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Exploring the nexus between law enforcement strategies and the increased feelings of insecurity among citizens in Östra Göinge municipality

- *The functions and dysfunctions of the law*

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Abstract

While the Swedish Police, in the geographical area in which they operate, as well as each municipality in Sweden, are responsible for making their residents feel secure, this thesis examines the causes behind the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the link between the practices of the local police in Östra Göinge and Östra Göinge municipality, which are governed by legal directives, and the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality. The results from the yearly conducted security measurement survey in Sweden provided a representation of the below the national average low crime rate and the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality in recent years. However, as the survey did not provide information about the causes behind the increase in feelings of security among residents, semi-structured interviews were conducted with residents and police officers of the municipality, to gain a wide-ranging picture of the problem.

The theoretical framework of this thesis, namely Robert K. Merton's theory about manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions was used to analyze the findings. The findings indicate that the main reasons behind the increased feelings of insecurity are the ineffective and dysfunctional practices of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality. The findings also indicate that media's depiction of society, new ways of communicating due to technological developments, and residents fear of future exposure to crime, are other possible reasons behind the problem.

The findings suggest that the local police and Östra Göinge municipality must alter their current, dysfunctional law enforcement practices. While both the local police and Östra Göinge municipality should increase their presence among the residents, especially at bus stops and squares, the local police should also, together with other relevant institutions, seek to provide more lighting and if possible, put up cameras in the municipality. Since the increased feelings of insecurity seems to also be a consequence of an unsuccessful integration of migrants in Östra Göinge municipality, due to a lack of insufficient information and knowledge about the Swedish society and its laws, the municipality should mainly focus on the integration of migrants in the municipality. They should provide sufficient information and knowledge about the Swedish society, its laws and culture, to the migrants throughout their integration process, to facilitate a successful and effective integration of the migrants.

Key words: Municipality, law, police, practices, functions, dysfunctions, insecurity, migration, integration

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1. Introduction

To ensure that municipalities in Sweden work in an efficient and knowledge-based way with questions regarding crime-prevention and residents security in their municipalities, the Swedish Government has proposed that the work against crime and security-related issues which municipalities conduct should be regulated by law. According to the new municipality law, which applies from the first of July 2023, the municipalities should be responsible for providing social order and prevent crime in their geographical area and produce a situational picture regarding the problems in their municipality, a situational picture which provides the basis for taking decisions on an action plan and the measures needed to tackle problems in their municipality (SFS 2023:196). One of the regulated tasks presented in the Government's bill, is that each municipality should coordinate their work against crime with other relevant actor's, such as the Police in respective municipality (SFS 2023:196 10§). The law would ensure that each municipality in Sweden take on most of the responsibility of fighting crime and security-related issues in their municipalities, while simultaneously cooperating with the local police and other relevant institutions.

Simultaneously, the Police in Sweden should, both on its own and in cooperation with other relevant actors, contribute to reducing crime, and, most important for this study, follow changes in society which has an influence on the social order and security of the residents of a society, as well as cooperate with the local community to meet local needs (SFS 1984:387). In other words, while the regulation which the police work by already states that the police must work to meet local needs, such as making residents feel secure on a local level, the upcoming law will ensure that municipalities in Sweden also work to prevent crime and provide its residents with feelings of security.

In the light of the upcoming law which ought to ensure that municipalities take responsibility for and work to reduce crime and increase residents' feelings of security, as well as the regulated task of the police to ensure residents feelings of security, the residents feeling of security has decreased in Östra Göinge municipality (LPO-Hässleholm, 2022). In line with regulations, the police in Sweden should work knowledge-based, locally, and problem-oriented, according to, inter alia, the SARA-model (PM 2022:12). Working according to the SARA-model (Scanning-Analysis-Response-Assessment), means that the Police should first map the problem(s) to address and then make an analysis of the problem(s) to find causes of

the problem(s). Then, the Police will adjust their work to respond to and remedy the problem(s), which will be followed by an assessment of how the Police must respond (PM 2022:12). The Police in Östra Göinge municipality, which proceed from the local police in Hässleholm, have done the scanning part of the process and detected that there has been a worrying trend, that the residents of the municipality have felt increasingly insecure, especially during the year period 2015-2022, simultaneously as the exposure to crime has not increased during the same year period. A negative trend which this socio-legal study explores, to gain a deeper understanding of the problem.

While the Police in Östra Göinge municipality has, and the municipality will have a legally regulated task to ensure that their residents feel secure, the purpose with this explorative socio-legal study is to analyze and come to a greater understanding of why this problem has arisen in the municipality in recent years and how it can be understood in relation to law enforcement practices of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality. The hope is that the findings of this investigation will also serve as a basis for the local police in Östra Göinge municipality and Östra Göinge municipality, as the two institutions have a legal obligation to provide security to the residents. Based on the purpose of and aim with this study, as well as the results of the literature review conducted in relation to this thesis, the research questions of this thesis are:

- *According to police officers and residents of the municipality, why has residents' feelings of insecurity increased among the residents in Östra Göinge municipality during the year period 2015-2022, even though the crime rate has not increased in the municipality?*
- *How can the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality be understood in relation to law enforcement practices?*
- *How can the Police in Östra Göinge and Östra Göinge municipality work in order for their residents to feel more secure?*
- *What can this study offer to socio-legal studies concerning law enforcement, crime, and security?*

The following chapter will provide background information on and around the topic investigated in this study (see 2. *Background*). Afterwards, the results of the semi-systematic literature review conducted to find relevant literature on the topic and the gap identified in the

field will be presented (see 3. *Literature review*). Thereafter, I present the theoretical framework of this study (see 4. *Theory*). In the fifth chapter, I discuss the methodology adopted, ethical issues, and the data collection process (see 5. *Methodology*). Lastly, the findings of this study will be presented, analyzed, and discussed (see 6. *Analysis*), before conclusions will be drawn (see 7. *Conclusion*).

2. Background

Östra Göinge is a municipality located in northeastern Skåne county, Sweden's southernmost county. The municipality consist of seven urban areas, where the central town is Broby, which is also the town where the police in the municipality have their office. The municipality borders the municipalities Kristianstad in the south and southeast, Hässleholm in the west and Osby in the north. The municipality has approximately 15 000 residents and four out of five residents live in one of the larger villages (Östra Göinge, 2023). Every year since 2006 the Swedish Police has assigned BRÅ (Brottsförebyggande rådet) with the task to conduct a national security survey. The survey is conducted on a national, regional and on a local level, where each municipality in Sweden is included in the survey. Every year, randomly chosen Östra Göinge residents receive a questionnaire to their home with questions linked to security (Östra Göinge, 2022). The questions mainly revolve around exposure to crime, as well as perceptions and feelings linked to living and being in the municipality in different contexts. Last year, questionnaires were sent out to 900 residents, while it was sent out to 600 the years before 2022, and of those 900 which received the survey last year, 64 percent, 576 of the residents answered. The results of the yearly conducted security measurement survey by the Police shows that while the residents exposure to crime has been more or less on the same level since 2007, which is the same level as the national average, the residents of Östra Göinge municipality have been more worried of being exposed to crime and felt more insecure during the year period 2015-2022, in comparison to the years prior to those years (Appendix 1). The feeling of insecurity among residents has constantly increased and gone from not being a tangible problem at all before 2015, to being a particularly noticeable problem between the years 2015-2018, and a fairly tangible problem during the year period 2018-2022 (Appendix 1). This explorative study intends to explore why the insecurity has increased among the residents in recent years from their and police officers' viewpoints, simultaneously as the exposure to crime has been on the same level as it was before 2015.

Considering the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in the municipality, the regulated task the police must make residents feel secure, and the new municipality law, this thesis investigates the causes behind this negative development in Östra Göinge, in order for the results to hopefully assist the local police in the municipality and Östra Göinge municipality as they take on adequate measures to make their residents feel secure.

The semi-systematic literature review conducted in this study has shown that studies revolving around the link between people's feeling or perceptions of safety and crime in a community, is a topic which there has been rather extensive research about. However, a study as this one has not been conducted before in the existing field, which the following chapter will demonstrate.

3. Literature review

To find, evaluate and summarize relevant literature on the issue investigated in this thesis, a semi-systematic literature review was conducted. The literature review enables a researcher to develop knowledge about the investigated field and discover a knowledge gap in the existing field (Hart, 2018; Efron & Ravid, 2019). Banakar (2019) argues that the literature review is a fundamental segment in research, as it helps the researcher to find the gap in the research field and to guarantee the feasibility of a research issue.

To find relevant literature on the topic the databases Scopus and Web of Science were used. Scopus has the largest abstract and citation of peer-reviewed literature and has more titles in comparison to the Web of Science (WoS), while WoS is more all-encompassing in terms of citations. Therefore, as the databases complement each other well, these two databases were chosen. Boolean search methods (AND/OR/NOT) were used to search for literature which had been published between year 2015 and 2022, both in the Swedish and English language, literature that included one or more of the keywords in the search that was used and is presented below:

((secur* OR insecur*) AND (feel* OR perce*) AND (municipalit* OR local*) AND (crim* OR polic*))

The first search on literature, in both databases, was conducted on both the Swedish and English language and focused on only finding relevant literature on the topic in the Swedish context, therefore, “*AND (Swed*)*” was added to the search string presented above. The amount of relevant literature in and linked to the Swedish context was eight in total, which were exported to a folder in Zotero named “Swedish literature”. Afterwards, using the search string presented above, a search was made in Scopus and Web of Science for relevant literature in an international context. The search generated a total of 297 articles in Scopus and 176 in the Web of Science, a total of 473, which were then exported to Zotero.

Afterwards, a first screening of the 473 articles was conducted, where the title of each article was read, to distinguish relevant from irrelevant literature. The relevant literature was placed in a separate folder, as well as the irrelevant. This was followed by a second screening in which each of the remaining 50 articles were subject to a skim-reading and after skim-reading all of them, eight of them were relevant for this thesis, which meant that the total number of relevant articles was 16. The snowball method was also embraced in this thesis during the literature review. By searching through the reference list of the relevant articles generated from the literature review, the researcher searches for other relevant literature, a method which according to Wohlin (2014) plays a significant role in the literature search, since it enables the researcher to find relevant literature which might not have been included during the database searches. However, using the snowball method did not lead to the discovering of other relevant literature and the 16 relevant articles found have been summarized and will be presented below. Afterwards, in the end of this chapter, the identified research gap will be presented and how this socio-legal study contributes to the existing research field.

Community and problem-oriented policing

Spasic and Radovanovic (2019) argue that the police hold the central position when it comes to nourishing the feelings of security¹ of residents in the local area in which they operate. Community policing is a qualitatively new technique which has its foundation in that the citizens of a neighborhood cooperate with the police to improve feelings of security and

¹ While two searches were made, were one of the searches included the search word ‘safety’, and the other the word ‘security’, the searches generated from the searches when the word ‘security’ was used generated far more relevant search results. Hence, the relevant search results from the search which included the word ‘security’ were used as a basis for this literature review.

decrease the crime rate in the neighborhood (Reisig, 2010). 750 residents from five Serbian communities which have embraced community policing as a part of the regulation which they work by, were interviewed regarding their security needs. The findings indicated that the residents of the communities were worried about the magnitude and intensity of various forms of violence and social conducts which endanger the security of their families. They view the police as a resource which are responsible for fulfilling and solving their security requirements. The residents mainly consider lack of interdepartmental collaboration internally in the police services and the lack of participation of the local community when problems must be solved, to be main reasons behind the problem (Spasic and Radovanovic, 2019). Spasic and Radovanovic's (2019) study is quite like this thesis, however, it differs in that it asks residents whether their security needs have been fulfilled or not, while this thesis first describes how the security needs of Östra Göinge municipality have not been fulfilled, and thereafter seeks to explore the causes through interview with residents. Also, the five communities which had embraced community policing where communities which had high crime rates, while the crime rate in Östra Göinge is low and has not increased in recent years, simultaneously as residents' feelings of insecurity has.

Community policing was also examined in two distinct districts in Ninawa province in Iraq, a Sunni district in Mosul, and a mainly Christian town in a multi-ethnic area. Watkins, al-Jerba and al-Delaimi (2022) interviewed 37 respondents which represented a variety of local interests, to explore Iraqis thoughts about community policing (Watkins, al-Jerba and al-Delaimi, 2022). The results of Watkins, al-Jerba's and al-Delaimi's (2022) study indicated that even though police operations might influence the way stakeholders view the police, the trust which the public have in the police is also a function of the image of the police and their actual work. The findings also indicated that feelings of insecurity among residents in the investigated areas could be a consequence of the low levels of trust in the police and due to the police not doing enough to protect their citizens and make them feel secure. While the study brings up security issues among residents and their thoughts about the police work, it does not talk about whether the crime rate is low or high in the investigated areas, and whether there is a gap between crime rate and perceptions or feelings of insecurity.

Manning and Fleming 's (2017) interdisciplinary approach to study individuals' perceptions of property crime and self-reported life satisfaction in relation to actual crime rates also showed the need of embracing community policing (Manning and Fleming, 2017). The economic model indicated that residents in a local space felt more insecure because they perceived that there was more crime than there actually was, and the life satisfaction model indicated that residents' perceptions of crime had more influence on individuals' well-being and life satisfaction than actual crime rates. Manning and Fleming (2017) study demonstrate that if community policing is embraced, the feeling of neighborhood cohesion strengthens among residents of a neighborhood, and if there is a strong, trustful relationship between police and the community, it can lead to a decrease in negative perceptions of crime (ibid, 2017). While Manning and Fleming embrace an interdisciplinary approach, it is a mix of economics and psychology, different from this socio-legal study. Additionally, Manning and Fleming's (2017) study do not include interviews, which leads to a lack of knowledge on residents' viewpoints on the issue.

On the other hand, Alda and Dammert's (2019) study about police efficiency and policing styles in Peru's municipalities demonstrated the need to embrace a problem-oriented style of policing, instead of community policing. Like this thesis, a security measurement survey was used, however, in this thesis it is used to demonstrate the gap between the crime rate and residents' feelings of insecurity in Östra Göinge municipality. Alda and Dammert's study was mainly conducted to understand if the police must alter their work to be more efficient and increase residents' feelings of security, and if they must embrace problem-oriented policing. The results of Alda and Dammert's (2019) study indicated that only six of the municipalities were efficient enough and embracing problem-oriented policing could help improve the efficiency of the police and increase the safety in a municipality (Alda and Dammert, 2019). Intercessors for problem-oriented policing, claim that if the structure of an organization is flexible and dynamical, it enables the organization to deal with external influences in a more efficient way, and helps the organization focus more on identifying and solving problems, instead of merely dealing with different crimes and incidents (Burton and McGregor, 2018; Lawrence and McCarthy, 2013). The Police in Sweden should also work by problem-oriented policing (PM 2022:12), by the so-called SARA-model. The police in Östra Göinge have identified the problem, and this thesis is a part of two of the four steps in the SARA-model, to analyze the identified problem and suggest how the police could response to the problem.

While the judicial system is a central element in society which ensures the rule of law and individuals' feelings of security, Blanco (2016) argues that judicial reforms may have critical outcomes on victimization and security. Through a survey and interviews with residents in 11 Mexican cities, Blanco (2016) studied the influence of the 2008 judicial reform in Mexico. The interviews with residents of the various cities showed that the reform of 2008 had reduced victimization but increased the feelings of insecurity among the residents in the cities. The reform had also led to lower levels of trust in the local and federal police but reduced the likelihood of being asked for bribes by police officers (ibid, 2016). While Blanco (2016) studies the consequences of a specific judicial reform on multiple cities in Mexico, this thesis focus more on the link between law enforcement and people's feelings of insecurity in a specific Swedish municipality.

Prieto Curiel and Bishop (2017) introduced a model to study the dynamics of perceptions of insecurity which provided greater understanding of a persistent gap between perceptions of insecurity and crime. The findings showed that while crime might be uncommon in some areas and highly concentrated, most of the residents, even if they never or rarely experience crime, will still be afraid of crime. The study demonstrated that only a little number of interactions between different people can cause persistent fear of crime and insecurity among residents. Even though the crime rates in some municipalities decreases, the model brought forward by Prieto Curiel and Bishop (2017) demonstrates that it might not have any influence on residents' feelings of insecurity. Prieto Curiel and Bishop's (2017) study is quite similar to this thesis, as they also investigate the gap between insecurity and crime. However, they use a different methodology, since they analyze the link through a survey, and based on it they create a model which is deemed to provide greater understanding of the gap. What the model lacks is that it does not build on voices from residents themselves on the causes behind their insecurity in areas with low crime rate, which this thesis includes through interviews.

O'Brien and Windle (2022) explored the perceptions of insecurity among farmers in a rural hinterland in Ireland which had or had not experienced crime. The interviews showed that their stances on security and crime were contradictory: even if few of them had been victims of a crime, the perception among most of the farmers were that they felt insecure in their local area (O'Brien and Windle, 2022). This is, similar to what the security measurement survey data shows in this master thesis, that there is a gap between crime rate and residents' feelings

of security in Östra Göinge Municipality. The results of O'Brien and Windle's (2022) study showed that media had the most influence on residents' feelings of insecurity, and the residents were mainly worried about theft of small machinery, violent coercion, and illegal dumping. The preventive measures which the residents themselves wanted to implement, were measures which they did not have time or could afford to realize themselves (ibid, 2022). O'Brien and Windle's (2022) study is quite similar to this master thesis, however, while this thesis focuses more on the practices of specific institutions in relation to residents increased feelings of insecurity, O'Brien and Windle's study focuses merely on residents' feelings of insecurity, and its causes, in relation to crime in a specific area in Ireland.

Similarly, Avila et al., (2016) analyzed the links between victimization and perception of insecurity in municipalities all over Mexico. Out of 8170 respondents, 49,9 % were women and 50.1 % men, and the measuring tool adapted was a survey conducted on a national level which measured victimization and security among residents in municipalities in Mexico. The findings indicated that those which have experienced victimization felt more insecure than those which have not experienced victimization. Nonetheless, a sense of insecurity was prevalent among many citizens. In places in Mexico with a high crime rate, more felt insecure than in areas with low crime rate, and more of them were men, therefore, Avila et al., (2016) highlighted the significance of conducting an in-depth examination of the role gender plays on perceptions and feelings of security. However, while the national-level study demonstrated that people which have been victimized felt more insecure than those which had not, there was no investigation of its causes, differently from this thesis. Another difference is that this thesis does not focus on highlighting differences in levels of feelings of security between people with different gender, ethnicity, religion, or other variables.

A structural problem

Ali and Rosenberg (2022) studied the factors which influence if Arab citizens in Israel, an ethnic minority in Israel, turn to or do not turn to the police if they potentially become victims of a crime in Israel. The data was obtained from a security measurement survey. The survey was conducted in Israel and the sample consisted of answers from 692 Arab citizens of Israel (ibid, 2022). The majority of Arab citizens which had been victims to a crime or perceived that the local violence had increased in comparison to previous years, would most likely not turn to the police, were not satisfied with, and did not have enough trust in the police to believe that they would intervene whenever they were needed (ibid, 2022). A shortcoming

with the study is that it lacks depth and context since only a survey was conducted, while interviews with all the 692 or at least some of the 692 citizens were not. Also, the study is only descriptive and does not explore why residents felt in a certain way, while this thesis explores the causes behind increased feelings of security among residents in Östra Göinge municipality by asking the residents.

Furthermore, Almanza-Avendano, Romero-Mendoza and Gomez San-Luis (2018) investigated the feelings, meanings and practices linked with insecurity in a municipality in Mexico, Tamaulipas, with high levels of crime and violence. The interviewed respondents claimed that the local government was the reason for the insecurity among residents in the municipality and criticized them for insufficient action and for tolerating the growth of organized crime. They were also criticized for not working by adequate strategies to ensure and maintain security, and for putting their own personal interests before those which were best for the public. In other words, the insecurity among residents was considered to have structural roots (ibid, 2018). However, while there is a gap between crime and feelings of security in Östra Göinge municipality, this gap does not exist in Tamaulipas municipality.

Azevedo, Nunes and Sani (2022) investigated the link between unsafety and criminal variables on campus in Portugal among 775 higher education students, with focus on the root to the problem from the students' viewpoints. The data was collected through a questionnaire on local security and the results of the study demonstrated, inter alia, that female had more fear than their male counterpart of crimes such as robbery, sexual offenses, and domestic violence. According to the respondents, the root of the problem comes from the structure, mainly from the government and the police, and to reduce crime on campus and the perceived insecurity among students on campus, preventive and security-building measures are required, both in the social domain and physical spaces (ibid, 2022). Similarly, to this master thesis, Azevedo, Nunes and Sani's (2022) study describes and explores the link between security and crime, however, it differs from this thesis in terms of the setting and its respondents.

Swedish context

During the 1990s, the number of reported crimes had fallen in Great Britain, however, the perception of people in Britain was that the crime rate had kept on rising (Peterson, 2010). The gap between perceptions of crime and actual crime was named the '*reassurance gap*' (Peterson, 2010). To fill the gap, the policing in Britain shifted from community policing to

the so-called reassurance policing. Embracing reassurance policing means that the policing is evident, available, recognizable, and has the greatest chance to deliver reassurance to, and feelings of security. The change from community policing to reassurance policing is an alteration which has taken place in Sweden as well. The idea was imported to the Swedish context in 2006, in the Stockholm metropolitan area. The intention with the so-called Local Police Office program was to generate feelings of security among inhabitants in depressed areas and construct as well as maintain the inhabitants' trust and confidence in the police, simultaneously as the police work in a manner which reduces crime and maintains law and order. Peterson (2010) examined the transferring of policing from one context to another as well as the alterations which occurred along the way. Peterson focused on investigating the process of adopting, partially adopting, and implementing the ideas of reassurance in Swedish policing. Based on observations and interviews with 19 police officers in local police offices in Stockholm region, Peterson (2010) argued that since the notions are familiar to the police, they fit well to the future, trained policing discourse. Simultaneously, there was a gap between what is deemed to be 'real' police work and reassurance policing, which is more linked to social work, and the idea of reassurance policing was barely detectable or visible external to the discourse (ibid, 2010). While the implementation of reassurance policing was clearly problematic, today the Swedish Police works based on problem-oriented policing.

Furthermore, Stjernborg (2017) studied experienced fear of crime and its consequences for the mobility of residents in an urban Swedish neighborhood. The focus of the study was to study fear of crime among older people in the neighborhood of Seved in Malmö city and how that fear affected their mobility in and around the neighborhood. The case study was of an ethnographic nature and a group of residents at an older age in the neighborhood were observed. The neighborhood was frequently negatively depicted in media, and the people living in the neighborhood usually felt more insecure than residents living in other neighborhoods. The results of the study demonstrated the media had a significant impact on the residents in Seved, and the fear of crime had a negative influence on the daily mobility of the older residents (ibid, 2017). While Stjernborg's (2017) study provides knowledge on consequences of fear of crime and feelings of insecurity, this thesis provides knowledge on the causes behind feelings of insecurity among residents in a Swedish municipality. Also, this thesis is not of an ethnographic nature, but rather uses interviews to obtain the viewpoints and beliefs of the residents.

Kullberg et al., (2009) examined the link between environmental, socio-demographic, personal elements, and security among residents in urban neighborhoods. The findings indicated three merged dimensions of the residents' feelings of security. Those dimensions were: structural displays of social disorder, acquaintance with disordered conduct, and existential insecurity. Crimes on an area-level and variables on individual level were linked to two of the dimensions, but only the individual level variable was linked to interaction with behavior of a disordered character. Furthermore, the findings suggested that resident's self-assessment of an area's reputation is an essential structural element of their feelings of security. Even though some neighborhoods were geographically close, there were differences in crime rates and security among residents living in neighborhoods with blocks of flats in comparison to smaller neighborhoods (ibid, 2009). As will be the case in this master thesis, interviews were conducted with residents to understand why residents felt insecure, however, the investigated areas had a relatively high crime rate, which is not the case in Östra Göinge municipality.

Moreover, Kullberg et al., (2011) explored the elements which residents from an urban Swedish municipality living in spaces with blocks of flats and detached houses perceived as a necessity for their security (Kullberg, et al., 2011). On the other hand, this master thesis firstly investigates the causes behind residents' feelings of insecurity, to get a grasp on what the residents need to feel secure. Through an open-ended question in a mail survey, residents in the municipality were asked which elements they considered to be of necessity for their security (Kullberg et al., 2011). Similarly to this master thesis, Kullberg et al., (2011) also sought to understand how stakeholders could alter their work based on residents' viewpoints. The findings showed that maintaining comforting relations was desired in areas with detached houses, and in parts of the municipality with blocks of flats, the requests of the residents were to assist management of poor and fear-provoking associations in the neighborhood, which indicated a need to decrease the disparity in experiences with security-related elements in the environments.

3.1. The research gap

This thesis contributes to the existing research field and complements the literature in four ways.

While previous research, both internationally and in Sweden, have touched upon and studied community policing and reassurance policing in various ways (Manning & Fleming, 2017; Peterson, 2010; Spasic & Radovanovic, 2019; Watkins, al-Jerba & al-Delaimi, 2022), and Alda and Dammert's (2019) study showed the need to embrace problem-oriented policing as a policing style in order to reduce crime and increase residents feelings of security, this study neither uses community policing nor shows why a policing style should be used and not another. The first contribution of this thesis to the field is that, in contrast to other studies which revolve around policing styles, a model called the SARA-model, with its roots in the idea of problem-oriented policing, is used as a basis to conduct this study and help the local police in Östra Göinge and Östra Göinge response to the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in their municipality.

Secondly, while the link between crime, victimization and insecurity has been studied in various ways before (Avila et al., 2016; Blanco, 2016; O'Brien & Windle, 2022; Prieto Curiel & Bishop, 2017), this thesis examines the link between crime and insecurity in a new, different way. Blanco (2016) studies the consequences which a judicial reform in Mexico had on the crime rate and insecurity among residents in 11 Mexican cities, Avila et al. (2016) studied the link between victimization and perceptions of insecurity in municipalities all over Mexico with a focus on gender, Prieto Curiel and Bishop (2017) introduced a model to study the link between crime and insecurity, and O'Brien and Windle (2022) studied the gap between crime and farmers perceptions of security in Ireland through the broken windows theory. This socio-legal study does not examine the consequences of a judicial reform on crime and insecurity, it does not study the link through a gender perspective or introduces a model to study the link. Instead, the link between crime and feelings of insecurity is studied in relation to the practices of two institutions in a municipality which ought to ensure that residents in the municipality feel secure, and the findings are to provide a basis for the institutions as they tackle the problem in their municipality.

While there are previous studies in the field which have been conducted in a Swedish context, this study differs from the previous studies in Sweden. Kullberg et al., (2009) had already chosen the elements from which they studied the link between crime and safety in a Swedish municipality, Kullberg et al., (2011) explored the elements which residents of a Swedish municipality needed to feel safe, Stjernborg (2017) examined the consequences of fear of crime and unsafety on residents mobility in a Swedish neighborhood, and Peterson (2010)

investigated the positives and negatives of the importing of reassurance policing from Britain to Sweden. This thesis, in contrast to the other studies in Sweden, aims to get a grasp on the causes behind residents' feelings of insecurity in a Swedish municipality with low crime rate, and the findings of this study are to assist the police in the municipality and Östra Göinge municipality as they work to make their residents feel more secure in the future.

Lastly, while previous studies in the field are from various disciplines, such as criminology, sociology, economics, psychology or from law scholars, the findings of the literature review indicate that the fourth contribution to the research field is that this study is unique since it is the first socio-legal study in the field.

This thesis also embraces a theoretical framework which has not been embraced before in the field to study the issue, which will be introduced and discussed in the coming chapter.

4. Theory

The theoretical framework embraced to achieve the purpose with this thesis is Robert K. Merton's theory about manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions. While the security measurement survey demonstrates the increased feelings of insecurity among residents and provides a basis for this thesis, the qualitative interviews provide an understanding of the causes behind the increased insecurity among residents in the municipality. Hence, the results of the security measurement survey and the findings from the interviews provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue and Merton's theory helps analyze the data and come to a greater understanding of the intended and unintended outcomes of law enforcement practices in relation to the problem. Additionally, and in relation to the third research question of this thesis, the aim is that the findings provided through the Mertonian analysis, can assist the police, and the municipality in light of the upcoming law, with a basis for their work to increase the feelings of security among residents of the municipality. The theoretical framework will be applied continuously as I interpret the collected data.

Before providing a presentation of the key points of Merton's theory, a summarizing outline of the debate in the academic world about functionalism will be provided in order to understand why his functionalist theory is more adequate than other theories in the functionalistic field. Since Merton's theory is a middle-range theory, the significance of

preserving intimate links between concepts and observation by embracing middle range perspectives will also be discussed. The end of this part of the thesis will highlight the link between the theoretical framework and this study, as well as the socio-legal debates about the expected and unexpected effects of the law, bridging the theoretical framework to the socio-legal field.

4.1. Merton's critique of functional analysis

Merton was mainly fascinated by Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism, however, he departed from Parsons' way of conceiving and explaining society (Merton, 1968). While criticizing the naivety of the stances of structural functionalism and structural functionalisms extremely abstract self-referential descriptions, Merton avoided the use of abstract grand theories and developed a middle-range theory for structural analysis. As Merton conducted functional analyzes of social structures, he recognized flaws in functionalist theory, and decided to embrace structural analysis. The flaws which Merton had recognized and criticized, were mainly related to the key postulations of anthropological forms of functionalism and can be summarized through three assumptions.

Initially, functionalists adopted the assumption that consistent cultural matters or social events have a uniting function for the entire social order, since they uphold a functional harmony in the society (Campbell, 1982; Radcliffe-Brown, 1935). However, Merton (1968) claimed that, in particular conditions, the function of social events do not have a uniting function, but generate rifts in society, particularly in large, multifaceted social orders. Additionally, Merton's idea was to search for empirical findings and the idea of functional harmony directly implied the opposite of what Merton was searching for. Merton believed that one does not have to search long until one finds that the idea of an all-embracing functional harmony in society is frequently in conflict with empirical facts, as social customs in a specific society are functional for several people and dysfunctional for others (Campbell, 1982; Merton, 1968, p. 92). Additionally, Merton argued that there is a risk in using the idea of a functional unity as an unspoken standard for a universal functional analysis, which he believed to derive from a Durkheimian viewpoint, that is based on examinations of non-literate societies. The Durkheim inspired examinations only included, for example, the unifying consequences of religion, simultaneously as the potential disintegrating consequences on specific social structures were neglected (Campbell, 1982; Merton, 1968). He argued that the idea of functional unity could

possibly be applied in simple, non-literate societies, but believed that it is problematic to apply the idea on multifaceted, highly differentiated modern societies (Merton, 1968). While the application of the idea of functional unity might provide a somewhat accurate image of the reality in primitive societies, Merton mainly criticizes the idea of applying the general model as complex, modern societies are being studied, and argues there are limitations in conducting a universal functional analysis of society based on the idea of functional harmony. Merton (1968) also clarifies that the analysis cannot only be done on a macro-level, but also on a micro-level, it can be conducted in organizations, institutions, and groups.

Secondly, Merton criticized the functionalist idea of total functionalism, which claims that all cultural or social matters has merely positive functions (Campbell, 1982; Malinowski, 1926; Ormerod, 2020). Merton (1968) claimed that the empirical facts which could be found were frequently in contradiction with that idea, and that social and cultural elements could also generate negative outcomes for a society. Even though we temporarily decide to agree on the idea that every element in a culture or social structure has a function, it is hasty to claim with sureness that each element has a positive function (Merton, 1968; Ritzer, 2010). Merton (1948) goes even further and claims that functions cannot only be positive and negative, but also manifest and latent.

Thirdly, functionalists assume that social actions which are executed by certain social institutions as well as every entity, notion and idea are a necessity and indispensability for society's upholding, while another institution might realize the same function, and several functions might not be necessary (Merton, 1968; Ormerod, 2020). Merton claims that there is an ambiguity with that viewpoint, since there is no clarification about if the function or the element achieving the function, or both, should be considered as indispensable. The idea about indispensability supposes that certain functions are necessary, since, if those are not executed, a society, groups or individuals will not endure. While the notion suggested that every structure and function are a functional necessity for society, Merton deemed it to be crucial to introduce a theory in which the same element can have numerous functions, and that those could be varyingly achieved (Campbell, 1982; Merton, 1968).

Merton considered structural functionalism to be built on the abovementioned flawed ideas. Merton (1968) refused Durkheim's idea about the reduction of all social structures to a certain

function and offered an alternative theory of structural functionalism. While structural functionalism provides a macro-level understanding of society and a comprehensive emphasis on the social structures that contribute to the formation of society, Merton claimed that society must be seen both from a micro and a macro-level. The theoretical insights provided by Merton were one of the reasons for continuing using structural functionalism (Campbell, 1982). As Merton repeatedly debated the link between structural and Parsonian functionalism, he developed an extremely nuanced framework and analyzed social activities and social occurrences in a way which distanced him from Parson's functionalism (Campbell, 1982; Ormerod, 2020). Contrary to Parsons, Merton emphasized testability and developed a middle-range theory which bridges the gap between concepts and the empirical reality, demonstrating the significance of verification and falsification (Elster, 1990; Lehman, 1966).

Using the original notions of functionalism while examining modern society and complex issues is rather problematic. However, the functionalist theory developed by Merton provides a framework which is nuanced, bridges the gap between generalizing theories and empirical facts, and provides additional dimensions to the original functionalist ideas. Most importantly, Merton's theory enables the researcher to conduct a functional analysis of complex issues such as the link between crime, insecurity, and law enforcement practices.

A middle-range theory

Merton was reluctant to be a part of ideas which promoted abstract theorizing. Instead, he developed a new way of conducting functional analysis, and claimed that sociology frequently was lacking the links between generalizations and empirical results (Elster, 1990). According to Merton, linking theory with empirical inquiries was a necessity, especially issues regarding crime and deviance (Merton, 1968). Therefore, he developed a conceptual framework which linked grounded theory and systems theory, so called 'middle-range theories' (Campbell, 1982; Merton, 1968, pp. 38-42). Middle-range theories seek to integrate empirical findings and theoretical frameworks, and pursue the avoidance of reductionism, generalized reasoning and oversimplifications. As the ambition was to conduct empirical studies on critical matters which can only be found external to direct data, Merton examined empirical studies as a way of identifying unspoken, but notionally valuable viewpoints (Merton, 1949). Simultaneously, Merton attempted to contribute both to the progress of theory and empirical studies, an attempt which was deprived of a binding of either side to a particular current structure (Elster,

1990; Merton, 1949, Ormerod, 2020). Merton's middle-range theory motivated me to embrace a deductive approach, a theory to analyze my empirical findings, instead of adopting an inductive approach.

While functionalism could not be proven or examined empirically, and as answer to the drawbacks of Parsons' generalizing theory, Merton developed a new model for functional analysis, characterized by two distinctions. A division was made between manifest functions and dysfunctions, and between latent functions and dysfunctions. In other words, the idea brought forward by Merton suggests that while some functions might be visible and intended, others might not be visible or intended, and while some might be functional, others might be dysfunctional.

Merton's conceptual framework

Based on his criticism on functionalism, Merton established a conceptual framework which revolved around manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions (Merton, 1949; Merton, 1968). Manifest functions are intended functions which are acknowledged by members of the structure and brings about objective effects for a specific entity, that eventually leads to the altering or revision of the entity (Merton, 1968). However, if a researcher merely concentrates on investigating evident functions, the effects for a certain entity or system, and if institutions or organizations achieve their aims, it creates limitations for and fixed settings for the scholar ahead of examination. Hence, Merton added the concept of latent functions (Campbell, 1982). Latent functions are not recognized and unintended effects, and Merton as well as Ritzer claim that the uncovering of unintended effects are an indispensable part for sociology and a necessity for sociological analysis (Merton, 1949; Ritzer, 2010). Additionally, Merton argues that manifest and latent functions, as well as their counterparts, manifest and latent dysfunctions, are vital elements of social researcher's conceptual toolbox, as the concepts are fruitfully applied in research (Merton, 1949).

If latent functions are also studied, it assists the researcher in the search for outcomes external to specified objectives (Helm, 1971; Merton, 1949). Merton argued that the main contributions of sociological scholars is when unintended effects of practices in society are examined and uncovered (Merton, 1968). While latent functions might not be as visible, unintentional, and even unacknowledged by the members of a society which are occupied with the practice that generates them, they are beneficial for a whole or segments of a society

(Merton, 1949). However, latent functions are different from unforeseen effects, since latent functions are merely one form of unforeseen effects, which is favorable for the entity or system which perform a specific practice. Other forms are the so-called latent dysfunctions (Helm, 1971; Merton, 1968). The scholar needs to be aware of the possibility of latent functions and dysfunctions and be cautious during empirical examinations to capture both manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions of social practices (Campbell, 1982; Merton, 1968). Merton underscores that scholars which embrace an analytical approach must concentrate on both functions and dysfunctions of practices and structures within a society. While both the manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions must be taken into consideration, it is the dysfunctions which can assist us we search for possible ways to implement measures and make changes for the better in society (Merton, 1949), such as alterations in police work and the work of other relevant institutions in a society.

Merton and sociology of law

If we investigate both manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions, it will provide a greater understanding regarding the role the law plays in society. This part will highlight how latent dysfunctions of the law can provide a basis for an understanding of, and ways to tackle the problem of the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge.

It is not exceptional that when a policy is applied, it can generate unintended effects, and even effects which are in direct contradiction with the intended effects. However, the question of how law operates within society, and especially the unintentional outcomes of the law, has received little consideration in doctrinal legal research, apart from those which practice law (Gibson, 1982). Sociology of law adds this dimension since it studies law and legal institutions to provide descriptions of and analyze legal phenomena in society. While the social structure frequently alters, it is necessary to investigate how the law and legal institutions function in society (Banakar, 2011). Numerous scholars which conduct socio-legal research put an emphasis on the so called 'gap', which was originally presented by Roscoe Pound, as they study the link between the law, legal institutions, and the consequences of legal norms on society (Banakar, 2019). Adopting a functionalist framework to study the law is linked to the idea that the effects of a legal organization is a response to the organization itself. E.g., functions are embraced to characterize the outcomes which usually lead to the reinforcement of the organization when purposes are achieved. When the purpose is not achieved, the latent consequences have a supporting effect that can assist changes in the law or the practices of legal

institutions (Mermin, 1973). Brown (1992) claimed that every legal norm and the institutions which work in accordance with them, have specific manifest functions which are accepted by the society which produces them, simultaneously as they produce latent functions as well.

There are several studies which have examined the unintended, latent functions of laws and policies (Berger, 1963; Grabosky, 1996; Larsson & Svensson, 2010; Roots, 2004). Berger's study showed that while the manifest function of anti-gambling laws was the defeating of gambling, an underlying dysfunction was the increase of unlawful gambling markets (Berger, 1963). Roots study demonstrated that an unintended consequence of minimum wage regulations is increased poverty among the poorest groups (Roots, 2004). Furthermore, regulations which are introduced to prevent crime can be so extreme that it can lead to the classification as law-abiding citizens as lawbreakers, which Grabosky's study of policies and crime prevention measures showed (Grabosky, 1996).

Furthermore, Campbell (1982), Helm (1971) and Saxe (1970) are scholars which argue that Merton's theory about manifest and latent functions is a marvelous approach to adopt in research. Helm (1971) argues that the theory confronts the traditional sociological assumption about triggers and outcomes and generates questions regarding functions and dysfunctions which congregate in social activities. Merton argues that those which embrace the functional approach to examine social structures, should both investigate subjective beliefs of people in a society, and the objective circumstances which exist in the society, allowing scholars to be accurate with empirical evidence, and simultaneously detached from a fixed idea about society (Merton, 1949). There is also a need for scholars, especially sociologists, to acknowledge when the observed social structure is not in line with the needs and desires of people or with the intentions of practices of a specific unit in a society, in other words, when there are dysfunctional circumstances in a society (Helm, 1971).

Merton's theory allows a functional analysis which is situated between theory and empirical facts, an investigation of manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions of law enforcement practices in Östra Göinge, which is not fixed to a specific idea about the society under investigation, and simultaneously emphasizes the empirical material, the viewpoints of residents and police officers in Östra Göinge municipality. This thesis analyzes the manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions of law enforcement practices in Östra Göinge linked to the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality. The various

consequences of law enforcement practices in Östra Göinge on the social circumstances among residents in Östra Göinge municipality have been investigated. The result of the analysis is set to provide a basis for the local police and Östra Göinge as they alter their practices in a way which increases the feelings of security among residents in the municipality.

5. Methodology

This thesis, which is of a qualitative nature, mainly seeks to understand the functions and dysfunctions of law enforcement on feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge through a Mertonian analysis on the viewpoints of residents and police officers in the municipality. While the results of the security measurement survey demonstrate the manifest functions and dysfunctions of the law in the municipality, the measurement survey merely provides a basis for the qualitative method for data collection embraced in this qualitative study, namely qualitative interviews.

Firstly, this chapter provides a discussion around the chosen method and a general description of the methodology, the empirical data and of the data collection process. Thereafter, in the last sections of this chapter, the validity and reliability of this study are discussed, as well as considerations of ethical issues taken and of my reflexivity as a researcher.

5.1. A qualitative interview study

While the quantitative data from the yearly conducted security measurement survey in Sweden show that the feelings of security have decreased since 2015 in Östra Göinge municipality, simultaneously as the exposure to crime has been on the same level, the results of the survey only provided a basis for this qualitative study. Embracing qualitative interviews as a method to achieve the aim of a study, provides an in-depth understanding and an expanded picture of a complex issue (Mason, 2018), hence, qualitative interviews were adopted as a research method in this study. While the quantitative data from the security measurement survey only scratches on the surface of the problem, qualitative interviews and gain a deeper, nuanced understanding of the problem from the viewpoints of the residents and police employees in the municipality.

As Creswell and Mason underline, a researcher's epistemology and ontology provide the basis for the research design of a study, which includes the choice of adequate and appropriate methodological tools adopted to explore a research problem and answer the research questions of a study (Creswell, 2015; Mason, 2018). The adequate procedural tools which were needed to gain a deeper, socio-legal understanding of the researcher problem and answer the research questions of this study have been embraced. After the literature review was completed, the gap in research had been identified and the objective with this study had been molded, qualitative interviews were conducted. As Mason (2018) underlines, if the ontological position of a researcher implies that people's viewpoints, perceptions, experiences, and narratives are important elements of the social reality which the researcher seeks to investigate, qualitative interviewing is the most suitable method for data collection. Since this study seeks to understand a social reality through people's viewpoints, qualitative interviewing was considered to be the most suitable method in this study. The qualitative data was generated as a way of coming to a greater understanding of the causes behind the increased feelings of insecurity and its link to law enforcement practices, according to residents and employees of the local police in the area. The findings of the qualitative interviews will also provide a basis for the police in the area and the municipality in Östra Göinge as they, according to the law, work to increase residents' feelings of security.

The type of interviewing adopted in this study was semi-structured interviewing, since, and as Fylan (2005) and Mason (2018) underline, the flexibility of semi-structured interviews makes them the suitable for explorative studies (Fylan, 2005; Mason, 2018), such as this study. Differently from unstructured and structured interviews, semi-structured interviewing allows the researcher to change questions and issues conversed during the interviews, which makes it possible to touch upon angles which are of importance for the respondents, which subsequently leads to the obtaining of a more nuanced understanding of the research problem (Fylan, 2005). Semi-structured interviews are interviews in which one has prearranged questions and a vision of the topics to be covered. However, there is a variation with regards to the issues discussed in each interview, and it can be a considerably difference and delineation between each interview, differently from structured interviews, where a list of questions are determined before the interviews and asked in the same order to every respondent in each interview. Even though unstructured interviews also are characterized by a less structured format than structured interviews, it differs from semi-structured interviews since considerably little is determined beforehand in terms of questions and topics, whereas

semi-structured interviews are characterized by prearranged questions and topics simultaneously as the interview itself is less structured (Fylan, 2005). In other words, what characterizes semi-structured interviews is that they are characterized by noticeable variation, which means that sometimes topics which one seeks to address might be covered considerably quickly and simple, while sometime an interview can take many different directions before the topics one wants to address has been addressed.

The interview guide which was used during the semi-structured interviews was formed based on the results from a local security measurement survey which is conducted and issued yearly by the Police in collaboration with the municipalities in police region South, which, inter alia, demonstrates the feelings of security among residents within Östra Göinge municipality. The quantitative data of relevance which was collected from the survey, provided a foundation for this study, its research design, research questions, and the questions asked during the interviews. Apart from fulfilling the purpose of this study, the qualitative interviews also help fill the gaps which merely the results of the survey cannot fill. While the quantitative findings demonstrate patterns and provide an outline of an issue, the qualitative findings generate a more in-depth picture and understanding of an issue from respondents' standpoint (Creswell, 2015). Combined, the results of both provide a basis for the police in Östra Göinge and the municipality as they work to decrease the feelings of insecurity among residents in the municipality.

5.2. Empirical material & sampling

This section provides a discussion and description of the empirical material of this thesis, both the quantitative and the qualitative.

The quantitative data

The results from the yearly conducted local security measurement survey provided the foundation for this thesis. The quantitative data was made accessible to me by the Hässleholm local police, more specifically, from the Police in Östra Göinge municipality, which has the Hässleholm local police area (*LPO-Hässleholm or Lokalpolisområde Hässleholm in Swedish*), as its basis. The survey has been carried out since 2006 by BRÅ (Brottsförebyggande rådet or Crime-prevention council), on behalf of the police, and is sent out by the police and municipalities to residents which live in one of the 58 municipalities and the 248 municipality parts in region South (BRÅ, 2023, Polisen, 2023). The local security

measurement survey provides a picture of resident's exposure to crime, their feelings of security and trust in the legal system. The picture of the situation in respective municipality also demonstrates what needs to be prioritized in each municipality. The data which has been selected from the survey to provide a basis for this qualitative study highlights residents experiences of crime and their feelings of insecurity in Östra Göinge municipality. The results of the survey revolve around the development of crime and feelings of security between year 2015-2022 in Östra Göinge municipality and have been described earlier on in this thesis (see *2. Background & Appendix 1*).

Every year, randomly chosen residents of Östra Göinge municipality get a survey sent home to them by the police or the municipality with questions linked to crime and security in their municipality. Year 2022, the survey was sent out to 900 Östra Göinge residents, where 544 residents responded, while it was sent out to 600 residents the years before. The survey was revised in 2017, before 2017 the data was collected through the phone, while it has been collected from the respondents through mail and web surveys since 2017, and it can be answered on five different languages. The respondents are men and women living in Östra Göinge, that are between 16 and 85 years old (Östra Göinge, 2023). Since one of the main purposes with the survey is to do comparisons over time, a method has been developed to be able to compare the trends for the period 2007-2016 with the period 2017-2022. Parallel with the revised survey in 2017 a survey with the other method was conducted. Based on the emerged level differences between, the results have been recalculated backwards in time based on an estimate of what they would have looked like if the new method had been used (BRÅ, 2023). The police forces, both in police region South and in the whole of Sweden, the municipalities in police region South, consider it to be tremendously important that as many as possible answer the survey, since the survey is one of the most important element for the parties, as they plan how to tackle problems in their area and decide on which problems to prioritize in their crime-prevention and security-related work (Brå, 2022:9; Polisen, 2023).

The qualitative data

The quantitative data provided the foundations for this thesis and the basis for the creation of the interview guide and interview questions of this study. Through semi-structured qualitative interviews, the idea was to gain in-depth of the understandings of the residents and employees of the police in the municipality in relation to the existing problem of insecurity among residents in a municipality with a low crime rate. Interviews can help capture the depth and

touch upon the complexities of a problem, which numbers and statistics cannot, and provide a nuanced picture of a situation (Creswell, 2015, Mason, 2018). Based on the aim and purpose of this thesis, the sample consisted of interviews with 12 residents living in Östra Göinge municipality, where two of the respondents were employees of the police in the municipality.

Qualitative random purposive sampling

The interviewees in the municipality were randomly chosen. However, the sampling was also partly purposive. It was partly purposive since it was determined beforehand that the sample should consist of residents which live in Östra Göinge municipality, and that at least one of the respondents should be young, old, middle-aged, women, man, Swedish-born and foreign-born, and that at least one resident should be from each town in the municipality, to provide a sample which is representative of the different residents in the municipality. On the 16th of March 2023, I visited all the towns in Östra Göinge municipality to find places where the various respondents could be found. After having visited all the towns of and got familiar with the municipality, including the locations where the various respondents could be found, I decided to go to the municipality again on the 22nd of March 2023, to search for residents to interview.

Eight of the 12 respondents were found by going and driving around in the municipality and asking people in various locations and places in the municipality. I went to schools, outside of grocery stores, at bus stops and so on, and asked residents if they would like to participate in an interview with me related to this study, where the purpose with the interview and study was clearly explained, the anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed, and the respondents were asked if they consented to participating in the interviews even though they were recorded, before each interview began. If a resident did not had time or wanted to participate when asking them, the search for respondents continued. While I at first thought that it would be hard to get access to residents which had the time or wanted to talk to me, I had interviews with a total of six residents only the first time I went out. Four of them were residents I managed to get access to by myself, and two of them through a field assistant worker in the municipality, while the remaining four residents were interviewed the second time, I went out searching for respondents. The interviews conducted with the 10 residents living in the municipality were face-to-face interviews conducted in various locations in the municipality. Further on, the interviews with the two police officers were conducted online through Microsoft Teams, mainly because it was more suitable for the police officers as they were

occupied with work most of the time. Initially, before asking questions regarding feelings of insecurity in their municipality, the respondents were asked about their background, gender, age, country of origin, if they live in the municipality, if someone did not live in the municipality or understood what was said to them, I friendly thanked them for their time and continued the search for other respondents. A total of 12 interviews were conducted with residents of the municipality, two of the respondents were old, Swedish men, two of them were young, foreign-born women, three of them were middle-aged, two men and one women, one of them was an old, Swedish women, one of them was a young Swedish women, one of them was a middle-aged foreign-born man, and the two remaining respondents were police officers living in the municipality, one male and one female. In terms of the gender of the respondents, six of them were female and six of them male.

The interview process

Before the interviews began, the respondents were handed a paper which provided information about the research problem, the purpose with this thesis, the terms of the participation in the interview, and how their answers would be used only for fulfilling the purpose of this thesis, and that they freely could end and leave the interview at any point (see *Appendix 2*). Afterwards, the respondents were asked if they agreed on the terms of the interview. After they approval, the respondents were asked questions which both provided background information about them and helped select adequate respondents to interview. If the respondents were the respondents needed for this thesis in terms of their background, they were once again asked if they wanted to proceed with the interview.

An interview guide was created in the Swedish language to be able to keep somewhat of a structure in the interviews and to ensure that the interviews would revolve around the purpose of the study (see *Appendix 3 for translated version*). The guide had several questions, however, there were four main questions which permeated all the interviews (see *Appendix 3*). All the interviews revolved around those main questions and took between 10-25 minutes to conduct. With the consent of the respondents, the interviews were recorded, both the interviews conducted face-to-face, and the interviews conducted online, to maintain a flow in the interviews, which might not have been the case if notes had been taken during the interviews. The face-to-face interviews were conducted between the 22nd and 28th of March in the municipality, while the first online interview was conducted with the female police officer on the 31st of March on Microsoft Teams, and the second online interview was conducted on

Zoom with the male police officer on the 3rd of April. After all the interviews had been conducted, each recorded interview was transcribed. The transcribed interviews were then subject to a thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis was adopted to analyze the qualitative data collected from the interviews, which according to Castleberry and Nolen (2018) is a common way of analyzing qualitative data, and scholars embrace it to identify and analyze patterns or themes in the collected data. The advantage with using a thematic analysis is that it is a flexible method and allows the collection of a variety of thorough and multifaceted information about data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Apart from the aforementioned advantage, a thematic analysis was used since it has the capacity to generate a thorough understanding of the research problem.

The qualitative, thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews happened numerous times. Firstly, the transcribed interviews were read several times to familiarize with the data. Afterwards, as all the collected data was being read, noteworthy quotes and phrases were emphasized. Then, the material with somewhat equal content was placed under a theme. The transcripts were read numerous times, and during the reading the data was coded until stable and specific themes had been developed. The codes which arose during the analysis were then sorted into themes, which are presented in the sixth chapter of this thesis (see *6. Empirical results*).

Validity & reliability

As the results of the secondary, quantitative data from the local security measurement survey provided the basis for this thesis, it is of importance to discuss its validity and reliability. Validity refers to the extent to which the results of a study mirrors what it was intended to measure, and that which is called conceptual validity, refers to if the measurements adopted by the researcher reflects the concepts which are intended to be investigated (Bryman, 2012, pp. 47-50). Since the intention with the secondary data employed to provide a basis for this study, was to measure, inter alia, residents (in)security, and the qualitative interviews provided results which helped get a grasp on the causes behind residents feelings of insecurity how it is related to law enforcement practices, and how the police and the municipality can work to increase residents feelings of insecurity, which is in line with the purpose of this study, the conceptual validity is considered to be high. The external validity, on the other

hand, concerns how well the results of a study can be generalized to a wider population or to another situation (Bryman, 2012, pp. 49-50). Since the local security measurement survey and the interviews in this study were conducted in Östra Göinge, it is only possible to generalize to Östra Göinge municipality, which means that the survey has a high external validity, but low if it concerns another country or another town in Sweden. Simultaneously, the generalizability of the survey and this study can be considered to be limited, since last year the survey was only sent out to 900 of the approximately 15 000 residents living in Östra Göinge, like how many it had been sent out to the years before, and 36 percent of the respondents did not answer the survey. The relatively high dropout rate leads to reduced quality and poorer reliability, while if more respondents had answered the survey, it had both improved the reliability and generalizability of the survey. While 12 interviewees can provide somewhat of a picture of the situation in the municipality, it limits the generalizability of the results of this study. However, I do not intend, in any way, to generalize based on this thesis, but rather to investigate a worrying trend in a specific context, in Östra Göinge municipality in Sweden, to assist relevant institutions in the municipality as they work to make their residents feel more secure.

Since this study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of a certain problem in a specific context and does not seek to pinpoint generalizable trends or causalities, Roberts and Priest (2006) highlight two ways in which one can prevent that the result of a study get affected by researcher bias and the expectations a scholar has on the study. Initially, Roberts and Priest (2006) argue that providing transparency in terms of the methodology of a study, for example how the literature review was conducted and the procedure of the analysis of the collected data, makes it possible for other researchers to test the research method of a study, as well as triangulate and converge the data. According to Roberts and Priest (2006) and Noble and Smith (2015), it will help test the validity of a study and discover patterns or incongruities, which appear among most of the respondents. However, it is possible that another researcher interprets my empirical data differently from me, which could provide different results. Nevertheless, a difference in interpretation does not weaken the relevance or significance of the empirical results of this study since the validity and reliability are guaranteed through transparency in relation to the research method and research process.

Even though a scholar to some extent must be distanced from the research problem, it is also vital to emphasize the subjectivity and positionality of a scholar, which we never actually can

detach ourselves from, instead of naively seeking to realize, with failure, complete impartiality, and objectivity (Dodgson, 2019; Watt, 2007). According to Bryman (2007), a researcher's beliefs can never be completely controlled by the researcher and will always to some extent influence the interpretation of the empirical material and other vital parts of the research process. To be reflexive as a researcher means to have an awareness in relation to the biases one has and the position one takes on in the study, and to overcome those two elements in research as much as possible as a researcher, is deemed to be essential in research (Dodgson, 2019). In this study, it means that I as a researcher living near Östra Göinge municipality and being aware of the happenings there in recent years, how the migration crisis affected the municipality, and of the political structure in the municipality, I am not unrestricted from biased views and my own thoughts with regards to the issue under investigation. Nonetheless, I was reflexive and transparent during every step of the research process, which helped me divide the actual discoveries of this thesis from the expectations and viewpoints I had before the study.

Researcher reflexivity & ethical considerations

When discussing researcher reflexivity, it is crucial to bring up the concept of positionality. Positionality means to recognize the identity, the origin, and beliefs one has as a researcher, and how those could influence the investigation and have an impact on the analyzed empirical data (Dodgson, 2019). Frequently, the researcher needs to reflect on the experiences of and position taken during a study (Dodgson, 2019; Vuleta, 2022). As I live relatively close to the municipality under investigation and know that the structure of the municipality and the characteristics of its residents changed from 2015 and onwards, it was vital to constantly think about how it might influence my own standpoint during the research process. In fact, with awareness, I knew that the position I had during the research process influenced both the issue under investigation and the analytical process of the thesis. I acknowledged that this thesis, even if it might have been, to some extent, value free, is not completely free from my pre-understanding of the issue, my values, and beliefs.

Jootun, McGhee and Marland (2009) argue some variables in qualitative studies could have an influence on the research, such as, the political standpoint, class, socioeconomic background, and ethnicity of the scholar. There are challenges with being both an “insider” which beforehand has quite much knowledge about the population one studies and the objectivity one must maintain as a researcher (Kanuha, 2000). Even though the researcher

seeks to maintain objectivity throughout the research the researcher's own cultural or social baggage while always, in some way, have an impact on how the researcher understands and interprets a specific social system or environment. In other words, even though the researcher seeks to maintain objectivity in research, the identification with and the closeness to the study population means a risk of the researcher 'going native'. As I have an immigrant origin and some of the respondents during the interviews also were immigrants, and since I have lived in Kristianstad municipality my whole life, which borders to Östra Göinge municipality, I was aware that my background could have an influence on the interview dynamics. For an instance, four of the respondents had immigrant background such as me, and the other respondents had a connection to Kristianstad in one way or another. Although I understood that I could not be completely unbiased during the research process, throughout the research process I tried to present the collected data and my analysis as impartial and detached from my background and beliefs as possible, to avoid the risk of going native during the research process.

As the reader of this thesis was provided with a high level of transparency, through a clear outline of the aim and purpose of this study, a clear outline of the methodology of this thesis, and of the literature review process, I could reduce the likelihood of my biases influencing the research process. Also, it is important to mention that merely one third of the conducted interviews consisted of immigrant respondents, which meant that, only four of the interviews were likely to be impacted by my migrant background and experiences, compared to the other eight respondents. Nonetheless, throughout the research process, I tried to remain as objective and free from my beliefs, values, and background, as possible. Even though it was not always possible, I constantly reflected on my standpoint and beliefs during the research process and tried to free myself as much as possible from them. Being reflexivity assisted me a lot as I tried to remain objective. By doing research with the objective of the research constantly in mind, it also decreased the possibility of any own preconceptions having an impact on the research process.

Apart from the importance of being reflective during the research, researchers conducting qualitative interviews are required to also conduct research in an ethical way. Simon Warren and Carol Vincent (2010) list some of the ethical codes which need to be taken into consideration during qualitative interview studies. Firstly, the participant must be informed about the purpose of the study, of the role the participant has in the study, and that the

participation is completely voluntary (Warren and Vincent, 2010). Additionally, the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants must be ensured. Informed consent is vital and needed from the participants before the interview begins (ibid, 2010). In this study, the ethical considerations were confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent. I ensured that the respondents understood the language and agreed on participating in the interviews. Since their consent was obtained and information about the interview question were provided to the respondents, they were aware of purpose of this study. Since the respondents were given pseudonyms and the recorded videos were deleted directly after they had been transcribed, their anonymity and confidentiality could be upheld. Warren and Vincent (2010) also underline the importance of collecting empirical data to merely fulfill the purpose of a study, in a legal, correct, and open manner in relation to the respondents (Warren and Vincent, 2010). This was the case in this study, as the empirical data was merely collected to answer the research questions and fulfill the purpose of this study, in a legal, correct, and open manner in relation to the respondents.

6. Empirical results

This chapter contains a presentation and discussion of the findings of the qualitative interviews which I conducted with the 10 residents and two police officers of Östra Göinge municipality. As the empirical findings are presented, they will be discussed based on the theoretical framework of this thesis, Merton's theory of the manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions of the law. As for the transcribed the interviews, they were conducted in the Swedish language, and then every word was translated from Swedish to English. Even though my translation of the words might be marginally diverse from the original Swedish words, the minor differences had no influence on the research (See *Appendix 4*).

6.1. Findings

The thematic analysis of the empirical findings generated three different themes. The three themes generated, each with their own definition, were: 1) *Police and municipality practices*; 2) *Migration and integration*; and 3) *Other*² (see *Appendix 5*). Even if the themes are

² The first theme: *police and municipality practices*, consists of quotes from the respondents which in some way links the practices of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality's practices to the increased feeling of insecurity among the residents. The second theme: *Migration and integration*, consists of all

distinctive as such, they intersect with each other in one way or another. Below, the three identified themes and belonging quotes will be presented and analyzed in relation to the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Police and municipality practices

While the low crime rate is a manifest function of the practices of the two institutions, and the increased feelings of security among residents a manifest dysfunction, the findings of the qualitative interviews indicated various latent functions, and especially, latent functions of the law enforcement practices of the two institutions. Even though every interviewed respondent (see *Appendix 5*) argued that the municipality and the police had taken measures to make people feel more secure in the municipality, which is a latent, not as obvious function of the practices of the institutions, the residents also felt that those measures had not been sufficient and effective enough in relation to residents' feelings of security. One of the residents, with the pseudonym Aione, a 77 year old Swedish man which had lived in in the municipality since year 1971, in the part called Glimåkra, argued that residents would feel more secure if employees of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality were more present among residents, indicating that a latent dysfunction of the practices of the two institutions had been that the residents felt that the two institutions had not present enough among the residents. Aione said that:

Maybe if not only the police, but also people which work for the municipality, are more present among the residents, so they feel that closeness you know, that would make people feel more secure [...]. Even if something might not happen, one would still know they are there, just in case anything happens. So, they tell us that they are here and simply exist for us [...]. (Appendix 5)

Betwo, a 72-year-old Swedish man which had lived in different parts of the municipality since 1954, and like Aione lives in Glimåkra now, argued that the police presence had increased the last three years. However, like Aione, Betwo also said that the police presence could increase even more, as well as the presence of employees of the municipality, which implies that a latent dysfunction of the practices of the two institutions is residents feeling that the institutions are not present enough among them. Additionally, Betwo pointed out that Östra

quotes from residents which somehow link the increased feelings of insecurity to the migration crisis in 2015-2016 and the integration of migrants. The third theme: *Other*, consists of all quotes from residents which do not mention either the migration crisis or the practices of the two institutions as possible reasons behind the increased feelings of insecurity.

Göinge municipality should invest more in some places of the municipality (Appendix 5).

Like Aione, Betwo said that:

[...] since bad things happen here, maybe the municipality have not done enough and should do more, and the police and municipality can be more present and go out and talk to its residents, make them feel secure and all of that. (Appendix 5)

Cethree, a 24-year-old Swedish woman which had lived in the municipality for 3 years, in Sibbhult, argued that Östra Göinge municipality focused mainly on what the local police could do differently in the future. Cethree's answers indicated that the practices of the local police had been latently dysfunctional as she highlighted police presence at night and harder punishment as the two main measures that would make residents in the municipality feel more secure, saying that:

It would be good if they could, when they have time, to keep track of what's going on at night, to see what the young people are doing at that time. (Appendix 5)

I simply believe that we are to kind in Sweden, we should have harsher punishments [...]. (Appendix 5)

Even though Cethree mainly mentioned the local police, she also said that other residents Cethree knew had said they mainly feel insecure due to places in the municipality where 'the lighting does not exist or is very poor' (Appendix 5), and argued that if the municipality could 'do something about the lighting' (ibid) it would 'help a lot' (ibid) in increasing the feelings of security among the residents. Hence, the practices of Östra Göinge municipality to make their residents had been latently dysfunctional since the residents had felt the lighting was too poor, which was mentioned as one reason behind increased feelings of insecurity.

Similarly, to the afore mentioned respondents, Defour, an 18-year-old immigrant woman which came to Sweden, Östra Göinge municipality in 2016 and has lived in Knislinge for 6 years, believed that more police presence, and more activities provided to the residents by Östra Göinge municipality, would make the residents feel more secure. Differently from the residents mentioned above, Defour also argued that both cameras and lighting in more places in the municipality would help increase the feelings of security among residents in the municipality. Apart from the residents feeling a lack of presence from the local police being a latent dysfunction of their practices, latent dysfunctions of the practices of Östra Göinge municipality linked to residents' security had been that the municipality had not provided

enough activities, as well as insufficient lighting and surveillance, for the residents to feel secure. Defour said that:

[...] cameras would be good or more presence of the police in those areas, like cameras almost everywhere, that way maybe the criminals would think that they will get caught if they do something [...] to put up some cameras and more lights everywhere, and just be there for us [...]. (Appendix 5)

Maybe that the municipality come up with activities for all in the different towns of the municipality and make residents feel a sense of community [...] people would meet and talk, get to know each other, and would not be as unknown to each other, it would make people feel more secure [...]. (Appendix 5)

Efive, a Swedish woman which has lived in the municipality since she was born 55 years ago, and her colleague, a 40-year-old Swedish man, Effsix, which had lived in the municipality for five years after moving there from Stockholm, were my fifth and six respondents. Efive, as most of my respondents, argued that more police presence could help residents feel more secure, and added that the resources, when it comes to the preventive work, should go to the municipality, as it according to her would make people feel more secure. The municipality should focus on providing more activities for the residents and more lighting in certain places in the municipality, indicating that the lack of lighting in the municipality and of activities are latent dysfunctions of the practices of Östra Göinge municipality. She said that:

I can feel that the police should be there just a little more, even when something has not happened [...]. (Appendix 5)

[...] more lighting in several places in the municipality. Of course, people still will find places without lighting to do criminal stuff, but I think the lighting is a bit poor in many places in the municipality [...]. Some more activities, a little more people out in the municipality [...]. (Appendix 5)

As for Effsix, he also said that the police were not present enough in the municipality. He added that more presence is needed from the employees of Östra Göinge municipality as well, and that more activities provide by the municipality could increase residents' feelings of security. Effsix answers, like the answers from the other respondents, indicated that a latent dysfunction of the practices of the institutions had been that residents had felt insufficient presence from employees of both institutions, and that insufficient activities provided to the residents by the municipality also is a latent dysfunction linked to residents' feelings of insecurity. Inter alia, Effsix said:

Clearly one does not see that many police officers out there [...]. (Appendix 5)

[...] if maybe more of the adults in the municipality, take a collective responsibility, as adults working in Östra Göinge municipality [...]. Everything from a place to play chess in the basement of the housing association, to centrally located places where the young people can do things, which they can do, according to the law. (Appendix 5)

While Geeseven, a 78 year old Swedish woman which had lived in the municipality since 1967, and Hayeight, a 19 year old foreign-born man which came to live in the municipality in 2017, in line with other respondents, argued that the police and municipality employees should be more present in the municipality, Geeseven also emphasized that many of the residents of the municipality were against having an asylum accommodation in the municipality in 2015. According to Geeseven, the municipality had not listened to its residents, and she argued that it might have made people feel insecure, indicating that resident's insecurity might be a latent dysfunction of the practices taken on by Östra Göinge municipality to integrate migrants which came to the municipality. Geeseven stated that:

Many in the municipality were against the asylum accommodation, I believe that it has made people feel more insecure, I think maybe they should just accept that many people would come here but at the same time also accept that many were against the asylum accommodation, I think many residents felt that the municipality did not care about the residents. (Appendix 5)

Simultaneously, both Geeseven and Hayeight emphasized the importance of police and municipality presence:

(G7) The police maybe could show themselves a little more. (Appendix 5)

(H8) The police and the municipality can maybe check more on what people do; it sometimes feels as they are not out enough looking for bad people. (Appendix 5)

Geeseven also added that the civic walks could help the municipality find its way back to the lost 'community feeling' (Appendix 5), since Geeseven argued that the municipality has 'a lot of division' (ibid), indicating that a latent dysfunction of the practices of the two institutions had been the losing of a community feeling among residents in the municipality which had made residents feel insecure.

The answers from Eyenine, a 43-year-old Swedish man, which had lived in the municipality all his life and in Broby since 2010, were quite like the other respondents, as he also

emphasized that the police must increase their presence and visibility in the municipality. As for the municipality, Eyenine also said they should provide more activities, adding that the evening football which had recently started had been a successful measure since it had made more young people choose to play football instead of doing illegal activities. According to Eyenine, knowing that the young people are playing football during the evenings would increase the feelings of security among residents. He said that:

[...] I think that there has not been enough local police presence so that one might want to feel secure. (Appendix 5)

You have football which they have begun with recently, during the evenings, I mean that is a good thing [...]. More of that would be great, because if those which mostly do the bad stuff, if they do other things instead, especially during the evenings, than people would feel that it would be calmer and more secure here. (Appendix 5)

Before interviewing the two police officers which operate in and around the municipality, I interviewed Jayten, a 35-year-old foreign-born woman which had lived in the municipality since 2017. Jayten said, like the other respondents, that for the feelings of security among the residents, the police should increase their presence and visibility in the municipality. As for Östra Göinge municipality, Jayten said that they should work together with other important actors to arrange events and activities and build more attractive places in the municipality. She believed that the municipality and the local police should cooperate and make a plan which unites the different cultures existing in the municipality, saying that:

The police maybe have a lot of other things to do, but it would be very good if they could come here more [...]. (Appendix 5)

The municipality should work together with other actor's and residents to make them feel more secure, through activities, maybe build some place where the young people can stay and do things arranged by the municipality [...]. (Appendix 5)

The first of the two police officers I interviewed was Kaieleven, a 53-year-old Swedish woman which works in the municipality and had lived in the municipality for 25 years before moving out. Kaieleven argued that what might have led to a decrease in feelings of security among residents, was that of time and resources of the police and Östra Göinge municipality. She said that the municipality took care of providing places for the immigrants to go to school and at the same time had to open up everything in the municipality and always be there for the

migrants. As for the police, she said that the only thing they had time to do was helping at the border as people came to Sweden and added that they ‘were fully occupied with that [...]’ (Appendix 5) and that they had to do it since ‘the government required it [...]’ (ibid). As for the cooperation between the police and the municipality, Kaieleven said that they already do ‘a lot of things together’ (ibid). However, she believed that when the new municipality law ‘comes into force’ (ibid), the municipality will have more responsibility and more will be required from the municipality, to ‘generate situational pictures and work preventive’ (ibid), which had not been a legal requirement before.

She added that, the local police organization had recently done a reorganization in which a new role, the municipality police role had been developed, and which according to her had truly created a link between the work of the police and the municipality. She argued that both the police and the municipality, but mainly the police, need to:

[...] be out among the residents, not in the police cars only, but in front of people in the square for example, otherwise we cannot talk with and create relations with the residents, I think it goes for all of those which work with people, you must meet them and interact with them. (Appendix 5)

Kaieleven emphasized the importance of creating relations and meet with the people living in the municipality, to have more closeness to, and physical presence among the residents, indicating that a latent dysfunction of their law enforcement practices had been the lack of presence among residents. Lastly, she added that the civic walks which are arranged on a yearly basis in the municipality, should be done ‘in every part of the municipality [...] and not only in Knislinge and Broby’ (Appendix 5), indicating that the practices of Östra Göinge municipality aimed to tackle the increased feelings of insecurity had been latent dysfunctional since they had been too concentrated on specific parts of the municipality and not the whole municipality.

The last of my residents, Eltwelve, a 38 year old Swedish man working as a youth crime investigator for the local police, which had lived in the municipality since 2016 in Knislinge, argued that one of the explanations to the increased insecurity among residents is the link between providing information about the crime when it happens and providing information about the process after the crime and the punishment, since the police according to him, are ‘uniquely bad’ (Appendix 5) in marketing what they do. The police could be better at providing information to the public about the investigation process of a crime, instead of the

residents being provided with only a small notice in the newspaper about the sentence of the crime (ibid). Hence, while a manifest function of the law enforcement strategies had been the low crime rate, a latent dysfunction had been that simultaneously the local police had been bad at the marketing of their work which had an impact on residents' feelings of insecurity. According to Eltwelve, the municipality had been 'too focused on costs, then the actual results of a measure' (ibid), which implies that the increased feelings of insecurity among residents might be a consequence of the actual intention with the practices of the municipality, than the consequences of the practices. If the intentions were to focus on increasing the security of residents instead of focusing too much on costs, the residents might feel more secure. He stated that:

They, the municipality in collaboration with the police, have arranged and completed some civic safety walks, in all villages in Östra Göinge [...] but what the public then lift up, is why they feel insecure or what they want to change, I have been on some of the walks, and heard how the municipality answered, that it costs money and therefore they have to do things in one way and not in the way the residents want, not always, but mostly, they answer like that. (Appendix 5)

Eltwelve suggests that the municipality should interact with the residents differently and work to increase residents' security, otherwise it might lead to the residents lose their hope for a more secure future in the municipality. He suggests they should say:

We will take your thoughts into consideration and think about it, and then the municipality can decide on what to do, but do not meet the public directly, with answers like, that cannot be done. (Appendix 5)

Otherwise, he argues that 'the public will no longer be engaged and involved and lose hope for a more secure future in the municipality' (Appendix 5).

According to Eltwelve, the municipality could also provide more:

[...] lighting, a lot of places in the municipality, which are, especially during the winter, which are very dark, where there are tall bushes, where it is easy to yeah [...] it is almost that I also feel insecure when I am walking there, because it is yeah, so lighting and cutting larger bushes, build inviting places for the public to stay, so that not only the younger people are out running. (Appendix 5)

Eltwelve also lifts the importance of having more area police officers, especially at evenings and nights in places where there is a lack of lightning. He explains that area police officers are police officers which have the task to be visible among residents and work in ways which can prevent crime. He argues that the lack of more area police officers negatively impacts the work of the police, and that because of it their practices mainly 'reactive' (Appendix 5), instead of 'preventive and proactive' (ibid), saying that 'more area police officers are needed in order to truly work to prevent crime' (ibid). Instead of working in line with their task, the local police:

[...] drive and put out fires, they drive to Osby, then a lot of things happen in Hässleholm, and they drive there and must be there for a while, the work is more reactively than preventively and proactively. (Appendix 5)

To increase residents' feelings of security, more police officers should be:

[...] visible, safety-creating, relationship-building area police officers [...] police officers which can be seen, are visible, among the residents, which do not only drive when they receive an alarm, which actually place the police car next to the bus square, get out of the car and walk around and just talk to people, and say, like, hi or something, not to go there for the purpose of holding an interrogation regarding something which has happened, but just wish the residents, like a good day, or something. (Appendix 5)

According to Eltwelve, the police should:

[...] reverse this pyramid, so that much more effort and resources are put into crime prevention work, we need to drive with blue light when something happens, but way too much effort and resources are put on that [...]. (Appendix 5)

Like the other respondents, the answers from Eltwelve indicated that while a manifest function of the local police and municipality had been the low crime rate, a latent dysfunction had been residents feeling not enough presence of and close relations to the employees of the two institutions, which seems to be directly linked to their increased feelings of insecurity.

Apart from the practices of Östra Göinge municipality and the local police, the respondents also considered that the migration crisis which occurred in 2015 and the following integration process of the migrants in Östra Göinge municipality had an impact on the feelings of insecurity among residents in the municipality.

Migration & integration

Eltwelve pointed out that Östra Göinge had been an agricultural, industrial municipality which had remained unchanged for some decades, and when the municipality received many migrants, the picture of the society which had been formed for the last decades had gone through a rapid transformation during year 2015-2016. The rapid transformation, and the youth gangs, which to a 'certain extent consisted of foreign-born' (Appendix 5), could according to Eltwelve, be one of the reasons behind the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in the municipality. Which implies that the practices linked to the integration of migrants seems to have been latent dysfunctional, since the practices seems to have led to an unintended consequence, the increased feelings of insecurity among residents.

Kaieleven also linked the problem to the migration crisis and the importance of a successful integration of the migrants into the Swedish society. According to Kaieleven, the migrants which came and come to Östra Göinge municipality had and have basically nothing in common with the residents which had lived in the municipality prior to their arrival. Therefore, Kaieleven underscores the importance of a proper integration of the migrants, saying that the increased feelings of insecurity 'has a lot to do with the integration' (Appendix 5), and that a proper integration of the migrants will help create 'a municipality characterized by a feeling of community, eventually [...]' (ibid).

For an instance, Kaieleven had interacted with the immigrants through the SFI (Swedish for immigrants) education, an education provided to newly arrived immigrants where they mainly learn the Swedish language and about the Swedish society. She visited the immigrants attending SFI and talked about her work, telling them about the Swedish police. Since the migrants arriving to the municipality had a completely different experience of the police in the country they had emigrated from, Kaieleven believed that the visits would be helpful in their integration process and in creating 'a relation to and connection with them' (Appendix 5). Her answers imply that a latent dysfunction of the integration of migrants is the lost community feeling among residents, and subsequently an increase in feelings of insecurity, arguing that the municipality and other institutions must ensure the residents obtain sufficient knowledge and information about the Swedish society, to facilitate their integration process. Kaieleven said:

When they come here they should get the information needed, for example, I would not know how I need to behave if I went to Syria, like, I want to know when I come there, like, this is what they want to know about me and this is what I need to know, in order to be and live in the society I go to, there is maybe a lack of sufficient information or the right information at the beginning phases. I think it is needed to know how to live and what rules and all of that, to follow here. ()

However, the problem had been that it had been provided to far into the integration process, which she argued had led to Östra Göinge losing the ‘community feeling’ (Appendix 5). Kaieleven claimed that if the residents ‘come close to each other’ (ibid), they will also be closer to the community feeling, and that it would subsequently increase the feelings of security among residents (ibid). The civic walks in the municipality were brought up as a step in the right direction towards the community feeling (ibid). Simultaneously as Kaieleven that everything had happened at a fast rate in 2015-2016, and that it ‘was not easy to solve then’ (ibid), the municipality, according to Kaieleven, must:

[...] be better prepared and solve the situation better, through maybe more information about the Swedish society, the culture and how to live here, the rights and obligations one has here. (Appendix 5)

The interviewed migrants living in the municipality, Jayten, a foreign-born woman which immigrated to Östra Göinge municipality in 2017, Defour, an immigrant woman which immigrated to the municipality in 2016, and Hayeight, a male immigrant which had lived in the municipality since 2017, also believed, even though they articulated it somewhat differently, that their migration to Sweden could be the reason behind the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in the municipality. Jayten said that:

[...] people from my country of birth that do live here, the majority are very kind, hardworking and good people, but a little part does some bad things and then people look at us as a group and blames all of us, it is sad, because we are not bad people. (Appendix 5)

While Jayten did not directly say that she believed non-immigrant residents felt insecure because of the migrants, she linked the feelings of insecurity among residents to how the immigrants are blamed for and linked to the criminal activities which occur in the municipality. Somewhat like Jayten, Defour believed that:

[...] the immigration and a lot of immigrants coming here can be the reason that residents, especially those that are born here, might feel more insecure than before all the immigrants came, and me as well, a couple of years ago. (Appendix 5)

Like Defour and Jayten, Hayeight also believed that the arrival of migrants to the municipality could be the reason for the increased feelings of insecurity among residents, since immigrants are ‘not like them’ (Appendix 5), which Hayeight argued might have led to the non-migrant residents feeling insecure. However, like Defour, Hayeight also believed that most of the migrants are ‘really good people’ (ibid), and that there are ‘only some bad people from them and some from us’, and then then all the blame is put on the immigrants (ibid). The answers from the migrants in this study indicate an unsuccessful integration process and that a latent dysfunction of, inter alia, the practices of the local police and the municipality taken on to help integrate migrants, had been the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in the municipality due to a lost community feeling.

One of my Swedish respondents, Geeseven also believed that the increased feelings of insecurity among residents have to do with the migration crisis in 2015, and that it is linked to the arrival of ‘the new Swedes’ (Appendix 5), the culture clashes, and that the migrants and the Swedish residents have ‘a hard time understanding each other’ (ibid). Further on, Efive said that residents mainly feel insecure due to the ignorance of the culture clashes which have occurred and continue to occur in the municipality. Once again, answers which indicated that a latent dysfunction of the practices of the two institutions in relation to the integration of migrants seems to have been the increased feelings of insecurity among residents.

Effsix said that the people living in the municipality before the migration crisis had been ‘a fairly homogenous group’ (Appendix 5) and that the ‘wave of migration in 2015’ (ibid) and the way it was tackled had made residents of the municipality feel insecure because it had led to a latent dysfunction in that it had fueled an unwarranted prejudice among residents which had lived in the municipality for a long time. Cethree, on the other hand, believed that the immigrants, especially the younger ones, were treated differently, saying that:

[...] we just want to be kind to younger people just because they come from a different country, we want to show ourselves as kind to other [...]. (Appendix 5)

On the other hand, Aione argued that residents had felt that the municipality had received too many immigrants, which can be seen as a latent dysfunction of the practices of Östra Göinge municipality. ‘A mix of unknown people’ (Appendix 5) with residents which had lived in the municipality for a long time had occurred, which Aione believed could have made the

residents feel more insecure. Betwo also argued that there is a link between the migration crisis in 2015 and the increased feelings of insecurity among residents since 2015, and that both the police and Östra Göinge municipality could do more than they have done until now to increase the feelings of insecurity among residents, indicating a latent dysfunction in that the residents feel the institutions do not help them enough. According to Betwo, the municipality should integrate the immigrants into the society better, and ‘do it in every step of the way’(ibid), until they have been ‘properly integrated’ (ibid), which could be made through different courses and the finding of jobs for them. Betwo also mentioned that the integration process could be successful, and the insecurity decrease if activities would be arranged in the municipality, which once again indicates that a latent dysfunction seems to be that the residents feel the lack of enough activities provided to them by the municipality. If the society and its institutions do not help immigrants enough from the beginning and until they are properly integrated, Betwo argued that it could lead to, another latent dysfunction, in that it would negatively affect and make it harder for the migrant parents to raise their children (ibid).

Apart from linking their feelings of insecurity to migration and integration, or to the practices of the police and the municipality, other reasons behind residents increased feelings of insecurity were also mentioned.

Other

While seven of the respondents did not mention the media or developments in ways of communicating, the two police officers, Kaieleven and Eltwelve, as well as three of the residents, Defour, Efive and Betwo, linked media or communication to the increased feelings of insecurity among residents. Betwo said that nowadays as a lot of ‘bad things’ (Appendix 5) happen, and that it can be seen and heard by the residents on the media ‘all the time’, which was not the case before, which according to Betwo could have an impact on feelings of security. While Betwo calls it ‘bad things’, Defour articulates it slightly different from Betwo, as Defour said that in the media and newspapers all one can hear or read about is ‘wars, shootings, bombings and alike’ (ibid), simultaneously as Defour argued that it would be ‘really appreciated’ (ibid) if ‘all the good people and good things happening’ (ibid) would be brought up as well, as it could possibly make residents feel more secure. Like Betwo and Defour, Efive said that one can feel insecure when hearing, seeing, and reading about ‘everything bad that happens’ (ibid) in the news.

Furthermore, Kaieleven, one of the two interviewed police officers, said that there had been a rapid development in society in terms of ways of communicating, as well as in terms of flow of and access to information. Before one could not ‘hide behind things’ (Appendix 5) and communicate, and there is a whole other flow of information nowadays, which according to Kaieleven has a huge impact on how people feel nowadays. Nowadays, like before the technological developments, it is possible to read about a ‘bombing in Malmö’ (ibid) in the newspaper, however, the difference is that nowadays, due to technological developments, you can read and hear and read about it on an application on the phone as well. Kaieleven also argues that the media should lift more of the positive things happening, or which have happened in the municipality. Kaieleven added that the world coverage has changed and that ‘the media are really good at writing a lot about that’ (ibid) which makes people feel insecure. As for Eltwelve, the way in which the police communicate with the public is ‘uniquely bad’ (ibid), which could make residents feel insecure.

Apart from linking media and new ways of communication to feelings of insecurity among residents, Betwo, Defour and Jayten added that residents might feel insecure due to them being worried of being exposed to crime in the future. Jayten, for example, said that some of her ‘cousins are afraid that someday they will be the victim, even if they are kind, work and are innocent [...]’ (Appendix 5). Most of the people Defour knows think that ‘Malmö has become a really scary town to go to, at least some parts of it’ (ibid), and since Östra Göinge municipality is not far from Malmö, they are afraid that what happens there might happen in their municipality as well. Similarly, when Betwo had talked to friends and family, they had said that even though they had not been victims to any crime, they were afraid of what could happen to them in the future.

According to Kaieleven, Efive and Defour, buses, and bus stops, especially at night, could be linked to feelings of insecurity among residents. Defour argued that the feelings of insecurity could be linked to bus stops in the municipality, saying that:

[...] it is more while waiting for the bus, people that are unknown to you might come and stand really close to me and talk with a high tone close to me and which me feel uncomfortable and insecure [...]. (Appendix 5)

When Efive had talked with residents of the municipality, they had said that they feel insecure when ‘they travel with the bus between Kristianstad and Östra Göinge municipality’ (Appendix 5), and when ‘they travel with buses within the municipality’ (ibid). Similarly, Kaieleven argued that the increased feelings of insecurity could have a link to people rather not taking the bus at night.

To summarize, the empirical results indicate that the feelings of insecurity have increased due to various reasons, some mentioned to a wider extent, and some to a lesser extent among the respondents. According to the empirical results, the increased feelings of insecurity among residents is linked, in various ways, to the law enforcement practices of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality, while the results simultaneously suggest how they can alter their practices to make the residents feel more secure in the future. Below, the empirical findings will be discussed based on Merton’s theoretical framework of manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions, simultaneously the research questions of this thesis will be answered.

Discussion

As mentioned before, the Swedish Police, regardless of which municipality they operate in, should not barely work and to fight crime, they should also aim to provide order and feelings of security to the residents in the area in which they operate (SFS 1984:387 2§).

Simultaneously, since the 1st of July, a new law has been introduced in Sweden which means that the municipalities should, inter alia, be responsible for providing social order, security and prevent crime in their geographical area, simultaneously as they produce a situational picture regarding the problems in their municipality (SFS, 2023:196, 3 & 4 §). Additionally, according to the new law, each municipality should coordinate their work against crime with other relevant actor’s, such as the police in respective municipality (SFS, 2023:196 10§). The new law provides municipalities, such as Östra Göinge municipality, with greater responsibility in making the residents of Östra Göinge municipality feel more secure in the future. Even before the new law took effect, the municipalities of Sweden had worked to provide security to their residents, however, from the 1st of July, the municipalities of Sweden as well as the Swedish police, through their law enforcement practices, function in society as two central institutions in preventing crime and providing security to residents in the geographical area in which they both operate.

Even though the Swedish legislature aims to prevent crime and provide security to residents of all the municipalities in Sweden, the quantitative data on which this thesis is based upon, shows that the feelings of security amongst residents of Östra Göinge municipality has decreased. While the prevention of crime can be seen as successful, the increased feelings of insecurity can be seen as a manifest dysfunction of the law enforcement practices of the two institutions. While both Östra Göinge municipality and the local police intend to prevent crime and make their residents feel secure through their practices, the results of the qualitative interviews demonstrate that their law enforcement practices have led to dysfunctional, unintended consequences. The main reasons behind the increased feelings of insecurity among residents are linked to the unintended, dysfunctional consequences of the law enforcement practices of the two institutions.

The qualitative findings demonstrate that the practices which the two institutions embraced to deal with the migration crisis which occurred approximately 7 years ago, at the same time as the feelings of security began to decrease among the residents in Östra Göinge municipality, had a significant impact on the feelings of security among the residents in Östra Göinge municipality, which will be discussed more in the coming chapter. Nonetheless, the qualitative findings indicate that both the local police and Östra Göinge municipality had also intended and attempted to integrate the migrants which came to Sweden, especially the municipality, which to a certain extent is legally responsible, together with the Swedish government and the regions, for the integration of migrants into the Swedish society. For example, the municipality had set up an asylum accommodation and had done ‘a great work in providing jobs for the immigrants’ (Appendix 5), and one of the interviewed police officers, Kaieleven, mentioned her visits to SFI-lessons where she had lectured and talked about the Swedish police and the rights and obligations of people living in Sweden.

While the law enforcement practices of the two institutions were intended to integrate migrants and make residents in the municipality feel secure, their actions have not merely led to manifest dysfunctions in the increased feelings of insecurity among the residents and an unsuccessful integration of the migrants, their practices had also generated latent dysfunctions. Apart from the latent dysfunctions of the practices of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality in relation to the integration of migrants and linked to the intention of making their residents feel secure, the qualitative findings demonstrated that there could also

be other possible factors behind the increased feelings of insecurity among residents, which will be discussed more in the coming chapter.

Additionally, the qualitative findings show that both Östra Göinge municipality and the local police must alter their practices in some respects, to make the municipality less divided, and most importantly, make the residents feel more secure. Kaielven, for an instance, argued that more institutions should cooperate with and use SFI as a platform to reach out with sufficient information and knowledge to the immigrants about the Swedish society, its laws, and cultures.

Before making concluding remarks of this thesis, it is deemed to be of importance to highlight the issue about police presence and of the problem of ‘going native’ as a researcher which had intimate knowledge about my study population. While the respondents mainly said that police presence would make them feel more secure, there were some respondents which argued that in terms of the police presence the police should not only drive around in the police cars but be present among the residents outside of the police cars, and respondents even argued that the police should only be present to a certain extent, since residents which do not have trust in the police might feel even more insecure if the police are more present among residents in the future.

Additionally, since I was born close to Östra Göinge municipality and has lived in a city nearby the municipality since I was born, and some of the respondents had links to Kristianstad or had immigrant background as me, there was constantly an underlying risk during the research process of me going native, losing my objectivity in relation to the study population. However, the fact that I constantly reflected on the possibility helped me from going native and maintain objectivity throughout the research process.

Having problematized the issue of police presence and of ‘going native’, the following chapter will provide some concluding remarks of this thesis.

7. Conclusion

This thesis consisted of an examination of the link between the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality and the law enforcement practices of

the local police in the municipality and Östra Göinge municipality, two institutions which are governed by legal directives. The main purpose was to get a grasp on the role the law has played in relation to residents increased feelings of insecurity in Östra Göinge municipality, how the local police and Östra Göinge municipality, and other relevant institutions can tackle the problem and increase the feelings of security among the residents.

Quantitative data from a security measurement survey which the Swedish Police Authority conducts in cooperation with the municipalities in Sweden on a yearly basis, provided a picture of how the feelings of insecurity had increased among residents in the municipality since 2015, while the literature review provided a picture on what had been investigated before in the issue and of the gap in research. In other words, together, the results of the survey and the literature review laid the foundation for this thesis, its purpose and research questions. While the empirical data which was collected from the qualitative interviews with residents of and police officers in the municipality offered a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the problem and the latent dysfunctions of the law enforcement practices of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality. Together the quantitative and qualitative data generate a wide-ranging picture of the research problem, the causes behind the problem, its links to the practices of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality, as well as on how to tackle the problem in the future.

This chapter includes answers to the research questions of this thesis, and simultaneously, a presentation and discussion of the key conclusions of this study. The chapter is concluded with propositions on possible ways for how the issue can be investigated by researchers in the future.

Residents' insecurity in Östra Göinge municipality

As for the first research question of this thesis: *According to police officers and residents of the municipality, why has residents feelings of insecurity increased among the residents in Östra Göinge municipality during the year period 2015-2022, even though the crime rate has not increased in the municipality?*, and the second: *How can the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality be understood in relation to law enforcement practices?*, the findings suggest that the answers to the questions intersect with each other.

As for the practices of Östra Göinge municipality, several of the respondents felt that there had been a lack of a community feeling in the municipality since the migration crisis occurred, which according to the residents, mainly is a consequence of the law enforcement practices of Östra Göinge municipality. The findings also indicate that the lack of presence from employees of the two institutions has an impact on residents' feelings of security. Apart from the unsuccessful integration of migrants, the respondents argued that the lack of presence, lack of sufficient lighting provided by the institutions to the residents in the area in which they live in the municipality, and the lack of activities and events in the municipality provided by Östra Göinge municipality, as the main reasons behind the increased feelings of insecurity.

The findings of this thesis show that the practices which the local police and Östra Göinge municipality had taken on to make their residents feel secure and to integrate the migrants in the municipality had been, in general, dysfunctional. While the quantitative data provided a basis for and made this thesis possible through a representation of the crime rate and the increased insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality in recent years, the quantitative data also show that the intention behind the legal frameworks which aim to prevent crime and provide security to residents (SFS 1984:387; SFS 2023:196) had been manifestly dysfunctional. Apart from the main reasons behind the increased feelings of insecurity among residents being the link between the law enforcement practices of the two institutions, the qualitative results also helped me gain an understanding of other reasons behind the increased feelings of insecurity. The findings of this thesis also indicated that media and the technological developments in recent years has had an impact on the feelings of security among residents in the municipality. The mostly mentioned factor apart from the law enforcement practices of the two institutions was the role media has played together with the increased flow of information in recent years because of technological developments. Some of the respondents mentioned the role media has played in making residents of the municipality feel more insecure in recent years, especially since the migration crisis. Four out of the twelve respondents highlighted that media mainly provided residents, not only from Östra Göinge municipality, with a dystopian, dark picture of the world, and that all one can hear about is 'wars, shootings, bombings and alike' (Appendix 5), which has an impact on the feelings of security among the residents. Nevertheless, the unsuccessful management of the noteworthy flow of Middle Eastern refugees and immigrants in 2015 and 2016, and the unsuccessful law

enforcement practices of the two investigated institutions, seem to be the two most prominent factors behind the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in the municipality.

The purpose with the law's, to, inter alia, make residents feel secure, had not been achieved, and the law enforcement practices of the two investigated institutions had been dysfunctional in relation to residents' feelings of security in the municipality. In other words, while the crime-prevention work had been manifestly functional, the qualitative findings, demonstrate manifest and latent dysfunctional circumstances between the residents of Östra Göinge municipality and the two institutions, which seems to have influenced the feelings of security among the residents and the integration of migrants living in the municipality. The findings of this thesis demonstrate that both residents and police officers believe that there has been flaws in the work of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality. The respondents argued that there has been a lack of lighting, cameras, police, and municipality presence, as well activities for the residents of the municipality, which has increased the insecurity among residents in the municipality.

Proposals of measures to tackle the problem

As Merton (1968) argues, when a social structure is evidently dysfunctional due to accumulated internal and external impact on the structure, it calls for change and adjustments in the society and its structures. Through the examination of the dysfunctions of the regulated practices of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality in relation to the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in the municipality, it enables an analysis of society which supports an examination of the vital elements for a stable social structure, and consequently, ways to modify the society to reach the desired stability and functionality. By emphasizing the link between feelings of insecurity among the residents and the law enforcement practices of the two institutions with Merton's theory as the foundation for analysis, I could find possible ways for the two institutions to modify their practices to reach the desired change and increased feelings of security among residents in Östra Göinge municipality.

As for the third research question of this thesis: *How can the Police in Östra Göinge and Östra Göinge municipality work in order for their residents to feel more secure?*, the residents argued that the local police and Östra Göinge municipality should provide more lighting, cameras, and activities for the residents, as well as more presence in the municipality, especially at bus

stops. Simultaneously, the respondents argued that the two institutions, especially Östra Göinge municipality, should provide more sufficient information and knowledge to immigrants about the Swedish society and its laws during every step of their integration process, to properly integrate immigrants in the municipality and to regain the lost community feeling in the municipality, make the municipality less segregated, and make the residents feel more secure. If the immigrants living in the municipality are accurately and sufficiently integrated, and the two institutions alter their practices and take measures in the future which are in line with the findings of this, there will not merely be a less divided Östra Göinge municipality, it will also be a municipality in which the residents feel more secure than momentarily.

Additionally, the findings of this thesis demonstrate that feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality should be tackled socially as well as through modified legal actions. Given the flux of migrants during 2015 and 2016 and the recent, ongoing flux of refugees from Ukraine, the proposals provided in this thesis, ought to be applied on the problem straightaway. To provide the basis for a successful integration of migrants, the municipalities in Sweden, not merely Östra Göinge municipality and in cooperation with the police and other relevant authorities, should provide the migrants with sufficient information and knowledge about the Swedish society, its culture, laws, and regulations, and start doing so as early as possible in migrants integration process. Apart from modifying their practices in relation to migrants in terms of their integration process, the local police and Östra Göinge municipality should also alter their practices to provide a social stability in the municipality and brings back the lost community feeling, which can be done in different ways.

While the municipality created an asylum accommodation after the migrant flux in 2015 and 2016 (Appendix 5), they have also worked to facilitate the integration of migrants in other ways. Östra Göinge municipality contributes with: practical advices for migrants in relation to migrants settlement in Sweden, support when enrolling in school and preschool, education in the Swedish language for adults and other adult educations, orientation in the community, ensuring that other municipality services are a part of the newly arrived migrants integration, and spreads information about meeting places, association life as well as social activities in the municipality (Östra Göinge, 2022). However, the results of this thesis indicate that those practices have been insufficient and ineffective, which consequently has played an important

part in the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality. Hence, other ways to tackle the problem should be considered.

Östra Göinge municipality, in cooperation with other relevant institutions, should take the front seat in the integration of migrants into their community, to prevent an increase and if possible, decrease in the feelings of insecurity among residents in the municipality. Firstly, I propose, in congruence with the findings of this thesis, that Östra Göinge municipality do not only spread information about social activities and association life, but also provide more social activities to the residents of the municipality and create a survey which both migrants and Swedish born residents of the municipality fill out and in which they answer which activities they like to do on their free time, and based on their answers take action to provide those activities to the residents. From own experience, the association life plays a huge part both during and after the integration, as well as the socialization process. Additionally, SFI (Swedish for immigrants), and other similar platforms which are an essential part of migrant's integration process in Sweden, should be used by Östra Göinge municipality and the local police to provide sufficient information about the municipality, about activities and association life in which the migrants can engage, as well as about their rights and obligations while living in Sweden. The aim should be to successfully integrate migrants in the community, where a possible way to achieve that could possibly be by enabling them to obtain sufficient knowledge and information about the society they come to, about the Swedish society and about Östra Göinge municipality, while simultaneously supporting them along every step of the integration process.

Furthermore, both the police and the municipality should increase their presence among the residents in the municipality, especially at bus stops and squares, and put more resources on investigating residents' opinion on the actions of the institutions in the municipality. Additionally, the findings suggest that if the two institutions are more visible among and build close relations with the residents of the municipality, it will make the residents feel there is more of a 'community feeling' in the municipality and feel more secure. The two institutions should also work to, especially the municipality, build more inviting places for the residents to meet, to provide more lighting in the municipality, and if possible, cameras in certain places, to increase residents' feelings of security. While both the police and municipalities in Sweden, are now responsible for preventing crime and insecurity among residents, the two institutions ought to take the findings of this thesis in consideration as they work in

congruence with the aim with the legal framework for a future Östra Göinge municipality in which the residents of Östra Göinge feel more secure.

Additionally, the findings suggest that Östra Göinge municipality and the local police should work at marketing more about the positive happenings around and in the municipality to make the residents feel more secure. In terms of the technological developments, which has increased the flow of information we take in daily through our technological devices, and the ways in which we interact with each other, Östra Göinge municipality and the local police ought to, firstly, use the technological developments and the digital sphere more frequently to reach out to the residents in the municipality. Since a lot of information can reach out to a lot of the residents through their technological devices nowadays, the institutions could use them as a platform to provide information about activities in the municipality, to facilitate the integration process for migrants and to provide positive news, to increase feelings of security among residents in the municipality.

Before discussing the contribution of this thesis, especially to socio-legal studies on law, enforcement, crime, and security, as well as providing suggestions for future research, it is of importance to underscore that the intention with this thesis has been to generalize upon the issue based on the findings of this thesis.

Contributions of the thesis

Apart from the findings of this thesis contributing as a foundation for the local police and the municipality in Östra Göinge municipality as they work to create a society in the future in which their residents feel more secure, this thesis also contributes, in various ways, to socio-legal studies on law enforcement, crime and security.

As for the last research question of this study: *What can this study offer to socio-legal studies concerning law enforcement, crime, and security?*, firstly, the theoretical framework used in this study enabled the examination of the links between the law and society, both on a micro and macro level, on the level of individuals as well as on a structural level. Employing a middle-range theory helped find noteworthy links between abstract theorizing and empirical discoveries (Campbell, 1982). Using Merton's functionalist theory in this study helped me conduct empirical research on residents' feelings of insecurity in Östra Göinge municipality

and dodge the risk of falling into theoretical generalization which can neither be tested on an empirical level or normally directs criticism towards the functionalist paradigm.

The theoretical framework helped provide a broader understanding of the problem since it enabled an analysis of the problem beyond the objectives of the law and the two investigated institutions of the municipality, as the unintentional results of their practices have been investigated. As the latent functions and dysfunctions are examined, it simultaneously reinforces the understanding of the tangible outcomes of the law enforcement practices of the local police and Östra Göinge municipality on the feelings of security of the residents in Östra Göinge municipality. This provides a basis for researchers within sociology of law, while seeking to obtain a broad understanding of the route and outcomes of law enforcement practices (Banakar, 2011). As for the methodology, the qualitative interviews added a dimension to the thesis through the subjective experiences related to the problem of insecurity among residents in the municipality and helped investigate the link between law enforcement practices and the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in a specific society.

Furthermore, considering existing research on the topic, this thesis offers several unique contributions. While previous research in a Swedish as well as international context have, *inter alia*, studied the nexus between law enforcement and security through the lenses of policing styles, either if a policing style should be embraced (Alda and Dammert, 2019; Manning and Fleming, 2017), or the effects of embracing a policing style in a specific context (Peterson, 2010; Spasic and Radovanovic, 2019; Watkins, al-Jerba and al-Delaimi, 2022), this socio-legal was merely intended to assist the local police in Östra Göinge as they work according to a problem-oriented policing model called the SARA-model. Hence, this socio-legal study is unique in terms of studying law enforcement, crime, and security through the lenses of policing and policing styles.

While the link between law, crime and insecurity has previously been studied in various ways and through different perspectives, this study examines the nexus through a different perspective and in a different way than the existing research on the topic. Blanco (2016), for example, focused on studying the effects of a judicial reform on crime and security, and Prieto Curiel and Bishop (2017) introduced a model to study the link between crime and insecurity. This study makes unique contributions to the field since it neither studies the effects of a judicial reform or introduces a model to study the link between law, crime, and insecurity, it

rather studies the causes behind increased feelings of security among residents in a specific Swedish context.

Regarding previous studies in a Swedish context on the topic, Kullberg et al. (2011) investigated which elements residents needed to feel secure, like this thesis, however, the findings were not used, as in this study, to provide a basis for institutions in a specific context to tackle the problem of increased feelings of insecurity among residents in the context. Additionally, Stjernborg (2017) studied the consequences of increased security in a specific Swedish city, and not the causes behind the increased security, as in this unique study.

Apart from the aforementioned contributions to the existing research field, the key contribution of this study to the existing research on the topic is that it studies the issue from an interdisciplinary, socio-legal perspective. While existing research on the topic is mainly from the perspectives of criminology, sociology, education, law, and psychology (Avila et al., 2016; Blanco, 2016; Manning & Fleming, 2017; O'Brien & Windle, 2022; Prieto Curiel & Bishop, 2017; Peterson, 2010; Spasic & Radovanovic, 2019; Watkins, al-Jerba & al-Delaimi, 2022) it is not interdisciplinary, it is not from the aspect of sociology of law. This study does not only seek to explain the topic through merely legal facts (Blanco, 2016), neither does it study it merely through a sociological lens (Kullberg et al., 2009), this study rather seeks to explain the research problem through the law, the law enforcement practices as well as the existing social relations and structures in Östra Göinge municipality. This interdisciplinary study of the nexus between law, crime and insecurity supplements existing research as this research offers an empirical study of the role of the law and law enforcement practices in relation to feelings of security in a specific society, as it highlights and focuses on studying the nexus between law enforcement practices and feelings of insecurity through the interplay between law and society. Additionally, this socio-legal study contributes to a more nuanced understanding on how the law can both increase and decrease feelings of security in a society. Different from existing research in the field, this study examines the consequences of law enforcement practices, the causes behind disruptions in a social structure in relation to the law enforcement practices, as well as possible ways to reform the law enforcement practices for them to produce social stability. The findings of this thesis offer a new perspective on the nexus between law enforcement, crime and insecurity, a socio-legal perspective which helped understand the reasons behind increased feelings of insecurity by studying the interplay

between law and society, as well as possible ways to make changes in society through changes in law enforcement practices.

Lastly, another unique contribution to the existing research on the topic, is that the findings of this study suggest there could be a link between migration, integration and the interplay between law and society. Differently from existing research on the topic, the findings of this study indicate that increased feelings of security could be linked to the role the law plays in terms of the integration process of migrants in a specific society. Hence, the empirical findings of this thesis provide a basis for future socio-legal studies on the nexus between law enforcement, crime, and security, which could intensify and more deeply study the topic through the interdisciplinary link between sociology of law and studies on migration and integration.

Future research

In the future, one could compare the approaches taken on by different municipalities in Sweden in relation to making their residents feel secure, both municipalities which have had an increase as well as decrease in terms of residents' feelings of security, to distinguish which approaches have been successful. It would provide the municipalities with a picture of the different ways municipalities seek to make their residents feel secure and assist the municipalities as they strive for a municipality in which their residents feel secure. Another comparison between municipalities in which their residents feel insecure, could include municipalities which have, in relation to the national average, a low crime rate and municipalities with a high crime rate. The findings of such a study would not merely shed a light on the important role municipalities have in making their residents feel secure, it would also, and most importantly, assist them in their work as they learn from each other's practices in their quest to make their residents feel secure.

Since this thesis provided findings which indicate that media also has an impact on residents' feelings of insecurity, a future study could examine the link between residents increased feelings of insecurity in the municipality, and how various forms of media depict Östra Göinge and municipalities nearby. A discourse analysis would be a suitable method to adopt as texts from frequently read newspapers and previous oral news reports in media are analyzed. It could be complemented by qualitative interviews with residents of the municipality, which could be asked questions linked to media's role in relation to feelings of

security and media's possible impact on the resident's general well-being, attitude, and behavior pattern. Such a study would generate a greater understanding on the role media's depiction of the municipality and municipalities nearby plays in relation to the normative structures in the municipality, and most importantly, on the increased insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality. The results would be valuable for institutions in Östra Göinge municipality as they strive for a future municipality in which residents feel secure and a sense of community feeling.

As previously mentioned, the findings of this thesis demonstrated that there had been an unsuccessful integration of migrants, not all migrants, however, enough to lose the community feeling and increase feelings of insecurity among residents. Hence, this thesis also provides the basis for a future study in which the migrants which have lived in the municipality for a couple of years could be interviewed regarding their experiences of the integration process. The study would enable the scholar to acquire knowledge about what migrants have felt was lacking, was positive and less positive during their integration process. An integration process which begins when the migrants have obtained a permanent residence permit and have perceptually adjusted to their new society, and which all relevant parties must participate in, the government, its agencies, the municipalities, the Swedish Police authorities, and other relevant institutions, ensuring that the migrants adapt properly to their new social milieu. This thesis merely suggests that an unsuccessful integration process could be one of the possible factors behind the increased feelings of insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality. By narrowing down the focus of the study, the scholar would obtain in-depth knowledge of specific weaknesses and strengths of the integration process, simultaneously, the findings would provide the basis for an implementation of concrete legal and social measures to increase the feelings of security in the municipality, at appropriate parts of the integration process.

In the future, it would be interesting to also investigate the effects of the new law which has provided the municipalities in Sweden with more responsibility to prevent crime, and subsequently seek to make their residents feel secure. In such a socio-legal study, Merton's theory about manifest and latent functions and dysfunction could be a possible conceptual framework to use while investigating the effects of the new municipality law. The empirical data which demonstrate the effects could be gathered from the residents themselves, through interviews. The findings would provide knowledge about both the intended and unintended

effects of the new law in society. The unintended, dysfunctional effects of the law could be taken into consideration as actions are put in place in society, or reforms made in regulations, which aim to produce changes in Östra Göinge municipality which the residents feel secure.

While the focus of this thesis has been on lifting the residents' experiences of law enforcement practices and of their increased feelings of insecurity, a future study could focus more on investigating the issue from a top-down approach. Considering the new municipality law, the increased insecurity among residents in Östra Göinge municipality could be investigated through the viewpoint's employees of Östra Göinge municipality and the local police in the municipality have in relation to the problem. The study could provide a greater understanding of how the new municipality law has been used as a basis to work for increased feelings of security among residents, by the employees of the two institutions, and how they have interpreted the new municipality law as they have employed it in action. Additionally, the findings of such a study could be compared to the findings of this thesis, to understand if the viewpoints of the residents are in line with those of the institutions included in this thesis, institutions which are responsible for increasing residents' feelings of security in the municipality. The findings of such a comparison would provide a basis for them to set up plans on measures to take to increase the residents' feelings of security.

Considering the new municipality law and the increased feelings of insecurity among residents of Östra Göinge municipality in recent years, Östra Göinge municipality should at least take the findings in consideration and review possible solutions of the problem based on the findings of this thesis. Then, it is up to Östra Göinge municipality do decide to what extent the findings of this thesis should provide a basis for the measures implemented in the future to tackle the problem. If it turns out that Östra Göinge municipality decides to employ the findings of this thesis as a basis for the future measures they take to tackle the problem, the effects of those measures should also be evaluated afterwards. After the municipality has evaluated their actions and identified weaknesses or strengths of the specific measures, Östra Göinge municipality could make alterations in their legal and social actions and implement new, modified measures to make their residents feel more secure.

Similar to the municipality, the local police which operates in the municipality, could use the findings of this thesis as a foundation for the part of their security creating work which is, or is recommended to be, partly based on the so-called SARA-model (PM 2022:12). A problem-

oriented way of working to achieve the aim of their work, which consists of four steps and was mentioned in the beginning of this thesis. Before this thesis was conducted, the police had already done the first step, they had mapped the problem and identified a recurrent problem in Östra Göinge municipality, through the national security measurement survey. This thesis has mainly assisted the police in the second step of their SARA-model work, the analysis part, as this thesis has analyzed the problem and its possible causes. Additionally, the findings can also be valuable and useful in the third and fourth step, the response part, and the assessment part. The findings can be beneficial as they consider which methods can be applied and decide on the implementation of measures in relation to the problem, and when they follow up and evaluate working methods and effects both during and after implementation. While the hope is that the results of this thesis will provide a basis for the two institutions as they aim to make their residents feel more secure, the extent to which the results of this thesis will be taken in consideration as they work to make their residents feel secure, will be known after the results of this thesis have been presented to employees of the two institutions on the 3rd of October 2023.

To conclude, the findings of this thesis have most effective if the two institutions, together with other relevant parties, combine their forces and tackle the problem as a team. If the dysfunctions are to turn to functions in the future, teamwork and collaboration is needed, since a football team is not a team, unsuccessful, and non-functional if there is merely one player in the team.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Link to security measurement survey results in Police region South, Sweden

Below is a link to the security measurement survey results in Police region South in Sweden (including Östra Göinge municipality).

[../Documents/LPO Hässleholm 2022 version 23 oktober \(005\).key](#)

Appendix 2- Introduction to interview (Translated version)

This text below was shown to and discussed with the possible respondents before the interviews started.

A study about residents increased feelings of insecurity in Östra Göinge municipality

Agron Selaci

The results of the security measurement surveys conducted in recent years, have shown that while the exposure to crime has been on a low level in Östra Göinge municipality since the security measurement survey began to be conducted, the feelings of insecurity have increased since 2015 and been on a higher level in relation to the national average and the exposure to crime in the municipality since 2015. My master thesis aims to gain a deeper understanding of this existing problem from residents and police officers' viewpoints, to understand how it can be understood in relation to law enforcement practices and provide a basis for the police and Östra Göinge municipality and the local police as they work to increase the feelings of security of their residents.

Therefore, to achieve the aim with my thesis I am going to conduct interviews with residents of and police officers working in the municipality, and you are one of my respondents. I am going to ask you questions which focuses on your understanding of the problem of insecurity in your municipality, why you think the feelings of insecurity have increased since 2015, what role you think that the municipality and the police in Östra Göinge and Östra Göinge municipality have in this development, and how they can work to increase the feelings of security among residents in the municipality.

Since you are a resident in the municipality, I would be extremely grateful if you agree to participate in an interview with me and answer some questions related to my thesis. You will be completely anonymous, and your answers will only be used to fulfill the purpose of my thesis and provide a basis for relevant actors in the municipality as they work towards increasing feelings of security among residents in the municipality.

The interview will be recorded to facilitate my work and the recorded interview will only be used to help fulfill the purpose with my study. Your participation in the interview is completely voluntary and you can choose to leave the interview at any time. With that said,

would you like to participate in an interview with me? If you do not have time now, can you participate at another time or day? If not, thank you for your time and for stopping and listening to me, have a nice day!

Appendix 3- Interview guide (Translated version)

This text below was used as the foundation for every interview conducted in this thesis, however, even though the guide below was used as a reference point in every interview, the 12 interviews often took various directions. The interview guide still helped me keep the discussions during the interviews in line with the aim with the interviews and purpose of this thesis.

Interview guide

Agron Selaci

I will now start recording, which means that the interview has begun.

Before I ask questions related to the topic, I would like to know a little more about your background.

How old are you?

Are you born in Sweden? If not, when did you come to Sweden and how long have you lived in Östra Göinge municipality?

In which part of Östra Göinge municipality do you live in?

Thank you for that information. Now I want to proceed with question linked to the purpose with this interview.

(After the background information of the respondent had been obtained, they were asked the questions stated below, however, the order of the questions varied from interview to interview and some follow-up questions are not stated below because they were asked to some respondents and not others, depending on the answers I got from each respondent.

Nonetheless, all the questions asked were somehow related to the issue being investigated and the aim of my study)

To begin with...

Are you aware of the insecurity problem which exists in the municipality? If yes, how did you get aware of it? Do you feel insecure in the municipality? Why, or why not? If you or someone close to felt insecure sometimes, when? Where? And why?

Why do you think residents of the municipality have felt more insecure since 2015 in comparison to the years before 2015, even though the exposure to crime has been on the

same level since then? Has anything changed since then in the municipality? What do you think are the main reasons for the increased insecurity?

What role do you consider that the municipality and the police in the municipality have had linked to this development? How do you think that the existing problem can be remedied? What can be done, according to you, in the municipality to make residents feel more secure in the future? What can the police and the municipality do? How should they do it?

That was it, I will now stop recording which means the interview has officially ended.

Thank you for taking your time to talk to me today. Your answers will be very helpful while I try to gain a deeper understanding of the insecurity problem in your municipality and provide a basis for the police and the municipality as they make residents feel more secure in the future. Once again, thank you. Have a nice day!

Appendix 4- Transcription of interviews

Below, I provide a link to the document where the 86 pages long transcription of every word in the interviews can be found and read through. It is provided as a link since it would take too much of the space of the thesis itself if it were to be put in here in full text.

[../Documents/Transcription interviews.docx](#)

Appendix 5- Themes after analysis

Below I provide a link to the product of the thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews, divided into the three identified themes. Since it consisted of a total of 20 pages, a link to it is provided.

[../Documents/Analysis categories & themes.docx](#)

