CRIME AND CRIMINALS IN NORDIC COUNTRIES

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Despite all the concerted efforts at Nordic cooperation and alliance, fundamental problems have always arisen. The symbol of the Nordic countries, the five swans, appears to have fallen out of formation. The countries are fairly homogeneous and a common language group prevails, but the question as to the existence of a uniquely Nordic identity remains open. Foreigners' views of Scandinavians as a single population would not appear to have much support in reality.

The most recent attempt at bridge-building between Denmark and Sweden, two formally antagonistic countries is epitomized in the concrete building of the extended Öresund bridge. The Öresund region is an interesting example of transnational regionalism supported by the EU. However, it has been difficult to materialize, mainly due to different cultural traditions. The flow of people also moves fairly uniformly in a single pattern: Swedish tourists on one-day excursions to the Danish capital of Copenhagen. This has evoked the Danish expression that Siberia starts in Malmö, the most southern Swedish coastal city.

Very clear stereotypes exist in the Nordic countries about their specific national populations. These stereotypes are important in the construction of national identities. One outsider, has made the following observations: "Among the Scandinavians themselves, judging by many conversations, it is popularly held that the Danes are fun-loving, easygoing, shallow, shrewd, not altogether sincere, and not inclined to too much exertion; the Norwegians are sturdy, brave, but a little too simple and unsophisticated; the Finns are dour, argumentative, courageous, a bit primitive, and apt to be violent after too many drinks; the Swedes are clever, capable, reliable, but much too formal, success-ridden and neurotic. It is only after getting to know the Scandinavians close up that one can see how true these descriptions are—and how untrue."

These stereotypes can be looked upon as social constructions that have a self-fulfilling impact regardless of their substantive validity. The longevity of the national stereotypes is illustrated by an article in a magazine published by the Danish state railways at the time of the opening of the bridge across Öresund. In this article, a number of classic differences between Jönsson, a typical Swedish surname, and Jensen, a typical Danish surname, were caricatured: Jönsson is said to fit more easily into a hierarchy but Jensen is more often critical and independent; Jönsson admires success while Jensen is skeptical of over-achievement; Jönsson is polite whereas Jensen is cheeky; Jönsson's outlook is international but Jensen's is provincial; Jönsson is stiff and Jensen is relaxed; Jönsson is stylish and Jensen sloppy; Jönsson is well-organized but Jensen is anarchistic.

Such descriptions of national character were discredited after the Second World War, and have only been rekindled since the late 1980s. Ethnologists have also taken a renewed interest in describing the respective mentalities of the Nordic countries, although with fairly impressionistic methods. The Danish historian Østergaard claims that the Danes are anarchistic and liberalistic. The Danish sociologist Gundelach argues that the Danes can be seen as a tribe, relatively closed, self-satisfied, and valuing consensus. The Swedish ethnologist Daun describes the Swedish mentality as characterized by shyness, conflict avoidance, independence, honesty, reserve, rationality, and joylessness: "The gloom in Swedish character—if there is such a thing—is traditionally explained with reference to two factors: the Nordic climate and the Lutheran Church." Finally, the German writer Enzensberger has observed how the population in Sweden accepts a strong authoritarian state, and that its moral values have coalesced and invaded the most intimate elements of the everyday lives of its citizens.

A highly publicized, controversial book written by the Danish journalist Berendt describes "Prohibition Sweden" and its absurdities, as exemplified by the state-run system of liquor stores. However, the Danish political scientist Mouritzen claims that the stereotypical image of Sweden as a country where everything is forbidden

is a myth. It may even be argued that Denmark is, in fact, the more prohibitive of the two. Rules regarding freedom of access to public records are far more stringent in Denmark than in Sweden. In addition to greater access to public records, or "*offentlighetsprincipen*," "everyman's rights," or "*allemansrätten*," in Sweden allows walking, docking, and overnight camping on all coastal areas regardless of land ownership, as well as on all public inland areas. Denmark, on the other hand, prohibits overnight camping everywhere within its borders except at designated, fee-collecting campsites. While the Swedish "Systembolag," or state-run system of liquor shops, has had regulations about opening on Saturdays, Denmark maintains restrictive rules on opening and closing hours for all shops. Another example of legislative restriction in Denmark is that people can only live in their summerhouses for certain months of the year, whereas in Sweden they may stay in them at any time.

Despite the fact that Danes are looked upon as being jovial and happy-go-lucky, Swedes are much more relaxed in their manner of addressing one another. Even if you have not met a person before, you are on first-name terms immediately, and first names are most often soon transformed into pet names. Mouritzen remarks that this rarely happens in Denmark: "We Danes are more stand-offish. We hold on to forms and to our integrity. We do not want to be pawed by anyone." Paradoxically, Swedes maintain a rather idealized picture of Danes as pleasant (*hyggelige*) and as having a relaxed outlook on life and other people. Mouritzen argues that this fits perfectly into the image the Danes have of themselves, and therefore helps to keep the myth alive.

The Danes' alleged positive self-image harmonizes with their reported comparatively robust sense of national identity and national pride. Survey research finds that the Danes are particularly proud of being Danes, and increasingly so as demonstrated by the European Values Studies from 1981 to 1999. These indicated that fewer Danes would consider living in another country as compared to respondents of other nationalities. One empirical study in 1995 concluded that the Danes are particularly chauvinistic.

Anthropologists like Radcliffe-Brown have identified joking relationships as structural-functional devices to lessen conflict between persons. Davies makes a distinction, in industrialized societies, between symmetrical and asymmetrical joking relationships, stating that asymmetrical relationships are generally much less common as far as ethnic jokes are concerned. Gundelach has carried out an empirical analysis of joking relationships and national identity in Scandinavia, although he admits that he cannot make a quantitative analysis of jokes in the different countries. Stupidity-based jokes are very common among the Scandinavians. The "War of Jokes" was started by a Swedish newspaper in the mid-1970s with a number of jokes about Norway. Norwegians retaliated with jokes about Swedes, sometimes merely reclassifying the object of the joke as Swedish instead of Norwegian. The Danish jokes about Norwegians are similar, in that the Norwegians are looked upon as provincial, stupid, and primitive. While the Norwegian-Swedish joking relationship is symmetrical, the Norwegian-Danish is not, since Norwegians are said not to tell jokes about Danes. Danish jokes about Swedes often relate to their supposed weakness for alcohol, their Big Brother status, and their energetic, healthy lifestyle. Again the Swedish-Danish relationship is said to be asymmetrical, since Swedes do not make many jokes about Danes.

One anthology of literary works shows that while almost all Swedish texts are relatively positive towards the Danes, almost all the Danish texts are relatively negative towards the Swedes. Similarly, Mouritzen has made an analysis of newspapers, concluding that Swedish articles about Denmark are generally either positive or neutral, whereas Danish articles about Sweden tend to be either negative or neutral. A recent historical dissertation explains the purported behavioral differences between Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians as a function of the varying position of the aristocracy in the three countries. The Swedish aristocracy has traditionally been particularly strong, while the Danish aristocracy has been weaker due to Denmark's system of absolute monarchy. Aristocracy in Norway has been essentially nonexistent. Historical explanations seem relevant in accounting for the development of the various stereotypes. Danish antagonism against Swedes as well as against Germans is interpreted by Østergaard as a function of enemy images: "It is an expression of a colossal inferiority complex about efficient and industrious neighbors."

Denmark's negative image of the Swedes is almost certainly related to the long history of wars between the countries. Denmark and Sweden have waged nineteen wars against each other (including eight conflicts during the Kalmar Union period) which amount to a grand total of 134 years of armed conflict. In his history of Sweden, Swedish novelist Vilhelm Moberg included a chapter entitled, "How Hate for the Danes grew in Sweden," wherein he sets forth the historical background of the Swedes' collective feeling of natural hate towards their hereditary enemies, the Danes.

The oldest known anti-Danish propaganda in Sweden dates from as early as the middle of the fourteenth

century, namely *Gotlandsvisan* (Gotland Ballad) and the rhymed *Karlskrönikan* (Karl's Chronicle). These consisted of numerous rhyming chronicles and countless ballads. *Danskdjævlarna* (the Danish devils), or *jutarna* (the Jutes) as they are also called, are not only described as being cruel and treacherous, but also wheedling, cowardly, and greedy. Archbishop Johannes Magnus preached hatred of Danes, and in his major Latin history of Sweden (1554) wrote: "As often as we Swedes have waged open war against Danes, have we held the battlefield and the Danes have had to bow their stiff necks under our yoke. But when we have negotiated with them, we have always been cheated and deceived." He also ridiculed the Danish language: "the Danes cough and push the words and turn them around far down their throat before they can get them out of their mouth."

Both Karlskrönikan and Gotlandsvisan were produced in Karl Knutsson's (later Karl VIII) Chancellery, and a major part of the subsequent chronicles and ballads were commissioned by his successors, the Stures and Gustav Wasa. They are outright political agitation, designed to be sung in churchyards and market squares. This anti-Danish propaganda also served as a binding force for the new Swedish state and was intended to prevent internal Swedish conflicts from breaking out into open rebellion. Stockholm's Bloodbath was used as a perfect example of Danish cruelty, and a play commemorating this has been performed every summer on the actual site of the Bloodbath. Against this background it is not surprising that up to the beginning of the eighteenth century in the southern Swedish province of Småland, Danes were considered a type of werewolf.

The Danish kings, especially during the Union Wars, had anti-Swedish propaganda produced by court officials to muster sympathy in the population. These ballads were written in a folksy form, giving the impression that they had actually been written by soldiers. Their style is, like their Swedish equivalents, ridiculing and hard-hitting towards the enemies for their cowardice and incompetence. According to the Danish historian Rahbek Rasmussen, the Danish image of the Swedes is less pervasive and less consistent than the cruel and treacherous stereotypes the Swedes have traditionally held of the Danes.

The Swedish professor Gustav Sundbärg maintained in his 1911 book, *Det svenska folklynnet* (The Swedish Mentality) that "the Danes' ability to persuade and talk one into something is extremely great and the Swedes' ability to resist phenomenally small." He further contended that throughout history the Danes demonstrated an "obvious disinclination to fulfill obligations they had taken on." Sundbärg's book was produced in connection with an enquiry into the reasons for the massive Swedish emigration, which he attributed to the Swedes' lack of national feeling. The book, however, is a rather fiery attack on the Danes, who are described as the exact opposite of the Swedes. Swedes are presented as coarse, many of them poor, and lacking a psychological sense. Both this lack and an absence of national feeling are alleged to make them easy victims for Danish businessmen and politicians, whose supposed cunning and guile enable them to exploit the poor Swedes consistently for Denmark's advantage.

Sundbärg's book attracted several replies from Denmark, including one from Harald Nielsen who wrote in his book, *Svensk og dansk* (Swedish and Danish) in 1912: "There is really a contrast present...between a people [the Danish], who through centuries of discipline are used to submitting themselves to laws, and a people [the Swedish], who for the most part until very recently have lived as under frontier conditions, and in loneliness have been tempted or forced to take the law into their own hands, where a Dane had a person in authority at hand."

Why was it that in previous centuries in Sweden there was more animosity towards Danes than there was towards Swedes in Denmark, whereas nowadays the situation seems to be reversed? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that while Denmark was the greater of the two nations for much of their previous history, Sweden subsequently achieved this position. Thus, the current enemy images appear primarily to be constructed around Danish deference, its "big brother complex" toward Sweden.

Demography

The Nordic countries have been characterized as small, the very small being Iceland and the relatively small being Sweden. Yet, Sweden is the third largest country in Europe, and neither Finland nor Norway is really physically small, although clearly distinguishable from Denmark, which is one of the smallest. The Nordic populations, however, are among the smallest in Europe. Sweden with its 8.9 million inhabitants has the largest population in Scandinavia, about double that of the other three countries. Denmark is the most densely populated, with the three other countries having only around one-sixth of Denmark's density. While Denmark can be characterized as agricultural, the other Nordic countries are largely covered by forests and mountains. Due to sparse populations, the role of regional policy is of great importance in maintaining infrastructures.

Looking at GDP (gross domestic products) in PPS (purchasing power standards) in 1990, Norway had the

highest figure, followed by Sweden, Denmark, and Finland on similar, about 10 percent lower levels. There has been a substantial rise in the GDP-level throughout the nineties, with Norway remaining in the lead but followed closely by Denmark, while Sweden and Finland have almost the same, approximately 25 percent lower level.

Compared with fifteen European countries, Norway and Denmark clearly surpass the average GDP, while Sweden and Finland lie just above the average. However, total GDP is by far the highest for Sweden due to its greater population, and it is almost double that of Finland. During the nineties, Finland showed a special pattern, decreasing in the beginning, then increasing from 1995 onwards. In the 1990s, there were minor recessions in the Nordic countries, other than Norway. The Finnish decline in 1992 was due mainly to its decrease in trade with the former Soviet Union, while its upswing, starting in 1995, reflects Finland's entry into the EU and its major investments in high technology.

Levels of employment in different economic sectors reveal no great differences between the Nordic countries. The service industries dominate and account for almost two-thirds of the total male workforce. Sweden has a somewhat higher percentage of its labor force employed in the financial services, but lower percentages in agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Sweden is famous for its many multinational companies, while Danish industry is characterized more by small and medium-sized companies. The number of Internet hosts per 1,000 persons in Scandinavia is very high compared to other European countries, with Finland at the very top. Figures for the number employed in the ICT-sector show Sweden highest, followed by Finland and Denmark, with Norway clearly at the lowest level.

The Nordic countries are characterized by almost full employment. In 1990, Sweden, Norway, and Finland had employment rates for both men and women of around 95 percent or higher. Finland had a fall in employment between 1990 and 1993, followed by a recovery, although ending up at the comparatively lower level of 90 percent in 1999. There were large differences among the countries in 1999, with Norway increasing its rates and ending up at the highest level. Denmark shows a somewhat higher rate than Sweden for men and somewhat lower for women, while Finland ended at the lowest level for both men and women. Unemployment rates among the four Nordic countries are lower than the average European rate in both 1988 and 1998. During this period, Sweden started as low as 1.6 percent but ended at 6.5 percent, although it has fallen to 4 percent according to the most recent statistics. Finland, on the other hand, shows an increase from about 5 to 11 percent for the same period. However, it should be noted that the number of "activated" persons, that is, persons on state-financed, work-for-welfare programs, amounts to about the same level as that for the unemployed.

Scandinavia is also well known for its large public sector. Government employment as a percentage of total employment is around 30 percent in the three Nordic countries with Finland around 5 percent lower. Among the OECD countries, only the Scandinavian countries employ as much as one-third of their labor force in the public sector. Accordingly, taxation is also high in all the Scandinavian countries. The highest rates of income tax in these countries, apart from Norway, are far above the EU-average. Hence, disposable incomes are also lower than the EU-average.

Health expenditures as a percentage of GDP in the Scandinavian countries lie at the upper end of the European scale. Sweden ranks highest, followed by Denmark, Norway, and Finland, in that order. Infant mortality rates in the Nordic countries are low compared to the other OECD countries. Sweden boasts the lowest rate, followed by Finland, Norway, and then Denmark. Infant mortality rates in Scandinavia fell by about a half in the decade between 1987 and 1997. Life expectancy figures show Swedes living longest, followed by Norwegians, Danes, and Finns. This pattern differs somewhat by gender, since Finnish women lived longer than Danish women in both 1990 and 1999. Over this period, life expectancies have increased in all the countries for both sexes, although Denmark shows the smallest increase for women. Levels of air pollution, that is, sulfur-oxides in kilograms per capita, are lowest in Norway, followed by Sweden. Rates in Denmark and Finland are approximately double those in Sweden and Norway. However, all the Nordic countries lie considerably below the European average. A comparison of total CO2 emissions from fuel consumption also shows Finland and Denmark ranking highest, followed by Sweden, then Norway. Total expenditure as a percentage of GDP for pollution abatement and control (excluding household expenditure) places Sweden and Norway on the highest level, closely followed by Finland, with Denmark somewhat lower.

Expenditure on public and private education as a percentage of GDP shows the Nordic countries on a somewhat higher level than the OECD mean. The greatest difference among the Nordic countries can be seen for tertiary education, where Sweden's expenditure is by far the highest, followed by Norway. Denmark and Finland are at a considerably lower level. For expenditure on research and development as a percentage of GDP, Sweden is clearly at the highest level, followed

by Finland, and then Denmark and Norway. Per capita expenditure, combining government and industry financing, has the same rank order for these countries. Government aid to developing nations as a percentage of GDP is exceptionally high in the Scandinavian countries compared to the European average. In 1999, Denmark achieved its goal of 1 percent, followed by Norway, Sweden, and with Finland by far on the lowest levels.

The proportion of the population currently married is lower in Scandinavia than in most other European countries. The proportion of persons married, aged 15 or over, in 2000 is between 40 and 50 percent in all the Scandinavian countries, with Sweden lowest. It should be noted that among the unmarried there is a high frequency of cohabitation in most Nordic countries. In total, approximately half of all marriages end in divorce, highest in Sweden.

Nordic households comprise about two persons on average. As high as 70 percent of all households are without children aged 0-17. This figure is highest in Denmark (77 percent) and lowest in Sweden (68 percent). There are great differences in the number of pensioners in different age groups in the Scandinavian countries. While 100 percent of those aged 65-66 were retired—due to obligatory retirement age—in both Finland and Sweden in 1998, only 40 percent of Swedes ages 60-64 as compared to 80 percent of same-aged Finns had quit working. Denmark comes in third position, followed by Norway on a much lower level.

The Human Development Index (HDI) produced annually by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) ranks 162 countries using four composite measures: life expectancy, educational enrollment, adult literacy, and per capita GDP. The index in the Human Development Report 2001 based on 1999 statistical data ranks Norway first, Sweden fourth, Finland tenth and Denmark fifteenth. HDI trends between 1990 and 1999, for the four Nordic countries, show Norway in first position and Denmark in last position throughout the decade. Sweden's index rating rose to a level very close to Norway's in 1999 while Finland's rank has approached the lower Danish level.

Politics

Although the Scandinavian social-democratic parties were founded in the 1880s, the Nordic welfare models are usually traced back to the recessionary 1930s, and the social welfare reforms started mainly after 1945 under the ruling social democratic parties. Sweden epitomizes the ideal type of Nordic welfare state. Apart from short intervals, Swedish politics has been dominated by social-democratic governments from the early 1920s to the present time. The Nordic model of government has been characterized as extraordinarily deliberative, highly rationalistic, very open, and consensual. In particular, the civil service and parliamentary commissions in Sweden can be seen as instrumental in their deliberative, rationalistic, and problem-focused politics. Related to this is the procedure whereby draft commission proposals are commented upon by different parties and organizations. During the extended commission work, efforts are made to achieve compromises and consensus among the parties.

Another way of trying to avoid confrontations has been the standing invitation extended by the Swedish social democratic governments to the industrialists to meet in Saltsjöbaden outside Stockholm to achieve compromises and reach agreements (*Saltsjöbadsandan*). In addition to this, as early as the 1930s, social contracts between the separate states, employers and employees were created, and new labor and social legislation was implemented.

As mentioned before, Sweden also has a long tradition of freedom of access to public records, that is, "*offentlighetsprincipen*." Efforts were made to export this transparency model to the EU at a meeting in Stockholm in 2001 while Sweden held the EU presidency. There is a belief that the Swedish word "*offentlighetsprincipen*" will become an international concept, just as the Swedish word "ombudsman" has. Whether this freedom of access to public records also results in improved democracy is another issue. This has been questioned, and it may be noted that Denmark, for example, has much less openness in this respect.

In the Nordic countries, especially in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, about half of the GDP is collected in taxes and redistributed in the form of transfers and services. The social-democratic model of equality required an interventionist state policy to try to eliminate basic inequalities in the social conditions and prospects of different individuals. It can also be concluded that the Nordic states have achieved the greatest equality in the distribution of income of all industrialized capitalist countries.

A high level of political interest is also reflected in the large turnout rates at elections. In Sweden and Denmark, approximately 80 percent of those eligible to vote did so during the last two elections. This high voter participation rate was followed fairly closely by Norway, though Finland's rate lay considerably lower at around 65 percent. A question on satisfaction with national democracy in the Eurobarometer opinion survey shows Denmark on the very high level of 81 percent, followed by Finland at 67 percent and Sweden at 65

percent. All three nations scored higher than the 15-nation EU average of 60 percent. A reverse order can be seen for satisfaction with the democracy in the EU, where Sweden is lowest with 19 percent, followed by Denmark at 30 percent, and Finland at 37 percent, all lower than the EU average of 42 percent.

Another characteristic of Scandinavia is the early female emancipation. Finnish women were the first in Europe to receive the right to vote in 1905. This trend was followed by Norway in 1913, Denmark in 1915, and Sweden in 1919. The proportion of females in the labor force is also comparatively high, amounting to between 70 and 76 percent. By establishing day-care centers for children, the public sectors of these welfare states have made it possible for women with children to enter the labor market.

An overwhelming majority of the Scandinavian population, amounting to around 85 percent, belongs to the Lutheran church. There is almost no difference among the four countries in this regard. In addition, a large variety of nonconformist Protestant churches exist with fairly low membership but high participation. Another general characteristic of Scandinavia is low church attendance: according to one study, 45 percent of Scandinavians have never attended a religious service, while another study shows about 30 percent have never attended services. The latter frequency is almost equally low in three of the Scandinavian countries, but Finland has the lowest figure of 19 percent. There are, however, high levels of ritual church attendance for occasions such as christenings, marriages, and funerals. Yet even in regard to these occasions only about half the population—ranging from 45 percent in Denmark to 58 percent in Norway—consider such events sufficiently worthy to merit a religious ceremony. Compared with other European countries, both regular attendance and special church attendance is much lower in the Scandinavian countries. There has been a long tradition in Scandinavia for the unity of church and state. Only recently has the church been separated from the state in Sweden.

Officially, the Scandinavian languages consist of Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Icelandic, and Faroese. Historically, these are all derived from what one commentator designates "Common Scandinavian," dating from A.D. 550 to A.D. 1050. However, different classifications and datings are used by different philologists. For example, what is designated "prehistoric" is called *urnordisk* or *fornnordisk* by other Scandinavian linguists. It may be added, that during the expansion of the Nordic people in the Viking Age, the Nordic language was spoken not only within Scandinavia but also in the courts of the Scandinavian rulers in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and Russia. During this period, Scandinavians (Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians) could communicate with one another without difficulty and thought of the language as one. Nonetheless, the separation and different orientations of the various kingdoms in the Viking Age led to differences in dialects.

The Finnish language, however, belongs predominantly to non-Scandinavian languages. Together with Estonian and Hungarian it is in the Finno-Ugric family, to which Samic is also related. Finnish, or Suomi, did not achieve official status in Finland until 1863, and prior to that only Swedish was used in education, government, and literature. The publication in 1835 of the "Kalevala," a national epic poem based on Finnish folklore, aroused Finnish national feelings. In the century that followed, Finnish gradually became the predominant language of government and education. However, Swedish is still an official language in Finland, although it is spoken by only a small segment of the population. Svenska Folkpartiet, or Swedish People's Party, was founded in the beginning of the twentieth century to defend the Swedish minority both culturally and linguistically. Nowadays, this Swedish-speaking minority comprises only about 5 percent of the Finnish population, whereas a century ago it made up as much as 14 percent.

The primacy of language as the heart and soul of a nation is also exemplified in Norway. Written Norwegian is based on Danish, and the two languages are similar. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the Norwegian *Riksmål* was nationalized, or "norwegianized," which can be seen as a reflection of growing nationalism. Also in the nineteenth century, and in direct competition with Riksmål, a new Norwegian language (*Landsmål* or also called *Nynorsk*) was constructed, based on dialects of the Western rural districts and intended to carry on the tradition of Old Norse. In a historical perspective, New Norwegian can be viewed as part of a counterculture that also embraces religion and teetotalism. Both languages are officially used in government and education today, and are mutually intelligible. New Norwegian, however, is used by only a small proportion of the population, mainly in the western regions, while national Norwegian prevails in urban areas and among the more educated.

If goodwill and some effort prevail, modern day Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, and Swedish-speaking Finns will be able to understand each other. According to conventions of the Nordic Council, the different nationalities have a right to express themselves in their own language in the Nordic countries when communicating with respective official authorities.

However, there are differences among these populations in the mutual intelligibility of their spoken lan-

guages. A further complication is the existence of widely varying dialects within the national languages. For example, Copenhageners do not usually understand the spoken dialect of fishermen from West Jutland. Similarly, due to the influence of television, Copenhageners generally find it easier to understand standard spoken Swedish than they do the Scanian dialect that phonologically is closer to Danish. When Scandinavians cannot understand one another they can resort to *skandinavisk*, which is a mixture of the Nordic languages, reminiscent of Creole..

Crime and Justice

The criminal justice systems in Scandinavia have usually been looked upon as progressive and humanitarian, and hence have sometimes been taken as models for other countries. Some Scandinavian legal scholars have expressed the view that the Scandinavian legal systems, because of their continental traditions, differ from those of common law countries. However, as far as criminal law is concerned, differences among such common law nations as England, the United States, and Canada from Western European countries seem to be almost nonexistent. The areas of criminalization and penal sanctions are almost identical among them. It is when comparisons are made in regard to criminal procedure and sentencing practices that real differences between the systems emerge.

Despite developed welfare systems the Scandinavian countries exhibit the same increasing trends for crimes, such as theft and assault, as the other nations of Central Europe. Several authors have noted a striking similarity between trends over the past fifty years. A shared conclusion appears to be that, irrespective of the different criminal justice systems, crime trends are very much the same.

Looking at total offenses registered by the police from 1980 to 1994, Sweden is continuously on the highest level, followed by Denmark, Finland, and Norway. Crime trend curves for all four countries are increasing, and doing so on a fairly parallel path. However, the curves for Norway and Sweden in 1994, and for Denmark and Finland in 1995 fall somewhat. Nevertheless, according to many criminological studies in different countries, such crime statistics based on officially recorded offenses against the criminal code represent only a small proportion of all crimes committed.

One explanation for deficiency of official crime statistics is police clearance rates. As in other European countries, clearance rates have fallen drastically, approximately halving over the past fifty years in all of the Nordic countries. The curves for Norway, Denmark, and Sweden have fairly parallel courses, with a decrease from around 40 to 20 percent, while Finland has had a rate almost double that of the other Nordic nations. It is not completely obvious how one should interpret the difference between Finland and the other Nordic countries, nor is it easy to explain their apparent fall in efficiency.

It may be noted though that the number of police per 100,000 is lower in the Nordic nations than in either southern or central Europe; in the mid-1990s, Nordic countries reported a total of 183 police officers per 100,000 inhabitants, while central Europe reported 291 (von Hofer 1999). The public reports more crimes to the police in Sweden than in Finland, even though the population of both countries has an above-average level of satisfaction with police response after reporting when compared to that found in other European countries.

Since not all crimes are reported to the police and not all crimes are registered by the police, cross-national comparisons of levels of crime ought preferably to be based on self-report or victimization data. In spite of the methodological problems involved in such interview studies, their statistics are usually considered more reliable for cross-national, comparative analysis. As many as seventeen countries participated in the most recent International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS), which used telephone interviews conducted in 2000. Respondents were asked whether they had been victims of car theft, motorcycle theft, bicycle theft, burglary and attempted burglary, robbery, theft from the person, sex offenses, or assault/threatening behavior. Overall victimization shows Sweden highest, followed by Denmark and Finland, with the Danish level almost the same as the average for Europe. In an earlier survey where Norway participated, it had the lowest victimization rate among the Nordic countries. The rank order of the countries thus remains the same for the police-reported and the survey crimes.

For crimes of violence, victimization data from 1987 can be compared with recorded crimes in the same year. For the recorded crimes, Sweden and Finland ranked far higher than Norway and Denmark (6.3 and 5.1 versus 2.1 and 1.8, respectively, per 1,000 inhabitants). However, for the victimization data the rank order is quite different, with Finland at the top, closely followed by Denmark and Norway, whereas Sweden is at a much lower level: 33, 30, 29 and 23 per 1,000 inhabitants, respectively.

The variations in these statistics have been explained by different methods of the police or the prosecution. In Denmark and Norway, the police and the prosecution service are amalgamated at the local level used in recording crimes. In Denmark and Norway, prosecu-

tors are obliged to follow the principle of public policy, which means that they have a duty to prosecute only when prosecution is determined to serve the public interest. In Finland and Sweden, however, prosecutors follow the principle of legality, which means that they have a duty to prosecute whenever they are of the opinion that there is enough evidence to obtain a conviction. The principle of public policy or of opportunity as it is also called in Denmark and Norway thus seems to explain the low levels of recorded crimes in these countries as compared to Finland and Sweden.

In addition to the difficulties involved in deriving comparable, cross-national data, it is obvious, generally speaking, that there are important differences among these nations in sanctions. Incarceration rates especially have been examined in particular depth both between countries and over time, and an interesting conclusion appears to be that there is no simple relationship between crime rates and incarceration rates.

In Scandinavia, fines represent the most common sanction by far. Half a century ago, this financial sanction was used most often in Sweden, but today it is most frequently applied in Finland and least in Norway. With the Nordic invention of the day-fine system, where the size of fines is related both to the severity of the offense and the socioeconomic ability of the offender, the possibility of using financial sanctions has been further expanded. The practice of converting nonpaid fines into imprisonment was abolished in Sweden as early as the 1930s; the number of persons sentenced to imprisonment due to unpaid fines was reduced from approximately 11,000 to 400 within a decade.

Non-custodial sanctions are used most in Sweden, although not more so than the average in Europe. Probation is used most in Sweden, while suspended sentences with supervision are used most in Denmark and Norway. (Such statistics are not available for Finland in the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics).

Community service as a penalty is used most often in Finland, followed by Sweden, when including the new sanction of conditional sentence with community service. Sweden has recently also introduced electronic surveillance as a permanent sanction. The greater use of non-custodial sanctions in Sweden probably reflects the more pronounced individual preventive philosophy in this country introduced with the Crime Code of 1965, where the concept of punishment was largely replaced by treatment. In recent years, the concept of punishment/treatment, however, has been modified by what is termed the penal value of a crime, which is intended to be the proportionate relationship between severity of a crime and its punishment.

The great variations in pre-trial detention rates across countries generally appear to reflect different practices rather than the presence of different types of crime. Thus, Denmark and Norway have much higher levels of pre-trial detention than Sweden and, especially Finland, reflecting varying legal practices.

Over the past fifty years, prison populations have been fairly stable in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. However, Finland has been a remarkable exception to this. The formerly extremely high levels of incarceration in Finland have been drastically reduced over the last half-century from around 200 to the same level as the other Nordic countries. This is attributable primarily to concerted political efforts. The detention rates per 100,000 inhabitants have been around 60 in Scandinavia, which is only half the mean in the European countries.

In 1999, Denmark had a somewhat higher and increasing level of persons deprived of liberty, while the other Scandinavian countries have shown decreasing levels over the last five-year period, with Norway having the lowest figure over time. Another characteristic of imprisonment in Scandinavia is the comparatively short length of sentences. However, with the increasing number of drug-convicted prisoners sentences have become longer. Also, a more repressive criminal justice climate in Sweden in recent years has led to increases in the number of life sentences. In Norway though, life imprisonment has been abolished.

Women constitute only about 5 percent of the Scandinavian prison populations. During the last five years, however, this proportion has increased somewhat in Norway and decreased in Denmark. The proportion of the incarcerated population consisting of foreign citizens is by far the highest in Sweden, with 26 percent, and lowest in Finland, where it has increased to 5 percent. In Norway, the figure is 11 percent. Comparable figures for Denmark are not available.

Correctional institutions in Scandinavia are small and to a large extent open, but they are highly staffed. The penal institutions usually have a capacity of fewer than fifty places and never more than 500. Among the Scandinavian countries, Finland has the lowest expenditure per 100,000 population on the prison service.

Recidivism is remarkably high in the so-called treatment-oriented correctional institutions of Scandinavia. Comparisons among the countries are difficult to make due to different methods of calculating relapse into crime. Owing to the negative results of rehabilitation in correctional institutions, indeterminate sanctions such as youth imprisonment and preventive detention or internment were more or less abolished in the Scandinavian countries as early as the 1970s.

The probability of recidivism correlates strongly with both age and gender, and tends to be highest among young males. There is much variation, however, in recidivism rates for different crimes, for example, higher for property crimes than for violent offenses. The Swedish Department of Corrections, compiling the more detailed recidivism statistics, publishes figures specific to different penal sanctions. Their data indicate higher recidivism rates after probation with deprivation of liberty than for ordinary probation. Rates of recidivism are still lower following sentences of community service, even lower after contractual treatment, and—by far the lowest—after supervision with electronic surveillance. For the latter sanction, recidivism within three years is only 13 percent, which is remarkable since to be considered for this intensive form of supervision a person must first be sentenced to traditional imprisonment and then apply for an electronic surveillance order. However, the official recidivism statistics do not account for differences in clienteles for the various sanctions.

In a comparative and longitudinal investigation of all kinds of correctional institutions in Sweden—training schools, youth prisons, prisons and preventive detention institutions for both men and women—there was ample evidence of prisonization, that is, the socialization of the inmate into the anti-social subculture of the penitentiary in all thirteen correctional institutions studied. While the official objective of these institutions was individual prevention, that is, re-socialization, the result was the opposite—that is, negative individual prevention—as clearly indicated by various measures of prisonization and especially criminalization in all types of institutions. In a follow-up study over ten years, three-quarters of all the inmates relapsed by committing serious crimes, and in a survival analysis there was a significant relationship between criminalization inside the institution and later recidivism.

A quasi-experimental study of conditional sentences and probation in Sweden also shows that the greater the use of treatment intervention, the worse the results. Probation combined with a short period of institutionalization thus resulted in higher rates of recidivism than ordinary probation, which, in its turn, produced higher rates of recidivism than conditional sentences. The differences in recidivism rates within a two-year follow-up period—61, 30, and 12 percent, respectively—remain significant, even when holding constant a great number of background variables using a prediction instrument. Similar, extensive evaluation studies have not been carried out in the other Scandinavian countries, but the results could probably be generalized.

Prisoner organizations in the Nordic countries have been rather effective in getting the general public and the media to look critically at the use of imprisonment. Mathiesen, who in the 1960s was involved in negotiations with the Department of Corrections in Sweden in his capacity of chairman of the Norwegian organization, has advocated the abolition of prisons in his many books, the latest in 2000.

In opinion surveys on alternatives to imprisonment, the Nordic populations also demonstrate great willingness to accept other non-custodial sanctions, even ones that have not yet been implemented. As a result of the high costs of prison construction and administration, in addition to the negative results of treatment, several Nordic legal commissions have in recent decades proposed that imprisonment be used to the lowest extent possible and with the shortest possible sentences.

At an international conference on prisons arranged by HEUNI—the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, in collaboration with the Finnish Department of Prisons and the Council of Europe—one group of researchers concluded by proposing a broad reform package to reduce imprisonment. This proposal includes crime prevention, improved enforcement, better treatment, changed legislation, attention to the media and mobilization of the public, in addition to research and evaluation.

For a reductionist imprisonment policy to be successful though, it has to be consistent and long-lasting. As rational, economic, and humanitarian values jointly come to the fore, it is considered to be most realistic to mobilize support for a radical reductionism within different groups in society. In this way a rational criminal policy objective, such as that advocated by Finnish criminologists Anttila and Törnrudd, could be approached, minimizing the cost and suffering caused both by crime itself and by society's measures to control it, while distributing the cost and suffering in a fair manner.

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