



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

The Center for Police Research: goals and strategies

(revised version 2018-12-23)

Introduction

According to the instruction which applies to the Center for Police Research, its purpose shall be to: make use of the university's resources to co-ordinate police research and higher police education, with the aim of becoming both a nationally important knowledge partner and an international node in the area of police research.

The main function for the center is to be a network which supports researchers at Uppsala University in their contacts with the Swedish police, the Swedish security police and other Swedish administrative authorities which have policing or societal security functions.

The present strategy document attempts to break down the above instruction into a number of smaller goals and to spell out how the center intends to achieve these. The objectives have been formulated for research, education and regarding.

Definition of police research

In this document police research refers to research which has the police, or the policing function, as its object of study. The center also has a role to play in networking as regards studies which are closely related to, and relevant to, the police and policing. Such police-relevant research is currently being conducted within Uppsala University's three disciplinary domains (plus the Faculty of Educational Sciences) and all of the university's nine faculties.

Points of departure

Police research may follow many different avenues. One approach in narrowing down the field in terms of goals and strategies is to focus on the national objective and purpose of the police organization. Formally, the police are described as being part of society's organization for promoting justice and security. They have the particular aim of maintaining public

order and safety, as well as in general providing the public with protection and other assistance (the Swedish Police Act, Section 1).

The police are the largest administrative authority in Sweden, with approximately 31 000 employees, of whom around 20,000 are police. The Security Police are, since 1 January 2015, a separate authority, with around 800 employees.

The responsibilities of the police include, among other things: preventing crime and other disturbances of public order or safety; maintaining public order and safety; carrying out surveillance and investigations concerning criminal acts subject to public prosecution; providing the public with protection, information, and other assistance when such help best is given by the police (the Swedish Police Act, Section 2).

However, this type of formal description account of aims, objectives, and duties associated with the police does not give the entire picture of police work in society today. Traditionally, fighting crime has been associated with the repressive domain of states. The government monopoly over violence for the maintenance of law and order has been intimately connected with the concept of a state. However, a shift in attitude regarding these questions has occurred for several reasons. To begin with, there are private security companies who investigate crimes committed within their own, and other's companies, as well as performing important roles in the maintenance of public order. Moreover, the policing function, widely defined, also involves crisis management, border control, protection of critical infrastructure and intelligence work. Other administrative agencies in Sweden are heavily involved in these functions, and their interface with the policing function is also part of the broader area of study of the center. In addition, public order and the combating of crime, particularly organized crime, requires the police to cooperate closely with local authorities (290 in Sweden) and other central state authorities (the tax authority, social insurance authority etc). The security police and the police cooperate closely as regards certain offences which fall within both agencies' responsibilities, and with other agencies. The security police and the police also cooperate with their counter-parts in other countries. In particular, there is intra-Nordic cooperation in operational police matters. For EU states, there is also an EU-dimension to police work, with cooperation in information transfer, but also different sorts of operative cooperation (Atlas etc.). The Swedish police have also been involved in various bilateral and UN projects assisting other states to build up a modern system of policing.

The Swedish police, and the security police, are facing considerable challenges today. Swedish society has, until recently, been characterized by a high degree of social capital, something which has made it possible to have a relatively low number of police. However, there are increased tensions in Swedish society which manifest themselves, inter alia in organized crime as well as increased gang activity and deaths by violence. The work load of the police has increased due to criminalization and the fact that other state services are not available on a day-round basis. The work load of the police and the security police has increased in relation to countering the threats of terrorism, cyber attacks and hostile foreign intelligence activity. The government is demanding a greater degree of effectiveness from the police in investigating crime, particularly “volume crime” at a time of limited public resources. New working methods, and surveillance technology, risk infringing more on human rights, particularly the right to private life. At the same time, demands for compliance with human rights and the rule of law are still high, and an important part of the public’s perception of the legitimacy of the police.

There are also demands for increased professionalism on the part of the police. The existing system of education of police consists of two and a half years of full time education, including a period of practice. All ranks have to go through the same education, which is mainly provided at colleges, rather than universities, and many of the teachers are instructors from the police themselves. The Swedish police nowadays have to perform a large number of different functions in society, demanding many different skills. In particular, organized crime has become increasingly sophisticated, requiring police to develop technological, forensic-financial and other types of competence. The present generalist system of education, the lack of exposure to critical thinking which characterizes, or should characterize, a university education, and the limited possibility of a “fast-track” education for graduates have all come under criticism. However the police are educated in the future, there will be a need for continuing education and masters courses for police to develop different forms of specialist knowledge which are nowadays necessary to police society and combat crime. This can best be provided at large, established universities, with qualified teachers. Established universities are also the only places where police are able to study for a doctorate.

Among the areas of knowledge which the Center for Police Research works with are:

- Public administration: models for accountability and control

- Coercive measures (surveillance etc.)
- Organized crime
- Cyber criminality
- Drugs
- Terrorism
- Police and forensic science
- International and EU police cooperation
- Crisis management

Research: goals and strategies

Goals

- The Center for Police Research shall conduct research of high quality which is relevant to police work.
- Research at the center shall aim to critically evaluate, and make important contributions to, the development of knowledge in the area of policing.
- Research can include projects with a comparative and international perspective.

Strategies

- Stimulate co-operation across academic disciplines and faculty borders
- Include the police and relevant administrative agencies in collaborative projects
- Stimulate research collaboration with internationally well-recognised universities and research groups
- Publish research findings in highly ranked journals and with well-renowned publishers
- Organize national and international conferences
- Participate in national and EU applications for funding
- Strive, long-term, towards the recruitment of PhD students in police research
- Strive, long-term, for providing funding for post-doctoral research projects in police research
- Strive for long-term viability in funding for the center.

Teaching: goals and strategies

- On request, and conditional on resources being available and the necessary authorizations being received from the concerned faculties and the university administration, offer police currently in service a conversion course, enabling them to convert their professional education to a university degree

- On request, and conditional on resources being available and the necessary authorizations being received from the concerned faculties and the university administration, organize masters courses in relevant areas for police studies

Collaboration with the police and other relevant actors in society: goals and strategies

- Contribute to the work of the police and security police, and critical evaluation of the police and security police, by answering government calls for consultation on inquiries and draft legislation, and, when requested, participating in commissions of inquiries and advisory boards
- Cooperate with other relevant research centers in Sweden, the Nordic states and Europe
- Organize regular research seminars, in cooperation with the police and other relevant administrative agencies on issues of topical and practical importance
- Develop cooperation with administrative agencies and other relevant organizations through facilitating students' practical work experience, masters theses, continuing education and commissioned research projects
- Organize national and international research conferences, on issues of topical and practical importance to the police and security police