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In Contact with the Public

Swedish police officers' understanding of consideration, restraint, and confidence

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Abstract

The Swedish population is distinguished by having a high level of trust in the police. This high trust is partly dependent on the numerous everyday interactions between police officers and the public. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of how Swedish police officers understand these interactions in relation to the existing legal framework concerning police behaviour. This research topic is qualitatively explored by analysing how Swedish police officers understand and describe the three keywords of *consideration*, *restraint* and *confidence* as found in § 10 in the Swedish Police Regulation Act (2014:1104). The analysis is realised by drawing on the theoretical framework of street-level bureaucracy and emotional labor. The empirical material, in turn, consists of eight semi-structured qualitative interviews with Swedish police officers with different professional roles and work experiences. The findings show that Swedish police officers' understanding and descriptions are influenced by how they exercise discretion as street-level bureaucrats and how they perform emotional labor. Additionally, it can be argued that Swedish police officers perform emotional labor to carry out police procedures and work-related tasks.

Keywords: Swedish police, Police Regulation Act, Discretion, Emotional labor, Street-level bureaucrats

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background	2
1.2 Research Question and Aim	3
1.3 Thesis Structure	4
2. Scientific Background	5
2.1 International Police Research	5
2.3 Swedish Police Research	9
2.3 Discussion of Previous Literature	12
3. Theoretical Frames	14
3.1 Street-Level Bureaucrats	14
3.1.1 Applying the Concept of Street-level Bureaucrats	16
3.2 Emotional Labor	17
3.2.1 Applying Emotional Labor	18
4. Method and Material	20
4.1 Methodological Choices	21
4.1 Semi-structured Interviews	21
4.2 Sampling	23
4.3 Structure and Interview Process	24
4.3.1 Interview guide	25
4.3.2 Recording and Transcription	27
4.4 Ethical Considerations	28
4.4.3 Confidentiality	28
4.4.4 Informed consent	29
4.4.5 Epistemological Ethics	30
4.5 Method of Analysis	31
4.6 Reflexivity	31
5. Analysis and Results	33
5.1 Consideration	33
5.2 Restraint	38
5.3 Confidence	42
6. Conclusion	46

6.1 Answering the research questions	46
6.2 Limitations of the Thesis	50
6.3 Future Research	52
References	53
Appendix 1: interview overview	59
Appendix 2: interview guide	60

1. Introduction

Surveys show that Swedish citizens have remarkably high trust in the Swedish police (Falk 2021; Medieakademin 2022). Anyone who wants to investigate the reasons behind these high feelings of trust in the police have several aspects to consider. One of these aspects is how Swedish police officers behave and interact with the general public. What guidelines do police officers have for how they should behave toward the public? And what decides how newly trained police officers should behave toward the public? The Swedish government initiated a major investment into the Police Authority in 2016 which will continue to proceed until 2024 (Regeringskansliet 2021a). This investment intends to increase the number of employed police officers by 10 000 by 2024, which means that the economic allocation has been greatly increased. In total, the Swedish government proposes that the Police Authority should be able to administer almost 33 billion SEK in 2022 (Regeringskansliet 2021b). This economic distribution alludes to the political and societal significance of the Swedish Police Authority of today. The increased financing of the police can be seen as a response to a constantly shifting political climate in Sweden. The investment is expected to have a positive impact on the many services Swedish police officers provide. Some of the core activities of the Swedish police include attending major social events, investigating cases of crime, performing traffic controls, dealing with violent family situations, and keeping order in public places where people gather (Polisen n.d.a). In common, all these activities involve the interaction between police officers and people from the public. An interaction which is an important aspect of building public trust in the Swedish police. Therefore, it is less surprising that the Swedish Police Authority have legal frameworks in place which provide guidelines for how police should behave in encounters with the public (SFS 1962:700, 20 kap.; SFS 2014:1104, 10 §). However, how are these written legal frameworks concerning police behaviour translate into actual practice? In the Swedish Police Regulation Act it is stated that:

Employees of the Police shall, in contact with the public, taking into account the circumstances and the situation, act as considerately as possible, show restraint and behave in a manner that inspires confidence. (SFS 2014:1104, 10 §¹).

¹ As a general rule, I will translate all Swedish citations to English in this thesis, this includes quotes and excerpts from interviewees.

This regulation suggests that Swedish police officers are obliged to manage their own behaviour and control their personal emotions in order to carry out their work as expected. How are these ambiguous terms such as consideration, restraint and confidence actually interpreted in the real world outside the law in books? Based on the government's economic investment in the Swedish Police Authority mentioned earlier, it is apparent that the role of the police is of great societal importance. The interaction between police and the public occurs daily and is of interest to both law and society. Therefore, police officers' understanding should gain attention from the sociology of law discipline. In this thesis, I aspire to explore the area between law and society by looking closer at how Swedish police officers understand and describe the legal framework of their professional behaviour.

1.1 Background

In the annual report made by the Swedish Department of Special Investigations (DSI), it is presented that 58% out of 6136 received cases reported are cases of misconduct (Polismyndigheten 2020). This means that the category 'misconduct' is the crime that is the most reported to the DSI for the year 2020 (Polismyndigheten 2020 p. 24). Furthermore, 83.4 % of these reports of misconduct are filed against police (ibid. p. 23). This also means that a large majority of reports filed against police officer consists of charges of misconduct. This might not be surprising when put in context with the fact that: "The classification 'misconduct' often is used when there is no other criminal classification appropriate, for example when a criminal report is filed based on charges of inappropriate behaviour." (ibid. p. 24). Consequently, inappropriate behaviour seems to be one of the contributing reasons why Swedish police officers are reported for misconduct. To put these statistics from the DSI into context it is necessary to ask: what is inappropriate behaviour for a Swedish police officer? The term 'inappropriate behaviour' is regulated in chapter 20 of the Swedish Penal Code (SFS 1962:700) and specified even further in the tenth paragraph of the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104) presented earlier. These are legal frameworks constructed to guide how Swedish police officers should behave when interacting with the general public.

The Police Regulation Act has been applied in Swedish legal cases. In 2006, the district court of Falun found a police officer guilty of misconduct when he, wearing police uniform and during active service, visited a school (RH 2007:51). The officer's visit to the school was part of an investigation of his son's stolen bicycle. During his stay he acted in such a way that upset

the children of the school by, for example, threatening to “chase their parents” and telling them “now it’s war” (ibid.). Interestingly, one of the assessments put forward by the district court is that the police officer had violated the then applicable Police Regulation Act (SFS 1998:1558). Noting that: “These rules are obviously added in order to maintain the public's trust in the police, a trust that is very important from a societal perspective.” (RH 2007:51, own translation). In other words, the court argued that the police officer’s behaviour hurt the public trust in the police. The officer might have been able to avoid the verdict if he had managed his personal emotions in accordance with the legal framework and behaved with more restraint. The socio-legal tension in this case lies in how the law promises to regulate police behaviour and conduct.

The legal frameworks which are to regulate the behaviour of Swedish police officers become relevant when accounting for the information described above. Similarly, it is meaningful to investigate this legal framework in order to understand how police officers make sense of their own emotions, behaviours and interactions in relation to their professional role. The Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104) states that Swedish police officers are obligated to behave and act in certain ways when interacting with the public. This regulation influences how police officers manage their emotions, discretion and ultimately how their work in everyday situations is performed. Therefore, it is of great interest to the sociology of law discipline.

1.2 Research Question and Aim

The aim of this master thesis is to increase the understanding of how Swedish police officers interpret and rationalise the legal framework of behaviour that § 10 of the Police Regulation Act prescribes. The socio-legal interest lies in how a set of legal regulations influence understandings, descriptions and thought processes in the social world. In other words, how do Swedish police officers make sense of a regulation that dictates how they should behave and act? In order to concentrate the aim of this study the following three research questions have been formulated:

- How do Swedish police officers understand and describe consideration, restraint, and confidence in relation to § 10 of the Police Regulation Act?
- How do these understandings and descriptions relate to the role of Swedish police officers as street-level bureaucrats?

- How do these understandings and descriptions relate to how Swedish police officers view their own behaviour and emotions when interacting with the public?

1.3 Thesis Structure

In this first part of the thesis an introduction, background, research aim, and the research questions have been presented. Henceforth, this thesis is structured by first introducing the scientific background in the form of a literature review, followed by a presentation of the theoretical framework. The next section is dedicated to explaining and discussing the method and material of the thesis. After this, the results are presented and analysed. Lastly, a conclusion is included in order to answer the research questions and consider both the limitations of this thesis and suggestions for future research.

Furthermore, throughout this thesis, there will be referrals to the *three keywords*. These are mentioned in the first research question and can be traced back to § 10 in the Swedish Police Regulation Act. The keywords are as follows: consideration, restraint, and confidence.

2. Scientific Background

The outline of previously published research and studies related to this master thesis is explored and presented through a literature review. The focus is to achieve an overview of previous literature related to the research topic and the aim of the thesis. The purpose is to detect potential themes, results and theoretical perspectives related to the research field which can be explored further and analysed. The review has been conducted by searching for specific search terms in the databases of Lubsearch (n.d) and Google Scholar (n.d) to find relevant results that are related to the research topic and aim. In the first couple of searches, more general search terms were used. Namely, *Swedish police*, *police behaviour*, *police discretion*, *police interaction*, *police emotions* and *regulation of police*. These search terms gave both many and varied results of previous literature and studies. In this first part of the search process more effort went into browsing the results and excluding literature that had none or very little relevance to the purpose and aim of this thesis. Later, the search process was refined by narrowing down search terms and formulating more advanced searches. This was achieved by combining search words which gave fewer, but more relevant, results. The search terms used in this more specific search was: *Swedish police + street-level bureaucracy*, *Swedish police + emotions*, *police + discretion + street-level bureaucracy*, *police + interaction + the public*, *police + regulation + behaviour*. Additionally, the given reference lists of relevant literature have been used to find additional literature that is utilised for the review. By using this method, it has been possible to map out and gain an overview of the literature relevant to the research topic of this thesis.

This literature review is divided into three parts. Firstly, international, and non-Swedish literature is presented, including research conducted in other Scandinavian countries. Secondly, specific research conducted on Swedish police is highlighted. Lastly, the previous literature is summarised and discussed.

2.1 International Police Research

The police and its related societal functions constitute a continuously relevant and important research area. The attentiveness is shown in international scientific research where the police is studied diligently which has given rise to a set of scientific journals and lists of issues specifically dedicated to the publishing of police-related research. E.g., *International Journal*

of Police Science & Management (SAGE Publishing 2022), *Police Practice and Research* (Taylor & Francis Online 2022), *Police Titles* (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2022) and *Police studies* (SAGE Journals 2022). These journals demonstrate the scientific interest in policing and highlight the large quantity of published literature relating to the police. Albeit much of this research is conducted outside Sweden, it is still providing valuable insights into the police profession and practices.

When searching more specifically for studies relating to police officers' interactions with the public, the psychology and emotions of police officers are shown to be prominent themes. Extensive research has been conducted on police officers' emotions. When searching with the search term *police emotion* in the database of LUBsearch (n.d) more than 3,000 peer-reviewed articles, books and electronic books are presented. An example of such research is Pogrebin and Poole's study (1991) on police's management of emotions in the city of Denver, USA. Their research shows that police use different emotion-management strategies in relation to their professional practice (ibid. p. 395). They noted that police experience that they have expectations on how they should behave and act in emotionally intense situations (ibid. p. 397). These expectations of their own behaviour contribute to police viewing their emotions as a weakness that will have a negative effect on their work (ibid).

More recent research highlights how police alter and adjust their emotions when engaging in their work. A study of police in Britain shows that Police officers suppress their emotions and follow strict display rules because showing emotions is associated with weakness and poor professional performance (Lennie et al. 2020, p. 10). The authors mean that this view of emotional display is rooted in organisational culture norms and calls for a police culture that facilitates an awareness of emotional support (ibid. p. 11). Their results also suggest that if police officers are allowed to talk about, and thus process, their emotions with colleagues they might be able to avoid signs of psychological work-related strains (ibid. p. 10). Related to these findings, Huey and Kalyal (2017) propose that police officers' emotions are important to criminal investigational work and: "...a central feature of everyday police work." (ibid. p. 140). Their study builds on in-depth interviews with Canadian police services and specifically looks at how emotional labour affects police officers. Similar to Lennie et al. (2020), Huey and Kalyal's (2017) research shows that the way police officers manage their emotions can affect their well-being. These findings are related to the claim that police officers experience complex social and emotional environments which are unique to the police profession. For example,

Stenross and Kleinman (1986) highlight how investigative police detectives experience the interaction with victims and suspects. Findings show that some police detectives enjoyed meeting criminals whilst disliking encounters with victims (ibid. p. 435). The reason being that the detectives were able to redefine their emotional labor with criminals into mental mind games that ultimately are viewed as more rewarding and intellectually stimulating (ibid. p. 441). According to the study, there is also a certain element of the learning experience that the detectives enjoy. During encounters with criminals, the detectives appreciated exploring and learning new interactional styles that could potentially help them in future encounters (ibid. p. 450). However, with victims, detectives failed to redefine the encounters as mind games because the victims' emotions could not be viewed as disingenuous or illegitimate. As a result, encounters with victims are experienced as more stressful and uncomfortable (ibid. p. 435).

Ethnographic research has also been conducted on how police officers perceive their encounters with the public. Through ethnography, Sausdal (2018) studied Danish police detectives and how they value certain work practices. The main argument put forward is that police can experience frustration and resentment towards foreign suspects because these suspects prevent police from enjoying certain aspects of their profession (ibid. p. 226). For example, police officers find pleasure in the interrogation process when they can “establish a good relationship” with the suspect (ibid. p. 232). This is done by talking with the suspect about general subjects trying to find common ground and gaining their confidence. The problem Danish police officers face when trying to establish a connection with foreign suspects is identified as gaps in knowledge, social factors, and language (ibid. 233). These gaps complicate the interaction between police officers and suspects and consequently prevent police from finding enjoyment in the interrogation process. Both Sausdal (2018) and Stenross and Kleinman (1986) found that police officers describe the interrogation as a ‘game’ or ‘mind game’ where the suspect and police are participating players. This reformulation of the common police task of conducting interrogations might be a strategy to find meaning in everyday work. The research conducted by Sausdal is an example of how police work is closely intertwined with subjective emotions. Somewhat naturally, police detectives enjoy certain elements of their work and dislike others, similar to any other profession. However, the relevant aspect from a socio-legal perspective is that these subjective perceptions might influence the interrogation process and by extension the investigation as a whole.

Also drawing on ethnographic research, Armenta (2016) explains how police bureaucracies can respond to immigrant residents in contradictory ways. Her fieldwork, conducted in the U.S.A. with the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, shows conflicting policing strategies when interacting with Latino immigrants. One strategy is to engage in community policing by educating the public about the role of law enforcement, working with crime prevention and hosting events together with Latino communities (ibid. p. 116). On the other hand, these community-building efforts are counteracted by the enforcement of state-issued identification laws on a street level which leads to continuous arrests of Latino residents (ibid. p. 112). Armenta derives this ambiguity to the duality between community policing and regulation enforcement which both are missions of the police. This results in police interactions switching between being integrating and benevolent, to being exclusionary and disciplinary towards Latino immigrants. In this relation, police discretion becomes a crucial variable since individual judgement and selective enforcement from an officer can mean the difference between issuing a state citation, an arrest or simply a verbal warning.

In addition to this, a review (Portillo & Rudes 2014) of street-level bureaucracy scholarships argues that police officers do not fit the traditional role of street-level bureaucrats coined by Lipsky (2010). The authors highlight and question the definition of street-level bureaucrats as an occupational group which has nothing to lose by failing to satisfy their clients (ibid. p. 331). They argue that police officers and police departments have much to lose if citizens are discontent with the police. Police officers risk losing legitimacy by not living up to the expectations of the public e.g., by exercising unjust stop and frisk policies. Consequently, police officers do not perfectly fit the traditional label of street-level bureaucrats since both police officers and the Police Authority as a whole have much to lose if citizens disapprove of police practices.

The literature presented here indicates that there is a certain focus on police emotions in previous research concerning police behaviour and interaction. This focus addresses how police conceptualise and understand their own emotions in relation to, sometimes, emotionally intense situations. However, there is less scholarly literature on how police relate to these emotions and their behaviour when encountering the general public. A recurring theme across the presented international literature is that police experience certain emotions when engaging in everyday police work involving interactions with the public. The research shows us that police have different methods of managing and coping with these emotions, e.g., by redefining

their professional tasks into ‘mind games’, finding joyous elements of their work or simply suppressing their emotions. Police officers also seem to adhere to specific organisational culture norms and display rules. By extension, these rules have an impact on the well-being of the police and the way they work. Similarly, the bureaucratic elements of the police impact police practices by putting pressure on exercises of discretion. Police discretion is shown to be an important variable since it has the possibility to determine the procedure and outcome of police practices. This relation is especially important when considering the duality of police work. On the one hand, police maintain a service role towards citizens. On the other, they enforce the law, and arguably a social order, with the perquisite of a monopoly of violence. These descriptions of police discretion point toward a characterisation of police officers as street-level bureaucrats. However, there are also scholars arguing that police officers do not fit the traditional role as street-level bureaucrats and that this notion should be acknowledged when understanding policing in relation to street-level bureaucracy.

2.3 Swedish Police Research

The role of the police is frequently discussed in public debates and highlighted in Swedish media coverage. This is displayed when searching for the word *police* in the database of Mediearkivet, a digital news archive, which provides more than 13,000 search results within the last 30 days (Retriever Research 2022). The attention police are given in media outlets in Sweden is mirrored in the scientific field (e.g., Bogestam & Bergnor 2018; Linnéuniversitetet 2022; Polisen n.d.b).

An example of relevant research concerning the police in Sweden is results showing high feelings of trust the general public has towards the police. Yearly reports show that people's trust in the Swedish police has been on the rise since 2016 and was at an all-time high in 2020 when it was estimated that 71% of respondents have a very or fairly high confidence in the police (Falk 2021, p. 38). A more recent report shows even higher numbers for the year 2022 where 76% of respondents answered that they had very or fairly high confidence in the Swedish Police Authority (Medieakademin 2022). These results give the impression that the Swedish police is a well-functioning part of society that citizens generally have confidence in. However, there are also accounts of minority groups in Sweden who perceive the police as discriminatory based on ethnicity and applying methods of racial profiling (Mulinari 2017, p. 4; Wästerfors & Burcar 2020, p. 184). Resembling the international studies, it exists substantial research on the

work environment and the health of Swedish police (Bogestam & Bergnor 2018, pp. 52-53; Padyab et al. 2016). This research involves several themes such as police officers' mental and physical health and how their professional practice affects their health. There is also extensive research concerning the professional methods of the Swedish police. Which is the most researched theme related to the police (Bogestam & Bergnor 2018, p. 22; Andersson & Nilsson 2017).

Hansson et al. (2015) analyse how Swedish police officers perceive their participation in forced repatriations of unaccompanied, asylum-seeking refugee children. The study conducts this analysis by drawing on the theoretical perspective of Lipsky's (2010) street-level bureaucracy. The results of the study show that using discretion becomes a way for police officers to manage the tensions that occur when trying to fulfil contrasting goals of their work (ibid. p. 106). The authors of the study use street-level bureaucracy to explain how the Swedish police officers use discretion when trying to meet the requirement of work efficiency while at the same time respecting the dignity of asylum-seeking refugee children. The study illustrates how discretion can be used by police officers in order to categorise and prioritise certain cases before others. Thus, acting on personal preferences and influencing legal practice (ibid.). Consequently, this study demonstrates how street-level bureaucracy can be utilised to analyse police practices. Similar to this study is research (Levy 2021) conducted on vulnerable EU citizens begging on Swedish streets. This study builds on interviews with police officials in Stockholm and argues that street-level bureaucracy is an important perspective when trying to understand the role of police officers in the events of punitive urbanism. Levy argues that Swedish police officers have the ability, through discretion, to determine how interventions of vulnerable EU citizens unfold and that this discretion is dependent on their personal political convictions (ibid. p. 922). The analysis put forward by Levy is relevant when trying to understand Swedish policing practices and offers another perspective of street-level bureaucracy in a Swedish context.

In line with the concept of street-level bureaucracy, Rolandsson (2020) has conducted research on how Swedish police officers actively use discretionary awareness when using social media. His findings suggest that web-based digitalisation raises new demands of awareness of a form of connected discretion. A subject which relates to not only the police but other bureaucratic officials as well. By qualitatively exploring police officers' reflections and viewpoints, the study was able to reveal a somewhat unique approach to social media use. The officers emphasised their awareness of value tensions and acknowledged new discretionary demands

related to performing work on social media (ibid. p. 385), meaning that officers experienced demands for continuous reconfigurations of their awareness. The study shows that the interviewed police officers legitimised themselves by expressing consciousness of new discretionary demands (ibid.). Rolandsson's research provides an insight into how Swedish police officers rationalise and justify police discretion in a digital environment.

Another study that is related to how police officers conceptualise their encounters with the public is a mixed-method examination of Swedish and Norwegian police suspect interviewers (Magnusson et al. 2021). The analysis identified linkages between police officers' self-reported goals, tactics, and emotions during interrogation processes. The study found that the police officers claimed that their own emotions should not have an effect on their work (p. 1). For example, the qualitative results presented a "...strong consensus regarding the importance of not expressing emotions during the suspect interview, or letting emotions influence their interview procedures." (ibid. p. 11). However, the quantitative results of the study indicated that the police officers' emotions do have an influence during suspect interrogation (ibid.). Different strategies were identified that helped the police cope with their emotions (ibid. pp. 7-11). Some of these strategies included the police officers focusing on their professional role while moderating their personal emotions, sharing and venting their emotions with a colleague after the interview process, and taking a break from the interview if strong emotions would arise. Lastly, some police officers said that having a fulfilling private life with friends, hobbies and family could facilitate the management of negative emotions related to their work (ibid. p. 9).

The previous research conducted on Swedish police officers is mainly focused on how their work is performed, i.e., their work methods. Studies also show that the Swedish public tends to have high levels of trust in the police. Additionally, there is research demonstrating the analytical perspective of discretion and street-level bureaucracy in a Swedish context. The studies highlight the use of discretion as a method for managing contrasting objectives of police work. It is exemplified that the use of discretion ultimately has an influence on police work practices. Furthermore, there exists a consciousness of discretionary demands related to a digital work environment involving the use of social media. The review of Swedish research on police also highlights how the public perceives the police as an authority and societal institution. Similar to the international research, there is scholarly attention directed toward how police officers perceive and manage their emotions, including what kind of strategies they

resort to in order to manage their emotions. Despite this existing research, there is less literature on how police officers relate to encounters with the public and the relation to the legal framework that regulates police officers' behaviour.

2.3 Discussion of Previous Literature

In order to summarise the results of this literature review, it can be stated that the police and their work is a prevalent subject for both international and Swedish-specific research. The review of the literature presents research focused on the interactions police officers experience in everyday work. The emotions of police officers and how they cope with them are prominent themes. How police officers are psychologically affected by their profession and which consequences this has for themselves and their work is also highlighted in this previous literature. From a Swedish research perspective, there is also a focus on how the public perceives the police when it comes to trust and confidence in the police authority. This research provides an understanding of how police officers conceptualise and experience their own emotions in relation to their work. However, these studies provide less insight into how police officers relate to themselves and their roles in everyday interactions with the public. Specifically, there seems to be a lack of understanding of how police conceptualise the demands placed on their behaviour when interacting with the public.

As shown in the presentation of previous literature, there is an apparent focus on how police officers perceive their emotions, their thought processes, practices, and their emotional management. This literature provides an understanding of how Swedish police officers view their own behaviour and emotions when interacting with the public. There are also studies discussing the significance of discretion and how police officers' use of discretion influences policing practices. The discussion on police discretion is closely related to the bureaucratic organisation of the police institution. The notion of street-level bureaucracy is explored and applied in studies of the police. Swedish police officers' use of discretion is shown to have an influence on police work practices. Additionally, discretion is recognised as a method for police officers to shape and determine police practices in the challenge of contradictory work objectives. The presented literature becomes meaningful when situating this thesis project in relation to the sociology of law discipline. The police, as a societal institution, is naturally relevant to the socio-legal field since the practice of police officers can be seen as a concrete expression of the law. Thus, how police officers understand their own discretion, behaviour

and emotions in relation to their professional practice become an important socio-legal subject. An insight into how police officers conceptualise the behavioural framework regulating them can contribute to an understanding of how police officers view this framework in practice. Similarly, discretion, in relation to the bureaucratic structure of the police organisation, becomes an important aspect when attempting to explore how police officers understand these behavioural regulations. By extension, this contributes to a greater and more comprehensive understanding of how police officers practice law.

3. Theoretical Frames

The theory of this thesis builds on Michael Lipsky's (2016) writings on *street-level bureaucrats* and how the discretion of these bureaucrats influences different parts of society. Secondly, the concept of *emotional labor*², presented by Arlie Hochschild (2012), is adopted as an analytical perspective. Together, these two theoretical notions form the theoretical framework which this thesis derives from. The motivation for using the theoretical concepts of street-level bureaucracy and emotional labor is based on the idea that these concepts hold an explanatory value in relation to the research topic and the material. In other words, this theory is used to interpret, understand, and explain the empirical material of the thesis. In the two sections below the theoretical concepts will be introduced and explained by drawing from the original literature respectively. Additionally, the concepts will be put in relation to the purpose and aim of this thesis in order to highlight how this theory can be applied in the analysis.

3.1 Street-Level Bureaucrats

In 1969, Michael Lipsky first wrote about street-level bureaucracy as a theoretical concept in relation to public policy. Since then, Lipsky has expanded and refined his understanding in later works (Lipsky 1980, 2010). He defines street-level bureaucrats as: "Public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work..." (2016, p. 3). Examples of street-level bureaucrats are social workers, health workers, teachers and different personnel of law enforcement, including police officers (ibid.). Additionally, Lipsky defines public service agencies which employ street-level bureaucrats as *street-level bureaucracies* (ibid.). Thus, the police as a public institution can be seen as a street-level bureaucracy. One element that characterises different street-level bureaucracies is that the employees generally work under the same or similar conditions. A part of these work conditions is that their professional practice demands, or allows for, a certain judgement which relates to their exercise of discretion.

The notion of discretion in Lipsky's definition is essential since discretion enables street-level bureaucrats to influence their work. For example, a social worker is able to determine if a client qualifies for economic aid and a health worker is able to decide if a patient needs a certain type of care. This does not mean that the street-level bureaucrat has the authority or power to

² When referring to Hochschild's concept of emotional *labor* I will deviate from my otherwise British spelling in this thesis.

independently make such decisions. Rather, street-level bureaucrats have regulations, guidelines and superiors to which they must adhere to. Lipsky does not deny this relation, he explains that public policy is shaped by political officials and policy elites who are placed higher up in the bureaucratic hierarchy (2016, p. 14). Therefore, influential actors such as elected political officials will have an impact on public policy which becomes the arena street-level bureaucrats must adjust and comply with. However, Lipsky's argument is that although street-level bureaucrats do not enjoy complete autonomy they are able to exercise considerable discretion as implementers of policies at the bottom of this hierarchy (ibid.). He means that street-level bureaucrats have a certain flexibility when making decisions due to a lack of supervision from both superiors and the public. In part, this exercise of discretion derives from the somewhat hidden and specialised role of street-level bureaucrats (ibid.). For example, by working outside the constant supervision of their manager they will be able to make informed decisions based on their own individual judgement and understanding. An example of this is related to the profession of police officers and their exercise of discretion:

Police behaviour is so highly specified by statute and regulations that policemen are expected to invoke the law selectively. They could not possibly make arrests for all the infractions they observe during their working day. (Lipsky 2016, p. 14).

This is an example of how some street-level bureaucrats are expected and even obligated to exercise their discretion. However, Lipsky does not necessarily mean that street-level bureaucrats are able to freely break agency rules and regulations. He argues that the guidelines provided by agencies often are cryptic and that the actual goals of their work are conflicting (ibid. p. 40). This ambiguity, in combination with stressful work environments, high work intensity and resource inadequacy creates challenging working conditions for street-level bureaucrats (ibid. pp. 32-33). Consequently, street-level bureaucrats are restricted in their ability to satisfy the needs of their clients. In response to this, they develop coping strategies to legitimise their role as public service officials. One of these strategies is to withdraw psychologically and reject responsibility, or to quit altogether, from the work they perform (ibid. p. 142). A possible consequence of this is that street-level bureaucracies can consist of personnel that are less bothered by the gap between the objectives of the agency and the actual practice (ibid.). One way of doing this is to mentally modify their working objectives so that those correspond better with their actual performance. Similarly, street-level bureaucrats modify their views of their clients in order to cope with this gap (ibid. p. 141). By doing this, a

street-level bureaucrat will point to a quality associated with the client to justify why the agency's goals are not met. For example, a police officer might state that a certain individual will not comply with law enforcement because of their social background or upbringing and not because of how law enforcement treats that particular individual.

Another of Lipsky's main arguments is that the individuals who act as street-level bureaucrats not only have a great influence on how public policy is implemented in practice but that their practice actually becomes the policy:

I argue that the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively *become* the public policies they carry out. (ibid. p. xii).

In one sense, what constitutes public policies is not the elite policymakers or elected political officials but the personnel working at the bottom of this hierarchy. This understanding becomes analytically relevant when looking at police officers as street-level bureaucrats.

3.1.1 Applying the Concept of Street-level Bureaucrats

Early on, Lipsky's work has been critiqued (see Wise 1981; Hasenfeld 1981; Goldner 1982). His writings on street-level bureaucrats have been criticised for generalising many different types of public service institutions and not acknowledging the differences between different kinds of street-level bureaucrats, e.g., police officers and schoolteachers (Michigan Law Review 1981, pp. 813-814). Despite this, Lipsky's work and ideas have been applied, reviewed, and advanced. Especially in public administration where the interest in street-level bureaucracy as a research subject has been growing since the 1990s (Ahrum & Gene 2022 p. 3). In these studies, less attention has been spent on the structural conditions that influence street-level bureaucrats. For example, how politicians, managers and other superiors might affect street-level bureaucrats (ibid. p. 17). Another review of street-level bureaucracy highlights the indication that the concept of bureaucracy has rapidly changed as technology has evolved (Bovens & Zouridis 2002). The argument is that the street-level concepts have developed into a system-level bureaucracy which changes the structure of public agencies as we know them.

These assessments of street-level bureaucracy are relevant and help us expose some of the weaknesses of Lipsky's understanding.

Despite the critique, the concept of street-level bureaucrats can provide a useful analytical perspective for this thesis and the related empirical material. According to Lipsky's account, the Swedish Police Authority can be seen as a street-level bureaucracy and Swedish police officers as street-level bureaucrats. Consequently, the concept of street-level bureaucracy contributes to a theoretical perspective of how Swedish police officers exercise discretion as street-level bureaucrats. This understanding can be used to theorise how Swedish police officers, as street-level bureaucrats, understand their professional practice in relation to the framework of the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104). The ambition is to apply Lipsky's ideas of street-level bureaucracy to discern how Swedish police officers understand and describe consideration, restraint and confidence.

3.2 Emotional Labor

Sociologist Arlie Hochschild first defined emotional labor in 1983 with her book *The managed heart: commercialization of human feeling*. Since then, the concept has been advanced and applied in social research, including police research (see Martin 1999). Hochschild defines emotional labor in the following way: "This labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others...", it is the "...management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display..." (2012, p. 7). Consequently, Hochschild distinguishes between purely physical labour and emotional labor, the latter: "...calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality." (ibid.). Hochschild means that emotional labor is performed by several professions and is sold for a profit, therefore having an exchange value (ibid.). Examples of workplaces that engage in emotional labor are day-care centres, hospitals, stores, schools and banks (ibid. pp. ix-x). Therefore, the service sector can be seen as a branch of work where emotional labor is performed. In order to conform to the demands, put on these service workers, they resort to emotional acting. Hochschild differentiates between two types of acting: *surface acting* and *deep acting*. When doing surface acting, the body is the primary tool. For example, by using body language and facial expressions to convey certain emotions. However, the person acting is not actively experiencing those emotions but is rather focused on displaying them to an

audience for a certain purpose (ibid. pp. 37-38). Deep acting, however, requires more effort and focus. It is achieved when a person draws on previous emotion memories and experiences in order to imagine real emotions and consequently end up generating a more sincere emotional display (ibid pp. 38-40). For example, when an actor is faced with the task of conveying anger that actor can engage in deep acting by remembering previous occurrences or events that have caused anger. By conceptualising these angry emotions and imagining them in the moment the actor is able to actually experience real anger. By doing this, the task of conveying anger to a potential audience becomes more accessible. Furthermore, Hochschild explains that a workplace can regulate and control both the surface and deep acting of its employees, it is what she calls *institutional emotion management* (ibid. pp. 48-54). Institutional emotion management refers to the capability of an institution to actually influence how employees experience their emotions. Hochschild describes it like the following:

Officials in institutions believe they have done things right when they have established illusions that foster the desired feelings in workers, when they have placed parameters around a worker's emotion memories, a worker's use of the *as if*. It is not that workers are allowed to see and think as they like and required only to show feeling (surface acting) in institutionally approved ways. The matter would be simpler and less alarming if it stopped there. But it doesn't. Some institutions have become very sophisticated in the techniques of deep acting; they suggest how to imagine and thus how to feel. (2012, p. 49).

This institutional management is linked to what Hochschild outlines as *feeling rules*, the moral rules that direct our feelings and how we *should* feel in any given situation (ibid. pp. 56-57). Both institutional emotion management and feeling rules are relevant concepts when investigating an organisation that involves emotional labor. Therefore, these concepts of emotion management become applicable to Swedish police officers and how they exercise discretion.

3.2.1 Applying Emotional Labor

It is argued that the concept of emotional labor can be applied to the analysis of Swedish police officers and how they understand their interactions with the public. Traditionally, the notion of emotional labor has been used to analyse occupational groups that have profit-generating assignments and objectives. An example provided by Hochschild is flight attendants who, with

their hospitality, are expected to accommodate and satisfy flight passengers. This hospitality is sold as part of a service with the ambition of generating a financial profit. Here, emotional labor is part of the job description. It is expected that the flight attendants engage in emotional labor to carry out their work. Contrary to this, law enforcement and police are part of a societal institution lacking a profit-generating objective. Instead, the objective of the Swedish police is, among other things, “...to reduce crime and increase people's security.” (Polisen 2019). However, this thesis argues that instead of looking at profit-generating objectives as the motivator for emotional labor, police directives, such as the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104), can be seen as an incentive to perform emotional labor. Therefore, display rules can be identified among Swedish police officers. It is argued that the theoretical concept of emotional labor can be applied to the analysis of how these police officers understand and describe consideration, constraint and confidence.

4. Method and Material

Before moving on with the methodological choices of this thesis it may be appropriate to mention and clarify the ontological and epistemological perspectives. The ontological perspective is defined as the position this thesis has in relation to the social world it seeks to study. In other words, *what* this thesis wants to study. The ontological perspective varies depending on the research project and discipline and is described as: “...the nature of the phenomena, or entities, or social world, that I wish to investigate.” (Mason 2018, p. 4). Contiguous to the ontological perspective is the epistemological standpoint. This is the notion of *how* the ontological properties can be studied and on which principles knowledge can be produced. Alternatively explained as: “...whether and how social phenomena can be known, and how knowledge can be validated and demonstrated.” (ibid. p. 7). The ontological and epistemological position is fundamental for the research project (ibid. pp. 3-8) and is strongly linked with the research questions and aim of the study.

The research aim of this thesis is to understand how Swedish police officers understand and describe consideration, restraint, and confidence in relation to § 10 of the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104). Thus, the ontological entities of interest in this thesis are the police officers’ own understandings and descriptions. In other words, the lifeworld of the police officers. More specifically, their thoughts, memories, experiences, and rationalities related to the keywords of ‘consideration’, ‘restraint’ and ‘confidence’. The epistemological questions then relate to how these entities can be studied and how knowledge can be produced from this study. The epistemological stance of this thesis positions itself in an interpretivist perspective. This viewpoint “...emphasizes the sense people make of their own lives and experiences – [the] researcher seeks out and interprets people's meanings and interpretations.” (Mason 2018, p. 8). Meaning that I understand reality in relation to how other people make sense of their subjective experiences and understandings. For example, a police officer might tell me about a personal experience they have had, or an understanding they currently have. This does not mean I will view this experience or understanding as objective truth but rather as an interpretation situated in a social context. An emphasis is thus put on the subjective understandings of the police officer and not on an ‘absolute truth’. In order to approach and investigate the research aim with these perspectives, it is necessary to ask Swedish police officers about their understandings and descriptions. Thus, the purpose of the methodological choices is to complement these ontological and epistemological standpoints.

4.1 Methodological Choices

The methodological choices of this thesis are motivated by the research topic and aim. The ambition of the thesis is to answer how Swedish police officers understand and describe consideration, restraint, and confidence in relation to § 10 of the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104) and how these understandings and descriptions relate to the role of police officers and the theoretical notion of street-level bureaucrats. Additionally, this thesis aspires to investigate how these understandings and descriptions relate to how Swedish police officers view their own behaviour and emotions when interacting with the public. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how Swedish police officers view their own lifeworld. That is, their lived experiences and specifically their lived experience of the three keywords and § 10 of the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104). Semi-structured qualitative interviews with Swedish police officers are utilised to empirically examine this subject. The aspiration is to interpret and understand how Swedish police officers relate to the prescribed legal framework which promises to regulate their own behaviour and how they make sense of this behaviour when performing their work. The qualitative interview, and specifically the semi-structured interview, is a beneficial methodology when trying to understand the lifeworld of an informant (Kvale 2006, p. 481). Consequently, the material of this thesis builds on eight individual qualitative semi-structured interviews with Swedish police officers. This material is enabling the exploration and interpretation of Swedish police officers' understandings and descriptions. Ultimately, the material is analysed in relation to the theoretical framework to draw conclusions about these understandings and descriptions.

4.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Mason suggests that qualitative interviewing is a useful method of generating data when the researcher's ontological position is such that people's knowledge, narratives, experiences, interactions and stories are able to explain something about the social reality (2018, p. 111). This rationale is in line with the purpose of this thesis as its aim is to interpret and explain the understandings of Swedish police officers. Therefore, the officers' statements, stories and experiences are valuable points of interest. Qualitative interviewing allows the researcher to take part of, and explore, these properties (Kvale 2006 p. 481). Additionally, the semi-structured interview contributes with the advantage of both structure and flexibility in the interview situation. It provides structure by having a certain focus and set ambition with the

interview. However, it also provides flexibility by allowing the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and the interviewee to elaborate their answers.

As mentioned earlier, the methodological choice of this thesis consists of qualitative semi-structured interviews. This form of interview is put in contrast with the structured and loosely structured interviewing methods and is defined as an interview which is focused on different themes or questions that the researcher has decided on in advance (Dalen 2015, p. 34). What this means, in relation to this thesis, is that a couple of specific themes and open-ended questions have been identified in relation to the research questions. More specifically, these themes and questions are formulated based on the three keywords of consideration, restraint, and confidence. These themes and research questions have been implemented in the interview guide which is described later in this method section below heading 4.3 *Structure and Interview Process*. It is this use of an interview guide that defines the interviews of this thesis as semi-structured. The structure of the interview guide allowed the interview to be focused on the different themes and questions that needed to be covered by the interviewee (Mason 2018, p. 110). However, the unstructured characteristic of these interviews also allowed the interview to skip, but also prioritise, certain questions or themes which added a valuable fluidity to the interview process. Another beneficial aspect of the semi-structured interview is that it allowed the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and delve deeper into already established themes or explore completely new ones. Allowing the interviewees to reflect and elaborate their answers. This aspect is meaningful since this thesis derives from the perspective that: "...knowledge is situated and contextual, and therefore the job of the interview is to ensure that the relevant contexts are brought into focus so that situated knowledge can be produced." (ibid.). Likewise, this semi-structured characteristic also allows the interviewee to ask clarification or counter-questions which happened several times during the conducted interviews.

Based on these benefits stated here, in conjunction with the ontological and epistemological standpoints of this thesis, the qualitative semi-structured interview is an advantageous method for generating empirical material. However, there are also limitations associated with both a qualitative methodology and semi-structured interviews. These limitations, among others, are considered in the concluding part of this thesis below heading 6.2 *Limitations of the Thesis*.

4.2 Sampling

The purpose and aim of this thesis required sampling informants in a certain manner. The research questions of this study specifically concern Swedish police officers. Therefore, the main requirement in the sampling of informants was that the interviewees had a police degree from a police academy in Sweden. This degree and the title of ‘police officer’ in Sweden are regulated by law (SFS 2014:1105; SFS 2014:1104). According to these regulations, a person must maintain their employment as police officer in order to be considered as part of the police: “If a person specified in the first paragraph [consisting of several police titles] does not hold his or her occupational position as a police officer, legislation concerning the police officer does not apply to him or her.” (SFS 2014:1104, § 2). Therefore, another requirement for the sampling method was to only interview police officers that were actively working as police officers.

The sampling required establishing contacts with Swedish police officers and the first stages of this process began in early 2021. This involved continuous communication and networking with several gatekeepers and potential informants. The most significant obstacle concerning the sampling of informants was gaining access to them. Police officers can be viewed as a very exclusive professional group and it exists potential difficulties when trying to gain access to law enforcement (Fassin 2013, pp. 12-20). These difficulties of gaining access seem to be a persistent feature of law enforcement which might derive from the constant societal scrutiny to which the police are subjected. Fassin highlights a quote from William Westley which describes this relation:

Secrecy among the police stands as a shield against the attacks of the outside world; against bad newspaper publicity which would make the police lose respect; against public criticism from which they feel they suffer too much; against the criminal who is eager to know the moves of the police; against the law which the police too frequently abrogate. (1970, p. 111).

Despite this, several gatekeepers were contacted, by mail or phone calls, which resulted in a number of willing informants. The sample of this thesis can thus be defined as a combination of both a convenience sampling (Mason 2018, p. 78), but also a snowball sampling (Bryman 2011, p. 654) since some interviewees were able to provide contact to additional informants.

In total, eight semi-structured interviews have been conducted with different police officers holding diverse occupational specialisations (see Appendix 1). All the interviews were conducted between February and the beginning of March 2022 and lasted approximately 40-50 minutes each. The professional functions of the interviewees are diverse and include police in external services such as patrolling police, border police, district police, police managers working as coordinators and crime investigators specialising in different categories of crimes. Furthermore, the interviewed police officers all have backgrounds of working in various areas within the Swedish Police Authority. The interviewees consist of both men and women of different ages varying from 25 to 65 years of age. This also means that the professional experience varies between the informants.

The ambition of this sampling is to reach theoretical saturation. Meaning that the material has been analysed to a point where no more theoretical insights can be identified (Bryman 2011, p. 655). However, the suggestion of theoretical saturation has been described as a flawed notion since it is difficult to dispute when a certain material reaches saturation, and thus the concept can be used as an excuse to stop generating data (Mason 2018, p. 70). Keeping this in mind, this thesis interprets theoretical saturation as less definite and more fluidly as the process of understanding the material up to a desirable point where it explains something about the social reality under scrutiny. This is recognised as a more methodologically preferable position than simply reaching a sampling limit. Further, consideration of the timeframe of this thesis project and the amount of manageable material has also been treated as markers for the sampling process.

4.3 Structure and Interview Process

As previously mentioned, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with eight different police officers. After acquiring contact details through various gatekeepers, informants were approached by phone calls, short message services (SMS) or by email. The interviews themselves were conducted in a variety of ways depending on accessibility to the interviewees and their personal requests. This meant that four of the interviews were conducted via phone calls, two interviews through the video platform of Zoom (Zoom Video Communications n.d.) while the remaining two interviews were organised in person (see Appendix 1). These different ways of conducting the interviews resulted in various methodological outcomes. For example, when conducting an interview over the phone there is

a loss of potentially relevant information such as the body language of the interviewee, their facial expressions and the general atmosphere in the room. This constitutes a methodological problem since this non-verbal information could not be perceived from the four interviews that were conducted via phone calls.

Ultimately, the comfort of the interviewees, their readiness to participate in the interviews and their ability to influence the structure of the interviews was more valued than the potential loss of relevant non-verbal information. To this argument, there is also a question of ethics since an interview is a process where the interviewer requests and receives information from an interviewee (Dalen 2015, p. 42). At the same time, the interviewee does not necessarily gain anything from sharing their understandings, experiences, and stories with the interviewer (Kvale 2006 p. 483). Which is one of the reasons the power relation between interviewer and interviewee becomes asymmetrical during the interview. Another element of this power relation is that the interviewer exercises power over the interviewee by defining the conditions under which the interview can take place (Mason 2018, p. 93). This further highlights the importance of allowing the police interviewees to influence the conditions of the interview to make the process as smooth for them as possible and at the same time balancing the uneven power relation between interviewer and interviewee.

4.3.1 Interview guide

In order to maintain a relative structure to the interviews and avoid missing out on relevant themes and questions, an interview guide has been utilised during all of the eight interviews (see Appendix 2). One of the main reasons to design and use an interview guide is motivated by the research questions of this thesis. The aim is to understand how Swedish police officers conceptualise and describe consideration, restraint and confidence in relation to § 10 in the Police Regulation Act (2014:1104). This aim requires a focus on the three keywords of ‘consideration’, ‘restraint’ and ‘confidence’ while interviewing the Swedish police officers. On a concrete level, this meant formulating questions around these three keywords such as: “How would you describe consideration?” and “How can a police officer show consideration to the general public?”. Thus, the interview guide became a tool for remembering the most central themes and questions related to the aim of the thesis during the interviews (Mason 2018, p. 121). It also contributed with some form of a standardised or systematic approach to the

interview process since some key questions were formulated and asked all to all of the interviewees.

The structure of the interview guide is defined by an introduction which is intended to explain the purpose and aim of the thesis for the interviewees. This introduction is a way of informing the conditions of the interview and ensuring that the interviewee can give informed consent to participate. The next part of the interview guide contains a couple of introductory questions that are generally unambiguous and straightforward to answer. Such as: “For how long have you been working as a police officer?” and “What kind of work-related tasks have you been doing?”. The purpose of these questions was to ease the interviewees into the flow of being interviewed and to avoid more difficult and abstract questions at the start of the interview (Denscombe 2016, pp. 277-278). As the interviews progressed the interview guide provides questions which are more directly related to the research topic and aim of the thesis. This part of the interview allowed me as the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and allowed the interviewees to elaborate. Therefore, the direction of the interviews can be seen as influenced by the interviewees and their responses. For example, when one of the interviewees stated that using ‘correct language’ was a crucial part of being a police officer, I as the interviewer would pursue their willingness to talk about their language use, instead of changing the subject.

The concluding part of the interview began when the relevant themes and questions from the interview guide had been covered in an exhaustive manner. At the end of the interview, all the interviewees were asked if there was anything they wanted to add or if they felt that we had overlooked any topics or questions. This was an opportunity to evaluate the interview and bring up potentially important information. It was also a way to let the interviewees feel that they had been heard and vocalise potential opinions concerning the interview (ibid. p. 279). Because of the semi-structured structure of the interviews, the interview guide is not a word-for-word reproduction of the interviews. Therefore, the interview guide should be seen as a loose template or framework and not as a definite step-by-step guide.

Because of the flexible character of the semi-structured interview method, every interview with an interviewee becomes somewhat unique (Bryman 2011 415, p. 415). This relates to the question of reliability which Kvale (2007) argues is embedded in positivist concepts of science. The standpoint of this thesis is rather that the interview process and consequently the analysis is dependent on the unique relationship between interviewer and interviewee. Reliability in this

sense becomes an unconventional concept. Therefore, it is only reasonable that some questions asked during the interviews were unique for that specific interview. For example, follow-up questions which were necessary to ask in specific interviews. Consequently, several questions are not included in the interview guide. However, the most central themes and questions that are designed to guide the interviews are defined in the interview guide (Appendix 2).

4.3.2 Recording and Transcription

In order to recollect, sort and code the empirical material, the interviews were audio recorded. Due to a technological error related to the audio recording system, only seven out of eight interviews were fully recorded. This resulted in seven audio recordings which amassed to a total of 335 minutes or 5.5 hours of interview material. While one of the recordings was lost, I still managed to salvage some of the material from this interview by relying on my written notes which were taken during, but also directly after, the interview. As with all of the interviews, notes were taken to highlight some relevant non-verbal communication which could not be captured by the audio recordings, such as body language. Because the interviews have been conducted in Swedish, the transcriptions are also in Swedish. Therefore, quotes and excerpts from the transcripts that have made it into this thesis have been translated into English. The seven audio recordings of the interviews have been partially transcribed into written excerpts. The reason for not fully transcribing the full interviews is twofold. One of the reasons is due to the time-consuming project of transcribing (Mason 2018, p. 135; Kvale 2007, pp. 94-95; Dalen 2015, p. 69). Therefore, only certain parts of the recorded interviews have been transcribed into written text, while less relevant segments, e.g., introductory questions, have remained untranscribed. Nonetheless, it is meaningful to highlight the importance of transcribing the empirical material in qualitative research projects, as this is considered a way of familiarising with the data and a form of first-stage analysis (Dalen 2012, p. 69).

Secondly, an argument by Ripley warns us about only basing our analysis on the transcripts of audio records: “What is key to remember is that *you base your analysis on the recording and your field notes.*” (2007, p. 50). He suggests that re-listening to the audio recordings of an interview and re-engaging with that material is a more adequate method to understand the nuances of an interview and avoid one-dimensional representations (ibid. p. 59). This is the methodological viewpoint I have applied when analysing the conducted interviews. The

ambition has been to utilise the written transcripts and re-listening to the audio recordings, while also accounting for the notes taken during and after the interviews. Therefore, Ripley's suggestion is understood as a more complete method of analysing qualitative material than simply relying on transcripts. However, it is important to emphasise that audio recordings, written notes and transcripts are still only partial reconstructions of actual interviews (Mason 2018, pp. 133-134) and should be treated as such in the empirical analysis.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

When carrying out a project like this thesis, there are certain ethical considerations to acknowledge. Below, the notions of confidentiality, informed consent and epistemological ethics are discussed in relation to the methods and material of this thesis.

4.4.3 Confidentiality

Hammersly and Traianou discuss the risks of harm associated with qualitative research (2012, pp. 61-67). One of the potential harms in relation to this thesis is related to the integrity of the interviewees. If the generated material is managed irresponsibly there is a risk that the identity of the informants could be revealed. Which, in length, could affect them with certain harmful outcomes. This is clearly not desirable and should be avoided as far as possible. Thus, confidentiality becomes a central ethical notion which must be considered. Confidentiality in relation to qualitative research projects is defined by Mike Allen: "Confidentiality refers to separating or modifying any personal, identifying information provided by participants from the data." (2017, p. 227). In order to meet the requirement of confidentiality, a number of efforts have been made. Firstly, the recorded interviews have been transcribed and presented in such a way that identifying information like the mentions of names, places of work and precise ages have been excluded or modified. For example, names in the interview transcripts have been changed into pseudonyms (see Appendix 1) and the interviewees' places of work have intentionally been left out. Secondly, audio records, notes and transcriptions have been stored in such a way that unauthorised access is prevented. More concretely, this has meant that audio recordings, notes and transcripts of the interviews have been stored on private hard drives and digital platforms which require passwords to access.

These precautions are related to the storage of information and are taken to protect the confidentiality of the informants. Data breaches can and do happen (Ramakrishna 2012) and it is important to acknowledge and consider the risks of storing data on digital devices. Keeping this in mind, the main measure of this thesis to meet the requirements of confidentiality has been to treat the material from the interviews with integrity by applying efforts to protect it from unauthorised viewing.

4.4.4 Informed consent

Another ethical measure that has been considered during the writing of this thesis is the notion of informed consent (Kvale 2009, p. 87). Informed consent means, in relation to the qualitative interviews conducted during this thesis project, that the interviewee is both informed about the thesis and voluntarily agrees to be interviewed. Interviewees were informed about the general theme and purpose of this thesis during the initial contact with them. Additionally, directly before each interview was conducted a more detailed presentation of the thesis was given. This presentation included:

- Informing the interviewee that the material generated from the interview only will be used for the purpose of this master thesis.
- That information or details that have the potential to identify the interviewee will be left out or modified.
- Informing the interviewee that they could choose to end the interview at any time.
- Right before the interview each interviewee was asked if they still wanted to participate in the interview.

By including this brief checklist in the interview guide (see Appendix 2) I made sure to inform each interviewee about the thesis and ask them for consent. In addition to the points in this list, I asked each interviewee if they agreed to me recording the audio of the interview. A request which was approved by all the interviewees.

As mentioned earlier, when first approaching some of the interviewees, a snowball sampling was applied (Bryman 2011, p. 654). This means that I reached out to employees with manager positions within the Swedish Police Authority who acted as gatekeepers. Some of them were

able to ask their police colleagues if they would agree to an interview with me, which some of them would. This procedure is worth reflecting on in relation to informed consent. Kvale asks questions about who should give consent to an interview (2009, p. 87). When an interviewee, who is professionally subordinate to the gatekeeper, agrees to an interview it raises the concern that the interviewee might act on the influence of their superior, perhaps to please them. In an effort to negate this influence each interviewee was carefully asked for consent when contacting them for the first time and a second time before the interview itself.

4.4.5 Epistemological Ethics

Another ethical consideration related to the conducted interviews is how the empirical material is approached and analysed. In every research project there exists a certain responsibility towards the generation of empirical material which ultimately translates to the research process as a whole. This is what Mason calls the epistemological ethics (2018, p. 86). The epistemological ethics concerns the responsibility of qualitative researchers to apply an appropriate epistemology to their production of knowledge (ibid.). This means that even though existing ethical guidelines advise us to conduct research in a certain way, we still need to consider the ethics related to our own unique research project. To blindly follow the ethical guidelines provided by different sources and actors has the potential to harm the research process and ultimately result in certain research being privileged over other. This does not mean that ethical guidelines should be ignored but that there should be an active consideration of ethics in relation to every research project, or as Mason puts it: "...you will need to exercise situated ethical judgement..." (ibid.). For example, the decision to not insist that every interview with the police officers should be conducted in person was a result of situated ethical judgement. While there are methodological benefits of conducting an interview in person, such as being able to read body language, it might also put some strain on the interviewees. Such as being required to travel long distances to meet up or being uncomfortable participating in an interview face to face. Similarly, ethical aspects were considered when choosing to ask every interviewee if the audio of the interview could be recorded. It is reasonable to imagine that being audio recorded might generate some discomfort for the interviewee, especially when considering the storage and usage of those records. Nevertheless, an ethical judgement was made based on how the thesis could be carried out in an appropriate manner. In this case, the usefulness of recorded interviews was deemed valuable enough to record the audio of the interviews. If the interviewees would have disagreed to be recorded, I would not have insisted

on doing so. In short, the notion of epistemological ethics is a demarcation between what is ethical and what is epistemologically sound.

4.5 Method of Analysis

The empirical material generated from the semi-structured interviews has been sorted, coded and analysed through the process of thematic analysis. This means that the method of analysis has had a "...focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes.". (Guest et al. p. 10). Codes have then been developed to capture the essence of the themes. The benefit of utilising thematic analysis in this thesis is its usefulness when trying to capture complex qualitative content within a textual data set (ibid. p. 11). Practically, the use of thematic analysis has resulted in the identification of five main themes in the material. This has been achieved by listening through the audio recordings of the interviews several times and rereading the notes taken during the interview. This process was complemented by also transcribing the interviews and adding written quotes and excerpts to the already existing themes. By doing this, the five major themes were identified in the material consisting of *consideration*, *restraint*, *confidence*, *discretion*, and *emotional displays*. The three first themes were defined directly in relation to the Swedish Police Regulation Act (2014:1104). While the themes of discretion and emotional displays were defined as having an explanatory value. Thus, the five themes have been identified according to their expected analytical and explanatory relevance. In practice, this form analysis was performed by identifying when and how the interviewees choose to talk about e.g., confidence or themes related to confidence. These quotes or excerpts were then considered in relation to the theoretical framework in order to interpret and understand how the interviewees conceptualised e.g., confidence.

4.6 Reflexivity

Attempting to conduct socio-legal research involves philosophical questions of what constitutes knowledge and knowledge production. This thesis consists of a methodologically qualitative approach, which requires a philosophical consideration of how decisions in the research process are made (Mason 2018, pp. 183-184). One way to begin this consideration is to acknowledge your own attitudes towards the potential methodological problems and to be

reflexive. Ashmore addresses several aspects of reflexivity, one of which is called reflexivity as self-reference:

Social science can be considered an implicitly self-referential discourse in that if it is about humans and their social arrangements then it is (also) about those humans in those social arrangements who are responsible for the production of social science. (1989, p. 32).

By considering this definition of reflexivity it becomes clear that knowledge and knowledge production cannot be isolated from the people that produce it. Instead, we need to exercise our own reflexivity which is: “An active process of examining one’s assumptions and attitudes toward research.” (Mason 2018, p. 206). That means acknowledging my own identity and preconceptions which influence the research process as a whole. In this thesis, I have tried to frame an understanding of how Swedish police officers understand and describe consideration, restraint, and confidence in relation to § 10 in the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104). In order to be reflexive, I need to acknowledge that my background and previous experiences can influence this understanding. Most of my experiences with the Swedish police come from working with them in different professional settings. My interactions with Swedish police are defined by instances of cooperation, performing work-related tasks, exchanging information and mundane elements such as casual conversations over lunch. I have never been on the receiving end of police confrontation or reprimands. Therefore, my experiences with the Swedish Police are overwhelmingly positive. Thus, I have considered if my previous experiences with Swedish police officers have made me less critical and more indulgent towards them and their work.

Another reflexive consideration which is related to the methodology is what Denscombe calls the interviewer effect. This is the effect the interviewer’s identity might have on the interviewees and their answers (Denscombe 2016, pp. 270-271). I never hid from the interviewees that I had previously worked for the Swedish Police Authority and some of the interviewees were aware of this before the interview took place. It is possible that this detail made me appear more like a distant colleague than a suspicious university student. By extension, this might have made me look more benevolent in the eyes of the interviewees. This could have influenced how comfortable the interviewees were in sharing information with me and how sincere their answers were to my questions.

5. Analysis and Results

The purpose of this section is to present and analyse the material generated from the qualitative interviews in relation to the three research questions of this thesis. This is achieved by applying the theoretical framework presented earlier. The analysis builds on the concepts of street-level bureaucrats, provided by Lipsky (2010), and of emotional labor, presented by Hochschild (2012). It is argued that these theoretical concepts are able to explain aspects of how the interviewed Swedish police officers understand and describe consideration, restraint and confidence. Therefore, the analysis is structured by a focus on the three keywords of § 10 in the Swedish Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104). Consequently, consideration, restraint and confidence have been organised into three subheadings.

5.1 Consideration

The word consideration, in Swedish, 'hänsyn' is defined as: "... (acknowledging the importance of) moderate behavior in order to not harm or disturb the environment often meaning that one, to some extent, leaves their own interests behind..." (Svenska Akademien 2021a). This definition provides a general insight into how Swedish police officers understand consideration in relation to § 10 in the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104). Elements of 'acknowledging the importance of moderate behaviour' can be found in the transcriptions of the conducted semi-structured interviews. Interviewee Lars, a younger officer who has been working as patrolling police for two years, described consideration in relation to proportionality:

[...] but we work a lot with proportionality all the time, I can't, for example, jump on someone who steals a bike and beat the shit out of him, it is not proportionate. But if it is instead a person who has abused another just a moment ago and chooses to be agitated against me as well, it is clear that I will treat that person accordingly, after the capital of violence and all that, so to show consideration and to be considerate is always in proportion to what we need to manage, so proportionality and consideration are different terms but usually it feels like they mean kind of the same thing.

Lars explains that the ability to show consideration as a police officer is dependent on which situation he faces. Being considerate to someone who has exercised violence and is agitated is less likely because the police officer also needs to manage the underlying threat of the situation. This account given by Lars can be linked to Armenta's (2016) analysis concerning the duality between community policing and regulation enforcement. According to Armenta, police officers have ambiguous objectives since they are supposed to both provide service to citizens

as well as regulate them through the enforcement of law. Lars explain relation with different words. His ability to show consideration is dependent on which situation he faces and what is considered a proportionate response. This explanation could be interpreted as the balancing between providing service to the public by community policing and enforcing order by being authoritative. In other words, Lars might act less considerate toward a suspect of crime who exercises violence and proves to be a threat. At the same time, Lars might act more considerate and be more service-oriented toward a person who calm and show no signs of violence. Thus, showing consideration is a question of appropriateness and where situational factors are decisive. Interestingly, a different interviewee, Alex with eight years of policing experience, elaborates on this relation between consideration and proportionality:

I always start off with a nice attitude and most of my colleagues start off with a nice attitude, but if the person has a bad or shitty attitude, yes then maybe we are more strict in the beginning but if you notice that he calms down... -yes it is like, how do you say, like the string of a bow, you pull and tighten, tighten and you find the position where it is appropriate to let go, it is like a ratchet strap you can compare it with.

This 'ratchet strap' that Alex describes is referring to how he and his colleagues behave when meeting people on the job. It could be suspects, plaintiffs or simply passers-by that Alex met during his work as a neighbourhood police officer. The ratchet strap is an analogy for how he answers to and manages different attitudes and behaviours from encounters with the public. When asked about showing consideration interviewee Klara touched upon the theme of the metaphorical ratchet strap. She understands consideration in relation to continuously evaluating if coercive measures such as having handcuffs on a detainee is necessary:

...then you always have to think "okay but wait a bit now", you reflect on the situation, what is required here? Do we need to do it this way? Can we do it another way? So you have to evaluate it from time to time, yes it calms down, then maybe we do not need handcuffs anymore, so you evaluate the situation and get to think again, and then sometimes when you are in situations that are extreme with violence or whatever it is, maybe it takes a little longer before you can you can rethink the situation and then "but wait a bit here, now it has calmed down a bit" now we can let go of this and this...

According to Klara, showing consideration towards a detained person is to evaluate if an intrusive measure is necessary or can be discontinued. This is an assessment that police officers sometimes are required to make as part of their professional practice. It can be seen as part of police officers' discretion as street-level bureaucrats. Because of the specialised roles of Klara

and her colleagues, they are able to judge when to apply coercive measures and when to cease them. This is related to their encounter with the general public and the policing authority they possess. Klara, for example, acknowledges that she can use her discretion in order to avoid having handcuffs on a detainee longer than necessary and that this can be a way of showing consideration. Alex elaborates on this discretion in relation to behaviour and attitudes:

You have to be flexible; you have to be able to change, both accelerate and decelerate, oscillate kind of all the time. But I think you should treat each other with respect and the way you want to be treated back, if you are shitty and have a shitty attitude then you can count on getting it back and if you are nice you can count on getting it back, in the majority of the cases at least.

Alex describes that police officers need to have the ability to change their attitude and behaviour toward a person that they interact with. He argues that you must adjust behaviourally to the situation and that the attitude of one person will be answered in a similar manner. This is one of the recurring themes from the interviews with the different police officers. Several of the interviewees mentioned that their view of other people's behaviour will influence how they themselves will behave when encountering the public in everyday work. Interviewee Pär explains this relation similarly to Alex: "I always have the same approach, that those I meet may set the level of how I should behave towards them...". This way of describing behaviour and interactions can be compared to the moral principle of "treat others the same way you want to be treated". This understanding that some of the interviewees seem to share could be interpreted in relation to one of the strategies associated with street-level bureaucrats presented by Lipsky (2016). As introduced earlier in the theory section of this thesis, one of the strategies street-level bureaucrats adopt is to withdraw psychologically from the work they perform and reject some of the responsibility associated with that work. Alex's and Pär's understanding of interactions with the public seems to be influenced by the attitude that they will adapt their response according to how the general public treats them as police officers. As Alex says: "...if you are shitty and have a shitty attitude then you can count on getting it back and if you are nice you can count on getting it back...". This understanding suggests that Alex and Pär shift some responsibility from themselves and onto the people they interact with while performing their work.

The tenth paragraph of the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104) stipulates that Swedish police officers should act as considerately as possible, show restraint and behave in a manner

that inspires confidence when in contact with the public. By suggesting that the public has a decisive role in how the interaction with police will unfold, this responsibility is partly shifted to the people of the public. Consequently, police officers could argue that “I will act considerate, show restraint and inspire confidence when interacting with the public, but only if I am treated on the same terms.”. This could be seen as a strategy to reject some of the responsibility of the tenth paragraph of the Police Regulation Act (ibid.). It could also be seen as a mental modification of the objectives of their work so that those correspond better with their actual practice (Lipsky 2016).

A central aspect of the tenth paragraph is that the *circumstances and the situation* need to be accounted for. Thus, when Swedish police interpret the requirements placed on them, they also need to consider the circumstances of the interaction. This suggests that they, as street-level bureaucrats, have room for their own interpretation and discretion. Therefore, it could be argued that Alex’s and Pär’s attitude of “I will treat others in the same way they treat me” is a valid aspect of the Police Regulation Act (SFS 2014:1104) since the public's behaviour towards police is a circumstance of the situation. The police officers are able to motivate their actions and behaviour in relation to the circumstances of a situation. For example, if a person is having a bad attitude towards the police the officers can respond by behaving in a similar manner. This rationalisation has a parallel to police officers’ use of force. If violence is exercised against a police officer, the officer is entitled to responding with appropriate violence in order to control the situation. The quotes from Alex and Pär seem to suggest that the same conditions apply for interactions and attitudes, which could be referred to as behavioural violence. According to their understanding, when behavioural violence is exercised against a police officer, the officer is entitled to responding with similar behaviour. Thus, the police officer is somewhat liberated from the stipulation of the tenth paragraph of the Police Regulation Act (ibid.). This relation could be seen as a strategy for Alex and Pär to transfer the rules concerning physical violence to a verbal situation of behavioural violence. This alleviates the responsibility of showing consideration. According to the strategy, police officers can justify not show consideration when facing heated interactions with the public. Ultimately, this becomes a question of discretion since police officers themselves are able to motivate when to show consideration and when not to.

This form of discretion also relates to the concept of emotional labor since the police officers’ displays of emotions are defined in relation to a given situation. Alex and Pär are emancipated

from their emotional labor when suggesting that they will treat the public in the same way the public treats them. In other words, if Alex and Pär are not motivated to show consideration they are able to argue that the circumstances of the interaction prevented them from showing consideration. This is an example of how emotional labor becomes relevant to the police officers' understanding of consideration, but also restraint and confidence. An account from interviewee Lars provides another perspective:

I may not inspire confidence and show consideration for this person who is shouting at me, but I may show more consideration and inspire confidence to the general public who have their eyes on me as well, because if I stand there and just receive this shouting in my face, then the public thinks "why isn't he doing anything?". So, in this way, I may inspire confidence and show consideration for the public and not the person I meet...

This rationalisation provides insight into how police officers are aware of their surroundings when encountering the public. From Lars's point of view, police are able to show consideration and inspire confidence by managing a situation appropriately. This could mean showing the ability to take action and initiative instead of "just receiving this shouting in my face". By managing a loud and agitated person, Lars means that it is possible to show both consideration and inspire confidence in potential bystanders who are also part of the public. Another technique for showing consideration while exercising discretion is explained by Alex:

...one should always show consideration and respect. For example, if we are going to enter someone's home -or we say that you are sitting in a cafe with your family, I know that you are a criminal and I know that you usually carry a weapon, then we will not perform a stop-and-frisk on you in front of your family and search for weapons, instead we will move aside and stand behind something somewhere where you do not have to be devalued in front of your family. So, it's like, you must try showing *that* consideration for a human being...

The attempt to discreetly perform a stop-and-frisk outside the gaze of family and other onlookers is another example of how police discretion can be used in order to show consideration towards the person being inspected. Alex is aware of the potential reactions a stop-and-frisk might cause and therefore tries to reduce embarrassment and humiliation in an act of consideration. The discretion Alex exercises allow him to choose where a stop-and-frisk takes place. When choosing to perform the stop-and-frisk in a considerate way, that consideration influences how the procedure is carried out in practice. Lipsky (2016) would argue that the consideration described by Alex is able to become part of the public policy and consequently determine how a stop-and-frisk is performed. Interviewee Pär provides an

additional understanding of how police discretion can be exercised in order to show consideration:

...the police regulation act is like a complement to the police law [SFS 1984:387], but it goes hand in hand with that as well because, yes, we *can* take him down on the ground now but *should* we do it? We *may* use our pepper spray on him, but *must* we do it? I also think it has to do with consideration and the like because just because we *can* do something, does not mean that we *must*, and just because we *may* do something does not mean that we *should* do it.

Pär refers to the use of force police officers may have to utilise in certain situations. His view of showing consideration is described as the ability to separate between actions that could be exercised legally and what *should* be done. The rationale is that even when criteria are fulfilled and police may use violence as a measure, they should still restrict themselves and consider other options. Pär gives an example of this discretion:

...for example, there had been a murder of a person and we had the task to be present and provide security. His friends are there who really hate the police, who have a very bad attitude towards us, they spit towards us, not on us but towards us and blare. If it would have been a normal day, I would not have tolerated it, I would have used the thirteenth paragraph of the Police Act to remove someone -or in the worst case apprehend someone, because I do not think we should tolerate this because they show that they cannot behave in a public place, and there is a risk that they may commit a crime against us for example, but in that case, we heard that "yes, we will have to endure more today"...

This excerpt from the interview provides an example of how Swedish police officers can exercise discretion as street-level bureaucrats. It shows that even though there is legal support to remove or apprehend by force, Pär and his colleagues choose not to, in order to show consideration and acknowledge the friends of the deceased person. This description of consideration and discretion is similar to 'restraint' which is one of the other key terms in the Police Regulation Act (2014:1104).

5.2 Restraint

'Behärskning' is the Swedish word for restraint and is defined as "control over emotions" (Svenska Akademien 2021b). Prevalent in all the conducted interviews is that the interviewees have experienced emotionally intense situations in their roles as police officers. Several of the interviewees bring up emotionally demanding aspects of the police profession. Based on the interviews, announcing the death of a close relative, and being involved in cases where children

have been hurt, seem to be the most emotionally taxing tasks. These two examples were brought up by almost every interviewee as the worst possible aspects of the job. Delivering obituaries to relatives is sometimes a task assigned to Swedish police officers. Interviewee Lars explained that he has had the burden to deliver obituaries on several occasions and that the task requires him to take control of his own emotions:

...then I really must control my feelings because I need to act respectful and be the person who can -which the person in question may cry in front of or whatever it may be. I could also have broken down [emotionally] with that person, but it would probably not have been to that person's advantage...

Here, Lars acknowledges that the task of delivering the news of a deceased person requires him to manage his emotions and show restraint in the sense that he cannot allow himself to be swept away by the sorrow of the situation and break down emotionally. He suggests that the emotional needs of the person receiving the tragic news are prioritised before his own. This understanding of emotional restraint illustrated by Lars can be viewed in relation to emotional management, surface acting and feeling rules presented by Hochschild (2012). Lars restrains his emotional displays by not “breaking down” in an emotionally charged situation. He does this in order to act respectfully in front of the affected person which is part of his emotional management. However, Lars does not deny that he experiences those emotions of sadness, he acknowledges them but chooses to not display them in front of a person who, according to Lars, does not need to see him break down. This is an example of how police officers, like Lars, use surface acting in their professional practice. Lars shows an awareness of these feeling rules while delivering tragic news to the public. In this case, the feeling rules require him to not break down and act as the respectful police officer which the grieving person can cry in front of. Therefore, the management of emotions becomes an aspect of how Lars understand, but also describes restraint in relation to his professional practice. Examples of these feeling rules can be identified in other aspects of police practices. For example, interviewee Anna understands and describes restraint in relation to her professional role as an investigational director:

Restraint is probably a little more than that you do not get upset, that you do not fall into an argumentation which is seemingly unnecessary, most of the time it is -as I see restraint, in this case, is that you often come across various foul language and you are called one thing and the other and somewhere it is better to just brush it off. Control can be that you do not show emotions but that is not what I mean because you have the right to show emotions. [...] it happens that we are on cases where we are affected by sad things and then I do not think it is wrong to show emotions because you are no more than a human being,

on the other hand, to enter into an argumentation that risks causing a situation to escalate and become more violent, I can consider that unnecessary, but you are no more than human there either...

This excerpt shows that Anna is aware that there exist feeling rules that apply to police officers. She recognises that displaying emotions while being affected by tragic circumstances is not wrong. Police officers are human, and it is expected that they may show emotions in tragic situations. This attitude voiced by Anna can be put in contrast with the results reviewed in the scientific background of this thesis. As presented in the literature review, Lennie et al. (2020) describe that British police officers actively alter and suppress their emotional displays in order to not avoid showing poor professional performance and weakness associated with openly showing emotions. Contradictorily to these attitudes, interviewee Anna does not associate emotional displays as a weakness or sign of incompetence. She expresses more acceptance towards the idea of police officers showing emotions because of tragic events. This contrast hints at the possibility that Swedish police officers are more inclined to acknowledge and accepting of their own emotional displays than their British counterparts. However, to display emotions that escalate a violent situation through argumentation is seen by Anna as unnecessary. She implies that causing such an escalation by displaying emotions is the wrong thing to do. Anna describes and differentiates between justifiable and wrong behaviour; these are examples of police feeling rules. She also gives an account of how these rules are constructed and maintained by police officers:

... it's a bit of a fingertip feeling, a lot of it is based on experience. All situations are unique, but you build up your backpack [of experience] that allows you to handle a situation in a completely different way. If you have been through similar things like that -you get some tips: "this is how a colleague handles it, that was a good trick".

This quote implies that the feeling rules described by Anna are learnt from involvement with police work and by working with other police officers. She mentions that a backpack of experience is built up over time and that knowing about these rules is a bit of a “fingertip feeling”: a kind of informal rule-work based on police practice and norms. This experience of showing restraint and being able to manage emotions is perceived as an important quality while performing police work. Interviewee Ella, who has many years of professional experience as an investigator, suggests that being able to control your own emotions and being able to “bite one’s tongue” is a crucial aspect of doing interrogations. When asked, she tells me that remaining calm is important because it allows the interrogator to perform the interrogation in

the most preferred way possible. She argues that “the interrogated person wins” if you lose your temper as an investigator and that the results of the interrogation will suffer if you lose control of your emotions. This account from Ella carries resemblance to the research of policing that discusses the interrogation process as a mind game (Sausdal 2018; Stenross & Kleinmann 1986). It is possible that Ella has reformulated the interrogation process in order to find meaning in her everyday work. This understanding can also be seen as a form of emotional labor since the interrogator must maintain an external façade that conveys that you do not lose control. According to Ella this involves “...acting correctly even when being provoked verbally by the person being interrogated”. She explains the importance of not giving in to anger or frustration during the interrogation process because this will hurt the quality of the information gained from the hearing. However, when all the necessary questions have been asked and the interrogation is over it is possible for the interrogator to communicate more openly. In this way, restraining oneself can be understood as a temporary process while performing police work such as interrogations. When the interrogation is over the interrogator can choose to discontinue their emotional labor and display more genuine feelings. In this account, emotional labor is performed to restrain personal emotions in order to generate the most reliable information possible from the interrogated person as part of the investigation process. Thus, the concept of emotional labor becomes integral to the understanding of restraint.

Restraint can be understood as an important ‘tool’ that police officers learn and put in their backpacks of experience. It allows them to perform their duties and ensures the quality of their work. It is also possible to view restraint and emotional displays as valuable tools or techniques that police officers utilise. Lars explains that using emotional displays is part of a role and is a method for achieving a desired result:

...often it is some kind of acting you do, when I act in a certain way I may not -for example, if I start arguing or raising my voice against someone it does not mean that I am actually angry. I may act in my role as 'angry policeman' from time to time because the person in question should understand, but I myself am calm. Should I walk around the corner, I am myself again...

This acting described by Lars could be identified as surface acting since he is using the tone of his voice in order to convey emotions of anger and seriousness. The goal of this surface acting is to make a person understand the gravity of the situation. However, Lars is not actually angry, it is a display put on in order to accomplish certain aspects of his job. In other words, it is

emotional labor that Lars engages in. It may be viewed as a tool like any other piece of police equipment that allows police officers to perform their tasks. It is a form of emotional labor since Lars need to display certain emotions and hold back others. He needs to convey the display of an angry policeman but also conceal his true calm self. Therefore, when Lars act out his role he also controls, and consequently restrain, his more genuine emotions to achieve a desirable effect in his professional practice as police officer. From this account, actively performing emotional labor also implies the control and restrain of other, more genuine emotions. Emotional labor becomes a technique which involves restraint and thus an important aspect of how police officers both understand and describe restraint.

5.3 Confidence

The Swedish definition of the word ‘confidence’ is a “Belief that you can trust someone or something” (Svenska Akademien 2021c). This definition can be viewed in relation to a quote from interviewee Karl, a 25-year-old investigator: “You try to create a relationship with the person you are talking to. It benefits interrogation in all situations, regardless of if it’s with a plaintiff or suspect”. This comment suggests that Karl understands confidence as an important aspect of the interrogation process and thus his own police practice. He states that gaining the confidence of a person being interrogated which: “favours the hearing in all situations”. He does this by “getting to know” the respondents which allows him to establish a relationship with them. When asked how Karl “gets to know” people during an interrogation he answers:

I'm trying to start a conversation that has nothing to do with the investigation. The weather or something like that, which the person himself wants to talk more about, a regular conversation. I try to lighten the mood, you try different subjects and ask about different things and if you notice that the person in question starts talking more about it, I follow that track and ask more questions and talk more about it, get to know them.

This process of getting to know the person being interrogated seems to fulfil two important aspects of Karl’s work as a police officer. Firstly, Karl suggests that it favours the interrogation process, improving the cooperation with the person being interrogated. Secondly, it can be seen as an effort to achieve the requirement placed on police officers to inspire confidence in the public. In this case, the interrogated person might experience confidence in a police officer spending time asking about everyday conversation topics and engaging in small talk. This

approach Karl describes towards the people he interrogates can also be seen as a form of discretion. As a police officer, he is not obliged to engage in small talk, it is something he chooses to do. It is made possible because Karl enjoys certain flexibility that allows him to interpret how his work as an investigator should be performed. By making small talk and trying to lighten the mood Karl becomes the considerate street-level bureaucrat whilst also performing the work of an interrogator. This is an example of how inspiring confidence also can be understood in relation to the work of a police officer in an interrogation setting.

Another example of how confidence can be understood and described in relation to Swedish police work is provided by interviewee Albin. He has nine years of experience working as a police officer and interprets confidence as related to appearance and being presentable. Similarly, to other interviewees, he mentions that wearing the police uniform correctly is important when inspiring confidence. However, he also highlights how police officers should behave when working among the public. Specifically, the use of tobacco was brought up as an example by Albin when asked about confidence:

There is nothing that says that you are not allowed to stand and smoke a cigarette while you work, we have colleagues who are nicotinists who smoke and use *snus*³ and I personally think that it does not look good when someone is smoking a *ciggeluring*⁴ in the middle of town, I do not think it inspires confidence. If you smoke, you can smoke somewhere it is not visible...

According to Albin, a police officer is not inspiring confidence when choosing to openly smoke among the public. He explains that there is no concrete rule that prohibits him or his colleagues from smoking cigarettes while working. However, there seems to exist an informal norm concerning smoking which Albin point out. Interestingly, it is not the smoking itself that Albin understands contradicts the effort of inspiring confidence, but the *display* of smoking. As he elaborates:

I myself have been a nicotunist, but I have never smoked when the public watched me. I have definitely used snus when the public watched, but perhaps I did not stand with a *ciggeluring* in the middle of the streets and squares because that -I do not think it looks good and if I think like that because of my upbringing or if I have learnt that from other colleagues, I do not know...

³ Smokeless tobacco also known as snuff

⁴ A playful Swedish word for cigarette

Here, Albin makes a clear distinction between the two different forms of tobacco use. Smoking a cigarette is not appropriate when trying to inspire confidence in the general public. However, Albin identifies snus, which is less obvious and a more discreet form of tobacco use, to not conflict with the process of inspiring confidence. Thus, Albin does not identify the tobacco use itself as harming, but the act of smoking in itself and the impression it portrays for the public eye. Albin's views on smoking tobacco can be interpreted from a perspective of surface acting and emotional displays (Hochschild 2012). The stipulation of inspiring confidence is stated in the Police Regulation Act (2014:1104). This can be viewed as a legal incentive for Swedish police officers to act in a certain way when encountering and interacting with the public. According to Albin, the act of smoking a cigarette portrays a certain image or display that is not compatible with the aspiration of inspiring confidence of the police. He suggests that police should abstain from using tobacco when the public is present and able to observe them. However, he is only concerned with the surface level of nicotine use, the use that the public is able to see. He expresses an awareness of the display of smoking cigarettes and although smoking is not strictly emotional labor the act of smoking still mediates an impression. Thus, Albin's understanding of confidence is related to how police display themselves. This includes both how police officers wear their uniforms and how they choose to use nicotine.

Another theme which could be discerned in the interviews relating to confidence is language. Interviewee Anna explains that inspiring confidence includes using correct language that each individual person understands:

... you make yourself understood in a simple way, to not use difficult words is also such a thing, for example, bureaucratic language and formal Swedish, not everyone will understand that. There is an expression called "talk to farmers in the way farmers do". It is like that; you must try to explain and sometimes it can be difficult. I experience this myself when I try to speak English, sometimes I have to use certain bureaucratic terms and I have a hard time explaining them...

Choosing to use both correct and understandable language becomes a technique for police officers to inspire confidence in the people they interact with. According to Anna, this seems to be especially important when talking to suspects deprived of liberty, which is a common occurrence in her role as an investigational director. To make yourself understood and to make the suspect understand their situation is an important aspect of Anna's work. She argues that:

It is possible to instil confidence by explaining why we do certain things, for example, that “we have made this decision after these circumstances and therefore this will happen now”, and that will perhaps make people become more comfortable with why we do certain things.

Drawing on this account it is possible to identify the use of understandable language as an approach to inspiring confidence. Anna recognises the suspect’s need for information and suggests that being able to explain and make people understand police procedures is a way to establish confidence in the police. Similarly, interviewee Ella states that using proper language and informing people with correct information is a way of inspiring confidence. An example that she frequently encounters in her work as an investigator is witnesses who wish to testify but also want to remain anonymous. According to Ella, leaving a testimony anonymously is not legally possible and therefore she is obliged to inform the witness of this information. This is an example of how Ella, as a street-level bureaucrat, decides to inform a witness on the legal conditions of the investigation. Another theme Ella brings up during the interview which relates to confidence is her obligation as a police officer to report and prevent crime even when outside working hours. According to § 9 in the Swedish Police Law (1984:387), police officers are obligated to report crime. However, Ella explains that she views this obligation in a critical light. She argues that, as a police officer, she must value her own spare time by separating work from leisure. In conjunction with this statement, she tells me the story of how she handled a particular situation during one of her days off work. Her story consists of a teenage boy who was driving a vehicle in both a dangerous and illegal manner in the neighbourhood where Ella lived. Instead of reporting the incident to the police, Ella chose to first talk with the boy himself and later his parents, highlighting to them the possible consequences of his actions. Ella acknowledges that maybe she should have reported the incident but choose to handle the situation differently. She argues that confidence can be established under such conditions as well. Ella’s account is an example of how confidence can be interpreted and how a police officer can exercise discretion as a street-level bureaucrat.

6. Conclusion

In this part of the thesis, I intend to summarize and conclude the content and results of my writings. This is achieved by firstly addressing the three research questions directly, answering them by drawing on the analysis and results presented above. Secondly, the limitations of the thesis are considered and discussed. In this same segment ideas for future research are suggested.

6.1 Answering the research questions

To concentrate the aim of this study, three research questions have been formulated. In order to answer these questions adequately each of them will be addressed, starting with the first question: *How do Swedish police officers understand and describe consideration, restraint and confidence in relation to § 10 in the Police Regulation Act?*

The material generated from the qualitative interviews and the analysis presented in this thesis show that Swedish police officers have a certain understanding of consideration, restraint and confidence in relation to § 10 in the Swedish Police Regulation Act (2014:1104). Although the interviewees did not know the tenth paragraph word for word, they all were aware of its existence and could relate to it through their own professional practice. Every interviewee also had their own descriptions and understandings of the three keywords and could relate to them when talking about their role as police officers. The results and analysis show that consideration is understood and described in relation to proportionality and discretion. In turn, proportionality and discretion is related to the duality of police work described by Armenta (2016). The ambiguity can be derived from the contradictory objectives of police officers who both need to provide service and enforce order. The ratchet-strap is used as an analogy for this relation. Meaning that police officers will adjust their behaviour and treatment of the public depending on how the situation and interaction look like. If the current situation calls for it, the police will be stricter and implicitly there will be less room for showing consideration; the ratchet-strap will tighten. This relation can also be interpreted as a justification strategy used by police officers in order to emancipate themselves from emotional labor and not show consideration. This is achieved by transferring the rules and mindset concerning physical violence to situations that involve other forms of disturbances, such as verbal violence or unpleasant attitudes, theorised as behavioural violence.

However, if a situation is calmer there will be more opportunities to act considerate and the ratchet-strap can be allowed to be loosened. In this way, showing consideration was described in relation to the coercive measures Swedish police officers have at their disposal in order to perform their work. To actively evaluate and ultimately choose to abstain from using a specific coercive measure such as handcuffs on a suspect was described as a form of showing consideration. Just because a coercive measure *can* be utilised legally does not mean that it *should* be utilised. To recognise this as a police officer is one way of understanding consideration. Additionally, consideration is also understood and described in relation to how coercive measures are performed. The example given in the analysis is the discretion police officers exercise while choosing to not perform stop-and-frisks on a suspect in front of their families or other onlookers. Instead, stop-and-frisks can be carried out more discreetly behind a car or building where the suspect avoids views from the public. This form of discretion is described as a method of showing consideration to the people police officers interact with during their work.

When asking the interviewees how they understand and describe restraint, a prevalent theme was the managing of their own emotions. In the analysis, examples of emotional labor are identified in the ways the police officers understand restraint. Part of the excerpts from the transcribed interviews suggests that the interviewees will hold back and control genuine emotions of sadness and hardship but also anger and frustration. This regulation of emotions is associated with emotionally intense situations or tasks that police officers deal with during their work, such as leaving obituaries and being involved with vulnerable crime victims.

However, showing restraint as a police officer is not only understood as holding back emotions. There is an awareness of certain feeling rules which prescribes how, and which emotions should be displayed. Displaying feelings of sadness in certain emotionally intense situations is understood and accepted as a human trait. Comparatively, to escalate a violent situation through emotional argumentation is described as unnecessary and where restraint should be exercised. These feeling rules are seen as normative and described as a fingertip feeling learned through the experience of working as a police officer. The regulation of emotions is also described as a form of acting that the police officers engage in. This acting can be understood as surface acting and emotional labor. The police officers use emotions to convey a message or display themselves as authoritative. This could be seen as a different form of emotional labor where the aim is to perform police work while interacting with the public. The traditional

understanding of emotional labor is defined as service workers aspiring to gratify a paying clientele. Comparatively, Swedish police officers lack this profitmaking ambition. Instead, they use emotional labor in order to perform certain aspects of their work.

The third keyword, *confidence*, is described in relation to how police officers present themselves but also how they interact with the public and use discretion as street-level bureaucrats. An emphasis was placed on the police uniform and that it should be worn correctly in order to inspire confidence. Secondly, visible tobacco use among police officers was highlighted as an example where confidence in the police is counteracted. More importantly, this highlights the idea that display is something Swedish police officers reflect upon, especially on a surface level. These displays are then understood as influencing the overall confidence the public have in the Swedish Police Authority as a law enforcement institution. Additionally, correct, and understandable language is understood as an aspect of inspiring confidence. Making a suspect or other parts of the public understand police procedures that concern them is one way of establishing confidence. Confidence can also be interpreted in relation to discretion when police choose to handle a situation with a specific approach. This is the case in the example provided by interviewee Ella who chose a more informal approach to handle illegal driving in her neighbourhood. These conclusions can be put in relation to the quantitative research of the public's trust in the Swedish police, reviewed in the scientific background of this thesis. The numbers presented by Medieakademin (2022) and Falk (2021) show that the public have high trust in the Swedish police. These results might give an indication that Swedish police officers, and the Swedish Police Authority in general, are doing a good job of inspiring confidence in the general public.

The second research question is formulated as follows: *How do these understandings and descriptions relate to the role of Swedish police as street-level bureaucrats?* By identifying the interviewed police officers as street-level bureaucrats, an additional perspective of theorising is made possible. Lipsky's account of street-level bureaucrats offers an explanation model which expands the recognition of how Swedish police officers understand and describe consideration, restraint, and confidence. The results from the empirical material and the analysis show that the interviewees can be recognised as street-level bureaucrats. An example is that discretion can be exercised in order to show consideration. The conducted interviews show that the interviewees are aware of the effect coercive police procedures have on detainees and suspects. One way of showing consideration as a police officer is to continuously reflect

and evaluate if a certain coercive measure should be used and how it is used. For example, the measure of removing handcuffs from a detainee. Such a decision needs to be evaluated and if the measure is realised, there needs to be a motivation behind the decision. It is the police officer's own motivations and their discretion as street-level bureaucrats that determines this decision. As with all street-level bureaucrats the police officers have laws, regulations, and superiors with which they need to comply. However, because of the specialised role of police officers, they are able to evaluate and motivate such decisions on the spot. There are seldom any superior police chiefs or lawyers present outside on the streets where most interactions between police and the public take place. If an arrest happens and a suspect is put in handcuffs, it is the police officers who perform the arrest who are responsible. Similarly, it is their actions and motivations which are decisive. It is true that wrongful arrests can be investigated, and police officers can be convicted of misconduct. However, police officers, as street-level bureaucrats, have a great influence on how public policy is implemented in practice. Their influence is so great that the actions they carry out effectively become the policy. In this way, their understanding of consideration, restraint, and confidence in relation to the Police Regulation Act (2014:1104), actually becomes part of the policy. This is not to deny the influence and impact legislation has on police practices from a top-down perspective. However, when a police officer chooses to put handcuffs on a person, that action, in that particular situation, become public policy. Similarly, when a police officer chooses to perform a stop-and-frisk discreetly in order to show consideration for the suspect, that becomes part of the policy. It is an example of how police officers, as street-level bureaucrats, impact real policing procedures. Consequently, Swedish police officers are able to exercise discretion when understanding consideration, restraint and confidence. Thus, how they choose to show consideration, restraint and inspire confidence is highly influenced by their decision making as street-level bureaucrats.

The third research question is: *How do these understandings and descriptions relate to how Swedish police view their own behaviour and emotions when interacting with the public?* The interviewed police officers demonstrate that they are aware of their own behaviour and how this may affect their work, especially in interactions with the public. By applying the theoretical concept of emotional labor this relation is possible to analyse. The analysis of the empirical material indicates that the interviewed police officers engage in emotional labor. They do this by engaging in surface acting which is performed to carry out certain police procedures. A

difference from the traditional understanding of emotional labor is that police officers do not perform emotional labor in order to generate a monetary profit. Rather, emotional labor, and specifically surface acting, is performed to accomplish certain work-related tasks. For example, interviewee Lars explained that he uses displays of anger to convey a serious impression. He does this by verbally arguing and raising the tone of his voice when interacting with people. According to Lars, this is a technique for expressing the gravity of a situation and making people understand information. Emotional labor can also be used by police officers to show consideration and inspire confidence in the public. For example, police officers can use emotional labor to act authoritatively and counter a loud and agitated person in a public space. By doing this the police officers can utilise the heated situation partly as a performance to show the public onlookers that they as police are able to handle the situation adequately. This becomes a form of authoritative display that can make the public gain confidence in the police as a law enforcement institution. This kind of emotional labor and surface acting is performed as part of the police profession and could also be seen as a form of institutional emotion management. For example, when police officers are tasked with delivering death obituaries, they engage in emotional labor in order to hold back their genuine displays of feelings. The interviewees acknowledge that giving in to their own emotions in such a situation would counteract their role and assignment as police officers. This is an example of how the police as an institution influence the emotional labor of individual police officers. Although these findings indicate that Swedish police officers engage in emotional labor, there is less evidence of emotional deep acting in the empirical material. The notion of emotional deep acting among Swedish police officers could be explored further in future research projects.

6.2 Limitations of the Thesis

When discussing the limitations of this thesis a particular notion is important to consider. This notion has been referred to as *the code of silence* (Kutnjak et al.). The code of silence is defined as: "...the informal prohibition of reporting misconduct by fellow police officers..." (ibid. p. 172). It refers to a culture of silence among police officers which function is to protect police colleagues and overlook accountability of misconduct. This culture of silence has been addressed earlier in this thesis and there exist several reasons for police officers to safeguard the integrity of their work. Partly because Swedish police officers often work with sensitive information which requires them to be conscious of confidentiality. Information that police officers acquire through their work is sometimes considered valuable by journalists, media, the

public and criminal organisations. Therefore, it can be assumed that Swedish police officers have developed a default suspicion toward people that wish to obtain information from them. It is not implausible to consider that the police officers interviewed in this study have been restrictive in sharing information with me as an outsider. When evaluating the results of this thesis it is necessary to be aware of this relation. It is very possible that the interviewees have chosen to speak about specific themes or subjects while avoiding other topics. This could be based on the willingness of police officers to protect their own and their colleagues' integrity.

Similarly, topics such as emotions, behaviour and personal experiences can be of sensitive nature. In this thesis, the objective has been to specifically examine some of these themes. During the interviews I have asked questions which can be interpreted as very personal. I have also received answers and information that build on very personal experiences. Therefore, it is necessary to ask the question: can it be expected that the informants are comfortable enough to provide sincere information?

Finally, methodological limitations are worth mentioning. One of these limitations refers to how the material used in this thesis has been generated, recorded, stored, and analysed qualitatively. Recordings and transcriptions of interviews should always be considered partial reconstructions of the actual interviews (Mason 2018, pp. 133-134). To assume, inappropriately interpret or overanalyse the material constitutes methodological caveats. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the methodological limitations of conducting qualitative interviews and the kind of information that can be generated. Similarly, the qualitative methodology utilised in this thesis depends on a subjective interpretation of the empirical material. Bryman highlights this critique of qualitative research for being too impressionistic and subjective by nature (2011, p. 368). This subjectivity and relatively unstructured approach to conducting research create difficulties in replicating qualitative research projects. A consequence of this is that the research conducted in this thesis has low reliability in the sense that it is difficult to replicate it and arrive at the same results. Mason (2018) is wary of discussing reliability in this manner, distinguishing between quantitative reliability from qualitative reliability. However, I will still consider the question of reliability to be a methodological limitation worth mentioning in this section.

6.3 Future Research

A focus of this thesis has been to gain an understanding of how Swedish police officers understand and describe consideration, restraint, and confidence in relation to § 10 in the Swedish Police Regulation Act (2014:1104). Thus, the aim has been to understand how Swedish police officers interpret and rationalise a legal regulation of behaviour. This has involved an investigation of how Swedish police officers describe and understand the keywords of the tenth paragraph and how those keywords relate to their professional practice. A suggestion for further research in this field would be to ethnographically explore how this professional understanding is translated and transformed into actual practice. As a suggestion, this could be done through an ethnographic field study where police officers are observed performing their everyday work. This kind of research would offer a different and complementary perspective of how Swedish police officers understand, but also perform consideration, restraint, and confidence. Another research scope which has not been explored in this thesis is a gender perspective. A future research suggestion could be to investigate if there exist any differences in how male and female police officers understand the legal framework of behaviour. It could also be empirically worthwhile to qualitatively interview an even number of male and female police officers and analytically compare this material. For example, what expectations do e.g., female police officers experience concerning showing consideration, restraint, and confidence in comparison to male colleagues?

These are subjects that would contribute to the understanding of how police officers interpret and rationalise the legal regulation of behaviour. Ultimately, I hope that future socio-legal projects choose to pursue and explore these topics since they are of great societal interest. I also believe that the police as an institution reflects today's society in a completely unique way, which is why socio-legal research has much to gain by studying policing.

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Appendix 1: interview overview

Interviewees (pseudonyms)	Age (rounded off)	Years of experience	Position/role	Interview length (minutes)	Interview method
Alex	35	1	Neighbourhood police	51	Zoom
Pär	35	2	Investigator	44	Telephone
Lars	30	2	External police*	41	Zoom
Karl	25	2	Investigator	43	Telephone (no recording)
Klara	40	12	Investigational director	50	Telephone
Anna	40	15	Investigational director	51	Telephone
Ella	65	40	Investigator	52	In person
Albin	35	9	Superintendent	48	In person

* External police in this case refers to the Swedish designation ‘ingripande verksamhets polis’ (IGV), who are uniformed and work externally by e.g patrolling and responding to emergency calls.

Appendix 2: interview guide

1. Introduction

- Introduce myself and explain why I have reached out to the interviewee.
- Provide the interviewee with information concerning the interview and explain the aim and purpose of the thesis.
- Explain that the material generated from this interview will only be used for the purpose of the thesis and information that can risk the anonymity of the interviewee will be edited or removed from the presentation of the results.
- Lastly, explain that the interviewee will be able to cancel the interview at any time.
- Make sure that the informant still wants to partake in the interview and ask for consent to record the audio of the interview.

2. Introductory Questions

- For how long have you worked for the police as a police officer?
- How come you choose to train to be a police officer?
- What have you been working with within the police?
- How do you encounter the general public in your everyday work?
- What do you think is important when police encounter the general public?
- In what different situations can police encounter the general public?

3. More Specific Questions

- Do you know of any guidelines of how the police should encounter the general public?
- Does the police academy training prepare you for encounters with the general public?
- Is there any other way that new police learn how to encounter the general public?
- Do you know about any internal social norms related to how police should encounter the general public?
- How do you relate to your own behaviour when you encounter the general public?
- Do you know about the police regulation act?
- How would you interpret: consideration, restraint and confidence in relation to your profession?
- Are there any strategies that you use when you encounter the general public?
- Do you feel that there are expectations on your behaviour as a police officer?
- What role does the law have in your everyday work as a police officer?

4. Concluding Part of the Interview Guide

- I do not have any more questions to ask you, is there anything that you would like to add or that you feel have been left out during the interview?
- Do you know of any colleague who would be interested in being interviewed by me?
- Thank you for your participation.