



Police Training and Police Violence in Scandinavia

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1 Introduction

During the last few decades policing across the globe has drawn the attention of local and international activists, politicians, and scholars. Specifically, attention has been focused on critically assessing police conduct, the efficiency and effectiveness of policing strategies and tactics, and relationships between the public and the police (Blumberg et al., 2019; Crank, 2014; Loftus, 2009; Walker & Katz, 2012). While further discussing and studying various topics related to police and policing, many highlight the importance of understanding the context in which

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police and policing are operated. Notions such as training, tactics and strategies, informal and formal practices, and occupational norms are all notions impacted by the local cultural and social context in which policing is implemented (Cockcroft, 2012; Crank, 2014; Martin, 1999). Thus, to understand more about policing in Scandinavia and police violence it is important to discuss how Scandinavian police are trained, the organizational structures, and local cultural and social contexts.

Scandinavia consists of five countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, which all adhere to the Scandinavian welfare model. This states that all society members have access to welfare systems that enable notions such as free education, free healthcare, and support for unemployed individuals. Although poverty and inequality rates are fairly low in these countries, crimes and violence still occur. While some of the Scandinavian countries' attributes are similar, such as adherence to the welfare model, similar political structure, and other cultural aspects, there are still some variations. For example, when discussing policing in Scandinavia, agencies' organizational structure, reforms, and trust in the police (Staubli, 2017) and crime rates can differ.

Several studies have further explored how notions such as policing strategies and tactics, officers individual characteristics, and the cultural context can influence police violence or the police's overuse of force (Friedrich, 1980); however, scholars also argue that environmental factors can impact the occurrence of police violence (Terrill & Reisig, 2003). Compared to other countries such as the United States, Scandinavian countries report low numbers of police violence, which for example could be exemplified as the overuse of force or interactions resulting in a deadly outcome (Hendy, 2014). By understanding more about the Scandinavian police more knowledge can be learned about the various nature of police violence and perceptions of police legitimacy and trust as studies have shown that positive perceptions about police legitimacy are associated with negative views about the use of violence (Jackson et al., 2013). Furthermore, reduced levels of legitimacy can have negative consequences for the efforts the police take to reduce crime as it can have a negative impact on citizens' intention to cooperate with the police and their trust in them. Scandinavians report having more trust in the police compared to many other countries (Kääriäinen & Siren, 2011), which

could be linked to many different factors, one potentially being the low rates of the overuse of force (Geller & Toch, 1959).

Most of the current scholarship which addresses policing in Scandinavia focuses on understanding policing in their separate countries (Eliasson, 2020, 2021; Giertsen, 2012; Karp & Stenmark, 2011; Olsen, 2017). Although these scholars contribute with essential findings informing the discourse on policing, there is a need to expand the overview of Scandinavian policing specifically through a comparative perspective. The studies that do address two or more countries in Scandinavia (Hendy, 2014; Høigård, 2011; Holmberg, 2014; Inzunza & Wikström, 2020) could benefit from expansion to provide more background information on the differences and similarities between police and policing practices in the various countries. It is essential to further expand the existing scholarship that addresses policing in Scandinavia to generate a robust foundation of knowledge about police in different parts of the world and the various contexts in which policing is implemented, particularly in countries where police have varying characteristics, such as different lengths in training. Additionally, by generating more knowledge about training and organizational structures and the cultural and social context of the Scandinavian police, more international scholars can incorporate the context of Scandinavian policing into transnational comparisons.

This chapter aims to explore the Scandinavian police and discuss various similarities and differences among the countries. The chapter will do this in three specific ways: first, by discussing the organizational structure and training of the police in each country; second, by outlining the current trends in policing scholarship for each country; and third, by discussing crime trends and police violence in each country, which can be linked to how policing is practiced in each country and across Scandinavia. The goal is to provide readers with contextual information about Scandinavian police by providing an overview of differences, similarities, and current scholarship trends. Thus, the chapter will start with a description of the structure of the police organizations and training and a brief overview of current policing scholarship in each country. The chapter will then describe and discuss crime rates and violence across Scandinavia and the challenges the police face.

2 Scandinavian Police

Extensive research has explored various aspects of Scandinavian police and policing. For example, scholars have explored aspects related to police conduct (Høigård, 2011; Solhjell et al., 2019), policing strategies and tactics (Christoffersen et al., 1999; Olsen, 2017), and occupational knowledge, reform, and training (Adang, 2013; Björk, 2021; Eliasson, 2020, 2021; Fekjær et al., 2014; Granér, 2017; Holmberg, 2014, 2019; Karp & Stenmark, 2011). This rigorous scholarship exploring individual countries and the comparative aspects of policing in Scandinavia highlights that, although being at a close geographical distance from each other, there are differences and similarities in the implementation of policing, reforms and organizational structures, and training. In this section, these aspects will be discussed separately for each country.

Denmark

The police academy in Denmark is a two-year long training consisting of practical and theoretical courses, covering topics such as law, IT, and international relations. The basic trainings for officers are held at specific police colleges around the country. The initial courses last approximately nine months after which the police trainees complete 18 months of practical training in one of the Danish police districts. After the practical training is completed, the trainees spend another nine months taking courses at the police college and then takes a final exam. After this exam, the trainees spend time with the tactical support unit with the Copenhagen police. The requirements for individuals applying to the academy are: that they have to be older than 21 years old, have Danish citizenship, have good language skills in Danish, be in good health, and have a valid driver's license. Beyond these requirements, there are certain attributes of the potential applicants which are considered "desirable" by the academy. For example the applicant should ideally not be older than 29 years, not have a criminal record, and live under orderly financial conditions, and have a reasonably strong physique (OSCE, 2022a).

The Danish police is an entity run by the Danish government and is combined with the Danish national prosecution office. Before 2007, the Danish police were divided into 57 districts. However, after a nationwide reorganization, it became 12 districts and two independent police districts in Greenland and the Faroe Islands (Holmberg, 2014). Each of the districts is headed by a police commissioner accompanied by a deputy police commissioner and two chiefs who are in charge of the police service and the prosecution services. The police commissioners will have been employed for several years and have responsibilities such as how policing duties are performed, budget allocation, and personnel allocation in the local districts (OSCE, 2022a).

Beyond the reforms, the Danish police had been impacted by other reforms focusing on changes in strategies, tactics, and approaches to policing. For example, the Danish police were inspired by international reforms enforcing community policing and problem-oriented policing (Balvig et al., 2011; Holmberg, 2014). A reorganization in 2002 was specifically implemented to further improve the relationships between the community and the police and increase citizens' feelings of safety as a result of international reforms. One of the key developments in police practices during this time was the Danish police learned that according to Danish citizens, the Danish Police did not need to increase their visibility to increase the citizens sense of safety but rather the police needed to increase their efficiency. To address this, the police aimed at reducing the response time to incoming calls, simplify the command structure, and remove distinctions between the investigative and patrol sections of the police districts (Granér, 2017; Holmberg, 2014).

Scholars have debated the success of the various reforms of the Danish police (Granér, 2017). For example, Degnegaard (2010) highlights that the organizational changes disregarded the informal organization and collective culture within the pre-existing structure. While one of the aims was to simplify the command structure by reducing the number of districts, the police became a top-down structure with the unforeseen consequence of communication directed towards individuals instead of collectives. Officers disliked the reform, referencing that their ability to conduct their job had been compromised, and the clearance rates had decreased (Holmberg, 2014). Furthermore, the reorganization and

reform impacted the perception of the police among Danish citizens. A year after the reform, studies showed a decreased confidence in the police and their efficiency. However, a few years later, satisfaction on a national level had increased among the population, matching the satisfaction rates before the reforms were implemented. However, the satisfaction rates on a local level was lower than before the reform, with local community actors noting the loss of personal ties and local affiliation with the police as influencing their perception (Balvig et al., 2011; Granér, 2017).

Iceland

Before 2016, Iceland had a national police college; however, the responsibility of training police officers was turned over to a local Icelandic university. Before this transition, the Icelandic police academy was a non-university educational institution (Mennta og starfsþróunarsetur Lögreglunnar, 2022). The current officer training consists of a two-year police science program, which generates a university certificate. By the university, the program is described as a “practical academic discipline” and consists of four semesters. The police trainees take academic courses such as law, ethics, criminal investigation and procedure, and other crime-related courses. In addition to the academic courses, the trainees also take practical training courses hosted by the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development. The requirements for admission to the program are that the applicant must be proficient in Icelandic and have the equivalent of a high school degree (University of Akureyri, 2022).

Iceland has a national police organization that, in line with its fellow Scandinavian countries, has experienced various attempts at reorganization during the last 20 years. Before 2007 there were 26 different districts; however, due to calls to increase the efficiency of the police, these districts were merged into 15. In 2015 these 15 districts were again reorganized into 9, with the largest one being the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police which is in charge of an area inhabited by two-thirds of the population (Oddsson & Bragason, 2020). In each of the nine districts, there is a district commissioner. The duties of the commissioners include

being in charge of administration related to general policing tasks but also more specialized efforts such as land-based rescue and missing person searches. The chief of police in each district is responsible for how the policing duties are implemented in each district and are, for example, in charge of how investigations of criminal offenses are conducted. They also have power over prosecutorial practices. Icelandic police officers have the power to conduct policing beyond the district and can thus perform duties in all regions of the country (Guðjónsson, 2003).

Inline with the evolving changes in organizational structure of the police, the approach to policing and police training has also evolved during the last few decades. For example, during the early 2000s, there was a shift towards science-based policing among Icelandic police. Furthermore, the police have also increased their collaboration with research entities for example examining general crime trends through national crime surveys (Oddsson & Bragason, 2020) and explored research that can inform the efficiency of police practices and organizational and individual-level factors that influence policing (Oddsson et al., 2020; Sigurðsson et al., 2006).

Finland

In Finland, there is currently one university that is tasked with training individuals who want to work for the Finnish police. Before 2008, there were two different types of training for officers, one being the National Police School and the other the Police College. However, these two were merged into the current Police University College. This university is in charge of the requirement, selection, and training of new officers but also leadership and training qualification programs and research activities. The training consists of both academic courses and practical training with local police departments and other police units across Finland (OSCE, 2022b).

The Finnish police are made up of two national police units and eleven local police departments. The local departments encompass several municipalities, and the general task of each department is to maintain law and order, prevent and combat crime, investigate crime, monitor

and carry out traffic control, among other things. Local police also assist other agencies, such as immigration services, and surveil major public events that can impact local traffic and public safety (Police of Finland, 2022).

Between 2009 and 2010, there was a substantial administrative reform implemented within the Finnish police, which centralized the power structure within the organization (Haraholma & Houtsonen, 2013). The local and national police units were reduced from 90 to 24 districts. There were five major motivators for restructuring, which reflected “security of a minimum service standard in the whole country, increasing productivity and profitability, management by results, maintaining cooperative relations with various partners and securing the personnel’s motivation” (Granér, 2017, p. 141). Although some positions within the organization were relocated to centralize power and decision-making, the implementation of police services on a local level was not impacted, and thus officers performed their duties the same way as they did before the reform. Yet, according to scholars, officers were not satisfied with the reform because there were increased levels of bureaucracy (Haraholma, 2011), which also led to increased stressors and labor turnover (Vuorensyrjä, 2014). Although causing dissatisfaction among officers, the reforms did not cause a decrease in levels of satisfaction with the police among Finnish citizens as compared to before the reforms (Granér, 2017).

Norway

In Norway, it is the Norwegian Police University College that is tasked with training future police officers. The current police training is a three-year bachelor’s degree where the first and third years are spent at the academy taking academic courses, and the second year is spent conducting practical training in various policing districts across Norway (Politi Hogskolen, 2022). The key areas which are taught to trainees are crime investigation and training, leadership, prosecution and administrative responsibilities, and other policing tasks. In 2005, 2265 individuals applied to the police academy, 50% of these were asked to conduct admissions tests reflecting physical, academic, and psychological tests.

Only 31.7% of the individuals who performed the tests ended up being accepted for police training, and of the individuals accepted, 37% were female (OSCE, 2022c). In addition to finishing this three-year training and graduating, the police trainees also need to attend 40 hours of training every year, which includes firearm training, for them to continue to qualify for operational services. Norwegian officers do not carry firearms on their body; however, they have access to pistols and submachine guns that are located in their police cars, though they need to seek approval from higher authority to use them.

The Norwegian police are currently made up of one agency which includes a central national police directorate accompanied by several specialty agencies such as those focusing on economic and environmental crime, police border commissioners, and police specifically addressing immigration. In addition, the police also include 12 districts, each of which contains several police stations in cities and towns, and rural locations. In every district, there is a chief of police who is in charge of several stations. The police are also in charge of the first level of prosecution. Thus, the police also have civil workers and officers with a background in law. The prosecution that the police are in charge of often reflects minor criminal charges (OSCE, 2022c).

As with many police organizations, the Norwegian police have been subjected to several reforms. One of the two most influential reforms in modern times occurred in 2002, which brought on a shift in Norwegian police ideology. Before 2002, the approach to policing in Norway reflected the need for an organization that had a broad range of duties that heavily embedded ties in local communities. The police were often viewed as a part of the local service sector, which highlighted the call for a broad range of duties and skillsets needed from them. However, with the 2002 reform, the ideology of police shifted, and three main goals were presented. The first stated that the police organization would be more efficient in crime prevention and combating crime. Second, it must improve the ability to meet the needs of the public and deliver services to meet those needs. Third, it must be more cost-effective. Furthermore, during this reform, the police districts were also reorganized and reduced from the existing 54 to 27 (Holmberg, 2014).

The 2002 reform was not the only reform that highly impacted policing in Norway. In 2016 another big reform was implemented, which was tasked with improving the community ties between the police and local communities as well as implementing more community policing. This reform reflects many of the shifts that were seen in other Scandinavian countries during this time, which all highlighted the importance of implementing community policing. During the 2016 reform, the 27 districts were reduced to the current 12, and the number of police stations was reduced. Furthermore, the main goal of the reform was to create a community policing approach “which is operative, visible and available and with the capacity and competence to prevent, investigate and prosecute criminal acts, and ensure the safety of citizens” (Granér, 2017, p. 144). Thus, the 2016 reform could be viewed as an effort to sever the community ties that were emphasized prior to the 2002 reform while also adhering to trends in policing approaches in neighboring Scandinavian countries. Thus, the reforms and changes within the Norwegian police reflected shifts in policing approaches, one emphasizing emergency policing and problem-oriented policing, and the other reflecting community policing.

There has been a wide range of responses to both the 2002 and the 2016 reforms. After the 2002 reform, several evaluations were conducted both among police personnel and citizens. Among police personnel, many of the more senior staff reported being satisfied with the reform, stating that their resources and budgets improved and that officers became better at combatting and solving more complex crimes. However, almost 60% of local police officers rather reported that their resources were relocated to more densely populated areas and that, as a result of this, local policing suffered negative consequences such as reducing the possibility of preventing crime. Among citizens, the 2002 reform improved Norwegians’ perception of the accessibility and presence of the police (Holmberg, 2014). After the 2016 reform, many officers expressed apprehension about the changes and questioned the success of reorganizing the police (Granér, 2017).

Sweden

The police academy in Sweden is divided into five schools, with one of them offering an online training program, but all reflecting the same training and program structure. The police trainees attend a total of five semesters which equals two and a half years of training. The first three semesters reflect theoretical courses that are taught at the police academy with various courses in law, psychology, and criminal investigation. After these semesters, the trainees spend six months in the field in various police districts across Sweden. During these six months, the trainees are paid and work as police assistants and shadow and partake in a wide range of police activities when shadowing both officers and detectives. After the six-month practical training is over, the trainees attend another two months of courses at the police academy, where they share their experiences in the field (OSCE, 2022d; Polisen, 2022).

In Sweden, there is one national police agency which consists of the National Police Board and the National Laboratory of Forensic Science, accompanied by seven police regions. Each of the seven districts consists of one department addressing major crime, one addressing violence in intimate relationships, a dispatch call center, and two departments for after-hours with emergency investigators on call. Furthermore, these regions have local policing districts which are tasked with patrolling and investigating certain types of crimes, such as theft (Liljegren et al., 2021). The Swedish police consist of both police officers who have attended the police academy and civil officers who often have a bachelor's degree, a law background, or other professional experience.

In line with the other Scandinavian countries, Sweden has also had several reforms impacting both the organizational structuring of the approach to policing and the implementation of policing. One of the larger reforms occurred in 2015 and was made to increase the flexibility of officers, increase the quality of policing, improve clearance rates, and improve cost-efficiency. The criticism of Swedish police at the time was that the decentralization of power meant that organizational and occupational tasks, titles, and structures were determined regionally, and this varied across the regions (Liljegren et al., 2021). Thus, the overarching goal of the 2016 reform to address this criticism was to centralize power

and administration to one organization with one police chief that has the overall responsibility for the organization. The existing 21 partially independent districts were reorganized into the existing seven police regions comprising approximately 100 districts (Björk, 2021; Granér, 2017; Stassen & Ceccato, 2021). There has been a wide range of reactions to the 2016 reform both during implementation and after. While the reform was being conducted, a survey was sent out to all personnel at the police. Of the 36.8% that responded, less than 20% noted that the reform would lead to increased efficiency in crime control, increased focus on crime prevention among youth, and more accessible police (Granér, 2017; Renå, 2016).

3 Crime and Violence in Scandinavia

Scandinavian countries are often described in relation to their egalitarian nature and approach to gender equality. Most of the countries in Scandinavia are known to have a well-developed welfare system and provide free or low-cost education and healthcare. However, although there are many positive aspects of these countries, they all experience crime. As can be seen in Table 1, which specifically addresses three types of crimes, there are some variations in crime rates between the countries. Sweden has the highest rates of crime in both assaults and sexual violence and the second highest rates of homicide; Finland has the lowest number of assaults and sexual violence but has the highest rates of homicide. Thus there is a wide range of variation in the frequency of crimes amongst the countries but also a variation in the frequency of different types of crime within each country.

In addition to homicide, assaults, and sexual violence, other violent crime occurs in the context of gang crimes, organized crime, and public protests (Moffat, 2018). For example, there has been extensive occurrence of violent crime among motorcycle gangs (Jahnsen, 2018; Klement, 2019) as well as among other types of gangs (Carlsson & Decker, 2005; Ralphs & Smithson, 2015). Although crimes that are reported to the police have risen in all Scandinavian countries since the 1960s (Von Hofer, 2005), there is still a large number of crimes that

Table 1 Violent crimes in Scandinavia (per 1000 individuals)

	Homicide 2018	Assault 2018	Sexual violence 2017
Denmark	1.01	32.28	83.6
Iceland	0.89	36.23	142.3
Finland	1.63	29.13	55.4
Norway	0.47	36.87	106.4
Sweden	1.08	47.22	190.6

Source Statistics are from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

are not reported. Thus the full extent to which crime occurs is not fully known. However, studies have found that there has been a steady increase in violent crime rates between the mid-1990s and 2011, with a slight decrease between 2011 and 2012 in almost all of Scandinavia (Nelson, 2015).

When looking at the punishment for crimes, scholars have found that the general sanctions for drug-related crimes, robbery, and violent crimes (excluding murder and manslaughter) are between two months to five years in prison (Balvig et al., 2015). The same study found that between 59 and 77% of individuals in Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland think that the punishments are too lenient; 55–69% in each country are in favor of longer sentences, and 73–78% think that violent crimes should receive harsher sentences. The overall approach to sanctions in Scandinavian countries could be argued to reflect a more rehabilitative approach where the goal is to successfully integrate the individuals who offended into society and into a life without recidivism.

4 Trust in Police and Police Violence

Scandinavian countries are known to have high levels of trust in the police (Kääriäinen, 2007; Kammersgaard et al., 2021) compared to many other areas in the world. Several studies have explored the public's trust and attitudes toward the police (Haller et al., 2020; Kammersgaard et al., 2021; Stevnsborg, 2019), which show that there are different rates of trust in the police and the criminal justice system at large. For example,

when looking at the general survey on crime and victimization produced by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (2018), 47% of Swedish individuals in 2018 described that they had high or fairly high trust in the overall criminal justice system, whereas 27% noted that they had neither high nor low trust, and 22% answered that they had little to fairly little trust. On the other hand 49% answered that they had high or fairly high trust in the police, 26% noted that they had neither high nor low trust, and 21% noted that they had little to fairly little trust. Among the different entities in the Swedish criminal justice system, the police had the highest percentage of trust (49%) compared to prosecutors with 36%, courts with 36%, and prisons and jails with 32%. In another survey conducted with 1,000 Norwegian individuals in 2012, 86% noted somewhat high or very high trust in the Norwegian police (Thomassen et al., 2014). When comparing Scandinavian countries to other European countries, the Scandinavian ones include the top four countries reporting the highest level of trust in the police (Kääriäinen & Siren, 2011). In addition to trust in the police, scholars have further explored levels of safety in Scandinavian countries, noting that, in general, individual states have high levels of safety (Holmberg, 2004). Compared to other European countries, individuals in Scandinavia tend to feel a lower level of fear of crime and unsafety (Visser et al., 2013). There are many reasons why Scandinavian police agencies have a high level of trust and individuals tend to feel less worried about crime and feeling unsafe. For example, scholars highlight that the high overall perception of the government or political systems could influence trust in the police (Kääriäinen, 2007). Thus, the high levels of trust in the government can increase levels of trust in the police.

Although several studies examine police officers' interactions with citizens, specifically focusing on those with youth and ethnic and racial minorities (Haller et al., 2020; Kammersgaard et al., 2021; Schclarek Mulinari & Keskinen, 2020; Solhjell et al., 2019), there are very few studies that address police violence or violence against the police in Scandinavia (Høigård, 2011). However, there are some statistics that address police violence against the public. For example, Swedish statistics show that between 1990 and 2012, the number of individuals who died due to being shot by the police was 17, with the mean being 0.7 yearly. During

the same time period, 147 injuries were reported, with a mean of 7.4 each year. Between 2013 and 2017, these numbers increased with 13 deaths and 61 injuries in total. Thus, the yearly mean of deaths increased from 0.7 to 2.6, and the mean of injuries reported yearly increased from 7.4 to 12.2 (Holgersson, 2018). A study that specifically focused on examining violence against minority youth found that police violence is less common in Finland and Norway compared to Denmark and Sweden (Saarikkomäki et al., 2020).

Altogether the current studies that address violence in the context of Scandinavian policing and levels of trust and safety indicate that there are variations among the counties, despite their often being perceived as homogeneous regions. It is essential to highlight that several factors impact the interactions between police and citizens and the attitudes towards police and safety. However, after reviewing the literature, one can assert that, although Scandinavian countries tend to score high in notions such as trust and safety, police violence is still a notion that occurs but is rarely talked about in the current scholarship.

5 Challenges in Scandinavian Policing

Policing in Scandinavia is heavily impacted by the welfare model (Høigård, 2011), which focuses on enforcing a large public sector resulting in egalitarian outcomes (Andersen, 2004). More specifically this means that “the public authorities have responsibility to ensure that all citizens have access to basic economic, social, and cultural goods and services” (Høigård, 2011, p. 273). Scandinavian officers are meant to assist citizens with a wide range of problems, since they are representative of the state, and to avoid criminalizing individuals who are in trouble. Scandinavian policing strategies emphasize the importance of collaboration with the public in order to solve crime and to prevent crime, which is aided by the overall focus on maintaining the public’s high level of trust in the police.

Scandinavian police are often praised for their tactics of aiming to avoid violent confrontation. For example, Danish police have for a long period been trained and instructed to use sympathetic insight into

managing interactions and using their verbal and body language to navigate divergent situations (Bro, 1984). Additionally, Swedish officers are instructed to try and avoid confrontation, both direct and physical, with individuals, in order to have time to assess the situation and increase the possibility for open communication between the officers and individuals (Hansson et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Scandinavians tend to report higher levels of trust in the police and feelings of safety compared to other European countries. These factors, together with the positive implications of Scandinavia and its implementation of widespread welfare systems, free or low-cost education, and healthcare, make the countries in Scandinavia often discussed in certain aspects as positive role models for other countries. However, although there are many positive aspects about Scandinavia and Scandinavian police, there are still many challenges. For example, although primarily practicing de-escalation tactics to avoid violent confrontation, and having a minimum of 2.5 to 3.0 years of academic and practical training before becoming police officers, Scandinavian countries have major problems with crime and violence (Holgerson, 2018; UNODC, 2018), but also notions such as differential or biased treatment by the police (Haller et al., 2020; Kammersgaard et al., 2021; Saarikkomäki et al., 2020; Schclarek Mulinari & Keskinen, 2020; Solhjell et al., 2019) and misconduct (Birk Haller et al., 2020; Ekenvall, 2003; Fekjær et al., 2014; Gottschalk, 2011; Høigård, 2011; Thomassen, 2002).

Additionally, as previously noted, the literature on police violence and violence against the police is scarce in a Scandinavian context. However, this does not mean that violence perpetrated by the police and violence perpetrated against the police do not occur (Høigård, 2011). On the contrary, a few scholars have stated that violence is practiced by the police (Holgerson, 2018). For example, in their study examining the police's use of force against minorities, Birk Haller et al. (2020) found that young minority men expressed that they were exposed to a disproportionate and excessive use of force by police in relation to the severity of the offenses. The men also reported that they experienced humiliating forms of violence by the police resulting in them feeling emotions such as embarrassment. The authors state that use-of-force among the police needs to be further explored by other scholars.

There are several potential reasons why there is little literature on police violence and violence against the police in Scandinavia. For example, compared to other countries, the levels of trust in the police are high (Kääriäinen, 2007; Kammersgaard et al., 2021). Although this may not directly indicate a causal relationship or correlation between low rates of violence perpetrated by the police or to which the police are subject, it rather states that there is a general perception of the police as being legitimate and an agency or institution that can be trusted. This could be one of the factors which impact the likelihood of violence against officers, but also how officers are met on the streets. Furthermore, officer de-escalation tactics and usage of firearms could also potentially impact officers' use of violence (Hendy, 2014). Finally, the notion of education and training is something that has been heavily debated in the policing scholarship, specifically whether the level of training and education impact police officers' use of violence and/or conduct. The results of current scholarship are mixed. However, there is a significant amount of scholarship arguing that training and education can impact the level of violence or force used by officers (Andersen & Gustafsberg, 2016; Engel et al., 2020; Hyeyoung & Lee, 2015; McElvain & Kposowa, 2008; Paoline & Terrill, 2007; Rydberg & Terrill, 2010). Thus, some scholars argue that the high educational and training level of officers can have positive implications for their use of force and violence, which can influence the likelihood of the occurrence and the attention put towards the overall phenomena.

Scholars argue that the Scandinavian police are faced with many challenges, which can have many negative implications for their implementation of policing approaches and practices (Høigård, 2011). For example, as with the police in many other countries across the globe, the police in Scandinavian countries have been subjected to numerous reforms during the last two decades, which have brought changes in organizational structure, power distribution, and approaches to policing. A clear example that can be seen in many of the reforms is that there is a push for centralization of power and centralized organization, with fewer and less independent policing districts. These efforts have been made to decrease the variety of practices and areas of responsibility and also to streamline the decision-making process, which was supposed to make the

police organizations more efficient both from a financial perspective but also when preventing and combating crime (Adang, 2013; Björk, 2021; Christensen et al., 2018; Degnegaard, 2010; Granér, 2017; Haraholma, 2011; Haraholma & Houtsonen, 2013; Høigård, 2011; Holmberg, 2014, 2019; Oddsson et al., 2020; Vuorensyrjä, 2014). Not only have the many reforms created an ever-changing agency or organization which every few years is faced with a new reform, the reforms seldom improve citizens' perceptions of the police in the various countries. Instead, the reforms rather seem to generate negative responses from the police, especially local police, who often state that their way of practicing policing has suffered negative consequences due to the reform (Granér, 2017; Haraholma, 2011; Holmberg, 2014; Renå, 2016; Vuorensyrjä, 2014).

Additionally, the many reforms can sometimes provide contradictory guidelines and approaches to policing over time. For example, almost all the reforms have been influenced by the ongoing debate on decentralized versus centralized decision-making and power structures within police organizations (Høigård, 2011). Although the reforms in Scandinavia during the last two decades have been focused on centralizing power to create unity and a more homogeneous police force, several studies have highlighted that this has not improved officers' efficiency but rather created barriers and uncertainty (Granér, 2017). Aside from the debate on centralized versus decentralized power, approaches to policing have been heavily impacted by the many reforms (Høigård, 2011). Scandinavian police have, in line with the police in many other countries, been impacted by trends in policing approaches, which has been for a specific push for community policing. However, in some countries, for example Norway, the police have traditionally been community-oriented, with policing having strong ties to the local communities (Granér, 2017; Holmberg, 2014). But, with the 2002 reform, there was a push to decrease the services provided by the police to communities and to aim rather to enforce problem-oriented policing, which was changed again in 2016 when community policing was again emphasized (Granér, 2017). The shifts in approaches brought on by the reforms in Scandinavia are not unique to this context (Høigård, 2011), but rather exemplify developments in modern policing and also the sometimes conflicting approaches that are implemented during a short period of time. This

creates further challenges together with extensive organizational changes when aiming to build stable and balanced police organizations while also staying sensitive to initiatives and efforts to improve practices.

6 Conclusion

Extensive scholarship has been devoted to studying different aspects of Scandinavian policing and the context in which it is implemented and practiced (Adang, 2013; Björk, 2021; Christophersen et al., 1999; Eliasson, 2020, 2021; Fekjær et al., 2014; Granér, 2017; Holmberg, 2014, 2019; Høigård, 2011; Karp & Stenmark, 2011; Olsen, 2017; Solhjell et al., 2019). Scholars from various disciplines have highlighted a wide range of notions that impact policing in Scandinavia, and only a fraction of these could be discussed in this chapter. For example, in addition to the impact of police reforms, education, and overall trust in police and safety, a wide range of societal changes, norms, and other factors impact the police (Cockcroft, 2012; Crank, 2014; Hyeyoung & Lee, 2015; Martin, 1999; Oddsson et al., 2020). However, most scholars agree that the context of where the policing is implemented needs very much to be considered when evaluating, discussing, or assessing policing. Thus to conduct comparative work on policing in different countries, it is essential to understand under what circumstances it is being practiced.

This chapter has not aimed at glorifying or overly criticizing the Scandinavian police but has instead aimed to provide an overview of the general training practices, police structure, and recent reforms in policing, as well as to discuss the challenges that the police are faced with. Although Scandinavian police are often regarded very highly due to their de-escalation tactics and receiving high levels of trust from their citizens compared to other countries in Europe and across the globe, police officers face many challenges that can have both negative and positive implications for their policing practices. Indeed there are positive aspects that need to be highlighted. However, it is also essential to separate the countries and understand how policing is practiced. Although Scandinavia is considered a very homogeneous area, there are variations in crime, how the police are structured, and how policing is practiced.

Thus, when using Scandinavian policing as an example or as a comparison, it is essential to consider the variations between the police in the various countries. It is also important to consider the societal structure and cultural factors, such as the general high trust in the police, the broad welfare system, and general attitudes towards notions such as safety and punishment.

Key Takeaways of the Chapter

The Scandinavian police have been subjected to a wide range of reforms during the last few decades; however, empirical support for their success is mixed. For example, the perception of the police and trust in them among society members have not increased as a result of the reforms and officers note that allocation of funds and reorganization often does not improve their efficiency.

As reported in this chapter, Scandinavian countries, compared to other countries, have lower levels of police violence and higher levels of trust in the police. However, it is essential to highlight that Scandinavian countries and police agencies do not function without challenges, police violence, and police misconduct, and that crimes do occur. Thus, it is important to not idealize Scandinavian police agencies or police models in a way that ignores the challenges that exist. Policing needs to be discussed and contextualized in relation to the culture and setting it is practiced in; hence when comparing police agencies in various countries a multitude of factors need to be considered when discussing notions such as training, policing strategies or tactics, or police legitimacy.

Police Officers

- Based on the existing scholarship exploring reform in Scandinavian police agencies (Holmberg, 2014), front-line officers need to be involved and actively voice their opinions about the effectiveness of reforms when an opportunity is given and more actively make an effort to be part of the organizational and practical development of their agencies. This could for example occur by systematically sharing their experience and knowledge from working in various communities and settings.
- While it is important for officers to use their knowledge and experience, it is also important that officers are open-minded when it comes

to improving the efficiency of policing. This could for example occur through participating in additional training or educational opportunities or participating in exchanges with other police agencies enriching the perspective and practices of each officer.

Conflict Management Trainers

- Conflict management trainers play an important role in the implementation and practices of various policing strategies and tactics. Trainers should, in line with decision-makers, stay sensitive to the previous experiences that officers have had and the history of agencies. More specifically, they need to be aware and informed about previous and current practices of conflict management within the agencies and aim to incorporate the experience officers have with evidence-based knowledge to create resolutions and strategies which can benefit officers, agencies, and citizens.

Police Decision-Makers

- Decision-makers who influence the implementation of police reforms need to be sensitive to the effect of previous reforms on the current practices of individual officers and agencies. It is very important that decision-makers integrate the voices of the officers together with evidence-based knowledge when creating or suggesting reforms. Hence, by allowing officers to be a part of the creation of new reforms before they are implemented, decision-makers can ensure that officers have an active role in the development of new reforms by sharing experiences from previous reforms.
- Decision-makers should actively encourage dialogue between local police agencies and facilitate knowledge exchanges between various agencies to ensure that policing strategies and reforms implemented have been thoroughly reviewed and discussed by multiple agencies at various levels.

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