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## THE POWER OF DIALOGUE IN THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MODERN POLISH POLICE

**Abstract.** The aim of the article is to define and substantiate the role of dialogue as a key tool of the negotiation process in the activities of the modern Polish police to achieve de-escalation and safe completion of incidents. The object of the study is negotiated communication and dialogical interaction of police officers with citizens in crisis and everyday situations. The article describes the power of dialogue in the negotiation process as a practical resource for conflict management in the activities of the modern Polish police. It is determined that dialogue in police negotiations is not only a form of polite communication, but also a professional de-escalation technology that combines communication, psychological and organizational components. It is established that dialogue allows you to quickly establish contact, stabilize the emotional state of the interlocutor, clarify the actual circumstances and intentions, as well as form a controlled scenario of events, in which the likelihood of sudden escalation is reduced. It is proven that the use of active listening, paraphrasing, reflecting emotions, clarifying questions, controlling the tone and pace of speech, neutral vocabulary and consistency in wording increase a person's willingness to cooperate and reduce the risk of the conflict turning into physical confrontation. It is substantiated that dialogue-based negotiations are particularly effective in critical incidents related to barricading, suicide threats or hostage-taking, as they allow you to gain time for risk assessment and preparation of tactical decisions, remaining an alternative to force scenarios. It has been established that the effect of dialogue is also manifested in everyday service, in particular when responding to domestic conflicts, public disputes, document checks, communication with witnesses and victims, where the quality of contact and a clear explanation of legal actions directly affect the behavior of the parties and subsequent trust.

**Keywords:** dialogue, negotiation process, de-escalation, crisis negotiations, police communication, conflict management, trust in the police, citizen safety, professional training, Poland

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## СИЛА ДІАЛОГУ В ПЕРЕГОВОРНОМУ ПРОЦЕСІ В ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ СУЧАСНОЇ ПОЛЬСЬКОЇ ПОЛІЦІЇ

**Анотація.** Метою статті є визначення й обґрунтування ролі діалогу як ключового інструмента переговорного процесу в діяльності сучасної польської поліції для досягнення деескалації та безпечного завершення інцидентів. Об'єктом дослідження є переговорна комунікація та діалогічна взаємодія поліцейських із громадянами в кризових і повсякденних ситуаціях. У статті описано силу діалогу в переговорному процесі як практичний ресурс управління конфліктами в діяльності сучасної польської поліції. Визначено, що діалог у поліцейських переговорах є не лише формою ввічливого спілкування, а й професійною технологією деескалації, яка поєднує комунікаційні, психологічні та організаційні компоненти. Установлено, що діалог дає змогу швидко встановити контакт, стабілізувати емоційний стан співрозмовника, уточнити фактичні обставини та наміри, а також сформувати контрольований сценарій подій, у якому знижено ймовірність раптової ескалації. Доведено, що застосування активного слухання, перефразування, відображення емоцій, уточнювальних запитань, контролю тону й темпу мовлення, нейтральної лексики та послідовності у формулюваннях підвищує готовність людини до співпраці та зменшує ризик переростання конфлікту у фізичне протистояння. Обґрунтовано, що переговори на основі діалогу є особливо ефективними під час критичних інцидентів, пов'язаних із барикадуванням, погрозами самогубства або захопленням заручників, оскільки вони дають змогу виграти час для оцінки ризиків і підготовки тактичних рішень, залишаючись альтернативою силовим сценаріям. Установлено, що ефект діалогу проявляється також у повсякденній службі, зокрема під час реагування на домашні конфлікти, публічні суперечки, перевірки документів, спілкування зі свідками та потерпілими, коли якість контакту та чітке пояснення правових дій безпосередньо впливають на поведінку сторін і подальшу довіру.

**Ключові слова:** діалог, переговорний процес, деескалація, кризові переговори, поліцейська комунікація, управління конфліктами, довіра до поліції, безпека громадян, професійна підготовка, Польща

**Introduction.** The relevance of the topic is due to the fact that modern police response in Poland increasingly occurs in situations of heightened tension, where decisions are made quickly, and the price of a mistake is measured in terms of people's safety, health and public trust. This applies not only to classic crisis episodes, when negotiations are used during threats of suicide, hostage-taking, barricading or aggressive behavior in public space, but also to everyday incidents that begin with a domestic conflict, a misunderstanding on the street, tense communication during document checks or the emotional reaction of witnesses and victims. In such





circumstances, it is dialogue, as a professional tool for establishing contact, reducing tension and finding acceptable solutions, that becomes the key to de-escalation, and therefore to reducing the risk of using force. For police work, this means increased efficiency, as well-structured communication helps to receive information faster, more accurately assess the intentions and needs of the parties, and also to form a controlled dynamics of events, when every word can either bring the situation closer to a safe conclusion or provoke an escalation.

**Literature Review.** In the literature on police negotiations, dialogue is seen as a tool for reducing tension, preventing violence, and increasing the safety of those involved in the incident [1-10]. M. L. Steele et al. [1] analyze police negotiations in suicidal crisis situations and demonstrate that such incidents have distinct “triggers,” contextual circumstances, and typical characteristics of the individuals being negotiated. M. Morgan, T. Miles-Johnson, J. Campana [2] describe an andragogic approach to training police negotiators, i.e., training adults through practical orientation, reflection on experience, self-direction, and training scenarios that are close to real-life work conditions. V. B. Van Hasselt, S. J. Romano, G. M. Vecchi [3] emphasize the importance of role-playing as a tool for developing negotiation skills in crisis and hostage situations. The idea is that negotiation competence requires not only knowledge of principles, but also repeated practice in conditions that simulate stress, time pressure, unpredictable reactions of the interlocutor and the need to simultaneously maintain security. N. Jon [4] analyzes the role and potential of the Norwegian crisis and hostage negotiation unit and shows that negotiations can perform a preventive function in relation to force scenarios.

**Aim and objects.** The aim of the article is to define and substantiate the role of dialogue as a key tool of the negotiation process in the activities of the modern Polish police to achieve de-escalation and safe completion of incidents. The object of the study is negotiated communication and dialogical interaction of police officers with citizens in crisis and everyday situations.

**Results.** Dialogue in the negotiation process for the police is not just politeness, but a professional risk management tool, as it allows you to reduce tension, stop escalation and create conditions for a safe solution. The power of dialogue is manifested in the fact that through contact and trust, it becomes possible to influence a person’s behavior without coercion, as well as to gain time for assessing threats, collecting information and preparing tactical steps. In modern policing in Poland, this is especially important, because police officers increasingly work in an environment of high emotion, where fear, anger, despair or panic are present, and any careless signal can provoke aggression, escape, self-harm or attack. That is why negotiations built on dialogue become a way to turn a chaotic situation into a controlled process, where each remark has a purpose, and is not a reaction to provocation (Table 1).





**Table 1.** The role of dialogue in the negotiation process

<b>Dialogue role</b>	<b>What it accomplishes in practice during negotiations</b>
Building rapport and a workable relationship	Dialogue creates a human connection that can replace the person's expectation of confrontation with an expectation of being heard. When the person feels respected, they are more willing to slow down, share information, and tolerate uncertainty. Rapport does not mean agreement, it means a communication channel that stays open long enough for safety focused decisions to become possible
Emotional regulation and de escalation	Dialogue can lower arousal by providing calm structure, predictable turn taking, and language that reduces shame and threat perception. By reflecting emotions and naming stressors, the negotiator helps the person move from raw reactivity toward partial self control. This reduces the likelihood of impulsive violence and increases the chance of a peaceful resolution without unnecessary force
Information gathering and risk assessment	Dialogue is a tool for learning what the person wants, fears, and is prepared to do, which is essential for judging immediate risk. Careful questioning and paraphrasing help clarify contradictions without triggering defensiveness. The information gained through dialogue supports safer tactical decisions by the police team, because it improves understanding of motives, triggers, and possible exit pathways
Guiding toward a safe agreement and preserving legitimacy	Dialogue supports step by step commitments, where small cooperative actions build momentum toward a final safe outcome. It also protects perceived fairness, because clear explanations and respectful language reduce feelings of humiliation or injustice. When negotiations end with dignity preserved, the long term result often includes higher public trust and lower probability of renewed conflict after the incident

*Formed by the author*

The negotiation process in police practice can be described as a sequence of steps based on psychology, communication techniques and ethical standards. It usually begins with establishing contact, when it is important to show the person that they are heard and understood, and not just controlled. This is followed by stabilization, that is, reducing the intensity of emotions, clarifying intentions and clarifying what is happening, who is involved, what are the risks, what needs lie behind the demands. After this, there may be a stage of influence, when the negotiator leads the interlocutor to realistic alternatives, forms a sense of choice and responsibility, offers safe options for exit, agrees on small steps that gradually lead to a solution. The conclusion is an agreement or voluntary cessation of dangerous actions, and then support after the incident, when it is important to maintain the stability of the decision and minimize the risk of recurrence (Fig. 1).





The communicative architecture of contact, which ensures the launch and stability of interaction with a person in crisis. It concerns the rules of entering the conversation, choosing the role of the negotiator, constructing the first message, creating a sense of security, and establishing the rhythm and boundaries of communication

Content-Analytical Conversation Circuit, which is how the negotiator gathers information, assesses risks, and builds an understanding of the motives and triggers of the interlocutor's behavior through dialogue. In practice, this means that questions, clarifications, and rephrases serve as diagnostic tools rather than interrogations, so wording should be gentle, precise, and non-accusatory

Procedural-Resultative Module, which moves the conversation from the contact and analysis phase to the phase of safe agreements and incident closure. At this level, dialogue becomes a tool for building step-by-step commitments, where the negotiator does not offer an abstract compromise, but a sequence of small actions that reduce risk and gradually move closer to a solution

**Fig.1.** Dialogue system for police negotiations

*Formed by the author*

In crisis situations, negotiation is often used when a person threatens suicide, when there is a barricade, when there is a threat of violence, when a dangerous confrontation arises in a public space, and also when the parties to the conflict are in a state that makes rational interaction difficult. However, dialogue is no less important in everyday service, when talking to victims, witnesses, aggressive participants in road incidents, when responding to domestic conflicts, when intervening in crowds, where issues of dignity and fair treatment are sensitive. In such situations, effective communication helps police officers avoid unnecessary escalation, explain their actions, obtain consent to legitimate demands, more quickly separate facts from emotions and more accurately determine who needs help and who poses a threat. Dialogue also increases the safety of police officers themselves, because de-escalation through words reduces the likelihood of physical contact, and well-established contact allows for better prediction of a person's behavior (Table 2).





Table 2. Specific features of how crisis situations shape the negotiation process

Crisis situation feature	How it changes negotiation dynamics	Practical implications for police negotiators
Acute emotional overload and rapid mood shifts, common in suicide threats or severe distress	The conversation can swing from cooperation to withdrawal within minutes, so the negotiation becomes less linear and more cyclical. Logical arguments often fail early because the person prioritizes emotional relief over factual consistency. Small wording choices can amplify shame or hope, which immediately affects risk	The negotiator should prioritize emotional stabilization before problem solving, using calm pacing, short questions, and consistent acknowledgement. Communication should reduce perceived pressure and avoid language that sounds like ultimatums. The negotiator should actively monitor micro signals such as sudden silence, agitation, or abrupt changes in tone, then adapt the dialogue to keep the person engaged and safe
High stakes control struggle, typical for barricade incidents or hostage situations	The person may use time, information, and access as bargaining tools, so the dialogue becomes a contest over control rather than a normal exchange. Threats may appear as leverage, and the person can test boundaries to see if the police react emotionally. Trust is fragile because any perceived deception can trigger escalation	The negotiator should maintain credibility through consistent wording and achievable commitments. The dialogue should offer structured choices that preserve the person's sense of agency while keeping safety priorities non negotiable. The team should align messages across all officers so that the subject does not receive conflicting signals that undermine the negotiation
Information uncertainty and fragmented narratives, often present in chaotic public incidents	Facts arrive late, are contradictory, or are distorted by stress, crowd influence, or misinformation. The negotiator may face multiple voices, conflicting witnesses, and social media pressure that shapes expectations. This increases the risk of misunderstanding intentions and misreading risk cues	The negotiator should use dialogue to separate facts from interpretations, repeating confirmed details and clearly marking unknowns. Questions should be specific and neutral, designed to verify rather than accuse. The negotiator should communicate visibly fair procedures, because perceived unfairness in public settings can quickly amplify resistance and escalate the scene

Formed by the author

The power of dialogue does not appear by itself, it requires education, training, development of active listening skills, control of one's own emotions, work with provocations, recognition of manipulations and simultaneous observance of legal boundaries. Team interaction is also needed, when the negotiator does not work in isolation, but in coordination with the operation management, with patrol officers, with medics and psychologists, because negotiations must be consistent with security decisions and real possibilities.





**Conclusions.** In conclusion, we note that the power of dialogue in the negotiation process in the activities of the modern Polish police lies in the fact that it is professional communication that is able to transform the conflict into a manageable process, reduce emotional tension, buy time for risk assessment and lead the parties to a safe solution without unnecessary coercion. Dialogue increases the effectiveness of the response, reduces the likelihood of the use of force, enhances the safety of police officers and citizens, and also maintains public trust through respect, explainability of actions and preservation of human dignity even in crisis circumstances. That is why the development of negotiation skills, a culture of de-escalation and systematic communication training are becoming key conditions for modern police practice, focused on security, legality and humanity.

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