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We Fear Them and They Fear Us

An interview study on youths' perception of
trust-building policing

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Abstract

In an effort to reduce crime, increase safety and public confidence in the police, the Swedish police initiated in 2014 a special operation - Operation Fenix - in the Stockholm suburbs Tensta, Rinkeby and Husby. Two years after the operation was initiated The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) published an evaluation of the operation. It showed that the police seemed to have partly succeeded in their crime reduction. However, the public perception of the police, their efficiency and trust hadn't changed at all. In order to address the issue of trust, BRÅ recommended that the police should in the future increase communication, by disclosing their operations and its goals and achievements. The purpose with this study is to explore how youths in socio-economic deprived areas express ideas about trust in the police and policing. Residents in the affected areas where Fenix operated have reported seeing an increase, during the operation, in interaction between police and youths. This study tries to analyze how youths perceive communicating with police and the trust-building efforts by the police. The theoretical framework for the study initiates with Émile Durkheim's thoughts on collective consciousness and morality of deviance. Durkheim's theoretical perspective is then expanded with contemporary interpretations. The neo-Durkheimian theory focuses on the police as a potential moral agent that continuously is being evaluated by the local community to ensure that the moral agent is representing community values and moral structures. Two approaches of trust-building policing are being presented: one based on the recommendation that the police should focus on communicating crime-reduction outcomes to increase trust in the police, and a second approach to trust that focuses on communicating shared values and social cohesion between police and youths. The data for this study relies on two focus group interviews held with a total of five youths between 16-24 years old. The data has been processed through directed content analysis that proceeds from categories given the underlying theories. The result of the study shows that youths' confidence in the police relies mainly on the police being capable of treating the local community with dignity, respect and being able to communicate shared values. Youths' perception of the police had little to do with evaluation based on crime-reduction outcomes.

Keywords: *Public confidence in police and policing; fear of crime; neo-Durkheimian perspective; focus group interviews*

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1 Introduction

In spring 2014 the Swedish police initiated *Operation Fenix* in the Stockholm suburbs Tensta, Rinkeby and Husby, in an effort to reduce crime, increase safety and increase public confidence in the police (BRÅ 2016: 14).¹ The effected suburbs are all socio-economically deprived areas with a high unemployment rate, low levels of education among the population and demographically diverse (Stockholm stad 2017). Fear of victimization is higher in these areas than in other parts of Stockholm and trust in the police is low (BRÅ 2016: 20 & 51 f.). Two years after the operation was initiated The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) published an evaluation of the operation. By surveying the local community BRÅ could note a general reduction in crime against person, in the time before and after the operation, in the areas affected by Operation Fenix (BRÅ 2016: 41 f.).² Crime reporting in the districts within Järva went up during the same period (Fenix was only in operation in a selection of districts within Järva) but in areas where the operation was in effect police reports partly decreased. Additionally, BRÅ noted that although the police seemed to have somewhat succeeded in their crime reduction, the public perception of the police and their efficiency didn't change at all. This rather paradoxical circumstance is explained by BRÅ as a failure of communication with the local community (BRÅ 2016: 62). In order to address the issue of trust BRÅ recommended that the police in the future should increase communication, by disclosing their operations, its goals and most importantly its achievements. Not long after, the police initiated another operation in Tensta, Rinkeby and Husby: *Operation Mareld* (Polisen 2016).³ One of the main objectives with the operation was to actively work to increase trust from the local community.

While BRÅ might not necessarily be wrong in their assumption that more transparence in achievements might lead to an increase in confidence in the police and policing, one might add that other factors play an equal part; if not greater. Two different approaches to trust-building policing will be presented in this study. We will in the following sections first introduce the neo-Durkheimian approach to policing and public confidence. This neo-Durkheimian approach to trust-building policing is labeled in this study as *The relational approach*. The neo-Durkheimian theory derives from Émile Durkheim's idea that reactions against delinquency are based on a desire to defend moral structures within society (Jackson & Sunshine 2007). These unifying structures are upheld by the society and Durkheim argued

¹ The suburbs are all part of the Järva area which consists of Rinkeby, Tensta, Hjulsta, Kista, Husby, and Akalla.

² It should be noted that the survey that BRÅ made has severe limitations due to low response rate (17-19 %) which makes the outcome problematic to fully interpret and to apply on a larger population (BRÅ 2016: 16 f.).

³ Around 300 police officers are being tasked to attend the operation (Polisen 2016).

that deviance without reaction could potentially erode the moral fabric of society. Scholars have expanded these ideas in the neo-Durkheimian theory and concretized how these structures arise and how members of society turn to specific moral agents – such as the police – who are capable of deflecting attempts to deteriorate the collective principles of morality within society (Loader 1997; Rock 1998). These moral agents undergo at the same time a continuing evaluation based primarily on trust and being capable of expressing common values. Aspects of the neo-Durkheimian perspective, that includes the role of the police, will be extracted and translated into the relational approach on how to increase public perception and trust in the police. Its furthermore based on neo-Durkheimian thoughts about cohesion with local community, treating its members fairly and maintaining a common moral foundation and being able to represent community values.

The second approach to trust-building policing derives, and is constructed in this study, from BRÅ's recommendation that trust from police could be gained by further disclosing police operations, its goals and achievements. This approach is in this study named *The instrumental approach*. Fear of victimization underpins to a wide degree this approach; an individual who is prone to feel anxiety about falling victim to delinquency are in theory more open to approaches that underline crime-fighting methods.

In the evaluation of Operation Fenix, BRÅ surveyed the local communities, in the areas affected by the operation, on how they perceived policing in their neighborhood and if they had noticed any changes in how the police work. One of the most noticeable changes, according the respondents of the survey, was an increase in interactions between youths and the police (BRÅ 2016: 55). The delimitation for this study is youths because of the public perception, in these areas, that the police have increased its efforts to initiate communication with youths.

Our ambition is to examine the topic through focus group interviews with youths in one of Järvas largest youth centers. The transcribed interviews are then analyzed through qualitative *content analysis* with a *phenomenological* approach, which highlights the youths' *lifeworld*, which underlines *how* and *what* meaning they emphasize towards delinquency, the police and policing as social phenomena.

1.1 Research Problem

How the police approach ideas of public confidence is an important and crucial aspect of policing. Distrust could potentially lead to an overall skepticism of the police as an institution and in the end the judicial system. This is an especially urgent issue in areas where fear of victimization is high and the trust in the police is low. The police frequently try to address these problems by initiating special operations in areas where delinquency is described as being high. We have previously mentioned that

the police have tried to increase the public perception by disclosing their special operations, its goals and most importantly - its achievements when it comes to crime reduction. This study tries to problematize what could be perceived as a quick-fix for addressing trust-issues within these areas. A narrow focus on repression comes with the risk of neglecting other, crucial aspects of general policing but in particular policing that focuses on trust-building. The instrumental approach to confidence in the police sounds compelling but this study will try to challenge this model by introducing the relational approach, which addresses public trust in a neo-Durkheimian fashion; a perspective that puts repression aside and focuses on cohesion, fair treatment and expressing common values.

1.2 Purpose & Research Questions

This study intends to contribute to a deeper understanding of how youths perceive the police's special operations targeting crime and trust-building policing in socio-economically deprived neighborhoods. The interview study will proceed through a neo-Durkheimian moral sociological analysis of youths' perception of the police and the study aspires to answer the following three research questions: *How do youths perceive delinquency in their local community and how do they perceive the police?*; ii) *How do youths express ideas of confidence in the police and police efficiency, within the instrumental and relational approach of public confidence in the police?*; iii) *Do the youths share ideas beyond the instrumental and relational approach of public confidence in the police?*

1.3 Disposition

The study begins with a broad presentation of the topic that this study will analyze. The introduction is then followed by a description of the research problem for this study. The first section of the study is then ended with the purpose and the research questions that this study intends to answer. A depiction of the social and demographic context is then presented with the intention to give the reader a brief understanding of the conditions of the environment that this study will be delimited to. The theoretical framework is then presented which partly acts as a preparation for the literature review where an emphasis is given to previous research that underlines same theoretical perspective as this study. It's then followed with the methodology of choice and its limitations. An extended analysis of the result is then presented where the research questions are being presented and answered. The study is then ended with a conclusion of the outcomes and recommendations for future research.

2 Social and Demographic Context

The qualitative methodology in this study requires a contextual description, to fully understand how delinquency, police and trust is constructed by the youths. In qualitative studies, much space is given to the specific context that a phenomenon occurs within, as it enables understanding of how different factors interact and create a specific outcome (Esaiasson et al. 2012: 210; Bergström and Boréus 2012: 355). A brief description of Tensta, Rinkeby and Husby will therefore be presented below. The three districts affected by Operation Fenix are all neighboring suburbs in the northern part of Stockholm. Decades of social and economic segregation has made these areas a reoccurring topic for media and politicians. The social deprivation has its roots in the 60's and 70's when the Swedish Social Democratic Party initiated an ambitious public housing programme called *Million Programme* (Hall 1999; Arnstberg 2000; Söderqvist 2008). The aim with the programme was to build millions of homes, for a reasonable price, that could house working-class families throughout Sweden. Criticism grew in the aftermath of the programme due to it contributing heavily to segregating poor families. The segregation later became ethnic as well as the lower parts of the working-class in Sweden became ethnified due to increase in migration from poorer countries (Scocco and Andersson 2015). The economic, demographic and social segregation, in these areas, are still present to this date. General unemployment rates are about three times as high in Tensta, Rinkeby and Husby than the average rate in the rest of Stockholm (Stockholm stad 2017). The average income is 1.7 to 2 times lower in these areas than the average in rest of Stockholm (Stockholm stad 2017). The rate of residents in Tensta, Rinkeby and Husby with a foreign background is 86-90 percent, with an average of 30 percent in the rest of Stockholm (Stockholm stad 2017). The police have characterized Tensta, Rinkeby and Husby as *particularly vulnerable areas* where criminal elements have a profound impact on the local community, to a degree that affects the willingness to participate in the judicial process (NOA 2015: 13 f.). The police further claim that it affects policing due to the situation being “difficult or almost impossible for the police to carry out their duties [...]”. Many times, there has been a normalization of the exceptional, which lead to neither the police nor the residents reflecting on the deviating situation in the area” (NOA 2015: 13). Although their description sounds alarmistic, they do highlight profound issues with victimization in these areas. Almost half of all the murders in Stockholm 2015 – the same year Fenix was operating - were committed in the Järva area, although Järva inhabitants only being four percent of the county of Stockholm (SVT 2016; Mitt i 2016). Although there was a drop in crime against person (based on victimization surveys) before and after Operation Fenix, the overall victimization rate was still higher than the average in Sweden (BRÅ 2016:

46; 2017: 34).⁴ Fear of crime is also considerably higher in these areas with a rate three times higher than the national level (BRÅ 2016: 49).⁵

Husby drew international attention 2013 when a five days long riot broke out after an altercation between police and a 69-year old man, which lead to police shooting and killing the man (de los Reyes et al. 2014; Schierup, Ålund, & Kings 2014; de los Reyes & Hörnqvist 2017). The causes for the riot (apart from the police killing) could to some extent be boiled down to all the factors and conditions mentioned above; police analysis of the riots and interviews with residents of Husby all mentioning *social concern* being one important catalyst for the riots (Hörnqvist & de los Reyes 2017: 139). The issue of public trust in policing – and especially youths’ perception – was dramatically highlighted during these days as many voices uttered concern of the recurring experience of police mistreating youths, using derogatory language and over-using stop and searches.

The different areas of Järva have long undergone political and economic transitions that have affected the areas in different ways; one is cutbacks in welfare services. This has been occasional been met by protest from the local community (de los Reyes et al. 2014; de los Reyes & Hörnqvist 2017). The shortage of democratic representation and the feeling of being let down by society has formed a great sense of solidarity and cooperation within the community; characterized both as formal and informal social organization. These social organizations approach both domestic issues but also target broader issues such as political and economic cuts.

We are aware that we might contribute to the continuing bleak picture of these districts, by describing them in a negative manner, but the ambition with our description is not to do a shallow portrayal of these neighborhoods but instead describe the conditions that previous research has showed has a strong impact on youths’, and other inhabitants’, trust in policing and general society.

3 Theoretical Departure

This study focuses on neighborhoods which are socio-economically deprived and that the police have described as having severe problems with delinquency. *The instrumental approach* to trust-building policing derives from the recommendations that the police should focus on building trust by frequently and publicly disclosing the positive outcomes of their special operations. It focuses less on theoretical perspectives and more on the public anxiety of delinquency and the police as an effective crime deterrent.

⁴ It should be noted that these two references don’t use the same selection processes for their sampling which mean that a direct comparison of exact figures is not possible.

⁵ These figures show a highly paradoxical phenomenon with fear of crime increasing in areas affected by Operation Fenix although the overall victimization in these areas declining (BRÅ 2016: 46 & 49)

The second perspective, *the relational approach*, is presented as a counter perspective and is meant to be a model that could be analyzed and compared to the instrumental. The relational approach to confidence-building policing derives from the neo-Durkheimian framework (there are elements from the early Durkheimian theory which will be further discussed) which focuses on cohesion, values and morals. The neo-Durkheimian theory of the police has been limitedly applied in a Swedish context and has thus the potential to underline unknown important aspects of policing in Sweden. The theoretical framework is presented before the previous research and will function as a theoretical preparation to the literature review where the neo-Durkheimian theory will be further discussed and explained how it's applied in research. The first section of the theoretical departure will focus on key concepts of Durkheim's thoughts on delinquency and the necessity of reactions against deviance. A segment dedicated to critic of the Durkheimian theory will then be presented in the following section. Note that the Durkheimian theory is a limited approach that analyzes primarily the effects of delinquency on wider moral perspective. These ideas and concepts will be used but instead to further explain the role values and morality have in evaluation of the police rather than on the effects of delinquency. This will be further explained in the neo-Durkheimian section of the theoretical departure where contemporary ideas of the Durkheimian theory is presented.

3.1 The Durkheimian Theory of Collective Consciousness and Deviance

In his doctoral dissertation, *The Division of Labour in Society*, Émile Durkheim (1893/2013) describes the process when individuals collectively create a *collective consciousness*. A moral framework that is internalized by the individual and maintained by the collective (Durkheim 1925/1973: 162 ff.; Durkheim 1895/1982: 97 ff.; Durkheim 1893/2013: 66 f.; Garland 1990: 29 f.). Durkheim describes it as “[t]he totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society [that] forms a determinate system with a life of its own” (Durkheim 1893/2013: 63). An entity that consists of society's collective norms, values, and views on right and wrong. Albeit being a sociologically interesting phenomenon, the idea of the collective consciousness will, in this study, only play a minor role. When interviewing the youths, some of the questions, regarding their view of delinquency in their neighborhood, will touch upon the effects of crime on a micro level. The subject of collective consciousness won't be brought up explicitly but instead in questions regarding if the informants feel that crime in their area has a profound negative effect in their everyday life. The concept of collective consciousness is mainly used to understand the main theory of this study - the neo-Durkheimian concept of policing.

Durkheim further argued that the core resentment against delinquency was primarily a reaction that reflected the collective consciousness (Garland 1990: 28 ff.). The act of crime was not simply an act

that affected the victim; it was an action that also penetrated the collective consciousness and its moral values and sentiments; “[c]rime [...] consists of an action which offends certain collective feelings which are especially strong and clear-cut” (Durkheim 1895/1982: 92). The reaction from the collective that upheld the common consciousness were therefore a necessity for the prevalence of the moral values within it. The act of punishment was thus something beyond retribution. “Society no longer punishes to avenge, but to defend itself” (Durkheim 1893/2013: 68). The reaction against deviant acts became a means to defend the common consciousness and its moral values. Without firm reaction against the deviant, Durkheim points to the potential eroding effect of delinquency; moral violation that demoralizes (Garland 1990: 43). In the article *Rules, Boundaries and the Courts: Some Problems in the Neo-Durkheimian Sociology of Deviance*, Rock (1998) argues that criminal courts could be seen, in a Durkheimian perspective, as an institute that ritualistically and dramatically deflects any attempt by deviants to disgrace the collective consciousness (Rock 1998: 588 f.). The idea of the criminal court, capable of restoring a deteriorating collective consciousness, presented in the article, misses however the simple fact that only a small fraction of all committed crime is being reported (BRÅ 2017: 39 f.). The attempted restoring processes must thus be analyzed earlier in the chain of events. The role of the police as a key actor, when analyzing moral strengthening factors, has been discussed in several studies (Loader 1997; Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Jackson & Sunshine 2007; Jackson & Bradford 2010) and this study aims to further analyze the moral aspect of trust-building policing with the police as the focal point.

3.2 A Moral Ground or Several Moral Grounds? Criticism of the Durkheimian Theory

The Durkheimian idea of a unifying collective consciousness has weaknesses that are important to mention. It misses to a wide degree the multiplicity within societies. Social division in societies affects how individuals perceive their opportunities in life, whether it is due to socio-economic discrepancies, ethnicity or gender. The outcome of this is that there are greater conflicts in society that affect cohesion and common values. The classless distinction (and non-intersectional view) in Durkheim’s collective consciousness makes it hard to accept at face value. The idea of the collective consciousness, in this study, will merely be used as way to describe the moral aspects expressed in policing. This is also critique that is relevant to the neo-Durkheimian theory. When touching upon the neo-Durkheimian aspects of morality and common moral foundation the idea is expressed with an assumption that common perception on values and moral has clear divisions, based on material conditions, within it. Additionally, the initial Durkheimian theory is less prominent in this study due to its strong emphasis on consensus (Allan 2005: 136 ff.). The theory of consensus focuses on aspects within society that bond its citizens together and overlook conditions of conflict. It furthermore views societal changes as something that

only should be made within the existing institutions. The consensus idea with its antagonistic position to conflict theory, a perspective which points to societal changes mainly being achieved through conflict, makes the general Durkheimian theory difficult to apply in a wider social perspective in the neighborhoods we are trying to depict. The (absence of) material conditions, within the deprived suburbs analyzed in this study and the consequences that follows are significant and therefore hard to ignore. Brushing it off as a detail in a greater consensus approach would be highly unfair and would ignore the economic and political factors that enable these conditions.

3.3 The Neo-Durkheimian Theory of Deviance and Moral Agents

The desire to analyze the police forces the study to expand to contemporary neo-Durkheimian interpretations due to Émile Durkheim himself not being explicit about the role of the police as an individual institution. Durkheim saw instead the state (and its citizens) as the actors responsible of defending the collective consciousness (Garland 1990: 43 & 59). The neo-Durkheimian approach to morality extends the Durkheimian theory to include ideas of what (and who) establishes moral boundaries, within the idea of the collective consciousness. The neo-Durkheimian theory has its background in the 60's when scholars highlighted the symbolic link between delinquency, deviance and control (Rock 1998: 586). They introduced the idea of the moral dialectic, to conceptualize moral structures. By doing so, significant actors could be identified and put in a greater theoretical context.

“The very symbolic boundaries of a society were thought to emerge in the policing of deviance, their features taking form in the dialectic between law-enforcers and lawbreakers, insiders and outsiders, us and them. Deviants provided the symbolic contrasts and antitheses that disclosed the form and structure of society, capitalists defining communists; radicals defining moderates; the poor defining the rich; the disreputable defining the respectable [...]. At the very center of that system of binary oppositions was a key moral dialectic.” (Rock 1998: 586)

The public perception of delinquency could therefore, in this dialectic process, expose the structures and edges of society that furthermore distinguish the respectable from the disrespectable. In this process, moral cohesion is stressed, and by doing so the public seeks a moral agent that could regulate norms, values and rules when they feel that they are under threat. In a counter perspective, this view of a hegemonic moral platform could be criticized due to its lack of deeper analysis of who has the fundamental capability to influence societal values and norms. The dialectic process that is presented is to some extent hollow due to it being described as a process where both parts are powerful enough to influence; wishful thinking but unfortunately this doesn't reflect a reality where resources determine who has the authority to influence culture and institutions.

In practice the neo-Durkheimian moral perspective in policing means that the public looks to the police to overcome moral deterioration and to reassert moral structure. The police and the efficiency in policing at the same time undergo an evaluation from the public to ensure that the moral agent bares the values and norms that it is meant to represent. Thus, public confidence in the police, their methods and their efficiency is fundamental in neo-Durkheimian theory. This aspect might potentially be overlooked, by the Swedish police, when solely focusing on the instrumental approach (and its focus on expressing crime reduction figures) in efforts to increase public confidence and by doing so they risk neglecting the moral aspects beyond combating crime. Previous neo-Durkheimian research in public confidence in policing highlights the importance of including expressed morality and values in their interactions with the local community (Jackson & Sunshine 2007: 3; Sunshine & Tyler 2003: 154). The empirical material in this study will be used, with deductive reasoning, to examine this theory in a Swedish context, with youths in socio-economically deprived neighborhoods.

The relational approach to trust-building policing consists of essential elements of the neo-Durkheimian theory. The main aspects within the neo-Durkheimian theory which are reduced to the relational approach are: i) the police must be seen as an extension of the local community capable of expressing common values and sentiments; ii) the police have to be perceived as fair, just and perceived as being capable of treating the local community with respect and encourage cohesion; iii) the police have to be viewed as a force that has the will to act on social issues concerning the local community.

4 Literature Review

The previous research for this study consist of two sections. The first one is dedicated to research done on youths' attitude to the police. Because this study is made in an ethnically segregated area, an emphasis has been put on research that includes this dimensions as well. The second section of the literature review consists of research on how neo-Durkheimian aspects in trust-building policing affects the public opinion of the police. This is research that includes a wider population and doesn't only analyze youths. The ambition of this study is to position itself in the middle between these two research fields.

4.1 Youths Perception and Confidence in the Police

The research done on public perception and confidence in policing is rather extensive but is in general limited to adults and excludes to a wide degree minors and youths (Brown & Reed Benedict 2002: 556 ff.). The stated reason behind this is that adults are more available and have had more experience interacting with the police, than minors and youths. One of the earliest and most known works in the field of public perception of the police, which also includes youths, is Decker's (1981) article *Citizen*

Attitudes Toward the Police - A Review of Past Findings and Suggestions for Future Policy. Several findings in his article are of relevance for this study; blacks⁶ and youths are among those who have the lowest confidence to the police. The author highlights, at the same time, that other contextual factors play an important part; one of them is prevailing neighborhood culture where a common negative perception of the police often is reproduced and internalized among the local community. An overwhelming part of the research shows that positive contact with police increases youths' likelihood of favorable evaluation of the police, while negative interactions reduce favorable evaluations (Derbyshire 1968; Bouma 1973; Rusinko, Johnson, & Hornung 1978; Cox & Falkenberg 1987; Hurst & Frank 2000; Skogan 2006; Flexon 2009). This is an aspect that will be discussed thoroughly in this study but with the hope to dig deeper into the processes of evaluation by including the neo-Durkheimian theoretical model. Research on attitudes toward the police, where ethnicity is in focus, shows that ethnic minorities generally think less favorably of the police (Brunson & Miller 2006; Hurst, Frank, & Lee Browning 2000; Hurst & Frank 2000). It should be noted though that these outcomes are from research mainly done in the US; a nation that has had decades, if not centuries, of police repression against Afro-Americans. Applying these conclusions on a Swedish context should therefore be done with caution. Lebeda Henrikssons discusses ethnicity in her study on children and youths in Sweden but she downplays the effect ethnicity has. "Ethnicity tends to have some significance but not in the same extent as in previous research" (2015: 110).

4.2 Neo-Durkheimian Approach to Confidence in Policing

The neo-Durkheimian perspective in policing research is in general limited and almost exclusively done in a British environment. Most of the research centers around how morality, cohesion and fair treatment from the police, affects public attitude towards the police. The authors Jackson and Sunshine (2007) have conducted a study in the rural parts of England to evaluate what shapes public confidence in policing, in the British article, *Public confidence in policing: a neo-Durkheimian perspective*. The study found that public perception of confidence in policing had little to do with expressing crime reduction outcomes but instead by representing community values. The authors argued that it could be achieved by "exercising authority in a manner perceived to be fair (e.g. affording citizens with respect and dignity) and by re-engaging as an active, visible and accessible part of community life" (Jackson & Sunshine 2007: 13). The conclusion bears a striking resemblance to the findings in *Crime, policing and social order* by Jackson

⁶ Much of the empirical research in this area of field are done by researchers in the USA and Great Britain (Lebeda Henriksson 2015: 14). Countries where "race" is a frequently used term in science, which explains why different types of racial traits, such as skin color, are recurrent themes in their analysis.

and Bradford (2009). The authors conclude that communicating bare statistics of crime reduction has little or no effect on public confidence; “[r]ather, people look to the police to defend everyday civility, norms and social controls, and when these are seen to be under threat, individuals lose faith in the effectiveness of their local police force” (Jackson & Bradford 2009: 16). Sunshine & Tyler (2003) extend these findings in *The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing*. They dismiss similarly the instrumental approach and emphasize instead the strong “normative basis of public support for the police that is distinct from police performance” (Sunshine & Tyler 2003: 535). These results could also be seen in further research that compares the instrumental approach to the more neo-Durkheimian approach which emphasis shared moral foundation, with the findings leaning to the latter approach (Jackson & Bradford 2010: 241; Sunshine & Tyler 2003: 162 f.).

5 Methodology

The qualitative design allows the participants’ views to be the main focus given a contextual understanding and providing rich information (Bryman 2011: 371 f.) and goes well with a phenomenological understanding of social phenomena. The *phenomenological approach* can be seen as the opposite of the positivist approach and stands distinguished by subjectivity, description, interpretation and agency (Denscombe 2014: 94). As we are interested in the youths’ perspectives of crime, police and confidence, this approach is providing us with a sociological understanding through their *lifeworld* as they describe and interpret it (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014: 44). Furthermore, the knowledge will be seen as a construction or production given the social context and the data will therefore be viewed as a social construction of reality. The social construction together with language as a constructing instrument helps us to understand and describe the reality in a meaningful way (Bergström & Boréus 2012: 28).

5.1 Procedures

Semi-structured interviews with youths spending time at a youth center were conducted in order to find answers to our research questions. Semi-structured interviews are characterized as flexible by using open-ended questions that further encourage the interviewees to expand on ideas (Denscombe 2014: 186). We prepared ourselves with an interview schedule (see attachment 01). The purpose of an interview schedule is to function as a support during the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014: 172). The questions in the interview schedule are divided into specific themes of an open-ended character which allows the following questions and likewise the order of them to be flexible (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014: 173). This style of questioning for the phenomenological approach allows the interviewees to give reflective

answers and to be followed up with further questions. The themes for the interview schedule are divided into two themes: *crime in the local area* and *confidence in the police*.

We decided to conduct the interviews in focus groups. Focus groups are characterized by a certain focus about a specific topic, the moderator assisting group interaction with a special emphasize on group dynamics by means of prompting information (Denscombe 2014: 188 f.). There are different recommendations about how many participants a focus group should include, but two to four individuals have been suggested as a good number since it allows for the respondents to get the feeling of influence and cohesion (Wibeck 2010: 61). Both of us doing the study were present during the interviews; one conducting the interview and one taking notes. The risk with having both present was that an already established power asymmetry, based on mainly age (older interviewing younger) and partly gender (male interviewing females), had the risk of being further extended. The choice of having group interviews was to minimize the effect of the two of us being present, which would be greater if we were two holding interviews with one single respondent at a time. An additionally power asymmetry was already present, due to us, directing the interviews having advanced knowledge about the topic and being in control of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014: 52).

5.2 Sampling

The purpose of our sampling is to be exploratory and not representative. When a study tends to be small, it seeks to bring greater depth instead of being statistically representative. Our sampling technique can be described as something in between purposive sampling and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling is when you select informants who are most likely to have experience and better information about the research topic (Denscombe 2014: 41) which the youth in Husby are most likely to have. However, once we knew where to find these informants the sampling became more of a convenience sampling which means that we selected the ones “first to hand” (Denscombe 2014: 43) at the youth center.

5.3 Interviews

We contacted the person in charge of the youth centers in Järva, organized by Stockholm Stad, in April 2017. He was helpful and recommended us to contact staff at the *Reactor youth center*. We made contact with a staff member at the center and explained our purpose and asked for the permission to contact youths visiting Reactor. They were helpful and told us that Monday was the evening to interview the females (a female-only day) and the rest of the days were appropriate for interviewing the males. We interviewed three females and two males on the next coming Monday and Thursday. The youth were

between 16-24 years old and their names have been anonymized. We will in this study call them Zeinab, Amina, Lena, Hassan and Rashid. They will mention the police officer Göran which name also has been changed. All the interviewed youths lives in the Järva area. We presented ourselves with the help of staff and asked for youths who would be interviewed voluntarily. After finding an appropriate number of participants, we asked for their consent to record the interviews, which they all agreed to verbally. Both interviews were conducted in a room or an office at Reactor youth center after we presented ourselves and our purpose. The staff was a great support for us in providing trust among the youths who could sometimes be suspicious that we were from the police or from media. The interviews were recorded with dictaphones and thereafter converted to text for analysis. It might be difficult to discuss *theoretical saturation* in a study with only five participants but it is worth mentioning that the answers in the material show a similar manner which could be interpreted to some degree as theoretical saturation which gives the outcome an additionally credibility and validity (see Bryman 2011: 395). When it comes to validity in interviews, there is always a risk of the informants not telling the truth (Denscombe 2014: 202). This is of course a difficult issue to overlook but much effort was put forth to establish trust between us, who conducted the interview, and the interviewed youths. We came to the youth centers several hours before each interview and socialized with the youths and communicated who we were and our intentions. This could on the other hand also risk the respondents feeling the need to please us with answers that they might think that we were more interested in. The issue of trust between researchers and respondents is without a doubt a difficult balancing act. Additionally, belonging and affinity are important elements for informants during focus group interviews to be able to express opinions and make extended conversation. However, a possible risk is that the participants begin to groupthink as the interpersonal interaction can be influenced by each other's expectations and notions of how the conversation should be (Wibeck 2010: 30 f.). Our reflections afterwards were that both the interviewed groups seemed to have good group compatibility due to their similarities that in the same time allowed them to frequently disagree and discuss vividly with each other.

5.4 Transcription

Transcribing is a way of transforming an electronic recording into a written text (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014: 194). We were, due to our qualitative approach, interested in knowing *what* and *how* the youths would express their thoughts. To record and transcribe is therefore an advantage to enhance the memory of what has been said but also to be able to go back in the findings and double check the interpretation (Bryman 2011: 374). We used two dictaphones for audio recording to minimize the risk of losing the precious data because of technological problems. The audio recording was of good quality which

improves the ability to translate the material which improves the validity of the transcribed material. The hard work of transcribing is however rewarding and it helped the analysis to reveal more than we would have without the transcription. The transcribed material has been translated from Swedish to English and the translated sentences will be as close as possible to the original texts. This process has been challenging since English is not the mother-tongue of either of the authors of this study. Extra time to process the transcription has been applied to avoid errors in the translation. Additional words have been applied to the transcribed material to clarify meaning or emphasize what the respondents refer to. These additions are put into brackets to accentuate when used and are not used to replace words but instead to clarify existing words. We have refrained from using clarification-words, to avoid presenting untruthful translations, when there are doubts what the respondents means.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

According to ethical recommendations the participants have the right to be informed about the research, given the right to withdraw, confidentiality and security of data (Denscombe 2014: 316 f.; Vetenskapsrådet 2002: 6 ff.). Since the recommendations aim to protect the integrity of the individuals we informed the youth that the recordings only would be used for this study and that we would anonymize their names. We needed to clarify that we only were interested to know about their perception of the police and criminality in their area and not about potential personal involvement, since that has nothing to do with our purpose of this study. We asked the interviewed youths if they were interested, at the end of the interviews, to give us their e-mail addresses so that we could send them our finished study.

5.6 Method of Analysis

This study uses qualitative *content analysis* to answer the research questions that have earlier been presented. Content analysis is a broad term used in both quantitative and qualitative research but is primarily a flexible method of analyzing texts and it can be used in different types of analytical methodologies. A consequence of being flexible and widely used is the absence of definite definitions and approaches (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1277). The following analysis has been inspired by Hsieh & Shannon's *directed content analysis* which means that the researcher allows a theory or previous research to form the design of codes and themes in a deductive way (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1281). The advantage of the directed content analysis is that it can support or expand the theory underlying the analysis. The disadvantage however is that the researcher might approach the textual data with a bias, which leads to expectations to find support for the theory (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1282 f.).

This method matches our study because of two main reasons: The first reason is that the data material, for this study, has theoretical aspects that can be translated into practical categories. The method is theoretically driven but with the help of the empirical material. We use the following five categories: *youths' perceptions of crime*, *youths' perceptions of police*, *ideas of confidence*, *ideas of police efficiency* and the last category, *ideas beyond instrumental and relational model*, which is meant to pick up aspects outside the theoretical framework. The second reason why directed content analysis is compatible with this study is the limited use of neo-Durkheimian theory in research in general and especially in Sweden. This method is highly compatible with narrow theoretical framework which has the potential to expand the conceptual framework. This small study might not contribute something crucial to the theoretical field of neo-Durkheimian theory but our goal is at least to enrich it.

5.7 Limitations

There are several limitations in this study that are necessary to highlight and they all affect in different ways the validity and reliability of this study and its outcomes. First and foremost, the sampling size and the method of choosing the sample of this study is considerably limited. The interviewed youths, two males and three females aged 16-24 years old, were picked from one single youth center, from Husby in Järva, and from two different occasions. The small sample size does limit the external validity and the study's outcomes capability to be applied to a broader population (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014: 295; Denscombe 2014: 203). This means in practice that the outcome of the study risks being to some degree different if it included different youths, was done during a longer time-period, or had a larger sample size. It should therefore be noted that the result of this study doesn't depict a single story of how conditions are in these neighborhoods. Instead, it expresses aspects within different stories about how youths perceive their interactions with the police, in their neighborhoods. Interviewing respondents in a youth center also limits the outcomes; not all youths have the interest or the ability to spend time in a youth center. There could be youths who are afraid of being targeted by other youths which could affect their willingness to spend time outside or in a youth center; youths who maybe are more susceptible to increased police presence and maybe less critical about the police, due to their anxiety about victimization. Male visitors were the primary visitors of the youth center, which could affect female's willingness to visit the center. This was however addressed partly by visiting the center when there was a female-only day. This study's data collection method – interview study – might not manage to cover youths who either choose or are forced to stay inside. We thus recommended further research to expand the collecting method to questionnaires or other types of method that don't depend on one single location.

6 Youths' Perception of Delinquency and Confidence in Policing

The analysis of the result is divided into five different sections and is based on the study's research questions. The first two sections, *perception of crime* and *the construction of the police*, covers the first research question: *How do youths perceive delinquency in their local community and how do they perceive the police?* The following two sections, *the ideas of confidence* and *ideas of efficiency*, answers the second research question: *How do youths express ideas of confidence in the police and police efficiency, within the instrumental and relational approach of public confidence in the police?* The last section, *ideas beyond the instrumental and relational approach*, discusses the last research question: *Do the youths share ideas beyond the instrumental and relational approach of public confidence in the police?* Each section starts with a brief introduction to the segment and ends with a summary of the findings.

6.1 Perceptions of Crime

Fear of victimization and general safety in one's neighborhood has several consequences. It could, on the one hand, potentially lead to individual limitations in outdoor activities and decline in quality of life but it could also, on the other hand, lead to the police being questioned for not being effective enough (Litzén 2006: 67-80). This may result in an overall skepticism against the judicial system for not being able to protect its citizens. The following section discusses the perception that the interviewed youths have on crime in their neighborhood and fear of victimization. The aim with this section is to establish a foundation for the following sections by trying to depict the youths' descriptions of delinquency in their neighborhood and consequences of it.

The opening question for the interview was *how does crime effect you?* and the respondents answered in various ways but the answers covered areas that the question itself wasn't meant to lead up to. This reflection right away highlighted our own subject positions; coming from rather safe neighborhoods where our main contact with Husby, Tensta and Rinkeby is through media and literature. The purpose of the question was to gather answers about fear of victimization but the answers started off in other, different ways. The initial answers to our questions were about stigmatization and the effects of seeing schoolmates being lured into criminality. Amina's first reaction to the question was to describe the psychological effects of seeing her friends being drawn into a criminal lifestyle.

"I see these friends whom I have been in elementary or high school with, and when I see them and they come to greet me, when [I] walk past them in the city center, and I know that they are doing things that aren't legal... I just get psychologically affected... I think about it when I'm home... it's just sad..." (Amina).

Zeinab and Lena on the other hand describe how it is others' perception of crime in these neighborhoods that affect them the most. This is a reoccurring theme among much of the discussion regarding delinquency and deviance: The burden of stigmatization. *"I feel more of the opposite way than you [Amina], the way it affects me is more of a feeling of injustice. There are people who have gone that path [the criminal path] but us, who haven't gone that path, we are getting trampled on. They see us as criminals"* (Zeinab). Lena continues the discussion and agrees with Zeinab's description of the effects of labeling.⁷

"I just get sad when I see them hanging around in the city center and you know what they do, and you know that they aren't proud of what they are doing but they don't know how to get themselves out of there. It's not easy pulling yourself out from it [deviance]. [...] They don't know who to turn to, to get help when they have this... label [on them as criminals] [...]" (Lena).

The discussion about labeling also relates to the media and how some of the youths believe that media portray a distorted picture of their neighborhood: *"The media always exaggerates"* (Rashid). The strong feeling that the youths had about stigmatization and labeling made it challenging to discuss victimization and delinquency in their neighborhood. It was an obvious sensitive topic and we, who conducted the interviews, didn't want to contribute to the respondents' feelings that we were trying to steer them too hard into talking about victimization. The discussion although developed to some interesting elements of victimization and crime; some of it affecting them personally. Bicycles were often stolen and older females were sometimes mugged in their neighborhood and a type of crime that they all had personally been subjected to were racist slurs and not rarely from police officers. The discussion then led into the issue of youths throwing stones at the police. This was a topic that we tried to dig deep into and asked if they had any reflections about why some youths decide to throw stones against the police.

"[...] When I've asked why they do it I often get the answer... this might sound stupid... but the police, the paramedics and the firefighters are all run by the state... and because some of the youths feel betrayed by society, they feel the need to show dissatisfaction by throwing stones, it doesn't need to be stones, it can be anything [...]" (Amina)⁸.

⁷ This is an interesting sidetrack that deserves a deeper analysis in a different study. The notion of being labeled a criminal is reoccurring in our discussions with all the interview youths and much of what they describe are in line with elements within labeling theory (Lilly, Cullen, & Ball 2011: 139-165).

⁸ The feeling of being betrayed of society is an issue that is highlight by several residents of Husby in Hörnqvist and de los Reyes' (2016) book *Bortom kravallerna* which describes the conditions that led to the Husby riots 2013.

This quote narrates an interesting subject mentioned in previous research section; Lebeda Henriksson's (2015) study, *Barn och ungdomars bilder av poliser*, where she discusses how youths' reaction against society could in some instances depict an issue that is larger than just the conditions for youths. Stone throwing youths is often brushed off as mere immature youth behavior but it could also be a greater sign of deteriorating living conditions and institutions (such as the police) that needs to be addressed. Conditions that not just the youths are exposed to but adults as well (Lebeda Henriksson 2015: 114 f.).

Another topic that was brought up by the youths was the ongoing shootings in their neighborhood and the fear that it inflicted on them. Two young males were recently gunned down in a restaurant (Polisen 2017) which Zeinab said has led to her being cautious when she's in crowded spaces. "[...] when you're in a restaurant, or somewhere else where there are a lot of young people, then you constantly look behind your shoulder because you're afraid that someone will just go in and 'bang bang bang'" (Zeinab). The shootings have also made Zeinab further question society and its neglect of her neighborhood. She describes how no-one bothered to cover the blood, after a murder outside her residence, which made her wonder why it is that no-one seems to care anymore after incidents like these.

The youths' perception of crime and victimization were overall modest. The above descriptions were just details in a general depiction of, what they perceived as, that crime in general is a non-issue in these neighborhoods. They explained several times how crime was not a more severe issue in their neighborhood than in other parts of Stockholm. This conclusion could be seen in two different ways: i) The youths could indeed perceive and feel that their neighborhood is as safe as any other area or, ii) they could feel that they don't want to contribute to the ongoing stigmatization and defamation of their neighborhood by bringing up crime and victimization. A fair assumption is that the both explanations interact and have an impact but the first explanation might be more likely; youths in general have low fear of being victimized and a low perception of general crime in society in relation to older individuals (BRÅ 2017: 41 & 97).⁹ Nevertheless, the youths perceive crime as something that occurs but being far from anything of the ordinary.

6.2 The Construction of the Police

This section will focus on how the respondents characterize the police, both as individuals but also as a broad institution. The construction of the police is divided into two main sections: *The distant police* and *The intimate police*. These are two themes that both have had a major impact on how the interviewed

⁹ Youths' low perception and fear of crime and victimization is a rather interesting paradoxical subject since youths in general are more likely, in comparison to other age groups, to be victims of crime (BRÅ 2017).

youths view the police, policing and trust. The distant police as an actor that is observing the suburbs and its inhabitants from a far view and the intimate police who tries to engage with the local community.

6.2.1 *The Distant Police*

A recurring theme among all the involved respondents is the notion of a police force brimming with preconceptions. It centers on ideas how the police view the residents from a far distance and how it shapes an image of the suburbs, and its inhabitants, as *the other*. The outcome of this process is depicted as *unfair treatment*; it has its inception with the police hovering around and above the suburbs. When initially asked how the youths noticed if there was an increase police presence, they all describe the patrol cars, filled with officers driving fast through and past the suburbs, gazing from the cars. Another answered with the increased presence of police cars “*circulating the neighborhood*” (Lena). This is to some extent reinforcing the picture of the distant police due to the fact that they, the police, being inside the car, without any personal contact with the youths. Another respondent describes the police in similar manner. Them being in the suburbs is not the problem but “*their approach with patrol cars, three or four of them, that just passing you by and you can feel the mutual fear of each other*” (Zeinab). This act, as harmless as it might feel, with car bound police presence is described as a circumstance that complicates mutual trust due to being a physical barrier that becomes a psychological. This further on gets reinforced when the youths describe that the only time they see these officers leaving their cars are when they have spotted something deviant. “*They ride three-four in their cars, and as soon as they see a group of four-five [youths], they jump out of their cars to stop and search you*” (Hassan).

Another similar phenomenon is the constant use of the police helicopter. It is described as excessively used, almost on a daily use, and highly intrusive; disturbing the residents sleep and maintaining the psychological distance between the police and the residents. The helicopter is being described as a new feature that has come along with the special operations (presumably Operation Mareld) in the neighborhoods. Some of the youths link the helicopter presence to occurring crime, while other sees it as just a surveillance matter. “*Every time I hear a helicopter I visit Aftonbladet [a Swedish news outlet] to see if someone has been shot*” (Zeinab). One of the youths emphasizes the sleep depriving effects of the helicopter presence: “[...] *[S]top using the helicopter during nights. I can't sleep!*” (Hassan). When the distant police engage – outside their vehicles – with the locals, they do so with what's being described as prejudice against the community. “*It's very strange, when they are in Södermalm¹⁰, they stop and talk [with residents] in one way there, and another way here. It's not the same way*”

¹⁰ Södermalm is a relaxed, trendy and creative inner-city part of Stockholm

(Rashid). When asked what this might derive from one answers “*because us having immigrant background*” (Rashid). Another respondent expands this view to being prejudice about of all residents being potential criminals: “*If Husby consisted of ten citizens, five of them being criminals, the police would dismiss all ten as being criminals*” (Hassan). Amina describes the prejudice as following:

“The police have prejudice about us. As soon as they leave their cars, when they are in our neighborhoods, [they operate and engage in one way], and on another way if they visit Södermalm. It’s like they have preconceptions how we are and what we do, they have literally applied a broad brush to us, especially the young men here. They are more exposed to this than us girls. They have this idea of how we are and treat us after this depicted image” (Amina).

The respondents do acknowledge that the prejudice might be two-way with the youths having preconceptions as well. “*There are really good police officers, but then you have the ones that treat us bad*” (Amina). Lena describes how she feels that prejudice and fear of each other has a spiraling effect: “*[...] I get frightened, I also have a negative picture of the police, I try not to be like this, painting them with a broad brush, because I know that not all of them are like this, but it’s from both sides; we fear them, they fear us and they don’t seem to know how to act [...]*” (Lena). The legitimacy of the police is described as partly obscured by the physical distance (patrolling police cars and helicopters) and the psychological distance (prejudice). The absence of legitimacy and the distance could thus be interpreted in the neo-Durkheimian fashion as a distance between the local community and the moral agent; characterized as an operator that doesn’t express views on common values that the local community tries to uphold but instead more often misrepresents. These interpretations are in line with the findings in Jackson and Bradford’s (2010) study which underlines the importance of being able to channel the values of the local community.

6.2.2 The Intimate Police

When the respondents outline the issues with *bad policing*, they inevitably approach *good policing* and what it consists of. One of these aspects is described as the intimate police; capable of being soft and emotional. Amina describes the resentment that some police officers seem to have, against showing a soft side; especially against male youths. She describes how some police consciously maintains a stiff approach because of fear of being soft in the eyes of the males. “*They don’t want to be [soft], they feel like the boys will respond... it’s hard to describe it to someone who hasn’t seen it... but [the police] want to be seen as these strong, hard [...], macho guys who the boys shouldn’t dare to disturb*” (Amina). Shortly after Amina describes police encounters with friendly officers who show an affectionate side and she describes a recurring thought that many of the respondents reflects upon. Something as simple as

walking up to the young residents and asking them how they feel is something that many of the respondents praise highly as a bonding act that immensely lowers the tension between the police and the youths. Both the interviewed males and females describe especially one specific officer: Göran. When asked to specify what exactly makes him a good officer they all describe that he has a soft side that few have. *“The way he talks and acts, it feels like home”* (Zeinab). Two of the males describes Göran as the contrary to the *tough approach* that many police officers seem to have: *“If they stop manhandling us all the time, then the situation might become better”* (Hassan), in which Rashid responds *“Be more like Göran!”*. Hassan then adds that he feels that Göran is the type of police officer that cares about the neighborhood. The two-way prejudice, that was previously described, seems to be the other way around with mutual trust instead. Hassan describes how *“Göran trusts us, us the residents of Husby, and Husby trusts him”*.

The characterization of the good police officer revolves mainly around the way they communicate; the issue where it has utmost potential to either stand or fall. *“I have multiple friends who are able to talk to some police officers, without being afraid, because they, the police, have a more [humble] way of talking with them”* (Amina). She later adds that it's the day-to-day approach that good police officers have, that makes them good; interacting on a basic level, asking the youths if they want to have a casual chat or play some football. One of the male participants describes conversation being on an interesting mundane level: *“[...] [A]sking how you feel, if you have any plans for the day, normal conversation as if you were friends”* (Hassan). This perspective could to some extent highlight the neo-Durkheimian idea that the moral agents - the police - need to be on an equal and mutual level, in order to be seen as a legitimate force. This is an outcome that is in line with other analyses of policing where confidence in policing is shaped by judgments of cohesion and mutual trust (Jackson & Sunshine 2007; Gill et al. 2014). The urge of a police officer that acts in everyday-situations is also underlined by Jackson and Bradsfords findings which concludes that policing strategies should prioritize engagement in “day-to-day social order of civil public space and civil society” (Jackson & Bradford 2009: 513 f.). This also goes back to the expressed ideas of the distant police who partly engage in an unfair way, based on (what is felt as), presumptions on how the local community seems to be and acts (unjust) thereafter; not having a common view on right and wrong.

6.3 The Ideas of Confidence...

This study is now approaching the analysis and comparison of two models of police confidence; *the instrumental perspective* and *the relational approach*. The ideas of police confidence are divided into these two sections, starting with the instrumental perspective which focuses on crime prevention

outcomes and public anxiousness about delinquency. The idea is, with this perspective, that a high degree of fear of victimization in combination with a perception of an ineffective police force could in the end – according to this model - result in low confidence in the police. The second model, the relational approach, emphasizes a perception of a police that is fair, just and willing to share common values with the local community its meant to protect. These are the main areas that is evaluated when the public is drawing its conclusion about confidence in the police.

6.3.1 ... In an Instrumental Approach

We have previously mentioned that none of the interviewed youths experience any strong fear of victimization. This was brought up promptly when asked how they perceive delinquency in their neighborhood. When Rashid was asked to specify his views on Operation Fenix and its efficiency he briefly answers that *“it’s not needed”*. He later adds that *“[t]here isn’t that much crime to stop here, to begin with”*. One of the females described her non-existent fear of victimization in a different manner; not being afraid was a result of here having close friends from school who regularly hanged around in the district center *“which makes you feel... it maybe makes you less capable of being targeted due to me having friends, that are to this day close to me...”* (Amina). When asked further if they didn’t have any concerns at all regarding crime Zeinab, Lena and Amina mentions shootings being a concern; not because of fear of being shot themselves but maybe one of their friends. There is evidently an overall modest perception of crime victimization.

Whether an operation in the Järva area is needed or not is difficult for us to address but there is an overall high degree of fear of victimization among the population in Järva and there is a high degree of victimization in these areas (BRÅ 2016). The fact that perception of crime in general is irrational and often not based on factual circumstances makes the instrumental perspective a bit difficult to accept. The irrational perception is often brought up in literature when discussing the *reassurance gap*; the public perception that crime is rising when it’s a matter of decline instead (Innes 2004; Millie & Herrington 2005). In the case of the interviewed youths, the matter seemed inverse; perception of crime was low while actual victimization is high (or at least higher than other parts of Stockholm). As previously discussed, their perception could of course be problematized; it could be that they feel that they don’t want to contribute to the continuing stigmatization of their neighborhood by describing their suburb as having problems with delinquency, but it could also be as simple as a case of underestimation of crime. A fair guess is that it’s probably a combination. Both Hassan and Rashid describes how they feel that police and media demonize Husby and Lena emphasizes how she feels that the perception of crime, that others have, mainly derives from prejudices. While they are most certainly not incorrect in their

statements, they do highlight a certain sensibility for portraying their neighborhood in a negative manner. In the same time, they perceive crime the same way as youths in general; low estimation of crime victimization and low impact of fear of crime. These conditions make the instrumental perspective a blunt tool when used to increase the confidence among these youths.

Addressing public confidence in the police by highlighting police efficiency and crime-reduction figures has been criticized in the literature (Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Jackson & Sunshine 2007; Jackson & Bradford 2009; Jackson & Bradford 2010) but there is an interesting deviation in our findings compared to previous empirical results. Previous research discusses the irrationality of the general population's crime perception, due to that the public often overestimate crime and being less susceptible to facts about decline in criminality. Our results suggest a similar outcome but with a crucial difference. The perception of delinquency amongst the youths instead seem to be underestimating crime (instead of overestimating crime), which makes the instrumental approach ineffective and perceived as meaningless. This is because of the following reasons: it might be considerable that amongst individuals who overestimate crime rates, and that dismisses ideas that crime might decline, also are in favor of special operations that target delinquency. However, in the case with a crowd who perceive crime as a none-issue this simply might be the opposite; special operations to combat crime, such as Fenix or Mareld, are not needed since there is not (according to the interviewed youths) a particularly high crime rate to combat. Trying to increase trust by bolstering crime reduction outcomes becomes thus highly ineffective. This circumstance, in combination with the youths' perception of an unfair police that is frequently described as missing the will or ability to establish a legitimate relationship, makes it difficult to find support for the instrumental approach.

6.3.2 ... In a Relational Approach

When asked to reflect upon the police presence in their neighborhood none of the youths explicitly criticize the mere presence of police but instead the way that the police present themselves. It's especially underlined when they mention instances when they have experienced pleasant encounters with police officers or other emergency personnel. *"It's really good that the police prioritize our neighborhood, and visits our school to talk to the youths; it's something that I have thought about a lot"* (Amina). Zeinab continues and mentions the positive relationship that the local firefighters have established with the youths: *"Firefighters are cool... [...] they are the only ones that is really appreciated here, they spend time here, they play football with us, they are like normal people, the rest are just feeling stressed when approaching our neighborhood"* (Zeinab). The reoccurrence of Göran, who was frequently named during the discussions regarding positive police officers and what good policing consists of, emphasize

the rational thoughts that the youths express regarding relationships with police. This is in many ways an expressed desire of maintaining a relationship based on mutual trust rather than authority and force. This could be compared to the findings in an extensive survey done by Charlotte Lebeda Henriksson (2015), in her study focusing on youths' perception of the police, where she discussed youths desire to be treated with respect. "Young people question [authority] in a completely different way today, understanding both themselves and others, such as police, as part of a democratic spirit" (Lebeda Henriksson 2015: 116). Youths challenging authority could thus be a form of practicing democratic principles and not so much an immature rebellion against adults.

The Durkheimian loose term common moral foundation is something that is touched upon briefly in our discussions. When asked if any of the youths perceive to have same thoughts on what's right and wrong with the police some of the youths mention that they believe that there is a discrepancy in the common perception between them and that there are frequently instances when the police and the youths don't see eye to eye on issues. When asked why this gap exists several explain that when you experience police who abuse their power, then the common moral foundation gets questioned. "*You would be shocked if you knew how much wrong-doing the police do in these neighborhoods [...]*" (Amina). She later adds that she doesn't believe that attitude is something that is normal but something that grows, in what could be interpreted as, police culture.

"I do not think there's a single police officer who went through police school, taking the entire education and thinking" 'I'm going to educate myself and be a police officer just to destroy, harass people'. They are educated to become people who help society. I do not think there is any police officer who thinks 'my purpose of becoming a police officer is to violate and harm them, people'. I think it's something that develops with the profession" (Amina).

This idea, that individual police officers are genuinely good when they undergo police training but later become bitter and negative when they "face reality", is further discussed in Ekberg's (2010) interview study *Dom kallar oss värstingar*. The author interviews youths who describe the exact same sentiment that police officers are good but later becomes negative and violent.

One of the male respondents in our study jokes about how he believes that the police view everything as being wrong. When asked to elaborate, he explains that "*they don't show any respect, any concern*" (Hassan). This sweeping generalization of the police is most probably exaggerated but it shows an interesting phenomenon among youths, that is well described in criminological literature, where youths attach more weight to negative encounters with police, than positive ones (Skogan 2006: 105 f.; Flexon, Lurigio, & Greenleaf 2009: 188). Hassan later describes the many positive encounters with the

police officer Göran and he seems to do it without reflecting the fact that he seconds ago dismissed all police officers as having a skewed perception on right and wrong.

There is nevertheless something important to extract from the many comments on the youths' view of the police. They heavily judge the police by their treatment of others and how the police in the end seem to miss the capability to embody community values and norms and this seems to have a profound effect on the perceived confidence. This goes in line with other literature that discusses the neo-Durkheimian moral evaluation of police (Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Jackson & Sunshine 2007). We tried in our interviews to explore this notion by diverting the discussion from what bad policing consists of, to instead discuss what makes good policing. And it comes back to the recurring police officer Göran. In our work in trying to compare the two models of confidence, the youths inevitably managed to embody the relational approach into Göran, as the police officer who profoundly seem to use essential elements within the relational approach. We have no way of acknowledging if this is an appropriate description, based on reality, but how the youths describe Göran and the relationship they have with him makes it an appropriate implication that is, for the sake of the discussion, an interesting thought that is worth mentioning. We have earlier mentioned the many positive perceived aspects of Göran's policing and much of it is equivalent to aspects within the relational approach to confidence-building policing. Hassan mentions how he often sees Göran, patrolling on foot (as opposed to in the patrol car which we have earlier mentioned being a circumstance that seems to obscure trust due to the physical distance) and how Göran takes time and asks the youths how they feel and how their day has been. Lena views Göran as an officer who has the perfect balance between an authority figure and a friendly approach. This is something that is interesting to highlight; Göran is a popular police officer but not due to perceptions of him being an inferior officer who doesn't exert his power on the youths. Instead, it's the way that he communicates and acts when exercising his power that makes him a preferred police officer. He is viewed as a fair police officer who doesn't abuse his powers. This is a crucial aspect that resonates with the previous research; when valuating policing fairness and dignity is prioritized (Bradford, Jackson, & Stanko 2009; Jackson & Bradford 2010; FitzGerald et al. 2002). *"He [Göran] can walk up to the youths, shake their hands and then do a body search. But there is another officer [...], he could just walk up to a parked car and physically drag out the passengers and do a search"* (Amina). The outcome of the many interviews with the youths has profoundly underlined the importance of the relational approach to confidence in policing. A police force, which solely relies upon crime fighting and repression, will to some extent have difficulties finding legacy from youths in these neighborhoods. Thus, trying to increase youths' confidence by pointing out the outcomes of successful police work won't have a noticeable

effect. Focus should instead be aimed on maintaining a healthy relationship with the youths, based on friendly dialogue and fair police work. This will result in a distinct common moral foundation that doesn't get questioned by excessive and unfair policing.

One final note before moving on to the next section; we have put emphasis on an approach that relies on the assumption on the neo-Durkheimian framework. We presented in the theory section critique against the theoretical framework used in this study but the criticism were general limitations that could affect the study. Cohesion has been stressed as a factor that primary lays in the hands of the police; their action is what shapes the perception of the youths. This assumption derives from the neo-Durkheimian framework. It should be underlined that the neo-Durkheimian perspective limits to some extent some of the findings. What haven't been included in the analysis are the consequences of societal conditions that risk to direct individuals into delinquency; both by criminalization of deviant behaviors but also indirect influence such as socio-economic inequality. A consequence of this is that deviant individuals might be suspicious to the police regardless of how the police acts and represents themselves.

6.4 Ideas of Police Efficiency

The following section will focus on the youths' expressed ideas of police efficiency and is meant to give a pointer on how youths, in these neighborhoods, look at crime prevention. The youths' discussions, in regards to ideas of police efficiency, were in general divided into two major themes: short-term crime prevention and long-term crime prevention. The short-term perspective of efficiency consisted of ideas about crime prevention that the youths perceived as prevention that might work for the moment but doesn't change long going patterns. The long-term perspectives, on the other hand, are topics of crime prevention that the youths perceived as having potential to change larger patterns; not only crime patterns but larger issues of trust and cohesion.

This study has mentioned several times the youths' perception of the (over) use of stop and searches. Stop and search as a tactic has been heavily criticized in the literature for disproportionately targeting ethnic minorities and for having a negative impact on ethnic tension within society (Delsol & Shiner 2006: 260; Bowling & Phillips 2007: 958 ff.). One of the elements of the criticism in the literature is the labeling effect the tactic has. Ordinary citizens are forced to undergo the scrutiny of the stop and search which has a mental effect on them. Several of the youths mention the same criticism and the same feeling when being stopped and searched by the police. In the discussion about stop and searches Hassan mentions another criminologically interesting aspect of the effects of stop and searches. When asked *"but do you believe that it has the potential to prevent crime?"* he replied *"No... [...] And if crime where to be done, people know that there is a special operation, so instead of being in the town center, they*

[conduct their business] in a back alley". The police have portrayed both Operation Fenix and Mareld as being partly successful due to less crime being reported before and after the operations (BRÅ 2016; SVT 2017b). There is a chance that crime has gone down but there is also another explanation to the crime-drop: crime displacement. The theory of crime relocation is in short different explanations on why and how crime (based mainly on rational choice and increase or decrease of formal and informal control) might move from one location to another (Cornish & Clarke 1987). The comment made by Hassan about crime being relocated due to increased police presence, could partly be supported by shop keepers in other parts of Järva area (SVT 2017a). News outlets have reported that shopkeepers and owners of the shopping mall in Tensta have witnessed an increase of drug related crime after the initiation of Operation Mareld. Another interesting subject that was brought up was that increased police presence also increased the likelihood of interactions with the police. This means basically that, with the perception of an unfair police who occasionally mistreats members of the local community, this could potentially result in a further split between the police and the local community – if not handled properly. In a neo-Durkheimian perspective this further underlines the importance of making sure that the constructive dialogue is prioritized and not just repression that has the risk of jeopardizing the issue of trust. *"Yes, you might have prevented one crime from being made. But the way you have handled that person [...] – it probably just contributed in the long run to further criminality and more hate towards the police"* (Amina).

The second topic of discussion, in relation to efficiency, with the youths was long-term efficiency. This issue was more about long-term projects that could increase positive relationship with the police and less about crime prevention. Zeinab discussed briefly a long-term crime prevention project aimed at former criminals who get aid in getting an employment. Her concern was that the type of work the project offered was low-skill and nothing with the goal of prospect. *"The thing is, they say that they want to fight it [crime], but in what way do they do it? They say that they do it by giving youths and ex-criminals employment. But what type of job do they offer? Working with youths and security"* (Zeinab). This is an issue that is highlighted by Magnus Hörnqvist (2013) in *Pleasure, punishment and the professional middle class*: "Successful completion of the treatment entails a social status at a safe distance from that of professional middle class, characterized by employment opportunities in the low-wage sector, the ability to follow instructions of superiors." (Hörnqvist 2013: 98). The author's discussion about the projects for ex-convicts and how the employment programme could to some extent be a tool for *doing class* by establishing a productive citizen. Zeinab's short description of similar projects in her neighborhood could to some extent underline the same class issue where young adults, from socio-economic deprived neighborhoods, are expected to peacefully accept employment in the low-skill sector

– regardless of their own capability. There is one long-term programme that is highly praised as being effective and described as establishing a long term positive relationship. *The man behind the uniform*¹¹ is a project with the goal to establish a relationship between the youths and the police, firefighters and paramedics. Amina describes how this has helped her to understand the difficult tasks that police officers must cope with. “[...] *The police explain that they from time to time see dead bodies, that they witness negative aspects of life that could potentially be dramatic for people [...]*” (Amina). These types of projects have the potential to be a useful arena where youths and police could interact in a credible and human way; a forum to overcome fears and prejudice. This study has previously underlined how misconception and prejudice goes both ways. This is a crucial aspect to understand in order to confront the issue of trust in the police and policing. Literature on youths’ trust towards police has highlighted that it’s the informal meeting between youths and police officers that is the key to mutual trust. “[P]ersonal contact with policemen under informal, non-threatening conditions, significantly reduces children's antipathy” (Derbyshire 1968: 188).

This segment of the study has two major conclusions. The interviewed youths perceive the short-term crime prevention efforts as problematic because crimes, in their view, seem to displace rather than cease to exist. The increased formal police interaction is also perceived as increases the risk of problematic confrontations that could increase the mistrust. The second outcome of the discussion regarding police efficiency is that the youths have sincere thoughts about police trust and policing. Much of their criticisms are based on a fundamental idea and desire of a fair police with common perception of right and wrong.

6.5 Ideas Beyond the Instrumental and Relational Approach

None of the youths have brought up any aspects that could be directly interpreted as approaches beyond those already discussed. Nevertheless, an interesting subject was brought to attention that is worth mentioning. The interviewed youths had several remarks about highly intrusive policing (and other types of crime preventing methods) that had the potential to obscure and complicate trust in the police. We have previously mentioned the use of the police helicopter and the intrusive effect it has. There are other examples of crime preventing elements the youths have described as having the same negative impact. During winter 2016 residents in Tensta discover that property owners had installed noise makers that emitted a high-frequency tone that was intended to deter drug dealing youths (DN 2016).¹² While this

¹¹ In Swedish: *Människan bakom uniformen*

¹² The device is called The Mosquito and is an alarm that emits high-pitch sound waves at approximately 17 kHz, which can only be heard by humans below 25 years of age. It’s being sold as a device to deter youths from loitering (Akiyama 2010).

was a machine installed by property owners and not the police, the interviewed youths interpreted this as one in many tools of control and repression that added mistrust to the police and society.

“We are them! The ones that they talk shit about, the ones that are being described as criminals, the ones that need to be controlled. Have you heard what happened in Tensta? The thing that whistles? [...] The sound... I couldn’t sleep during that whole weekend and nobody knew what it was. [...] Nobody would believe us if we told them about this. And it wasn’t there first time used in the suburbs. You know, it has of course never been used in Östermalm¹³” (Zeinab).

The sound devices were later removed after much protests but the interviewed youths’ description on the effect it had in their over-all mistrust in crime prevention efforts is of interest when discussing trust.

7 Conclusion

Our ambition with this study has been to highlight the conditions that contribute to youths’ attitude towards the police and policing. The study departed from the Durkheimian theory of collective consciousness with its moral aspects; reactions against crime as a reassurance of society’s values and morals being fought for. The neo-Durkheimian perspective has, at least for us, given Durkheim a revival with concretizing the moral aspects being represented by the police as moral agents. The constructions and conditions of crime in the youths’ local community has been described in various ways; they acknowledge criminality existing but not in the commonly described level and they don’t seem to fear being victimized. Instead they seem to be more worried to be encountered by physical and psychological abuse from the police. Furthermore, the police as an organization are being described as having potential to do good but being obstructed by individual police officers who damage the reputation for the whole organization. Simultaneously, individual police officers are being portrayed as extraordinarily popular among the youths for being fair and showing respect. The neo-Durkheimian perspective was in this study translated into a police approach named *The relational approach* which in short included different types of trust-building policing. It consisted heavily on policing by increased communication and verbally making sure that the local community was being ensured that the police shared common values with the community. In addition to the increased communication, the relational approach also focused on the importance of treating the local community with dignity and respect. This would increase the likelihood of being seen as a *moral agent* that has the capability of being a character that the community would turn to in situations when needed. The second approach, *the instrumental approach*, was a confidence-building approach that relies mainly on communicating positive crime-reduction outcomes; an approach

¹³ Östermalm is a wealthy inner-city part of Stockholm

that this study saw being recommended to the police in an ongoing operation in Järva area. The result of this study shows, that when youths were asked how they perceive confidence in the police and their work they favored an approach that made sure that the local community were being treated with dignity and communicating common values and norms; their words echoed the neo-Durkheimian approach. This was especially apparent when they described specific police officers (namely Göran) and how they behaved and acted among the local community. When digging deeper into why none of the youths saw the importance of trust-building by highlighting that the police force is an organization that has crime-reducing potential, the youths brought to attention that they didn't see the need of additional crime-fighting efforts (such as Operation Fenix or Mareld) since they perceived crime in their neighborhood as being as low as in any other parts of Stockholm.

There are several aspects of the outcome that are worth underlining. First and foremost, this study has been a limited interview study with few participants. The goal has never been to tell the story of how the situation is, but instead describe conditions that some youths perceive as common perspectives in their neighborhoods. The result should be used as *analytic generalization* which aims to enrich the theoretical context of the subject; an extension of the contemporary understanding of the theory which can be applied in further situations and studies. Limitations aside, the findings do highlight serious issues that need to be brought to common attention; changes are needed to be done if the police are serious about their intentions on gaining the trust from the youths and the rest of the local community. Our findings show that the youths don't feel that there is accountability when the police violate rules. This contributes to an over-all mistrust of the police when shared values and norms are absent. If this is the case, then the relational approach to confidence needs to instantly be applied before attempts to pride itself in crime-reducing outcomes.

7.1 Future Research

The first and obvious is to expand the sample size and to include adults. Operation Fenix and Mareld have targeted various suburbs of Stockholm. Its scope consists of inhabitants from other parts than Järva and a larger demographic than just youths. An expansion of the sample size could thus increase further studies' generalizability to a wider population of residents. A second recommendation is to analyze the effect of the newly installed closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV cameras) in Järva (Polisen 2017b). The youths have described how the police's efforts to reduce crime occasionally have had the effect of increasing the perception of being targeted and labeled as criminal. The 60 CCTV cameras that the police have installed in the Järva area may potentially have an intrusive effect that could further increase the labeling effect.

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Attachments**Attachment 01****Interview schedule*****Research questions***

- 1. How do youths perceive crime in their local community and the police?*
- 2. How do youths express ideas of confidence in the police and their perception of police efficiency?*
- 3. Do the youths share ideas beyond the instrumental- and relational model of public confidence in policing*

Background

- Name?
- Age?
- Where do you live?

Crime in the local area

- How are you affected by crime in your area?
- How often do you see police in your area?
- How do you notice the police?
- Do you think the police are actively trying to stop crimes in your area?
- Has crime increased the last year in your area?
- Do you think an increase in police presence could reduce crime in your area?
- How do you perceive the special operations that the police sometimes have in your neighborhoods?

Confidence in the police

- How are you treated by the police?
- Do you think the police are fair?
- Do you and the police, according to you, have the same view of right and wrong?
- Have you witnessed or heard of unlawful police encounters?
- Does the police treat members of the local community with respect?
- How could the police increase the public perception of them?