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STUDIES ON SWEDISH POLICE EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010–2024: AN OVERVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS, METHODS, POLICE- AND EDUCATION FOCI[1]

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Abstract

This article presents a mapping of 111 empirical studies on Swedish police education and training published between 2010 and 2024. It examines publication characteristics, research actors, methods and educational contexts, as well as whether the studies had a central or partial focus on Swedish police, and on education and training. The findings highlight an emerging but fragmented research field, with studies dispersed across various publication types and disciplinary contexts. Most studies were published in scholarly journals on policing and criminology, education and learning, or emergency and crisis management. Academia-affiliated authors were represented in almost all studies, while the representation of police-affiliated authors was low.

[1] This article was handled by Fredrik Portin as editor. Caroline Mellgren and Joakim Ingrell, who are co-authors of the article, were not involved in the editorial process.

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Qualitative methods dominated, whereas experimental- and simulation-based designs were rare. Pre-professional contexts were studied most often, while studies on professional in-service training were less frequent, especially those with a central focus on Swedish police. By examining how empirical knowledge on Swedish police education and training is generated and published, this review highlights strengths, gaps, and opportunities for advancing police education and training as a research domain and a field of practice.

Keywords: police, policing, education, training, scoping review, police research

Sammanfattning

Denna artikel presenterar en kartläggning av 111 empiriska studier om svensk polisutbildning publicerade mellan 2010 och 2024. Fokus ligger på publikationer, forskningsaktörer, metoder och utbildningskontext, samt om studierna hade ett centralt eller partiellt fokus på svensk polis respektive på frågor om utbildning och träning. Resultaten synliggör ett framväxande men fragmenterat forskningsfält, med studier spridda över olika publikationstyper och disciplinära kontexter. Flest studier publicerades i vetenskapliga tidskrifter inriktade på polis och kriminologi, utbildning och lärande, samt nödsituationer och krishantering. Författare från akademin var representerade i nästan alla studier, samtidigt som andelen polisanknutna författare var låg. Kvalitativa forskningsmetoder dominerade, medan experimentella och simuleringsbaserade forskningsdesigner var ovanliga. Oftast studerades kontexter kopplade till grundläggande polisutbildning. Studier om utbildning och träning inom professionella kontexter förekom i lägre grad, särskilt sådana med centralt fokus på svensk polis. Genom att undersöka hur empirisk kunskap om svensk polisutbildning genereras och publiceras belyser denna kartläggning styrkor, brister och möjligheter för att främja polisutbildning som forskningsområde och praktikfält.

Nyckelord: polis, polisarbete, utbildning, träning, scoping review, polisforskning

Introduction

Police education and training is a central aspect of policing, shaping not only professional competence but also the values, practices, and decision-making of police officers. In recent decades, police education has undergone substantial changes in many countries (Paterson, 2011; Blumberg et al., 2019), including Sweden – which is the context of this study – where the education has become increasingly academic, research-informed, and integrated within higher education institutions (Jonsson & Persson, 2023).

These developments have been accompanied by a growing body of research addressing various aspects of police education and training, ranging from recruitment and selection (Annell et al., 2015; Aplin & Atkin, 2025) to pedagogical methods and digitalisation (Ingrell et al., 2025), professional socialisation

(Fekjær et al., 2014), and the transition from education to practice (Kohlström, 2023; Petersson, 2015). However, this research is fragmented across multiple disciplines and publication formats, which makes it difficult to gain overview of the field and its development over time.

A comprehensive effort to provide such an overview, albeit limited to Australian, Canadian, British, and American contexts, was recently undertaken in a scoping review of police education and training research published in peer-reviewed journals between 2004 and 2023 (Frade & Walsh, 2026). The review identified 339 articles and noted a substantial increase in production volume over time, especially since 2016. Quantitative research dominated (61.4%) compared to qualitative (28.3%) and mixed methods studies (10.3%). Given the often-highlighted challenges of experimental and quasi-experimental research designs in police research (e.g., Magnusson, 2020; MacQueen & Bradford, 2017; Todak et al., 2018), an interesting finding was that approximately half of the studies built on randomised controlled trials, interrupted time series studies, difference-in-differences analyses[2] or other experimental or quasi-experimental research designs. In terms of disciplinary orientation, the review noted a concentration of research published in journals on criminology and criminal justice (55.5%), medicine and public health (18%), and psychology (15%). Only 3.5% of the studies were published in education-oriented journals (Frade & Walsh, 2026), indicating a lack of research interest in didactic and pedagogical aspects of police education and training in the Anglosphere.

Overviews of research on Swedish police education and training remain scarce. Although a recent scoping review of 885 empirical studies on Swedish police published between 2010 and 2024 found that 12.5% (n=111) addressed education and training (Weichselbraun et al., 2026), the structural characteristics of this literature remain unmapped. This lack of comprehensive overview obscures systemic characteristics, strengths and gaps, limiting our understanding of the field's composition and development. It may also constrain the strategic advancement of Swedish police education and training as an emerging research domain and a field of practice.

To address this problem, the present review offers a more detailed examination of the subset of studies on Swedish police education and training identified in the scoping review by Weichselbraun et al. (2026). Rather than analysing substantive findings within specific thematic areas, the purpose of this study is to map and analyse the structure and development of this sub-field. More specifically, it examines:

- Publication characteristics, such as types of publications, publication output over time, publishers, and the disciplinary or subject orientation of publishers or the publishing context
- Authors and their affiliations
- Applied research methods, limited to methods for empirical data collection and distribution between qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method approaches
- The context of study (pre-professional or professional) and empirical data sources

[2] Difference in difference (DiD) is a statistical method where changes in one group are compared to changes in another to draw conclusions about the effect something has. A famous example is the comparison between New Jersey and Pennsylvania when the former increased its minimum-wage, and a DiD showed that it had no impact on employment (Card & Krueger, 1994).

- The extent to which the studies have a central or partial focus on a) the Swedish police, and b) education and training

Consequently, this review offers a descriptive overview of how knowledge in this area is produced and disseminated, shedding light on the infrastructure of Swedish police education research. Mapping publication types, publishers, authors and research methods provides insights into the field's coherence and the balance between academic and practice-oriented knowledge production. Furthermore, distinguishing between a central and partial focus clarifies whether police education and training is studied as a primary object of inquiry or within broader research areas.

Methods

The reviewed literature consists of a purposive subsample of 111 publications extracted from a broader scoping review of 885 empirical studies on Swedish police published between 2010 and 2024 (Weichselbraun et al., 2026). The parent scoping review encompassed a heterogeneous corpus of literature – such as scholarly journal articles, dissertations, reports by universities, authorities and other organisations, empirical book chapters and monographs – assessed and selected for inclusion by two reviewers independently. From 31 identified subject areas, the present study comprises all publications categorised under "education and training". A limitation of this approach is that no supplementary searches with education-focused keywords were performed to capture studies outside the primary dataset. However, because the original search architecture captured a comprehensive spectrum of Swedish police research, it provides a robust, representative foundation for this sub-field. For details on the original literature search, selection process and data charting, including conflicts and selection dilemmas, see Weichselbraun et al. (2026).

All previously charted data from the 111 studies were retrieved, including data on publication years, publication types, publishers, authors, affiliations, keywords, aims, research topics, methods and empirical data sources. In addition, full texts were analysed to code whether each study addressed pre-professional or professional contexts, and whether it held a central or partial focus on a) the Swedish police and b) education and training. This coding was based on interpretive readings of abstracts, introductions, and research questions. It was performed by a single reviewer, which is recognised as a limitation compared to two independent reviewers to reduce risk of bias and assess inter-rater reliability. Studies primarily aimed at producing knowledge on Swedish police/policing were coded as having a central focus, while those investigating broader phenomena where the police served as one of several cases or actors were coded as having a partial focus. Central versus partial focus on education and training was assessed similarly. Finally, relevant data were compiled to support the descriptive analysis.

Results

Publication types

Most studies (n=68; 61.3%) appeared as peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles, including 17 that also featured as sub-studies in doctoral compilation theses. The second largest publication type consisted of studies published as reports by universities (n=13; 11.7%). Eleven studies (9.9%) were published as dissertations, comprising eight doctoral compilation theses, two doctoral monographs, and one licentiate

monograph. Studies were also published as chapters in anthologies (n=8; 7.2%) and as reports by Swedish authorities (n=7; 6.3%). The remaining four studies (3.6%) were categorised as "Other", including two conference proceedings, one non-dissertation monograph, and one report published by a non-profit organisation.

Publication output over time

During the 15-year period, the annual publication volume fluctuated considerably, both overall and across publication types. As shown in Figure 1, the annual output varied between one study (2010) and 14 studies (2015).

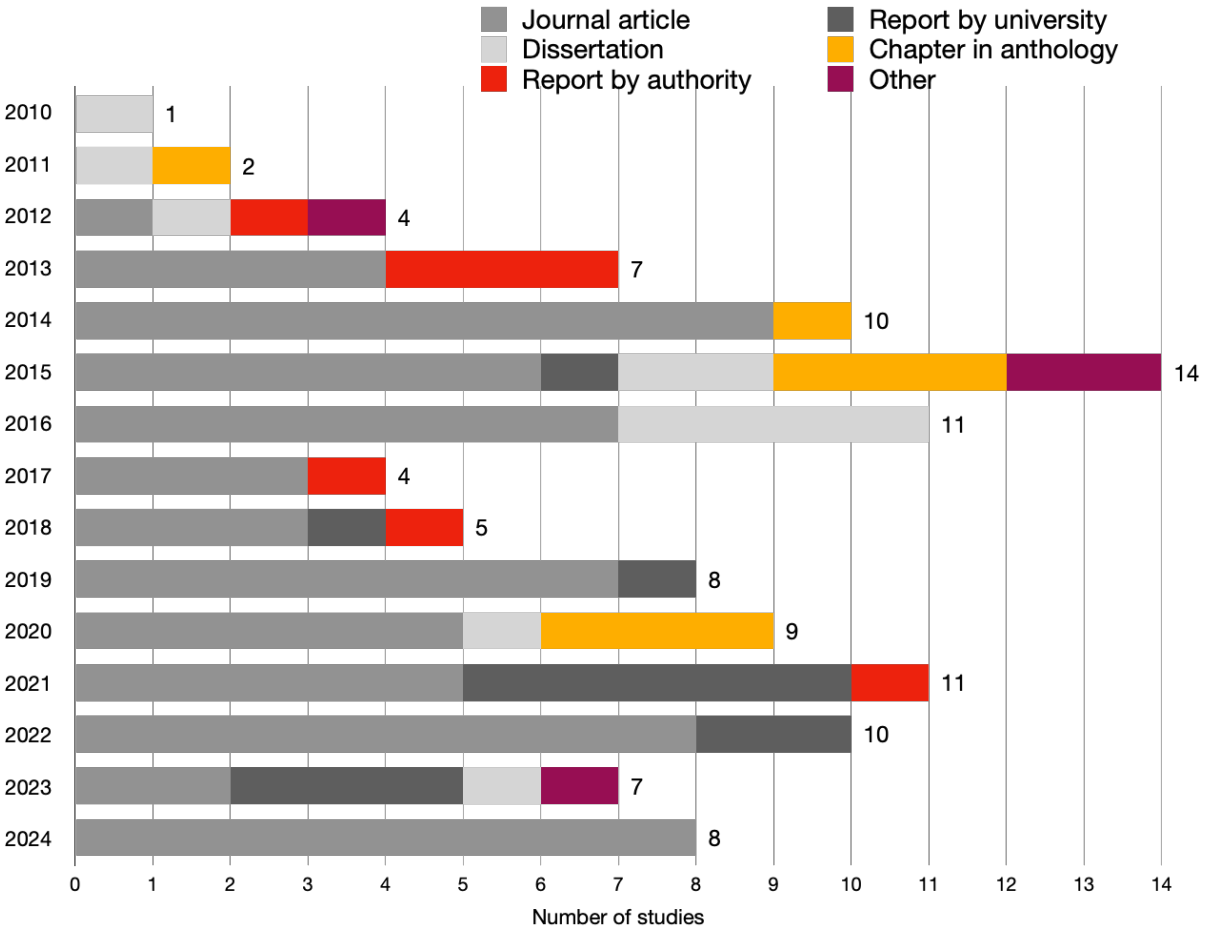


Figure 1: Empirical studies on Swedish police education and training 2010–2024 (N=111) distributed per year and publication type

An increase in production volume over time is indicated when comparing the annual mean of the last five-year period (2020–2024) with the first (2010–2014) and middle (2015–2019) periods, see Table 1. A t-test shows that the near-doubling of output between the first and last periods is statistically significant. However, any assessment of a long-term increase in publication volume should be made with caution, given the relatively low number of studies and the observed annual fluctuations.

Table 1: Publication output 2010–2024 per five-year period

	2010–2014	**2015–2019**	**2020–2024**	**Total**
Number of studies	24	42	45	111
Annual mean *(SD)*	4.8 *(3.7)*	8.4 *(4.2)*	9 *(1.6)*	7.4 *(3.6)*

Publishing actors and disciplinary/subject orientation

The mapping identified a diverse set of publishing actors spread across multiple professional fields and with various disciplinary and subject orientations. The results are reported based on each publication type.

Scholarly journal articles (n=68)

The 68 scholarly journal articles were distributed across 41 journals. The most represented were *Nordic Journal for Studies in Policing* (n=8), *Policing and Society* (n=4), *Journal of Vocational Education & Training* (n=4), *International Journal of Emergency Management* (n=3), *Police Practice and Research* (n=3*), Studies in Continuing Educatio*n (n=3), and *Vocations and Learning* (n=3).

As shown in Table 2, most articles appeared in journals oriented towards policing and criminology (n=29), education and learning (n=19), or emergency and crisis management (n=11). The remaining nine articles – categorised as "Other" in Table 2 – were published in journals covering psychiatry (n=2), engineering, information, and learning technologies (n=2), psychology (n=1), human resource development (n=1), organisational studies (n=1), reflective practices (n=1), and intellectual disabilities (n=1).

Table 2: Scholarly journal articles distributed by journal discipline/topic, listed in number (n) and percentage (%)

Journal orientation	**n**	**%**
Policing and criminology	29	42.6%
Education and learning	19	27.9 %
Emergency and crisis management	11	16.2%
Other	9	13.2%
Total	**68**	**100%**

Reports by universities (n=13)

Studies published as reports by universities originated from six Swedish institutions: Linköping University (n=4), Linnaeus University (n=3), Umeå University (n=3), Södertörn University (n=1), the University of Borås (n=1), and the University of Gothenburg (n=1).

Three reports from Linköping University appeared in a report series by CARER (*Center for Advanced Research in Emergency Response),* a research centre run by Linköping University in collaboration with the Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency. The remaining Linköping report, alongside all reports by Umeå and Linnaeus universities, were published in police-focused report series (n=5) or as standalone reports on police issues (n=2).

The Södertörn University report, published by the *Institute for the Study of Multireligiosity and Secularity* (IMS), explored multireligiosity-related knowledge needs within public administration, schools, healthcare, and the police. The report from the University of Borås – focusing on welfare profession recruitment using police and nursing education as cases – was commissioned by the *Centre for Welfare Studies* (Centrum för välfärdsstudier) and published in a report series on governance, organisation and management. Finally, the report from the University of Gothenburg appeared in a report series by the *School of Public Administration*, focusing on how occupational culture and professional roles are portrayed in police recruits' educational material.

Dissertations (n=11)

Seven of the eleven dissertations were published by Umeå University. Of these, six originated from the *Department of Education*, all focusing centrally on police and educational matters, whereas one was published by the *Department of Surgical and Perioperative Sciences* and examined preparedness for mass-casualty attacks on public transportation. The latter was a compilation thesis where only one of five sub-studies investigated police education and training.

Of the remaining four dissertations, one was published by the *Department of Psychology* at Stockholm University and examined sustainable police recruitment and selection factors. Another, from the *Department of Health Sciences* at University West, focused on training and learning in emergency service collaboration exercises. The third, from the *Department of Political Science* at Linnaeus University, examined police recruits' perceptions of legitimate authority, autonomy, and non-legalistic police work during their training and initial career years. Finally, the fourth was a compilation thesis on police-protester interactions from the *Department of Sociology* (now Department of Sociology and Work Science) at the University of Gothenburg, where only one of the four sub-studies covered aspects of police education.

Chapters in anthologies (n=8)

Six of the eight anthology chapters appeared in books from academic publishers, one Swedish (Arkiv Förlag) and five international (one each by CRC Press, SENSE Publishers, and IGI Global, and two by Routledge). Two of these anthologies highlighted global perspectives on policing, two focused on vocational education and professional learning, one had an international and comparative focus on police education, and one addressed AI and web technologies in educational and professional settings. The

remaining two chapters were published in an anthology on reflection as a professional tool in police work, issued by the *Unit of Police Work* at Umeå University.

Reports by authorities (n=7)

The *Swedish Police Authority* (Polismyndigheten) published two of the seven reports issued by authorities. One report was published by each of the following organisations: the *Swedish National Audit Office* (Riksrevisionen), the *Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention* (Brå), the *Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute* (Statens väg- och transportforskningsinstitut, VTI), the *Swedish Defence Recruitment Agency* (Rekryteringsmyndigheten, now the Swedish Defence Conscription and Assessment Agency), and the *Public Health Agency of Sweden* (Folkhälsomyndigheten). Two of the reports focused centrally on police education, four examined specific policing tools and practices and only partially touched upon education and training, and one addressed education on HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health in higher education, including police.

Other publications (n=4)

Two of the four studies categorised as "Other" were conference proceedings. One appeared in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* (a former non-peer-reviewed journal specialised in conference proceedings), while the other was published by the conference organiser *IEEE*, a global organisation for technology professionals. The third study was an empirical research monograph on collaboration exercises conducted by researchers at University West and published by the Swedish academic publishing house *BAS*. Finally, one study was published as a report by the non-profit organisation *Institutet för polisforskning* (Institute for Police Research).

Actors conducting the studies

The mapping of authors and affiliations showed that scholars from academia heavily dominate. Ninety-four studies (84.7%) were authored exclusively by academic researchers. Five studies (4.5%) featured authors from both academia and the Swedish Police Authority – four through collaboration and one by a researcher affiliated with both the police and academia. Three studies (2.7%) involved authors dually affiliated with academia and the Swedish Defence Conscription and Assessment Agency (formerly the Swedish Defence Recruitment Agency). Additionally, one study was authored in collaboration between academic scholars and representatives from the Swedish Maritime Administration (Sjöfartsverket), and another was co-authored by four academic researchers, two of whom were also affiliated with the Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten). In total, academic actors were represented as authors in approximately 94% (n=104) of the studies.

Seven studies (6.3%) lacked authors from academia. Representatives from the Swedish Police Authority authored two of these, while one study each was authored by representatives from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), the Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute (Statens väg- och transportforskningsinstitut, VTI), the Swedish National Audit Office (Riksrevisionen), and the Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten). Finally, one study had three authors with unclear affiliations; however, one of these had a background as both a police officer and an academic, while the other two were social workers.

A closer examination of authors' affiliations in the 104 studies with at least one author from academia showed that these authors came from 25 different universities: 15 Swedish, four Norwegian, three in the UK, two in the USA, and one in South Africa. Despite this diversity, a core of universities was identified. Umeå University in Sweden stands out with its author representation in almost half of the studies (n=54; 48.6%), followed by the University of Gothenburg (n=12; 10.8%), Linnaeus University (n=11; 9.9%), and University West (n=11; 9.9%). Authors from Stockholm University, Linköping University, and Malmö University were represented in six studies (5.4%) each. The most represented university outside of Sweden was the Norwegian Police University College in Oslo, with author representation in four studies (3.6%).

Methods applied

Almost half of the studies (n=52; 46.8%) used a qualitative approach, and the remainder were quite evenly distributed between quantitative (n=30; 27.0%) and mixed-methods approaches (n=29; 26.1%). Around half of the studies (n=58; 52.3%) used only one method to collect data, most commonly surveys (n=19; 17.1%), interviews (n=18; 16.2%), and collection of documents (n=12; 10.8%). Fifty-three studies (47.7%) combined more than one data collection method. Table 3 lists the various methods for collecting data and how these are distributed between qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches.

Table 3: Methods to collect empirical data, total representation and distributed per qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches

Data collection method	**Total (*n*)**	**Qualitative (*n*)**	**Quantitative (*n*)**	**Mixed-methods (*n*)**
Interviews and focus groups	57	39	0	18
Surveys	44	2	25	17
Collection of documents	33	17	4	12
Observation and fieldwork	25	16	0	9
Secondary data collection	12	2	7	3
Experiments and simulations	10	2	5	3

Overall, interviews and focus groups were the most utilised methods for collecting empirical data (n=57; 51.4%), followed by surveys (n=44; 39.6%) and collection of documents (n=33; 29.7%). Documents consisted mainly of written sources, such as course materials, guidelines, policy documents, news articles and internal police documents. In occasional cases, audio or visual documents were retrieved, such as video sequences from headcams and audio-recorded training sessions. Observations and other types of fieldwork, such as field interviews and informal conversations during participant observations, were conducted in 25 studies (22.5%). Twelve studies (10.8%) collected secondary data, either from

previous studies (n=6; 5.4%) or from official and unofficial registers and statistics (n=6; 5.4%). The use of experiments or simulations staged within the framework of a research or development project was rare (n=10; 9.0%).

Context and data sources

Each study was assessed with respect to whether it targeted a *pre-professional* or *professional* context. As shown in Table 4, most studies (n=62; 55.8%) examined matters, practices or actors situated in a pre-professional context, most commonly the basic training programme for police officers, and in rare cases the probationary training period. Education and training within the professional context were examined in 35 studies (31.5%), while 14 studies (12.6%) focused on *both* pre-professional and professional career stages.

Table 4: Distribution of studies based on education/training context, listed in number (n) and percentage (%)

Education/training context	n	**%**
Pre-professional (basic police training, probationary training)	62	55.8%
Professional (police officers and other police authority employees)	35	31.5%
Both (pre-professional and professional)	14	12.6%
Total	**111**	**100%**

Pre-professional context

Most studies from the pre-professional context (n=45) were partially or exclusively based on data originating from or in other ways linked to police recruits, such as interview, survey, observation and register data. Data related to educational actors, such as police teachers, police supervisors, field training officers and education providers, were used in 16 studies. A total of 11 studies drew in whole or part on sources such as curricula, syllabi, course evaluations, teaching materials, policy documents and other official documents. In occasional cases, selection practitioners, administrative staff at universities and figurants were used as data sources.

Professional context

All 35 studies from the professional context were, partly or exclusively, based on data on employees at the Swedish Police Authority, mostly police officers but in rare cases also administrative staff. Only one study focused explicitly on, and generated data from, leaders within the police organisation.

In addition to data originating from employees at the Swedish Police Authority, approximately three-quarters (n=26) of the studies from the professional context also drew on data linked to external actors. Most commonly, this included personnel from rescue and ambulance services or other emergency

management organisations (n=18). More rarely, it included actors from the social services (n=3) and the criminal justice system, such as prosecutors, lay judges and lawyers (n=4). Occasional studies also drew on data from victims of crime, activists, researchers, and voluntary organisations. Data sources also encompassed instructions, action plans and guidelines from the Police Authority, as well as course evaluations, syllabi and other educational materials.

Police educators were underrepresented in studies from the professional context, with only four studies explicitly stating that police supervisors or other educators were used as data sources. However, 10 studies built at least partly on field observations – for example, of full-scale emergency exercises – and it is possible that police educators were observed in such settings.

Pre- and professional contexts combined

In the 14 studies that concerned both pre-professional and professional contexts, police officers were directly or indirectly used as data sources in all studies except for one, which obtained data from education providers. Seven studies also used data on or from police recruits. At least nine of the studies examined the transition from education to work or changes over time, of which seven utilised a longitudinal approach.

Central or partial focus on Swedish police

The studied sample includes both studies with a central focus on Swedish police (n=71; 64%) and studies in which Swedish police was only of partial interest (n=40; 36%). As illustrated in Figure 2, most studies with a central focus on Swedish police relate to the pre-professional context (n=46). These studies span a variety of research topics, including selection of police applicants, report writing, police culture, attitudes and job values.

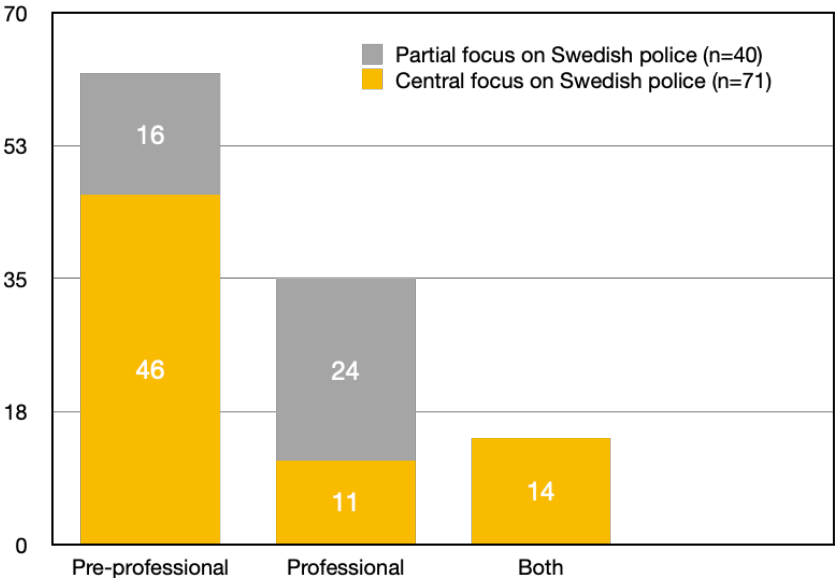


Figure 2: Number of studies with central and partial focus on Swedish police, distributed per context

A total of 16 studies from the pre-professional context were assessed as only partially focused on Swedish police. Seven of these examined matters related to police as well as other vocational education, such as lawyer, nurse, psychologist, social worker and teacher education. Studies examining multiple national contexts were also assessed as only partially focusing on Swedish police, and six such studies from the pre-professional context were identified.

When shifting from the pre-professional to the professional context, studies with a central focus on Swedish police were less common (n=11). Investigative interviewing, protest policing, development of leadership in extreme situations and workplace learning in criminal investigation are examples of topics covered in these studies. As Figure 2 highlights, most studies from the professional context had only a partial focus on Swedish police (n=24). This can, to some extent, be explained by the fact that many of these studies (n=18) concerned multi-agency emergency training or collaboration where Swedish police were only one of several participating and studied actors.

Other examples of research with a partial focus on Swedish police from the professional context are two studies on knowledge and competence needs among professionals within the criminal justice system, and one study on multi-agency joint action against drunk driving. Five studies concerned both Swedish and other national contexts, four of which studied cross-national emergency and collaboration training in Scandinavian border regions, while one addressed educational as well as other aspects of emergency preparedness, partly from an international perspective.

All 14 studies targeting both pre-professional and professional contexts had a central focus on Swedish police. Recruitment, professional socialisation, conflict management, interrogation of suspects and mental preparation are examples of topics of interest within these studies.

Central or partial focus on education and training

A majority of the studies had a central focus on matters related to education and training (n=84; 75.7%). As Figure 3 shows, most of these (n=60) concerned pre-professional contexts. Curricula content, simulations as learning tools in basic training, weapon training and police recruits' learning preferences are examples of topics in these studies.

Two studies from pre-professional contexts only partially focused on education or training. One concerned cognitive test batteries and investigated, among other things, the predictive validity of test scores in relation to police recruits' academic performance. The other examined how perspective-taking can be measured, and partly focused on perspective-taking at different stages of basic police education.

Of the studies from professional contexts, 19 had a central focus on education or training, studying matters such as coordinated emergency response training, learning pathways among police educators, outcomes of investigative interviewing education, and the use of extreme fiction as a pedagogical tool in crisis leadership development. The remaining 16 studies from the professional context focused only partially on education and training, for example as part of studies on preparedness for terrorist attacks, implementation of new working methods, and conditions for professional development.

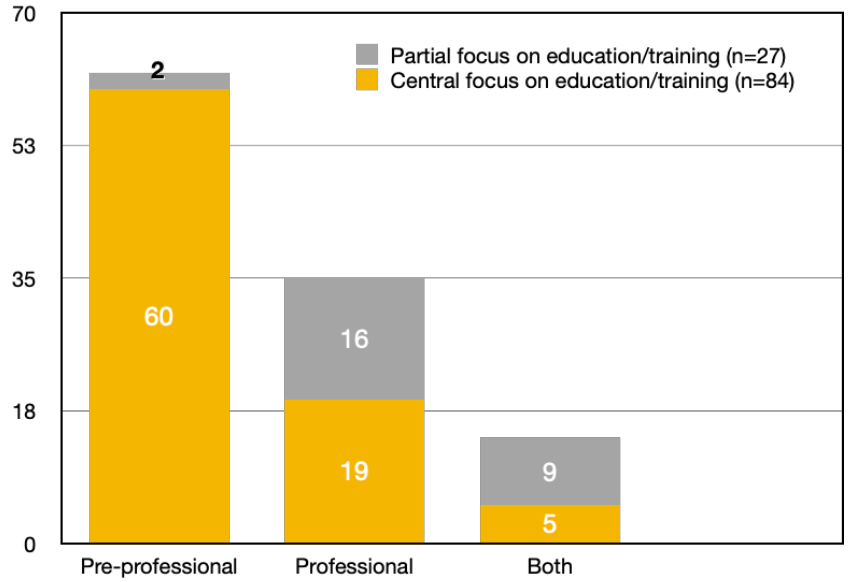


Figure 3: Number of studies with central and partial focus on education/training, distributed per context

Among studies concerned with both pre-professional and professional contexts, five had a central focus on education or training, covering topics such as correspondence between educational content and labour market demands in police and several other vocational training programmes, the effects of in-school and on-the-job training on attitudes towards non-legalistic police work, and international comparisons of training in the interrogation of suspects. A partial focus on education or training was found in nine of the studies concerned with both contexts. Conflict management, use of force, professional competencies, and knowledge in mundane police work are examples of topics of interest in these studies.

Synthesis of foci

An overall synthesis of the different foci shows that almost half of the studies (n=54; 48.6%) had a central focus on *both* Swedish police and matters related to education and training, see Figure 4. A total of 30 studies (27.0%) had a partial focus on Swedish police, but a central focus on education and training. In contrast, 17 studies (15.3%) focused centrally on Swedish police but only partially on education and training. The remaining 10 studies (9.0%) had a partial focus on both Swedish police and education and training.

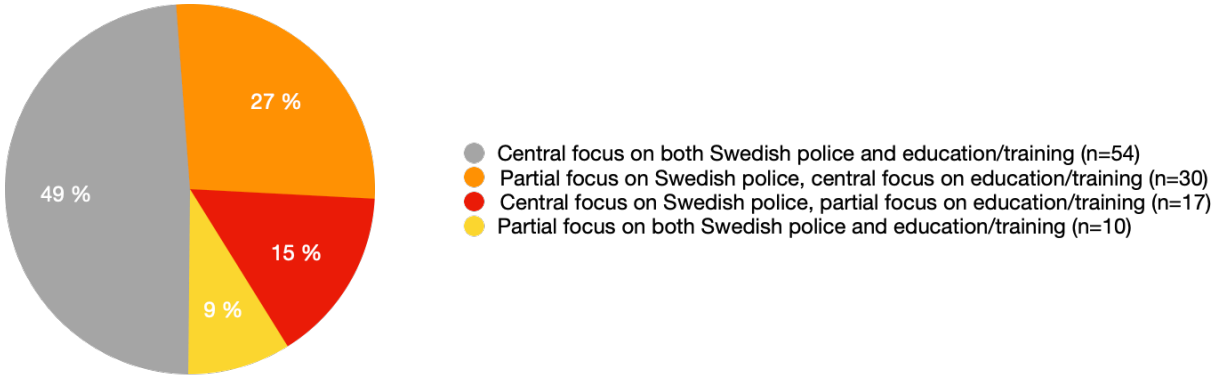


Figure 4. Distribution of studies in relation to central or partial focus on Swedish police and education/training.

Discussion

This study set out to examine the structure and development of empirical research on Swedish police education and training by analysing publication characteristics, methodological approaches and overarching research foci within a defined subset of empirical studies published between 2010 and 2024.

The results indicate that research on police education and training in Sweden constitutes a relatively substantial but fragmented sub-area of police research. Studies were dispersed across a wide range of publications, although the proportion of studies published in peer-reviewed journals was fairly large in this subsample (61.3%). This is a higher proportion than in the total sample of empirical studies on Swedish police included in the original scoping review from which this subsample was drawn, and in which approximately 50.7% of the studies were published as journal articles (Weichselbraun et al., 2026). Conversely, the proportion of reports published by Swedish authorities was significantly lower in this subsample, standing at 6.3% compared to 18.3% in the total sample.

This, as well as the finding that academia-affiliated authors were represented in as many as 94% of the studies, indicates a stronger academic than practice- or policy-oriented interest in knowledge production on Swedish police education and training. The dominance of academic authors in the production of research, in combination with the relatively limited involvement of practitioners, also raises questions about the relationship between research and practice. Although this strong academic presence contributes to critical thinking, methodological rigour and theoretical development – and is logical following the increasing academisation of police education in Sweden – the limited representation of police practitioners as authors may indicate a gap between research and the everyday realities of police education and training. This may call for a stronger integration between research and practice. In part, this could be facilitated by broader shifts within the police towards more evidence-based thinking, encouraging police officers to study their own profession. Such an approach is particularly relevant in a field where the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical competence is central, as has often been highlighted in relation to translational criminology and policing (Nichols et al., 2020; Lum & Koper, 2017). Regarding the Swedish police research context, this dynamic has been discussed in more detail by Magnusson (2022).

Furthermore, the results of this review show that studies on Swedish police education and training are not only scattered among different publication types but also across disciplinary contexts. While this diversity reflects the interdisciplinary nature of police education, and police science in general, it also suggests the lack of a clearly defined and consolidated research field. Knowledge is produced in parallel strands rather than cumulatively, which may limit the development of shared concepts, theoretical frameworks, and methodological standards. While this is a potential limitation, diversity in research has been noted for related fields as well, such as in the training of prison officers (Ryan et al., 2021). However, without downplaying the variety of disciplinary and subject orientations among publishers and producers of studies on Swedish police education and training, a relevant finding was that three core disciplinary or subject areas could be distinguished in which most journal articles were published: policing and criminology, education and learning, and emergency and crisis management. As in the scoping review of studies from Australia, Canada, the UK and the USA (Frade & Walsh, 2026), most studies from the Swedish context were published in journals focused on criminology, policing and

criminal justice, but a striking difference was the relatively large proportion of studies published in journals on education and learning: 28% of the journal articles compared to 3.5% in Frade & Walsh (2026). The findings also reveal that among the 11 dissertations studying matters related to Swedish police education and training, five originated from the Department of Education at Umeå University. These findings indicate that Sweden holds a prominent position in research on police education and training informed by the educational sciences, a suggestion made with caution given the relatively low number of studies.

In contrast to the scoping review by Frade & Walsh (2026) – in which research was dominated by quantitative approaches and experimental and quasi-experimental research designs were common – the methodological landscape in studies from the Swedish context is characterised by a predominance of qualitative approaches, particularly interviews and document analyses, and few studies employing experimental designs or simulation-based methods. While qualitative approaches are well suited to capture experiences, perceptions, and organisational processes, the relatively limited use of experimental and longitudinal designs may constrain the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of educational interventions and training methods.

The findings of this review also reveal a clear emphasis on the pre-professional context, particularly basic police education. While this focus is understandable given the institutionalisation of police education within higher education, it also points to a relative lack of research on training and learning in the professional context. Given the importance of continuous professional development, in-service training and learning within organisations, this imbalance reflects a notable gap in the literature. Furthermore, the limited attention paid to police educators as a distinct group suggests that key actors in the educational process remain underexplored.

Finally, the distinction between studies with a central versus partial focus on Swedish police and on education and training highlights important conceptual issues. A substantial proportion of studies address police education indirectly, as part of broader research on policing, collaboration, emergency management, or vocational training. While such studies have the potential to provide valuable contextual insights, they may also weaken the analytical focus on police education and training as a distinct domain. This raises questions about how the field defines its core object of study, the extent to which it is developing as an independent area of inquiry, and whether there is a need for greater coherence in terms of theoretical frameworks – questions left open for discussion.

Taken together, this review demonstrates the value of examining not only the content of research but also its structure and production. By shifting attention to how knowledge is generated, organised and disseminated, it becomes possible to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities for development within a field. Such insights are essential for advancing police education and training as both a research domain and a field of practice. Providing a systematic overview of publications, methods and overarching research foci, this article contributes to the consolidation of police education and training as an emerging field of study and offers a foundation for further research and development within this area. The article can be seen as a first step in a series of in-depth analyses of research on police education and training in Sweden, as well as other sub-fields of Swedish police research. While this study focuses on structural and bibliometric aspects of the literature, future analyses may examine thematic content, theoretical frameworks, and substantive findings in greater detail.

Conflicts of interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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