



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

POLICE OFFICERS UNDER PRESSURE:

**SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT,
STRESS, AND JOB SATISFACTION IN
SWEDEN**

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In the loving memory of my dear father and for my beloved mother

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Abstract

Police officers encounter challenging and stressful situations at work, which negatively impact their health, job performance, and aspects of their lives. Regarding the gendered structure and competitive work environment of police organizations, women are under extra pressure from the pervasive gendered norms within the police organization.

The aim of this dissertation is to study sexual and gender-based harassment and work-related stress as important work environment elements from a gender perspective, and to explore if and how these elements can affect police officers' job satisfaction in the context of Swedish police work.

This thesis is based on three studies: a scoping review, a quantitative study, and a qualitative study, resulting in four articles. In the scoping review study on sexual and gender-based harassment in police work in the European context 16 articles on sexual and gender-based harassment against police employees were studied. Thematic analysis was applied to obtain the main patterns across and within the included studies. In the qualitative study, data collection included one group interview and 12 individual interviews with male and female police officers. Thematic and content analysis were conducted to analyze the interviews. During the quantitative study, data were collected from 152 male and female police officers applying a set of questionnaires including sociodemographic questions, the Police Stress Identification Questionnaire (PSIQ), Sexual and gender-based harassment questions, and Job Descriptive Index (JDI).

The scoping review showed that most of the European studies were focused on sexual harassment, while gender-based harassment was often overlooked or mixed with other types of harassment and discrimination. Six main themes were found in the studies; the existence of sexual and gender-based harassment, perpetrators, associated factors, consequences, individual response, and impact of organizational policies. In the mixed methods article, results from the quantitative and qualitative studies on sexual and gender-based harassment indicated that female police officers experienced a statistically significant higher percentage of gender-based harassment compared to male officers. However, there was not any significant gender difference in sexual harassment. "Sexual comments and jokes" and "mocking or telling jokes about the #MeToo campaign" by colleagues were reported as the most frequent sexual

harassment and gender-based harassment items. Additionally, police officers identified the presence of toxic jargon and a culture of silence, along with ineffective or negative management styles, as organizational factors that can contribute to the perpetuation of such harassment. Also, the quantitative results on police work stress showed that police officers rated higher on the “impact on significant others” stress and “operational stress” subscales. In addition, female officers reported higher stress in these subscales compared to their male counterparts. The police officers who had experienced sexual harassment reported higher “self-image stress” and “operational stress”. Moreover, in studying job satisfaction among Swedish police officers, both male and female officers reported the highest satisfaction with “people on present job” and the lowest satisfaction with “opportunity for promotion” and then “pay”. No significant gender gap was found in job satisfaction subscales, nor was there a significant association between these subscales and experiences of harassment. However, organizational stress was negatively related to three domains of job satisfaction; “job in general”, “pay” and “supervision”.

The research findings revealed that despite substantial changes in the Swedish police organization and work culture during recent decades, the issue of sexual and gender-based harassment remains persistent. This finding highlights the need for more attention to organizational factors (cultural and managerial issues) enabling sexual and gender-based harassment. The findings also underscore the higher levels of work pressure and challenges faced by female officers and the importance of challenging prevailing gender norms affecting both female and male police officers. Moreover, addressing organizational sources of stress can improve the working conditions and job satisfaction of police officers. Finally, the thesis highlights the importance of considering sexual and gender-based harassment along with work stress to create a safer and more productive police work environment.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, Gender-based harassment, Work stress, Job satisfaction, Police officers, Work environment

Abbreviations

CHM	Challenge–Hindrance Model
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
ILO	International Labor Organization
JDI	Job Descriptive Index
JGI	Job in General Index
NOA	Department of National Operations (Swedish: <i>Nationella operativa avdelningen</i>)
OSF	Open Science Framework
PRISMA-ScR	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis extension for Scoping Review
PSIQ	Police Stress Identification Questionnaire
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PVAs	Particularly Vulnerable Areas
WHO	World Health Organization

Enkel sammanfattning på svenska

Poliser ställs inför svåra och stressfyllda situationer i arbetet, vilka har en negativ påverkan på deras hälsa, arbetsprestation och aspekter av deras liv. När det gäller den könade strukturen och konkurrensinriktade arbetsmiljön inom polisen, utsätts kvinnor för mer tryck från de könsnormer som är utbredda inom polisorganisationen.

Syftet med den här avhandlingen är att från ett genusperspektiv undersöka sexuella trakasserier och trakasserier på grund av kön samt arbetsrelaterad stress som viktiga aspekter i svenska polisers arbetsmiljö. Syftet är också att utforska om och på vilket sätt dessa aspekter kan påverka polisers arbetstillfredsställelse i Sverige.

Den här avhandlingen bygger på tre studier som omfattar en litteraturstudie, en kvantitativ studie och en kvalitativ studie. I litteraturstudien studerades 16 artiklar om sexuella trakasserier och trakasserier på grund av kön inom polisen i Europa. En tematisk analys gjordes för att få fram de huvudsakliga mönstren mellan och inom studierna som ingick. I den kvalitativa studien omfattade datainsamlingen en gruppintervju samt tolv enskilda intervjuer med manliga och kvinnliga poliser. Tema- och innehållsanalyser genomfördes för att analysera intervjuerna. Under den kvantitativa studien samlades data in från 152 manliga och kvinnliga poliser med hjälp av en uppsättning frågeformulär som innehöll sociodemografiska frågor, PSIQ (Police Stress Identification Questionnaire), frågor om sexuella trakasserier och trakasserier på grund av kön samt JDI (Job Descriptive Index).

Litteraturstudien visade att de flesta europeiska studier fokuserade på sexuella trakasserier medan trakasserier på grund av kön inte adresserades eller blandades ihop med andra typer av trakasserier och diskriminering. Sex huvudsakliga teman hittades i studierna: förekomst av sexuella trakasserier och trakasserier på grund av kön, förövare, associerade faktorer, följder, individers respons samt policys inverkan. Resultaten från de kvantitativa och kvalitativa studierna om sexuella trakasserier och trakasserier på grund av kön visar att kvinnliga poliser upplever en statistiskt signifikant högre andel trakasserier på grund av kön jämfört med manliga poliser. Det fanns dock ingen signifikant könsskillnad när det gällde sexuella trakasserier. "Sexuella kommentarer och skämt" och kollegor som "förlöjligar eller skämtar om #metoo-kampanjen" rapporterades som de vanligaste förekomsterna av sexuella trakasserier respektive trakasserier på grund av kön. Dessutom

identifierade poliser närvaron av en toxisk jargong och tystnadskultur tillsammans med ineffektiva eller negativa ledningsstilar som organisationsfaktorer som kan bidra till att sådana trakasserier förekommer. De kvantitativa resultaten visade att poliser rankades högre i domänerna för "stress beträffande signifikanta andra" och "operationell stress". Bland poliserna angav dessutom kvinnorna högre stress i dessa domäner jämfört med männen. Poliserna som hade upplevt sexuella trakasserier angav en högre stress relaterad till "självbild" och "operationell stress". Avseende arbetstillfredsställelsen hos poliserna rapporterade både männen och kvinnorna den högsta tillfredsställelsen med "personer på ditt nuvarande arbete" samt den lägsta tillfredsställelsen med "möjligheter till befordran" och "lön". Ingen signifikant skillnad mellan män och kvinnor upptäcktes i domänerna för arbetstillfredsställelse. Det fanns heller ingen signifikant koppling mellan dessa domäner och upplevelser av trakasserier. Organisationell stress hade dock en negativ relation till tre domäner inom arbetstillfredsställelse: "arbetet i allmänhet", "lön" och "arbetsledning".

Forskningsresultaten visar att trots stora förändringar inom den svenska polisorganisationen och arbetskulturen under de senaste årtiondena kvarstår problemet med sexuella trakasserier och trakasserier på grund av kön. Resultaten synliggör att det finns behov av att i större utsträckning uppmärksamma organisationsfaktorer (kulturella och ledningsrelaterade frågor) som grund för sexuella trakasserier och trakasserier på grund av kön. Resultaten understryker även de högre nivåer av arbetsrelaterat tryck och utmaningar som kvinnliga poliser ställs inför samt vikten av att utmana rådande könsnormer som påverkar både kvinnliga och manliga poliser. Genom att ta itu med de organisationsrelaterade källorna till stress kan man dessutom förbättra polisernas arbetsvillkor och arbetstillfredsställelse. Slutligen lyfter avhandlingen fram hur viktigt det är att ta hänsyn till sexuella trakasserier och trakasserier på grund av kön tillsammans med arbetsrelaterad stress för att skapa en tryggare och mer produktiv arbetsmiljö inom polisen.

Nyckelord: Sexuella trakasserier, könsrelaterade trakasserier, arbetsrelaterad stress, arbetstillfredsställelse, poliser, arbetsmiljö

Original papers

This thesis is based on the following papers:

- I. Rostami, A., Burman, M., Ghazinour, M., & Hansson, J. (2023). Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment against Police Employees in European Countries: A Scoping Review. Manuscript Submitted And Reviewed (Under Revision).
- II. Rostami, A., Burman, M., Hansson, J., Ghazinour, M., & Hurtig, A. K.(2024). Shedding a Light on Blue: A Mixed Methods Study to Understand Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment in Swedish Police Work. (manuscript)
- III. Rostami, A., Burman, M., Ghazinour, M., & Hansson, J. (2023). Work-Related Stress in Relation to Gender-Based and Sexual Harassment among a Group of Swedish Police Officers. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Policing*, (1), 1–17.
- IV. Rostami, A., Ghazinour, M., Burman, M., & Hansson, J. (2022). Job Satisfaction among Swedish Police Officers: The Role of Work-Related Stress, Gender-Based and Sexual Harassment. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10, 889671.

Introduction

Police work is an inherently demanding job, and police officers are often faced with challenging and complex situations during their daily work. In addition, police officers are influenced by the organizational, interpersonal, and socio-cultural elements of their work environment; all of which can significantly impact police officers' well-being, work efficiency, job satisfaction, and at the broader level, the effectiveness of police organization (Houdmont, 2017; Tengpongsthorn, 2017).

Work-related stress is a significant factor among the numerous factors influencing the police work environment. Police officers are exposed to various stressors in the line of duty. One significant stressor that has received little attention in this context is sexual and gender-based harassment. Sexual and gender-based harassment, as a work-related stressor, is a unique and complex concern within the police force, often intertwined with issues of power, hierarchy, and traditional gender roles. Sexual and gender-based harassment from both external sources (criminals and citizens) and internal sources (colleagues and supervisors) affect different facets of policing and can transcend workplace boundaries and impact officers' health and lives (Chen et al., 2023). Recognizing the underlying mechanisms, manifestations, and perceptions of such harassment is essential to providing a more equitable and inclusive police work environment.

The work environment, as the stage upon which police officers operate, reflects the complexities of their work, organization, and society, which can influence and be influenced by officers' work-related stress, interpersonal relationships, and job satisfaction. Understanding the main determinant factors of the police work environment is essential for developing support systems and interventions to address the special needs of officers and can enhance their individual well-being and workplace environment.

This study employed a gender-sensitive approach to delve into the complex environment of police work. The experiences of police officers, their encounters with stress and sexual and gender-based harassment, and their job satisfaction levels are not gender-neutral. In contrast, they are intertwined with prevailing gender roles and expectations, and power dynamics within the police organization.

There is a lack of multimethod and comprehensive studies on sexual and gender-based harassment as a significant element in the police work environment together with other relevant factors in the Swedish police context. Applying a gender perspective alongside stress and gender theories, this study aimed to obtain a deeper understanding of sexual and gender-based harassment, work-related stress, and the job satisfaction of police officers. This research endeavored to provide a more complete picture of the difficulties faced by officers and presents evidence-based suggestions for developing more comprehensive and effective policies and support systems within police organizations.

Aim and objectives

The main aim of this thesis was to study sexual and gender-based harassment, work-related stress, and how they influence the job satisfaction of police officers. To achieve this aim, the following objectives were established:

- To examine the available knowledge and gaps on sexual and gender-based harassment in the police work environment in the European context.
- To explore sexual and gender-based harassment in the police work environment in the context of Swedish police work
- To investigate work-related stress in the context of Swedish police work
- To study the influence of stress and sexual and gender-based harassment on job satisfaction in the context of Swedish police work

My research addresses multifaceted questions and explores the relationship between gender, work-related stress, sexual and gender-based harassment, and job satisfaction among police officers. In this way, my thesis presents a combination of diverse disciplines, research questions, methodologies, theories, and results, which has led to both challenges and opportunities. The multi-disciplinary nature of my research—rooted in police studies, health sciences, and gender studies—requires a careful balance and integration of knowledge from these distinct fields.

Background

In this section, I will begin by discussing the gendered characteristics of police organizations both in a general context and in the specific context of Sweden. Following this, I will provide brief explanations of the key concepts that form the foundation of my research, including sexual and gender-based harassment, work-related stress, and job satisfaction.

Police organization as a gendered organization

Police work has traditionally been defined as a gendered profession with a male-dominant and “macho” work environment. According to the concept of double dominance (Gruber & Morgan, 2005), organizations can demonstrate male dominance in either numerical or normative dimensions. A workplace is considered numerically male-dominant when there is a significantly higher number of male employees compared to female employees. On the other hand, in a normative male-dominated occupation, traditional masculine values and heterosexual norms shape the workplace culture.

Police organizations are double male-dominant organizations, where men are dominant both in terms of the number of employees and the pervasive masculine culture within organizations (de Haas & Timmerman, 2010). Nowadays, gender distribution among police employees is diverse in different countries. In the UK, women comprise 30.4% of employees in the police organization (Statista, 2019), and the proportion is estimated at 27.2% in the United States by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2019), and at 14.9% in the Spanish National Police (Central Registry of Personnel, 2020). Male domination in the police force is not only a statistical characteristic of the organization, but as Crank (2004) explains, masculinity is a cultural theme that implies the appropriateness of men alone as “real” police officers capable of doing “real” police work and maintaining the public order. Traditional characteristics of police have been based on masculine characteristics such as body strength, risk-taking behaviors, aggression, violence, and dominance (Morash & Haarr, 2012; Prokos & Padavic, 2002). Therefore, due to gender stereotypes, women cannot fulfill the appropriate characteristics required to be a real police officer. Relying on a strict gender dichotomy and different feminine and masculine attributes, Martin (1980) explained that women in a male-dominant profession are often confronted with a challenging decision to choose between gender identity and being a policeWOMAN or occupation

identity and be recognized as a POLICEwoman. Choosing either identity poses its own challenges. Opting for a gender identity as a policeWOMAN can lead to perceptions of weakness and doubts about their ability as real police officers (Miller, 1999), while prioritizing their professional identity as a POLICEwoman may subject them to negative labels such as “butch” or “dyke” (Pike, 1985). However, gender is beyond traits and roles, it is socially constructed and is achieved through interaction with others (West & Fenstermaker, 1995; West & Zimmerman, 1987) and as Rabe-Hemp (2009) discussed, female police negotiate their gender within the hegemonic of the police work environment. They differentiate themselves from their male colleagues (adopting some stereotypes), and attempt to attribute any stereotypical differences to the different styles of policing in women, while at the same time resisting other stereotypical norms. Female officers collaboratively integrated gender identity and work identity by actively resisting and adopting stereotypical norms of femininity and policing.

Similarly, Morash and Haarr (2012) in their study on gender identity in female police officers, concluded that women do not simply perpetuate stereotypical heterosexual norms and hierarchical structures in police work. They acknowledge and embrace some traditionally feminine qualities and devalue certain traits linked to men. Rather than wholly accepting or rejecting traditional gender stereotypes, women adopt varied approaches based on contextual factors and timing. They construct complicated and favorable professional identities that may not necessarily be linked to their sex category.

In a gendered organization driven by masculine norms and practices, sexism and masculinity are often internalized by women, and in compliance with masculine norms. Therefore, they tend to show masculine traits in a bid for acceptance as members of the privileged group (Acker, 1990; Bearman et al., 2009). As Lo and Lim (2023) clearly explained in their study, female police officers adopt the gender-neutral structure of the organization and tend to rationalize the validity of the masculine expectations by minimizing sexism and claiming it’s not a gender-biased expectation but simply a matter of different officers’ “personalities”. Then, in emphasizing masculine traits as prerequisites for female police officers, they implicitly devalue and label feminine characteristics as an unsuitable “personality” for police work. Subsequently, masculinity and sexist practices become normalized and reproduced even by women within the organization.

In recent years, the number of women in police organization has been increasing in Sweden (from 42% in 2015 to 46% in 2022). Even though the proportion of female police officers is now closer to an equal gender distribution in terms of the number of female employees in the police organization, only 34% of police officers are women, and a majority of female employees (68%) are working as civilian employees. A similar pattern is evident in managerial positions, where 30% of police managers and 66% of civilian employee managers are women (The Swedish Police Authority, 2022). The majority of women in the police force are predominantly engaged in civilian roles and administrative tasks, which might reinforce the numerical and normative perception of policing as a male-dominated profession. The situation of women within the police organization aligns with what Keisu and colleagues (2021) explained regarding the extent of gender segregation in the labor market in Sweden in general. Despite Sweden's reputation for high levels of gender equality, the Swedish labor market remains highly gender segregated. This gender segregation manifests in various forms, including horizontal gender segregation, where men and women occupy different occupations and work in different industries and workplaces. Additionally, there is vertical gender segregation, which systematically hinders women's career advancement compared to men, resulting in their underrepresentation in higher managerial positions. Last, internal gender segregation leads to differing job assignments for men and women in the same occupation with the same job title (Keisu et al., 2021).

The involvement of women in police organizations follows the historical trajectory of women entering other traditionally male-dominated professions. They were assigned to police forces as health care providers and social workers for women, juveniles, and children; not as patrol officers and crime fighters (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Dahlgren, 2007). In Sweden, the first group of women were recruited into the police force in 1908 in Stockholm. They were called "police sisters" (*polissystrar* in Swedish) and their main responsibilities were supporting women and children, or assisting in police interventions involved the arrest of women and children. During the 1950s, women were recruited to the police as police officers. In 1957, women were allowed to train as police officers for the first time, and in 1958 the first female police officers working in the field were hired. A skirt (or trouser skirt) and baton comprised the uniform and equipment for women, as opposed to the men's standard uniform and saber. The first group of female trainees began their patrol service in the Klara district in Stockholm in January 1958 on a trial basis, which sparked significant debate and resistance within the police union, leading to a slowdown in recruitment during the 1960s and limiting their

duties to investigation, crime prevention, and socially oriented police work (Dahlgren, 2007; Furuhaugen, 2009). In 1969, the National Police Board decided to reassign women to investigation units or other non-patrol-related duties and excluded them from patrol duty. But in 1971, a formal decision was enacted to emphasize the work of men and women within the police force on equal terms (Dahlgren, 2007). Therefore, the historical trajectory of women's entrance to police work demonstrates the police organization as a normative and numeric male-dominant organization.

The history of women in police work in different countries is closely tied to the broader evolution of gender roles in society, and the presence of women in policing has witnessed significant growth over the past few decades. This transformation in the gender dynamics of police work has been particularly noteworthy in Sweden, where gender equality is a cornerstone of societal values.

Sexual and gender-based harassment in police work

Definition

There has been a growing focus on researching sexual harassment and gender-based harassment in the workplace over the last few decades. Fitzgerald et al. (1997) presented a psychological definition of sexual harassment as “unwanted sex-related behavior at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding her resources, or threatening well-being” (p. 15). Sexual and gender-based harassment in the workplace is considered an important issue, adversely influencing the individual employee and workplace. The European Parliament and the European Council (2006) define sexual harassment as any unwanted form of verbal, non-verbal, and physical behavior of a sexual nature, with the purpose or resulting in the degradation of an individual's dignity, especially when it leads to the creation of an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, offensive, or degrading environment. In a similar way, gender-based harassment is another type of discrimination related to gender, but does not involve conduct of an explicitly sexual nature (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

According to research, people working in male-dominated jobs such as police work encounter more sexual and gender-based harassment (Di Martino et al., 2003; Sainio et al., 2007). In the police work environment, as a double male-dominant profession, women and individuals from other

groups who express their gender or/and sexuality in non-normative ways and are not in alignment with masculine values experience increased levels of discrimination and harassment. Sexual and gender-based harassment is rooted in male dominance and hegemonic masculinity and aims to reinforce masculine and stereotypical heterosexual norms. It is not simply about sexual matters but is a way to control women, and the individuals who do not fulfill expected masculine traits (can be men or queer people including gay men) and to exercise power by degrading and humiliating them (Palmer, 1988; Wilson & Thompson, 2001).

Sexual and gender-based harassment can arise from both inside and outside the organization. Internally, it may come from supervisors and colleagues, and externally, it can be attributed to third parties, such as criminals or citizens.

Consequences of sexual and gender-based harassment

Sexual and gender-based harassment violates human dignity, and such harassment in the workplace has adverse and profound consequences, affecting individuals and organizations. A meta-analytic review study by Chan et al. (2008) categorized the harmful impacts of sexual harassment into three groups: psychological, physical, and job-related outcomes. Sexual harassment in the workplace can increase symptoms of depression, anxiety, and general psychological distress, reduce job satisfaction and productivity, and increase intentions to leave the workplace. From the International Labor Organization's (ILO, 2020) perspective, sexual harassment undermines equality at work by threatening the integrity, dignity, and well-being of workers. Sexual harassment can affect anyone, particularly women, and perpetuates stereotypes regarding their competence and ambitions. Additionally, it plays a significant role in discouraging women from entering or persisting in the job market, which contributes to the gender disparity in workforce participation. Furthermore, besides the individual adverse consequences, sexual harassment results in large costs for organizations, in terms of medical care and counseling, lost productivity, and the organization's reputation.

Studies in the police context show that experiencing sexual and gender-based harassment significantly elevates the level of stress (Savicki et al., 2003), and can increase the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder and complex post-traumatic stress disorder in police officers. Furthermore, sexual harassment can negatively affect life satisfaction, exacerbate psychological stress (Lim & Cortina, 2005), and increase the risk of

physical health problems among officers (de Haas & Timmerman, 2010). Consequently, experiencing sexual and gender-based harassment can lead to burnout and cause emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment in police officers, especially female officers (Savicki et al., 2003). A study on sexual harassment and burnout in Dutch police officers revealed that police officers who experienced sexual harassment and felt bothered by the experience reported more burnout problems in dimensions of emotional exhaustion, and increased levels of depersonalization compared to those who had no experience (de Haas et al., 2010).

Also, sexual harassment is linked to lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Lim & Cortina, 2005; Savicki et al., 2003). Sexual and gender-based harassment not only diminishes individual productivity but can also disturb the functioning of workgroups, leading to decreased productivity at multiple levels within an organization (Willness et al., 2007). Moreover, harassment experience is related to heightened intention to quit among police officers (Brough & Frame, 2004), which can have negative effects on an organization's stability and productivity.

In sum, the adverse consequences of sexual and gender-based harassment underscore the importance of comprehensive preventive measures, robust support systems for victims, and organizational commitment to creating safe and inclusive work environments.

MeToo movement in the police context in Sweden

In 2006, Tarana Burke, a social activist and survivor of sexual violence, coined the phrase "Me too" to shed light on the prevalence of sexual harassment, particularly focusing on women of color. She aimed to empower women by illustrating how widespread sexual harassment is and by letting survivors know that they are not alone and that they have support (Ohlheiser, 2017). In fall 2017, a wave of testimonies of sexual harassment of women by men surged globally, after The New York Times (Kantor & Twohey, 2017) reported that several women had accused Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein of sexual harassment and assault on October 5, 2017, followed by a tweet by actress Alyssa Milano who wrote a tweet about it and used #MeToo on October 15, 2017. She encouraged women to employ their social media platforms as a forum to describe their sexual harassment experiences and use the #MeToo in their posts to highlight the magnitude of the problem (Milano, 2017). Women from various industries started speaking out about their experiences of

sexual harassment, leading to consequences for many perpetrators. In Sweden and other countries, women used the #MeToo to reveal the extent of the problems they had faced silently for a long time at their workplaces. Women in organizations and industries in Sweden joined the wave, highlighting the serious issues women have endured over the years. A private Facebook group created by women in the police force initiated a campaign called #Nödvärn (self-defense) (2017), and Swedish police employees, former police personnel, and police students shared their experiences of sexual and gender-based harassment, abuses of power, and a culture of silence in the police environment under the hashtag #Nödvärn. These testimonies were collected, published in a public blog linked to the call, and handed over to the national police commissioner, the minister of justice, and the media to demonstrate the need for changes in this area. Analyzing the testimonies, Frisk and Hjort (2019) revealed several significant findings. Firstly, the pervasive influence of traditional masculine norms within the police organization, together with a prevailing culture of silence, discouraged individuals from reporting or resisting sexual harassment. Furthermore, the testimonies highlighted a sexist and harsh jargon among police officers, which led to a certain degree of acceptance and normalization among female police officers.

The campaign and testimonies unveiled the concealed and troubling aspects of police organization, emphasizing the urgent need for decisive action to address these issues within the police force.

Preventing sexual harassment in the workplace

Considering all derogatory consequences of sexual and gender-based harassment, and above that to protect human dignity and provide a safe working environment free from discrimination and any forms of harassment, companies and organizations must adopt proactive and continuous measures. Employers are obligated by Swedish law to implement a zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual and gender-based harassment, along with taking necessary steps to prevent and address such incidents in the workplace. Two laws mandate organizations to take action against sexual harassment: The Discrimination Act (2008:567), and The Work Environment Act (1977:1160). The Discrimination Act is primarily aimed at combating discrimination and enhancing equal rights and opportunities. Within the scope of this act, sexual harassment is recognized as a form of discrimination. On the other hand, The Work Environment Act focuses on preventing workplace-related ill health and accidents to provide a favorable working environment. Sexual harassment

is acknowledged as a potential form of victimization and is regulated under this act.

As a result, all individuals within the workplace must understand that sexual harassment is not acceptable or tolerable by the employer, and any related information should be readily available in written guidelines. Employers are also responsible for monitoring and enforcing these guidelines, ensuring that everyone has access to well-defined procedures for preventing and addressing sexual harassment. These procedures should provide clear guidance on how and where individuals facing harassment can seek assistance, as well as the responsibilities of employers when they become aware of incidents of sexual harassment within the workplace. In cases where employers receive reports of sexual and gender-based issues, they must conduct a thorough investigation to determine whether harassment has indeed occurred. If confirmed, immediate action must be taken to stop it, and diligent monitoring is essential to ensure that the harassment has ceased. All procedures must be followed confidentially and respectfully, while individuals experiencing harassment should be encouraged to speak up and receive support.

Police work stress

Sources of stressors

Working as a police officer exposes individuals to different sources of stress, and work-related stress has always been a concern in police work. Police work stressors are categorized into operational stressors, organizational stressors, and external stressors from the socio-political context (Patterson, 2001; Saunders et al., 2019; Violanti, 2014). Operational stressors or job content stressors are related to the intrinsic aspects and distinctive characteristics of police work. Some of these stressors can involve dealing with critical and fatal incidents, natural disasters, contagious diseases, life-threatening materials such as toxic or explosive substances, crimes against children, exposure to physical/verbal attacks, shootings, losing colleagues, and killing someone during the course of police interventions (Collins & Gibbs, 2003; Johnson et al., 2019; Klimley et al., 2018; Violanti & Aron, 1995)

Organizational stressors or context stressors refer to stressors that are more or less common in various occupations and can affect the everyday work of police officers. Organizational stressors are due to organizational bureaucracy, administrative work, leadership and supervision,

interpersonal relationships, training, resources, and support (Houdmont, 2017; Shane, 2010).

External socio-political stressors are stressors from other organizations, political shifts, media influence and pressure, citizens' opinions, and officers' personal lives (Saunders et al., 2019). New policies, regulations, and organizational reforms based on political desires can impose extra pressure on police organizations and personnel, especially when these changes conflict with the individual political beliefs and the personal preferences of police employees (Kara et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2019). Citizens' high expectations of the police to perform police interventions perfectly and faultlessly, and a lack of support from the public can be sources of stress for police officers. In addition, balancing work and family life can be challenging for police officers due to the demanding nature of their job (e.g., long shifts, involvement in high-risk interventions, and inability to attend family events). This challenge in achieving work–life balance can result in stress for officers (Li et al., 2022; Viegas & Henriques, 2021).

Sexual and gender-based harassment can be considered a work-related stressor by police officers (Bezerra et al., 2013; Dowler & Arai, 2008). Morash, et al. (2006) indicated in their study among US police officers, that sexual harassment as a stressor can predict work stress in both male and female officers. Also, gender discrimination and gender-based harassment are recognized as interpersonal stressors in police officers (Thompson et al., 2006). Moreover, Violanti and colleagues (2016), in their study on the most frequent stressors among police officers, mentioned sexual harassment as an important stressor that needs to be studied when assessing stress in police work.

Studies on work stress in police officers showed different findings in terms of the most frequent and important stressors in police work. Violanti and Aron (1995) and Violanti and colleagues (2016) identified some operational stressors such as “exposure to battered or dead children”, “killing someone in the line of duty”, “fellow officer was killed in the line of duty”, and “situations requiring the use of force” as the most stressful events in police officers. In contrast, other studies have indicated that organizational stressors may play a more significant role in work stress in police officers compared to operational stressors. Collins and Gibbs (2003) showed that organizational values, work overload, physical threats, lack of support, and organizational pressure were reported as the highest-scored stressors by police officers. Moreover, some other organizational stressors such as job insecurity, inadequate pay and

resources, poor management, sexual harassment, and discrimination have been noted as sources of stress for police officers (Thompson et al., 2006; Violanti, 2014).

Police work stress and gender

As police work has been defined as a gendered profession, some research has investigated the role of gender in work-related stress in police. Female officers working alongside male police officers in a masculine environment face extra work stress to prove their capabilities and competencies in policing to their colleagues, supervisors, citizens, and to criminals (Morash & Haarr, 2012; C. Rabe-Hemp, 2008). Violanti et al. (2016) assessed stressors based on frequently occurring stressors and stressful events in police officers. There were no gendered differences among the top five most-frequent stressors, however, female officers reported “situations requiring the use of force” as more stressful than their male colleagues. Comparing all items in both categories showed that male officers reported administrative stressors such as public criticism of the police, court appearances, and working second jobs higher than female officers, whereas women officers reported a lack of proper equipment (frequent stressors) and situations requiring the use of force, inadequate support from supervisor and colleagues (stressful stressors) higher than their male counterparts. Bartol et al. (1992) categorized perceived work stress into four groups (organizational, task-related, external, and personal) and indicated that the experienced stressors were the same in the male and female officers, except for the task-related group. Women reported more stress in facing tragedy and the occasions associated with responsibility for the safety of the citizens and their colleagues. Morash and colleagues (2006) found significantly higher work stress reported by female compared to male police officers. Women reported more workplace problems such as physical underestimation, lack of influence, language harassment, physical harassment, racial harassment, and bias than their men counterparts.

Consequences of stress in police work

The demanding job environment police officers face can have adverse effects on different aspects of their life. Work-related stress increases the risk of job burnout and negatively impacts their mental health, well-being, and marital life (Kurtz, 2008). Police officers have a shorter life expectancy (Violanti et al., 2013) and are at higher risk of cardiovascular disease and psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety, aggression (Han et al., 2018; Violanti, 2014), high alcohol consumption (Rinkoff, 2023; Weir et al., 2012), suicide attempts (Violanti & Steege,

2020), life dissatisfaction (Lambert et al., 2021), and lower quality of life (Alexopoulos et al., 2014). In a qualitative study in Scotland, the main stated stressors were related to working hours, workload, workplace culture, leadership, and organizational change. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression were also reported as consequences of work stress (Demou et al., 2020). A systematic review study on the relationship between organizational stressors and mental well-being among police officers revealed a significant association between organizational stressors and psychiatric symptoms/psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, and personal accomplishment. The main organizational stressors identified in this relationship included a lack of support, work pressure, administrative pressure, and long working hours (Purba & Demou, 2019).

These negative consequences—besides other job characteristics such as shift work and absence from family—can influence the interpersonal relationships of police officers, especially intimate relationships with family (Roberts & Levenson, 2001; Taris et al., 2010). Also, work-family conflicts have significant negative effects on officers' psychological health (Griffin & Sun, 2018; Mikkelsen & Burke, 2004).

Furthermore, the impacts of stress extend to the police organization level. Stress can have a detrimental effect on officers' job performance, leading to reduced efficiency and effectiveness in performing their duties (Chikwem, 2017; Shane, 2010). Additionally, it can influence their attitudes toward misconduct and the potential for noble-cause corruption, raising ethical issues, and undermining the integrity of the police force (Lawson et al., 2021). Moreover, the presence of persistent stress among officers can impact their job satisfaction and weaken their commitment to the organization (Lambert et al., 2015). Furthermore, the increased stress levels among officers can contribute to a higher number of sick leave instances (Fekedulegn et al., 2013; Houdmont, 2017; Magnavita & Garbarino, 2013). The need for sick leave due to stress-related issues not only affects individual officers but also places an additional burden on the organization in terms of staffing and resource management.

Job satisfaction in police work

Definition and some determinant factors

Most researchers acknowledge that job satisfaction is a subjective concept that is comprised of different facets. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction

as an emotional state emerging from the perceived relationship between the expectations of a job and the appraisal of various aspects of the job. Job satisfaction encompasses psychological, physiological, and environmental factors that lead to a feeling of satisfaction in a job (Hoppock, 1935). Researchers often divide job satisfaction into intrinsic and extrinsic components. In this classification, extrinsic factors encompass aspects such as pay, promotions, coworkers, and supervision, while intrinsic factors include factors related to the nature of the work itself. According to Spector (1997), job satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that encompasses employees' feelings concerning both the nature of the work itself (intrinsic factors) and the working environment (extrinsic factors). Smith et al. (1969) identified five facets of job satisfaction: promotion, pay, supervision, colleagues, and the job itself. In this context, job satisfaction results from individuals' appraisals and feelings of satisfaction related to these facets.

Gender has been considered an important determinant of job satisfaction, especially in police work as a male-dominant job. Study findings on the comparison of job satisfaction between men and women are different. However, most of the studies have demonstrated either no gender differences in job satisfaction or a higher satisfaction among women (Dantzker & Kubin, 1998; Redmond & McGuinness, 2019). Some studies described that women who worked in worse working conditions (compared to their men counterparts) in terms of promotion opportunities, pay, and support, paradoxically reported higher levels of job satisfaction than their male colleagues (Clark, 1997; Redmond & McGuinness, 2019). This gender–job satisfaction paradox can be attributed to lower work expectations in comparison to men, which is deeply rooted in the historically disadvantaged position of women in the male-dominated labor market. Consequently, the gender gap in job satisfaction diminishes or vanishes in studies of younger, more educated female employees, those in professional or managerial roles, or those working in male-dominated settings, where expectations about their jobs tend to be as high as their male colleagues. This explanation has been confirmed by several studies in this field. As indicated by a study in several European countries (Kaiser, 2007), the gender–job satisfaction gap tends to disappear in nations, such as Scandinavian countries, where women face fewer restrictions in accessing the labor market and enjoy more equitable opportunities. In addition, as another study encompassing 32 European countries demonstrated, growing up in environments characterized by greater gender equality leads to equivalent expectations between women and men. Consequently, in these countries, the gender

gap in job satisfaction is notably narrower (Perugini & Vladislavljević, 2019).

Results of studies in the police field align with the previously mentioned findings regarding the gender–job satisfaction gap. A study involving 2,618 male and female officers in the United States reported no statistically significant gender differences in job satisfaction (Dantzker & Kubin, 1998). Another study of 199 police officers working in a medium-sized police department in the United States yielded comparable results (Zhao et al., 1999). Similarly, Johnson (2012) and Juncaj (2017), in their studies in the U.S., found no significant association between gender and job satisfaction among police officers. In Barnett’s study (2020), which focused on improving job satisfaction to increase retention among 930 law enforcement professionals, no significant gender differences in overall job satisfaction were found. In a longitudinal interventional study conducted in a European context among 112 German police officers, which explored the longitudinal effects of changing shift schedules on job satisfaction and quality of life, job satisfaction was not found to be statistically significant between male and female officers (Rohwer et al., 2022). As noted by Pita and Torregrosa (2021), the gender gap in job satisfaction has been steadily diminishing over the course of this century. They anticipate that this paradox will gradually fade as working conditions become increasingly equitable for both men and women.

In addition to gender, other sociodemographic characteristics that impact job satisfaction have been studied in the context of police work. Age and job experience (years of service) have been examined as significant variables, and the findings have been diverse. Some studies have revealed a negative correlation between age and job satisfaction among police officers (Dantzker & Kubin, 1998; Forsyth & Copes, 1994; Johnson, 2012; Miller et al., 2009). Conversely, Abdulla and colleagues (2011) showed that police officers with longer experience tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. However, several other studies have found no significant relationship between job satisfaction and years of job experience (Armstrong et al., 2015; Lambert et al., 2015).

Concerning the impact of shift work, Juncaj (2017) reported lower job satisfaction among police officers engaged in rotating shifts. Interestingly, in their study, Abdulla and colleagues (2011) did not identify any significant association between shift work and job satisfaction among police officers. Furthermore, it was observed that police officers in supervisory or managerial roles reported higher job satisfaction compared to those without such responsibilities (Abdulla et al., 2011).

Job satisfaction in relation to stress and sexual harassment

Studies have found a negative relationship between work stress and job satisfaction in police work. A study among police officers in Greece indicated the negative influence of perceived stress levels on job satisfaction (Alexopoulos et al., 2014). In addition, in a study of police, fire, and ambulance services, Brough (2004) found that for police officers, organizational stress was a stronger predictor of job satisfaction compared to traumatic experiences and operational stress, while operational demands were predictive of psychological problems and less predictive of job satisfaction. Another study on job satisfaction and well-being found that organizational characteristics such as pay, opportunities for promotion, and support from supervisors were more important predictors of job satisfaction than job characteristics (Juncaj, 2017).

Sexual and gender-based harassment as a type of stressor can negatively influence job satisfaction (Chan et al., 2008; Willness et al., 2007). A study of UK police revealed that sexual harassment from organization insiders can negatively affect job satisfaction in police officers, while sexual harassment from outsiders was not associated with job dissatisfaction or other adverse outcomes (Hershcovis et al., 2010).

Consequences of job dissatisfaction

Job satisfaction is considered more than just a measure of contentment or happiness within the workplace; it's a crucial predictor of employee's well-being and organizational effectiveness. Job satisfaction is linked to employees' psychological well-being, including aspects such as self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and burnout, as well as their commitment to the organization, motivation, and intention to continue working within an organization (Fabi et al., 2015; Faragher et al., 2005; Peng et al., 2016). A study on job satisfaction and mental health conducted by Janyam (2009) showed that overall job satisfaction and a sense of job security are linked to improved mental well-being, while lower job satisfaction is associated with an increased level of somatic symptoms, anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and decreased levels of overall psychological health.

At the organizational level, job satisfaction can influence organizational performance and productivity, customer satisfaction, and voluntary turnover (Paoline & Gau, 2020; Whitman et al., 2010). Expanding our perspective to the societal level, individual job satisfaction is linked to organizational effectiveness and job performance, and ultimately influences the quality of services provided to society (Bakotić, 2016; Capone & Petrillo, 2015).

In the realm of policing, where work demands and pressures can be intense, paying attention to job satisfaction is essential for both police employees and the overall police organization. A longitudinal study by Chan and Doran (2009) showed that the majority of mid-career police officers were dissatisfied with the performance evaluation and promotion system in the police organization, and about half of the police officers were seriously considering quitting their work. Intention to leave work and voluntary turnover is an important issue in police organizations and is associated with negative influences on different economic, organizational, and service-based aspects. Considering the high costs and the long time it takes to train and recruit police officers, improving job satisfaction and consequently decreasing police officer turnover is important for police organizations (Allisey et al., 2014).

Conceptual and theoretical framework

Theory of stress/work-related stress

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) defines work-related stress as a response to work demands and pressures that exceed employees' skills and capabilities and challenge their ability to cope. Due to the demands of the work environment, work pressures are unavoidable. Stress can be acceptable and even motivating if an employee has the appropriate resources and abilities to cope with work pressures, otherwise, this pressure can lead to stress and can negatively affect different aspects of an individual's health (Leka & Griffiths, 2003). This definition is aligned with the Stress Transactional Theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). According to this theory, stress is a mutual process between a person and the environment that is mediated by "cognitive appraisal" and "coping". Cognitive appraisal is a process that includes evaluating whether an event is positive, negative, or irrelevant to one's well-being (primary appraisal), and evaluating what might and can be done about it based on available resources (secondary appraisal). The process leads to an understanding of to what extent the event is threatening and taxing. The coping process refers to constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific demands appraised to exceed an individual's resources. In the context of work-related stress, the consequences of the stressors have been determined by the extent to which a person appraises the demands as threatening and whether they find their resources and capabilities enough to cope with the work demands. Cavanaugh and colleagues (2000) in the challenge-hindrance model (CHM) of stress classified work stressors into two categories based on the results of the stressors: challenge stressors and hindrance stressors. According to this model, challenge stressors are demands that can be appraised as stressful but, at the same time, are motivating and result in feelings of accomplishment, development, and satisfaction. On the other hand, hindrance stressors are those job stressors that are appraised as taxing, hinder employee development, and negatively influence well-being and work performance (Boswell et al., 2004). Considering both the transactional theory of stress and the CHM, the distinction between a stressor as a challenge or a hindrance is rooted in an employee's appraisal of the stressor and the resources they have to cope with it. In this project, I tried to integrate the aforementioned stress theories and the concept of job satisfaction to understand how officers'

appraisal of various work-related stressors, including gender-based and sexual harassment, can influence their job satisfaction.

Gendered organizations and masculinity norms

Gender as a social construct is a product of human actions rather than predefined norms. According to Connell, gender is a "configuration of practice," which implies what people do, instead of what they are expected to do (Connell, 1996). This view aligns with Butler's notion of gender as a continuous process of "doing". Butler describes gender as an ongoing, often unconscious, activity performed not automatically but rather as a practice of improvisation in the societal context. Both Connell and Butler challenge the static and normative understanding of gender. Instead, they propose a more fluid and performative definition. Accordingly, gender is not something inherent or fixed but rather a series of actions and practices constantly produced and reproduced within the complex interplay of societal constraints and individual agency (Butler, 2004; Connell, 1996; Demetriou, 2001). This means that gender norms can change over time by doing differently or undoing (Butler, 2004).

Acker (1990) critically challenged the assumption that organizational structures are gender-neutral, arguing that gender underlies the rules, principles, and documents that form the basis of organizational construction and conventional organizational theories. Everyday concepts such as job roles and positions, which are applied to build an organization or construct a theory have been historically shaped by the exclusion of women. This underlying gendered construction is an integral aspect of organizational processes and theories, contributing to the gender bias evident in both organizational practices and theoretical frameworks.

Gendered organizations produce gender through five interacting processes; job divisions, cultural symbols and images (e.g., beliefs, language, dress, ideology), workplace interactions (social structures and relations), individual identities, and organizational logic (the underlying assumptions and practices that construct organizations). Therefore, in gendered organizations, various aspects of the organizations are structured and influenced by gender binary norms, as Acker explained,

When applying the term gendered organization on an analytical unit implicate that action and motion, advantage and disadvantage, meaning and identity, exploitation, and control, are

patterned through and in terms of a distinction between female and male, feminine and masculine. (p.146)

Despite organizations' attempts to portray themselves as gender-neutral structures with disembodied and universal workers, in reality, gender is a contextually situated process in these organizations and workers are often defined based on heterosexual masculine characteristics. The notion of a disembodied and universal worker obscures sexism and enables the persistence of practices that maintain dominant male stereotypes, even in the presence of claims of an equal work environment.

Masculinity norms are the rules and standards that guide and dictate how to behave "as a man". Masculinity embodies a set of traditional male traits, which include qualities such as risk-taking behaviors, self-reliance, emotional control, physical strength, violence, dominance, power over women, heterosexuality, and disdain for homosexuality (Mahalik et al., 2003). This concept extends beyond mere physical attributes or actions and is deeply rooted in society. In accordance with the pattern of masculinity, men are privileged over women and subordinate femininity. Masculinity influences the structure of organizations, private life, and cultural norms in society (Connell, 1987). As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explained, there are different types of masculinity in the masculine hierarchy, and hegemonic masculinity stands on top of this hierarchy. Hegemonic masculinity portrays men to a certain standard. In this hegemonic manifestation of masculinity, there's an emphasis on supremacy and privilege, not only over women but also over other forms of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Aligned with Acker's theory, police organizations can be defined as bureaucratic, hierarchical, gendered organizations where all organizational processes, police cultural symbols, police identity, and police organizational logic are deeply rooted in heterosexual masculinity norms. This dominant normative framework leads to the exclusion of women and those with non-binary gender and/or diverse sexual orientations, resulting in segregation and discrimination. Police work is characterized by both numerical and normative overrepresentation of men. As Silvestri (2017) described, an "ideal" police officer is linked to male attributes, and this masculine imagery is deeply embedded within the organizational processes and cultural beliefs. Also, masculinity is linked to solidarity in police culture and as an invisible bond that connects policemen (Crank, 2004). In such a work context, women, non-masculine men, and non-binary genders and sexualities are considered "others" who

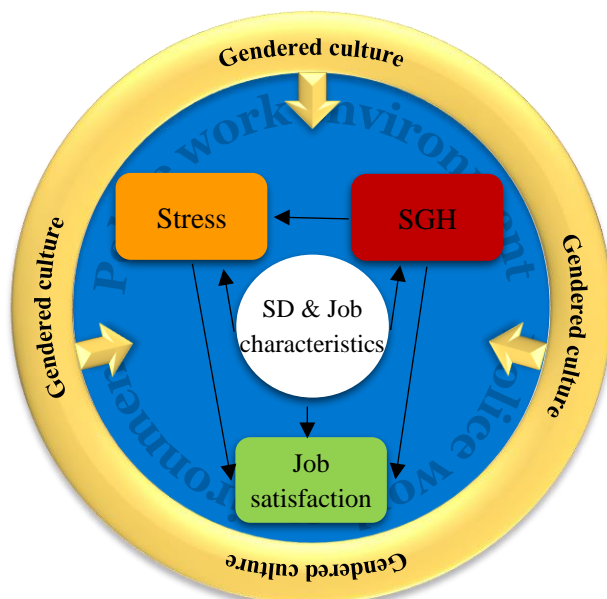
have no link (or a weak link) to the dominant and privileged group and are degraded as non-ideal officers who cannot perform real police work.

In the given context, sexual and gender-based harassment serves as a power control tool that reinforces the gendered system and hierarchical structure within police organizations. According to Mackinnon’s power-based definition of sexual harassment, sexual harassment is the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of an unequal power relationship (MacKinnon, 1979). Thus, sexual harassment is both a cause and a consequence of a gendered system.

The pervasive masculinity in police work has been embedded in the organizational processes and culture of the police organization, influencing all aspects of the police work environment. In this study, I applied the concepts of masculinity, gendered organizational theory, and the transactional theory of stress to explore sexual and gender-based harassment, work-related stress, and job satisfaction within the context of Swedish police work.

Figure 1 illustrates the main concepts of this thesis. This figure depicts stress, sexual and gender-based harassment (SGH), job satisfaction, socio-demographic factors (SD), and job characteristics (e.g., job experience, type of work) and their relationships in the police work environment, influenced by the gendered culture of the police organization as a gendered organization.

Figure 1: Research concepts in the police organization



Materials and methods

Context of the study

The Swedish Police Authority comprises seven police regions (north, east, south, west, central, Stockholm, and Bergslagen) and national departments, including the national operational department, national forensics center, HR department, IT department, finance department, communications department, legal department, national police chief's office, security department, the department for special investigations, and internal audit and supervision under the national chief of police. The police authority employed about 35,000 employees, with 81% working within the police regions and 19% employed in the departments. About 22,000 of the 35,000 employees work as police officers in Sweden (Swedish Police Authority, 2022).

This thesis was conducted among police officers working in three local police districts in the Stockholm region, located in so-called particularly vulnerable areas. The National Operations Department (NOA) of police in Sweden has classified the degree of vulnerability of an area into three levels: vulnerable areas, risk areas, and particularly vulnerable areas. A vulnerable area is defined as a geographical area characterized by low socioeconomic status where criminals have an impact on the local community. The impact can consist of direct pressure (for example, threats and extortion), or indirect pressure (such as public acts of violence that risk damaging third parties, and open drug trafficking), which leads to insecurity, dissatisfaction, and a reduced inclination to report crimes and participate in the legal process among those who live in these areas. A particularly vulnerable area is characterized by the criteria of vulnerable areas in addition to a general reluctance to participate in the legal process. There may also be systematic threats and acts of violence against witnesses and informants of crimes in the area. The situation is difficult or sometimes impossible for the police to operate their mission and requires regular changes and adaptation of working methods or equipment. A particularly vulnerable area is also identified by parallel social structures, extremism, a high concentration of criminals, and by people traveling away to participate in combat in conflict zones. A risk area is an area that meets all the criteria for a vulnerable area but does not fully meet the criteria for particularly vulnerable areas. The situation in risk areas is alarming and has the potential to escalate into particularly vulnerable conditions without adequate interventions (NOA, 2019, 2021).

In total, 61 areas in Sweden have been identified as one of these kinds of vulnerable areas. Of the 19 areas categorized as particularly vulnerable areas, 6 areas are located in the Stockholm police region in Botkyrka (3 areas), Rinkeby (2 areas), and Södertälje (1 area) (NOA, 2021).

The Stockholm police region started an initiative so-called “Mareld” project to strengthen the particularly vulnerable areas of the Stockholm region between 2018 and 2020. The Mareld project aimed to reduce crime and increase security for authorities and businesses, as well as citizens living in particularly vulnerable areas (PVAs) in the Stockholm region. One of the specific objectives of the Mareld project was to improve the working environment of the police officers working in these areas (Sundqvist et al., 2021), and this study project is in line with this specific objective.

The findings of the Mareld project showed gender-based and sexual harassment against police officers (by insiders and the public) as one of the work environmental issues (Sundqvist et al., 2021). Additionally, the worldwide MeToo movement and the #Nödvärn (self-defense) campaign (2017) in the Swedish police context revealed the presence of this problem as an organizational issue in the police organization. Therefore, the obtained results highlighted the necessity of paying more attention to sexual and gender-based harassment alongside other work-related problems in police work.

The selection of police officers working in PVAs for this study was primarily driven by the existing project conducted in PVAs and the practical feasibility it offered, rather than by a specific hypothesis on a specific characteristic of sexual and gender-based harassment, stress, and job satisfaction among police officers working in these specific areas. The Mareld project provided a unique gateway to access and engage with police officers, allowing for the collection of data for this thesis.

Research design

A multimethod approach was applied to address the main objectives of this research. A multimethod approach is defined as applying two or more methods in a research program (Hunter & Brewer, 2016). In recognition of the need for greater emphasis on sexual and gender-based harassment, the scoping review approach helped provide a clearer picture of the available knowledge on sexual and gender-based harassment in Europe. Also, a quantitative approach was applied to provide an overview of the

key factors of the research and the quantitative relationships therein. In addition, the qualitative approach enriched the thesis with a deeper study of sexual and gender-based harassment in the Swedish police work context.

Therefore, the thesis project is based on three sub-studies: 1) a scoping review study, 2) a cross-sectional quantitative study, and 3) a qualitative study. The aforementioned studies led to the formulation of four papers. The scoping review study led to the first paper on sexual and gender-based harassment against police employees in European countries. The second paper was based on a mixed methods design and is derived from the results of the quantitative and qualitative phases of the project on sexual and gender-based harassment. The last two papers (related to assessing work-related stress, sexual and gender-based harassment, and job satisfaction) were built on the results of the cross-sectional quantitative study. An overview of the papers and applied methods in this research is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of papers' aims and methods

Papers	Aim	Study design	Participants	Data collection method	Data analysis
I	To examine the available knowledge and gaps on sexual and gender-based harassment in the police work environment in the European context.	Scoping review	16 extracted articles	Searching 9 databases using search terms and Boolean phrases	Thematic analysis
II	To investigate the occurrence of sexual and gender-based harassment from insiders and deepen understanding of this occurrence in the police work environment.	Mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative)	Quantitative phase: 152 male and female police officers Qualitative phase: 12 male and female police officers, and a 5-member group of female police employees	Quantitative phase: sociodemographic questions, sexual and gender-based harassment questions Qualitative phase: individual interview and group interview	Quantitative: Descriptive analysis, T-test, χ^2 test Qualitative: Content analysis, Thematic analysis
III	To investigate work-related stress among police officers.	Quantitative	152 male and female police officers	Questionnaire: sociodemographic questions, the Police Stress Identification Questionnaire, sexual and gender-based harassment questions	Descriptive analysis, Mann-Whitney test, Kruskal-Wallis chi-square test, χ^2 test, Spearman correlation coefficients, Multiple linear regression analysis
IV	To study job satisfaction among police officers in relation to work stress and sexual and gender-based harassment.	Quantitative	152 male and female police officers	Questionnaire: sociodemographic questions, the Police Stress Identification Questionnaire, sexual and gender-based harassment questions, the Job Descriptive Index	Descriptive analysis, T-tests, χ^2 test, Pearson correlation coefficients, Hierarchical multiple regression

Methods in article I

Study sample

All peer-reviewed articles and theses on sexual and gender-based harassment against police employees in European countries published in the English language between 2010 and 2022 (November) were included in the study.

Data collection

The Arksey and O'Malley (2005) methodological framework was applied to conduct the scoping review study. A protocol was prepared based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis extension for Scoping Review (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018). The protocol was registered with OSF, a platform for registering scoping reviews. The selected search terms using Boolean operators were searched in nine databases, including EBSCO (Academic Search Premier, APA PsycInfo, CINAHL, SocINDEX), PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Proquest (IBSS, Dissertations & Theses Global). All obtained articles were exported to RAYYAN (a web application for conducting systematic and scoping reviews) (Ouzzani et al., 2016). After the removal of duplicate entries, 7278 initial entries were reduced to 4831 records. Screening the obtained studies based on inclusion and exclusion criteria was carried out in two stages—initially evaluating titles and abstracts, and subsequently assessing full texts—and resulted in 15 eligible studies. Also, one article from another source was incorporated into the selected studies for review (Figure 2).

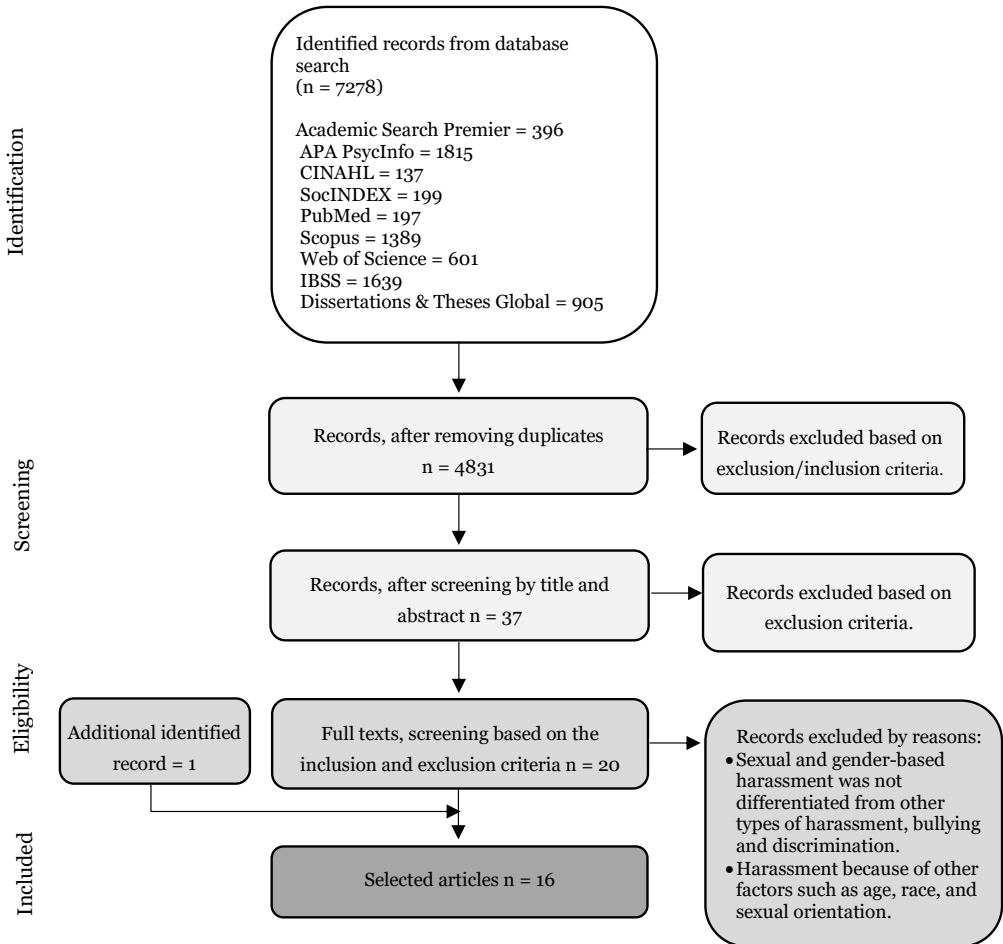
Data analysis

The full texts of the included articles/theses were reviewed, and the extracted data were charted according to the extracted important characteristics. Also, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to identify patterns and themes across and within the included studies.

Two reviewers carefully examined the articles to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the entire study, but the themes were primarily derived from the results sections. The coding process was initiated with an inductive approach and was followed by a deductive approach based on existing scientific research and field experiences. The core themes were compiled by revising and refining the extracted codes. The final themes

were acquired through an iterative process of reading, revising, and refining the primary themes.

Figure 2: PRISMA flowchart of included studies



Methods in article II

Participants and study sample

In the quantitative part of this mixed methods study, the participants consisted of 152 police officers in three particularly vulnerable areas in Stockholm (more explanation in the method part of articles three and four). All participants in the quantitative phase of the study were asked to mark a checkbox at the end of the questionnaire's front page if they were inclined to participate in individual interviews. Among 41 volunteer police employees, 17 police officers were selected (due to having varied participants in terms of gender, local districts, and job positions) and invited to the interview. Ultimately, 12 police officers responded positively to the invitation and participated in individual interviews. Also, one of the police districts has formed a group of police employees with the mission of addressing issues related to harassment within the organization. A focus group interview (with five female police employees) was conducted involving the aforementioned group.

Data collection and measures

In the quantitative part of the study, data were collected using a questionnaire encompassing sociodemographic information and questions about sexual and gender-based harassment in police work (mentioned in the data collection part of articles three and four).

In the qualitative phase of the study, data were collected through individual interviews and one focus group interview with police officers working in PVAs in Stockholm. The heads of the local police district in the three PVAs were contacted via e-mail and the aim of the project, and the process of interviewing police officers were explained. All three areas responded positively to the e-mail. Volunteers for the individual interviews were contacted directly through their mobile number (by sending an SMS, followed by calling). After explaining the aim of the study and the interviews verbally, a written information sheet was sent to the interviewees, and they were asked for written consent to participate in the interviews. The participants had the option to choose between a web-based (online) interview or an in-person interview. The type, timing, and location of interviews (if conducted in person) were arranged according to the preferences of each interviewee. Two separate interview guides were developed for individual interviews and the focus group interview to explore interviewees' perceptions and experiences of sexual and gender-based harassment from their colleagues and supervisors. The main

questions of the interview guide were categorized into three themes: 1) general opinions regarding the role of gender in police work, sexual and gender-based harassment in police work, and the role of police organizations in addressing harassment; 2) reflections on the results obtained from the quantitative study; and 3) personal experiences of or being a witness to sexual and gender-based harassment (only for individual interviews). The interviews were mixed in English and Swedish and were conducted by a Swedish native language researcher and the author (due to the lack of Swedish language proficiency of the author). The questions were asked in English; however, the interviewees had the option to answer in either English or Swedish. All interviewees but one (who had the equivalent language proficiency in both Swedish and English) chose to answer in Swedish. More explanations, clarification, and some follow-up questions were managed by the native Swedish interviewer.

Data analysis

The quantitative results were presented as numbers and percentages for nominal variables (gender, gender of perpetrator, and sexual and gender-based harassment), and mean scores and standard deviations for continuous variables (job experience, age). A t-test was applied to test for group differences for continuous variables (age and job experience), and a χ^2 -test for categorical variables (gender, job categories, and sexual and gender-based harassment).

Qualitative data were analyzed by applying qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), considering the research questions and theoretical framework to extract the main findings from the collected data. First, all transcripts were read comprehensively to gain an overview of the entire interview material. A straightforward qualitative content analysis was used to identify and categorize words and sentences where police officers explicitly discussed the manifestations of sexual and gender-based harassment within the police. Then, a thematic analysis was utilized to identify the police organizational factors which, according to the police officers' perceptions, contribute to the occurrence of sexual and gender-based harassment in police work and to organizing themes based on the recognized codes. The process of data analysis was conducted by two members of the research team. Both researchers iteratively revised and refined the initial codes and themes, and any disagreement was discussed to reach a consensus before finalizing the derived themes. The final derived codes were compiled under the three overall themes: toxic jargon in police work, the culture of silence, and important role of management.

Methods in articles III & IV

Participants and study sample

All police employees (civilian employees and police officers), working in three particularly vulnerable areas in Stockholm during spring 2020 were eligible to attend the study. Therefore, a total of 510 questionnaires were distributed to police personnel. Out of these, 275 questionnaires were filled out by police employees (approximately 54% response rate). Eighty-nine questionnaires were excluded during the process of pairing with their front pages (more explanations in the data collection part). Due to the different job roles between the police officers and civilian employees, and the small size of the latter group (which makes it difficult to statistically assess this group and compare it with the police officers' group), the questionnaires of 37 civilian employees were eliminated from the 189 retrieved questionnaires. This resulted in the final inclusion of 152 questionnaires of police officers (including police patrol officers, investigators, and other internal services officers) in the study (Table 2, characteristics of the participants).

Data collection and measures

In both studies, data were collected by applying two sets of questionnaires; one set from the Mareld project (containing the sociodemographic information, the Police Stress Identification Questionnaire, and other questionnaires related to the Mareld project) and a complementary set of questionnaires, including the Job Descriptive Index and sexual and gender-based harassment questions. The COVID-19 situation during the data collection period made it impossible for the researchers to take part directly in the process of data collection (the distribution and collection of the surveys); therefore, contact persons from the three local police districts were asked to engage in the data collection process. The participants received an explanation of the aims and research process from the contact persons before completing the questionnaires. Each questionnaire was assigned a unique code number (written on all pages). To maintain confidentiality, the respondents were requested to remove the front page of the questionnaire, which contained their personal data (personal identification number and other personal sociodemographic characteristics) after filling out the questionnaire. The main section of the questionnaire and the front page were placed in separate sealed envelopes and sent to the research team. The principal researcher paired the questionnaire and front page applying the specific code allocated to each questionnaire.

The participants completed the questionnaires during working hours, which required approximately one hour. Participation in the investigation was completely voluntary and the respondents had the autonomy to withdraw at any point during the investigation.

Instruments

The set of questionnaires applied to collect data for the quantitative phase of this thesis encompasses the following:

The sociodemographic and job characteristics questions were designed to collect information such as the respondent's gender, age, education, marital status, number of children, type of work, years of job experience, job position, and type of shift work.

The Police Stress Identification Questionnaire (PSIQ) is a 42-item self-report measurement of police work stress developed by Ghazinour et al. (2021) to measure different types of stressors in police work. The items are placed into 5 subscales including organizational stress (17 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .93), operational stress (6 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .93), impact on significant others (7 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .88), self-image (6 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .78), confrontation with death (4 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .80), and two single items. Each item was scored on a 9-point scale ranging from *no stress* (0) to *the most stressful level* (9). In this study, data analysis was performed based on the mean score of the items in each subscale, and the single items were not included in the analysis.

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) was originally designed by Smith and colleagues (1969) to measure job satisfaction based on the feelings of the employees about their job. In 1989, an initial version of the Job in General Index (JIG) was developed to measure global job satisfaction (Ironson et al., 1989). The JDI questionnaire has been revised several times (Balzer et al., 1997; Brodke et al., 2009; Smith et al., 1987), and the latest version of the questionnaire contains both the JDI and the JIG. The last version includes 90 items (words) describing the job in one general and five specific subscales; job in general (18 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .85), people on the present job (18 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .87), work on present job (18 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .77), pay (9 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .85), opportunities for promotion (9 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .91), and supervision (18 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .79). Each subscale consists of several items which are adjectives or short phrases, and respondents can describe their feelings about their

job using one of three answer options—*yes* (scoring 3), *no* (scoring 0), or *cannot decide* (scoring 1). After the value scores of the items with negative wording were reversed, the total score for each facet was calculated by summing the items’ scores. Since there are 9 items in the “pay” and “opportunities for promotion” subscales, the sum of the scores must be doubled to calculate the final score in these subscales.

Sexual and gender-based harassment questions were designed by the research team to obtain the respondents’ sexual and gender-based harassment experiences in police work. The questions were based on the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (Fitzgerald et al., 1995) and the Sexual Harassment Inventory (Murdoch & McGovern, 1998). Taking into account both police literature and testimonies from the #Nödvarn campaign, some additional questions, as well as questions about the source of sexual and gender-based harassment and the gender of the perpetrators were included in the questionnaire. This adjustment was intended to tailor the questionnaire to better address the nuances of sexual and gender-based harassment within the context of Swedish police work. The questionnaire included 36 questions about experiences of sexual (27 questions) and gender-based (9 questions) harassment from public citizens, supervisors, and colleagues during the last 12 months. Each question was scored on a 5-point scale between *never* (0) to *several times in a week* (5). The respondents were also asked to indicate the gender of the perpetrator for each item.

In this study, to facilitate the analysis and ensure consistency, the officers who experienced at least one of the items of gender-based or/and sexual harassment questions were categorized as group 1 (had experience of sexual and/or gender-based harassment); otherwise, they were categorized into group 0 (had no experience of sexual and/or gender-based harassment). Subsequently, the gender-based and sexual harassment variables were analyzed as dichotomous variables.

Table 2: Characteristics of the participants by gender (articles III and IV)

	Male (107, 70.4%)		Female (45, 29.6%)	
	Mean or Number	SD or %	Mean or Number	SD or %
Age	39.2	9.4	41.6	9.6
Job experience	12	10.9	14.6	11.1
Birthplace				
Sweden	99	92.5	41	93.2
Other	8	7.5	3	6.8

Marital status				
Single	14	13.2	10	22.2
Married/Cohabiting/Living apart together	92	86.8	35	77.8
Number of children				
Childless	38	38.8	9	22.5
1-2	52	53.1	24	60
3 and more	8	8.2	7	17.5
Education				
Elementary school/Gymnasium	21	20	7	15.6
University or college	84	80	38	84.4
Kind of work				
External services	62	60.8	16	35.6
Investigation	23	22.5	17	37.8
Reception and other	17	16.7	12	26.7
Managerial position				
Yes	39	36.4	9	20
No	68	63.6	36	80
Shift plan				
Day time	41	38.3	28	62.2
Two/three-shift work	66	61.7	17	37.8

Data analysis article III

Statistical data analysis was conducted using SPSS 26. Descriptive results were presented as numbers and percentages for nominal and ordinal variables (some socio-demographic variables and sexual and gender-based harassment), and mean scores and standard deviations for continuous variables (job experience and different dimensions of job stress). As the dependent variable (stress subscales) was not normally distributed (tested by Kolmogorov–Smirnov test), nonparametric tests were applied to the group differences (Mann–Whitney test, Kruskal–Wallis chi-square test, and χ^2 -test) and associations (Spearman correlation coefficients) between the variables. Also, multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the relationship between each work stress subscale as the dependent variable and gender, job experience, and type of harassment as predictive factors.

Data analysis article IV

According to a normal distribution of job satisfaction subscales as the dependent variable (tested by Kolmogorov-Smirnov-test), T-tests were applied to test group differences on the continuous variables, and χ^2 tests were used for categorical variables. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to assess the correlation between continuous variables (job satisfaction subscales, stress subscales, age, and job experience). The

variables that showed significant associations with the dependent variables in bivariate analyses were included in the multivariate analyses. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to test for the predictive relationships between variables with sociodemographic variables (age, gender, type of work, and managerial position) in the first block, and work stress (organization stress, operational stress, self-image, and confrontation with death) and experiencing sexual or gender-based harassment in the second block with job satisfaction domains as dependent variables. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha analysis was applied to assess the internal consistency of the Job Descriptive Index and the Police Stress Identification Questionnaire. The analysis was performed in SPSS 26.

Ethical considerations

The current study has been reviewed and approved by the Regional Ethics Review Board in Umeå, Sweden (Dnr: 2020-00758) as a complementary part of the Mareld project.

To ensure adherence to the ethical standards of research, several precautions were implemented in various steps of the research. In the quantitative phase of data collection (along with the third phase of the Mareld project's data collection), police employees received written information about the aim of the study and were clearly informed that the survey participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the autonomy to withdraw at any point during the investigation. Furthermore, clear information was provided about how the project would handle their personal data, emphasizing that unauthorized access would not be permitted. Also, to ensure confidentiality, a special code number was provided for each questionnaire and the respondents were asked to detach the front page of the questionnaire which contained the personal identification number and personal sociodemographic characteristics after completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire and front page were sent in separate sealed envelopes to the research team, and the questionnaire and front page were matched by the principal researcher using the assigned specific code.

During the qualitative phase, which involved individual and focus group interviews, individuals from the quantitative data collection group who expressed interest in participating in interviews were contacted in person. They were provided with both verbal and written information regarding the interview's purpose, discussion concepts, guarantees of anonymity,

restricted access to interview material, and the application of interview material in the study. Participation was voluntary and could be canceled at any time. This written information was presented in the form of a letter signed by the two main researchers who conducted the interviews and focus group.

To ensure comprehensive data protection, all data were shared exclusively with authorized members of the research team through fully encrypted and password-protected files. The files are stored on a fully encrypted and password-protected university-provided laptop.

Results

Existing knowledge on sexual and gender-based harassment against police employees in Europe (Article I)

Assessing the main characteristics of the included studies indicated that the main focus of most studies was sexual harassment, while gender-based harassment was largely underrepresented in the studies, and often merged with other forms of harassment and discrimination, without precise definition or assessment. Also, the studies differed in terms of the studies' participants. In several studies, the specific focus was solely on female officers or employees, while the remaining studies encompassed both genders. In terms of the work category within police organizations, a larger number of studies were conducted exclusively on police officers compared to those that examined both police officers and civilian employees. Moreover, of the studies whose objectives were fully focused on sexual and gender-based harassment, only half applied a theoretical base related to sexual and gender-based harassment. The main used theories encompassed gender and power relations, double dominance organization, attribution theory, power perspectives, and role identity theory. Overall, there was a clear lack of a theoretical foundation in the quantitative studies.

Also, the analysis of the results parts of the included studies led to the identification of six main themes: the existence of sexual and gender-based harassment, perpetrators, associated factors, consequences, individual response, and impact of organizational policies.

Existence of sexual and gender-based harassment

One of the common themes in the examined articles was the existence and occurrence of sexual and gender-based harassment in police work. The quantitative studies highlighted the prevalence of different forms of harassment, while in the qualitative research, the presence of the problem was shown through the narratives. In the quantitative studies, the prevalence and types of harassment reported varied. For example, de Haas and Timmerman (2010) found that 64% of women in police work had experienced sexual harassment, mostly through "offensive comments about body or appearance" and "offensive sexual remarks". Brown et al. (2018) reported that sexualized banter was the most common form of

harassment (58%–78%), followed by repeated dirty jokes, questions about private life, and inappropriate leering and staring. Similarly, various studies across different European countries revealed instances of sexual and gender-based harassment (de Haas et al., 2010; Rostami et al., 2022; Steinþórsdóttir & Pétursdóttir, 2018).

The qualitative studies also confirmed the existence of these issues. Cunningham and Ramshaw (2020) found that female police officers experience ongoing harassment and discrimination, despite changes in the work environment. In Serbia, Spasić et al. (2015) revealed that female officers faced gender-based harassment such as underestimation, inappropriate assignments, and offensive remarks. Alexander's study (2019) highlighted sexual and gender-based harassment against women senior police officers. Silvestri and Tong (2022) focused on female police leaders, who shared experiences of sexist comments on their competence and role. The studies collectively emphasized the presence of sexual and gender-based harassment in the police work environment through both quantitative prevalence data and qualitative narratives.

Perpetrators

The chosen studies provided a diverse perspective on sexual and gender-based harassment, particularly in terms of the perpetrators involved. Among the quantitative studies, some studies exclusively investigated harassment within the organization, attributed to colleagues and supervisors, while others encompassed both internal and external sources (the public or criminals). Furthermore, four quantitative studies examined sexual harassment generally, without specifying the source.

Regarding internal perpetrators, police colleagues (both police staff and officers) were identified as the main perpetrators, followed by supervisors and junior police employees (Brown et al., 2018). A UK study by Hershcovis and colleagues (2010) delved into the consequences of harassment from both inside and outside sources and highlighted the pivotal role of harassment from insiders. Steinþórsdóttir and Pétursdóttir (2018) explored internal and external perpetrators, considering gender differences. Female officers noted male colleagues, supervisors, and male members of the public as the main harassers, while male officers reported female members of the public, male colleagues, and male supervisors as the main perpetrators.

In contrast, qualitative and mixed methods studies didn't primarily focus on perpetrator sources. However, in some studies, participants' responses

could point to perpetrators, most of whom were male colleagues and supervisors.

Associated factors

The focus of this theme is on the factors associated with the occurrence of sexual and gender-based harassment and was mainly extracted from the quantitative studies. These studies explored a range of factors including sociodemographic factors, the nature of police work, and organizational culture as contributors to such harassment. In examining the relationship between gender and sexual harassment, most studies indicated a higher prevalence among female officers (de Haas et al., 2010; Steinþórsdóttir & Pétursdóttir, 2018; Svedberg & Alexanderson, 2012). Younger and single officers (de Haas & Timmerman, 2010; Hershcovis et al., 2010), those in public-facing roles, or those with disabilities (Brown et al., 2018) were found to encounter higher levels of sexual harassment.

Beyond demographic factors, cultural and organizational elements, along with individual perceptions, were explored in some articles. Organizational factors such as justice, confidence, and tolerance of harassment were predictive of more severe sexual harassment experiences among police employees (Brown et al., 2018). Moreover, normative, and numerical male dominance within police work (de Haas & Timmerman, 2010), an old occupational culture (masculine culture) and lower scores in police identity (Brown et al., 2019), the traditional pre-liminal and liminal occupational cultural environments (Brown et al., 2021), and lower confidence in grievance procedures and perceptions of equal opportunity support (Hershcovis et al., 2010) were linked to greater odds of experiencing sexual harassment.

Consequences

The theme of the consequences of sexual and gender-based harassment emerged in both quantitative and qualitative studies (Brewin et al., 2022; Brown et al., 2018; Rostami et al., 2022; Svedberg & Alexanderson, 2012; Watson, 2022). Brown and Colleagues (2018) explored how different sexually harassing behaviors, especially explicit sexual harassment, negatively affected police staff stress and work outcomes.

Another study on police employees revealed that harassment from colleagues or supervisors was correlated with intentions to quit, overperformance demands, and reduced job satisfaction. Conversely, harassment from external sources showed no significant connection to these outcomes (Hershcovis et al., 2010). However, Rostami and

colleagues (2022) found no relationship between sexual and gender-based harassment and various dimensions of job satisfaction among police officers.

Furthermore, the studies revealed a statistically significant association between sexual harassment and post-traumatic and complex post-traumatic stress disorder (Brewin et al., 2022) and sickness absence (Svedberg & Alexanderson, 2012) in police employees.

In a qualitative study on gender-based violence on social media (specifically Twitter), female police officers stated experiencing online sexual and gender-based harassment which negatively impacted their mental health. These experiences led to reduced online engagement, self-censorship, or adopting a quieter online presence (Watson, 2022).

Individual response and coping strategies

Individual responses and coping strategies in dealing with sexual and gender-based harassment were found to be another common theme in the selected studies. In a study addressing the “blue wall of silence” in police work, officers were presented with different scenarios of sexual misconduct. Most officers indicated their readiness to report behaviors like the distribution of private images of colleagues or instances of witnessed sexual harassment against a colleague. However, a lower percentage would report scenarios involving sexual comments about a colleague. The main reasons for not reporting were “minimization” of behaviors and “not being their responsibility” (Sweeting et al., 2022).

Across the studies, a tendency to avoid formal reporting of sexual harassment was observed. Informal methods of dealing with the issue were common, and fear of retaliation and jeopardizing job security (particularly if the perpetrator was superior) were the prevalent reasons for not reporting (Steinþórsdóttir & Pétursdóttir, 2018). Only a small fraction of exposed staff took formal action, and they believed it was easier to remain silent and take no action (Brown et al., 2018). Brown et al. (2019) found that senior female police employees reacted to unwanted verbal sexual harassment more informally while responding more formally to unwanted physical contact and sexual propositions.

Women police officers reported choosing “acceptance” and “resilience” as coping strategies to deal with less serious harassment in police work. Also, they had to demonstrate masculine behaviors to prove their abilities and be accepted in the police environment (Brown et al., 2021; Spasić et al.,

2015). Moreover, female police officers responded to harassment with avoidance strategies like withdrawing from social media, silencing, and self-censorship, or through active coping mechanisms like forming alliances with other women (Watson, 2022).

Impact of organizational policies

One study conducted in the Netherlands compared sexual harassment rates between 2000 and 2006 in police divisions with varying policies. The findings revealed a non-significant decrease in sexual harassment among women but a significant increase among men by 2006. Importantly, divisions with comprehensive policies didn't significantly differ in harassment rates compared to those with less comprehensive policies. The study concluded that while comprehensive policies are necessary, their quality and integration into the work environment are vital for the effective prevention of sexual harassment (de Haas et al., 2010).

Moreover, a study on preserving masculine dominance and sexual harassment in Iceland's police force emphasized that the persistently high rate of sexual harassment revealed that comprehensive policies alone do not effectively prevent sexual harassment in police work (Steinþórsdóttir & Pétursdóttir, 2018).

Sexual and gender-based harassment among Swedish police officers (Article II)

Results in this part are based on the findings of the quantitative and qualitative sub-studies on sexual and gender-based harassment in the Swedish context. These results were presented in the second article (the mixed methods article). The first part of the results is the combination of the quantitative and qualitative findings on the targets, perpetrators, and manifestation of sexual and gender-based harassment. The second part focuses on the qualitative findings on the organizational enabling factors of sexual and gender-based harassment.

Targets, perpetrators, and manifestations

In the quantitative part, all questions on sexual and gender-based harassment (in the sexual and gender-based harassment questionnaire) were categorized into two groups gender-based harassment (9 items) and sexual harassment (27 items). The collected data showed that 20.8% of male and 44.2% of female police officers experienced one to several

instances of gender-based harassment, for which the difference was statistically significant. Also, about 49% of male police officers and 44% of female police officers reported sexual harassment. Although sexual harassment was reported at a slightly higher rate among male police officers than among female officers, the difference was statistically insignificant. A more detailed analysis based on the source of harassment (from outsiders and insiders) and gender showed that 25% of female officers reported experiencing gender-based harassment from outsiders and 36% from insiders, while 6% of male police officers had experienced gender-based harassment from outsiders and 18% from insiders. Regarding sexual harassment, 43% of both male and female police officers reported that they experienced sexual harassment perpetrated by outsiders, while 18% of female officers and 22% of male officers reported sexual harassment perpetrated by insiders (Table 3).

Table 3. Gender-based and sexual harassment from outsider and insider perpetrators, by gender

Harassment	Perpetrators	Male (107, 70%)		Female (45, 30%)	
		N	%	N	%
Gender-based	Outsiders	6	5.6	11	25
	Insiders	19	17.8	16	36.4
Sexual	Outsiders	46	43	19	43.2
	Insiders	24	22.4	8	18.2

The younger and less experienced the female police officers were, the higher gender-based harassment (Age: $t = 5.15, p < .001$; Job experience: $t = 5.04, p < .001$), and sexual harassment reported (Age: $t = 3.70, p < .001$; Job experience: $t = 3.67, p < .001$). However, this negative association was statistically significant only in sexual harassment among male police officers (Age: $t = 3.07, p = .003$; Job experience: $t = 2.67, p < .009$). Furthermore, 86.7% of the female and 58.1% of the male police officers who worked as police patrol officers had experienced sexual harassment, where the differences compared to internal services were significant in both male ($\chi^2 = 6.37, p = .012$) and female officers ($\chi^2 = 16.56, p < .001$).

In the quantitative part of the study, out of 36 questions on sexual and gender-based harassment, 16 questions on sexual harassment were not experienced by any of the respondents. The experience of “mocking or telling jokes about the #metoo campaign” by colleagues (19.9%) and

supervisors (11.3%) was reported as the most frequent gender-based harassment item by police officers. Women reported a higher percentage of this kind of harassment from both colleagues (30.2% of women, compared to 16% of men) and supervisors (15.9% of women, compared to 9.4% of men). Among the items pertaining to sexual harassment, “sexual comments and jokes” by colleagues (15.9%) was the most-reported sexual harassment (16% in male police officers, 15.9% in female police officers).

Assessing the gender of perpetrators of the most frequent types of gender-based and sexual harassment showed men as the most reported perpetrators by both male and female police officers.

In the qualitative phase of the study, applying qualitative content analysis, two main categories were extracted to present how police officers experience manifestations of sexual and gender-based harassment inside the police work environment. Based on how participants identified behavior as either a direct and obvious manifestation of gender-based and sexual harassment or a more indirect and subtle form of harassment, each category is presented with two subcategories.

During the interviews, it became evident that describing experiences related to gender-based harassment was less straightforward compared to sexual harassment. Participants had a limited definition of what constitutes gender-based harassment, and they did not always recognize certain behaviors as instances of gender-based harassment. Consequently, participants required additional clarification and examples to better grasp the concept of gender-based harassment.

Manifestation of gender-based harassment

Police officers explained various incidents they had encountered, observed, or been informed of regarding gender-based harassment within their workplace. A few participants had not encountered gender-based harassment in their work environment. A female police officer emphasized that she was not subject to gender-based harassment in the workplace, underscoring her workplace’s commitment to gender equality. She described a workplace culture where task allocations were based on the officers’ competence and personality, rather than their gender (P1). However, the remaining participants detailed their encounters with gender-based harassment as follows.

Blatant manifestation of gender-based harassment: Several police officers described experiences that were perceived as clearly offensive and direct

instances of harassment. Female police officers shared their experiences where they felt being disregarded, undervalued, and not taken seriously in the workplace due to their gender. For instance, one woman police officer explained an occurrence in which she was excluded from the intervention team during a shooting case. Her supervisor had remarked, “You can sit inside and watch tonight because I want the big strong guys out” (P4).

Subtle manifestation of gender-based harassment: While certain behaviors might not have been explicitly identified as gender-based harassment and may have appeared positive on the surface, they were still perceived as subtle forms of gender-based harassment. For example, doubt about the competence of women officers and managers was expressed by both male and female police officers. Female officers and managers encountered more frequent scrutiny regarding their professional decisions, plans, and actions compared to their male counterparts in similar situations. They often felt the need to “prove” that they could do their job as well as their male colleagues (P4). One male police officer openly admitted, “I have noticed that I have questioned a female manager more often than a male manager when they do the same thing, which, in retrospect, may not be fair. I’ve been harder on the female boss than the male” (P5). Furthermore, male police officers and managers tended to receive greater attention, praise, and affirmation for the same ideas and decisions compared to their female colleagues (P5, P9). Moreover, male police officers were more frequently regarded as the main sources of information and dominant figures during interactions (with other colleagues) when working alongside female officers, even when the female officer possessed more pertinent information to offer (P5).

Female officers explained that their mistakes and achievements were often interpreted through a gendered lens, subjecting them to more scrutiny and judgment when they make mistakes compared to their male colleagues (P7). Moreover, female police officers described instances of patronizing behavior from their male colleagues who offered to “help the girls to train ...” (P6). This led to feelings of inadequacy and being undervalued within the profession. (P6, P11).

Manifestation of sexual harassment

Some female officers did not personally experience sexual harassment, but they either heard about or witnessed instances of such harassment against their colleagues. Additionally, one of the female officers, who initially mentioned no such experiences but later during the interview

explained an incident that was identified as a case of sexual harassment (P1).

Blatant manifestation of sexual harassment: Sexual jokes and explicit sexual comments were frequently reported by police officers, particularly female officers, as a manifestation of sexual harassment (P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11). Police officers mentioned that officers used some sexual jokes and comments about each other that were perceived as disrespectful and offensive, “So that you might have received comments about something, about breasts or ass or something like that” (P4). A male police officer shared his experience of being targeted with sexual jokes by his supervisor and colleagues due to driving a small car (P5).

Also, female officers stated their experiences or observations of sexual harassment, such as showing inappropriate pictures, inappropriate behaviors at work-related gatherings (e.g., parties), narrating sexual stories and descriptions, and expressing themselves sexually (P1, P7, P8, P10). Moreover, female police officers reported incidents where male colleagues or supervisors had touched them or other female colleagues in a sexual manner (P4, P6, P11, P12). One officer explained her experience “I myself have been patted on the butt once when I was standing in the queue for the café, that’s what I’ve had to deal with a colleague who was just about to retire” (P11). Also, a male officer talked about the instances he had heard about, where some colleagues were perceived as “touchy-feely” during team-building exercises, causing discomfort among women who did not welcome such physical contact, categorizing it as sexual harassment (P9).

Subtle manifestation of sexual harassment: Female police officers experienced receiving flirtatious talk, requests for mobile phone numbers, and comments on their appearance, from their male colleagues and supervisors (P5, P12) which can be considered subtle sexual harassment. A woman manager mentioned receiving direct comments and an email from male colleagues about her “nice body” (P12).

Swedish police officers’ perceptions of the organizational factors enabling sexual and gender-based harassment

Employing thematic analysis to explore the organizational factors perceived by police officers as facilitators for sexual and gender-based harassment revealed three primary themes, which are addressed below.

Toxic jargon in police work

Police officers highlighted the prevalence of jargon within the police environment and its potential toxicity as a contributor to sexual and gender-based harassment, which can indirectly create a work environment conducive to such harassment. The results are presented under five subthemes.

Macho jargon in a masculine culture: Many police officers referred to “toxic jargon” within police work that can be perceived as derogatory and offensive. As a female police officer explained about this type of jargon:

I think this is also a matter of how to speak. Because there is sick jargon in this job, and there are quite a lot of rough words and gendered words... how you talk to each other, about each other, to others. (P4)

This type of toxic jargon was commonly described as “macho” and “boyish,” deeply rooted in a masculine culture (P1, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, P10, P13).

Although some participants mentioned that both men and women used this jargon, they perceived it to be more prevalent and harsher among male police officers and within male-dominated groups (P1, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9). A woman police officer noted, “Although girls can also sit and talk about sexual stuff or joke at a... but it’s not as rough, isn’t it, like with a bunch of predominantly men” (P4).

Macho jargon as a normalized language: Participants highlighted the normalization of macho jargon as a pervasive communication style within the police force (P5). Therefore, such jargon has been accepted within the workplace and is reinforced by police officers as they strive to conform to it (P10). A male police manager explained that group conformity perpetuates this normalization through the process of producing and reproducing this behavior (P9). As he explained, such jargon begins as a norm-breaking behavior but eventually transforms into an accepted norm over time.

Women as catalysts for a positive environment: Police officers highlighted the moderating influence of women in mitigating the harsh masculine climate and reducing toxic jargon, even though it may not entirely eliminate such language, as a female police officer stated:

The guys feel like they have to behave more civilly because there's a woman present. I don't think they consciously think, 'Oh, now there's no woman here, we can say whatever we want,' but it's easy to slip into that kind of atmosphere. (P7)

Participants noted that in male-dominated groups, officers tended to use more openly rude language and reinforce macho jargon. However, the presence of women can help mitigate the "feeling of back-patting" and "locker-room talk" among male officers (P8). While women in predominantly male groups might face harsh macho jargon, working in more balanced, mixed-gender groups can contribute to a more positive working environment (P5).

Men against men: Both male and female police officers mentioned the prevalence of a harsher jargon among male police officers, which was often perceived as offensive (P1, P2, P5, P8). Therefore, male officers also encounter harsh jargon from their male counterparts, as a male police manager pointed out:

My bad experiences with sexual harassment, and when it gets bad it's usually when too many men are in the same room, then I've seen that it can get bad and that you can even harass each other. That's the jargon and that's how you behave. (P9)

According to some participants, male officers applied sexual jargon to target other men's masculinity and belittled them with derogatory words and jokes. A female police officer in the group interview described this issue as possibly rooted in a competition for masculinity:

Maybe it's more about competing for each other's masculinity and that you probably can't get it up, that there will be comments like that, you may not be able to perform sexually or gay jokes or the like, I can imagine that it's about diminishing men's sexuality. (P13)

Another man officer explained that some male officers—especially those belonging to the old police culture—use such derogatory language to disparage other men who do not conform to the traditional masculine norms, such as those who may not exhibit physical strength or express emotional sensitivity (P2).

Macho jargon by women police officers: Some police officers pointed out that some women officers also employ macho jargon, even though it is

perceived as less intense and aggressive compared to the language used by men (P4, P9, P12). Women can easily engage in such sexist or sexualized language in their work group as a way to conform to the group and the dominant culture. When female officers apply such jargon, it can be considered an approved communication style by others and can complicate efforts to mitigate the situation by managers or those who aim to address such situations. A male police manager explained the complexities and challenges in addressing situations where a female officer employs such jargon about themselves or others:

What I find more challenging is in the rare cases when it's women who exhibit similar behaviors...I mean, what I recognize in their behaviors is that it's strange because they're women, because the behavior of sitting around and making derogatory remarks, using slurs or words that shouldn't be used, especially in a workplace, even if it's meant as a joke, stands out so much more just because it's a woman saying it...I see a challenge in addressing it. (P9)

Culture of silence

Police officers acknowledged a prevailing culture of silence regarding sexual and gender-based harassment in the police work environment (P1, P2, P5, P9, P13). A male police manager explained:

There has been and still is a culture of silence, but everyone probably wants to get rid of it, it has no purpose, and it does no good, I think people understand that, but they haven't developed the ability to break it either. (P9)

One of the participants in the group interview noted that the silence emanated from both employees and managers (P13). A male participant mentioned that—despite formally specific agendas within the organization—there was silence following the discussion of the problem, indicating a gap between discourse and actual reporting of such incidents (P2). A male police officer shared his experience at his workplace where several woman employees who were exposed to harassment by a male group leader did not want to testify and make the issue public (P5). One of the female police officers described the culture of silence as “a bit boyish that you are buddies and boy buddies can't see that their friend or colleague is behaving badly, or don't want to see it” (P10).

Police officers attributed this silence to employees' reluctance to engage in conflicts and gossip, be labeled as troublemakers, be isolated, or

negatively affect the team's atmosphere and workplace. Participants expressed fears of facing negative consequences, leading to their silence (P1, P6, P9, P10). They underscored that breaking their silence could end up in reprisal from managers that could affect their career, as a female officer mentioned, "... end up in the freezer and don't get any training, they can't go on anywhere, they can't do this or that...you don't want to end up in the freezer and simply for the sake of your own career" (P1).

Additionally, there was a perceived lack of support from the organization and colleagues for those who attempted to raise such issues (P13, P6) as a female officer mentioned, "Some people think that nothing would come from it anyway, so why bother?" (P6). Female police officers pointed out that due to the lack of support from colleagues and the organization for those who did speak up, employees often chose to stay quiet and move on unless an extremely serious issue occurred (P1, P6).

Furthermore, police officers mentioned a lack of transparency from the organization. They believed that acknowledging incidents, without necessarily revealing all the details, was essential to prevent issues from persisting or feeling covered up (P5). A female participant stressed the need for a balance between discretion and transparency to ensure the recognition of the organization's efforts to address such issues (P13).

Important role of management

The police officers described their experiences regarding the positive and negative roles of the managers. Their experiences highlighted the significant role of managers in shaping either a hostile or inclusive work environment within the police force.

Positive management: Police officers stressed the key role of managers in providing a zero-tolerance work environment toward sexual and gender-based harassment. They highlighted managers' responsibility in responding to such incidents, in addressing the issue effectively, and in providing support to survivors. The women in the group interview underscored the role of senior managers at the local level as the gatekeepers who prioritize the issue of sexual and gender-based harassment within the local police departments, and middle managers have to follow the directives set by senior managers. They highlighted the supporting role of their managers in initiating a special group within the police force to tackle sexual and gender-based harassment (P13).

Police officers shared their experiences of receiving strong support from managers when such harassment occurred (P6, P7, P10, P11). One female officer praised the organization's prompt action and personal support after reporting harassment (P6). Also, another female officer expressed satisfaction with her managers in supporting her in the occurrence of such harassment throughout her career (P7).

Ineffective and negative management: Although police officers pointed out the positive experiences of their managers in tackling sexual and gender-based harassment, some officers encountered ineffective or negative management that created a vulnerable work environment regarding harassment. Some managers were criticized for not addressing these issues seriously or merely sweeping them under the rug (P1, P4, P7). Some were observed to uphold the old school of policing and a male-dominant culture and may not regard sexual and gender-based harassment as an important problem that requires attention and resolution (P4, P5). Furthermore, a female police officer explained how nepotism within the police organization led to the promotion of a police officer without regard for his previous history of harassment (P1).

Several police officers noted an issue concerning middle-level managers. While high-ranking managers (at least outwardly) highlight sexual and gender-based harassment, the problem is not prioritized by managers at lower levels. Middle-level managers have many different priorities, which sometimes leads to assigning a lower priority to addressing such harassment (P5, P7). One female police officer described how the existing agenda was addressed at her workplace, emphasizing the lack of genuine commitment:

We always have an item on the agenda, which is gender equality and equal treatment, and it often happens that then you bring up 'do we have something here?' and then everyone looks at the girls in the group and then the girls say 'no, that's fine' and then you move on. (P7)

In addition, police officers emphasized the lack of resources and support to effectively address this issue at middle-level management. The participants expressed concerns about potential staff shortages, forcing managers to sidestep conflict, tolerate inappropriate behaviors, and avoid taking action due to the fear of losing their staff (P2, P6, P10).

Furthermore, based on the experiences shared by participants, it was revealed that some managers themselves were involved as perpetrators of such harassment, which not only created a hostile work environment but also hindered any response to the harassment due to their positions of authority (P4, P5).

Also, police managers acknowledged a lack of expertise and proper training in handling situations related to sexual and gender-based harassment. A female police manager explained the need for specialized training and support for managers in dealing with such issues:

I am an expert in leading efforts of an external nature, I am a specialist in that. But I'm not a specialist in dealing with issues of this nature. Then it becomes more and more that there is support in what we are going to do, that is great. But it's not like any of us go through a two-week training as a manager in how we deal with this kind of problem, there isn't one. (P12)

Moreover, one male police supervisor noted that police officers often hesitate to voice their concerns if they feel that supervisors are suppressing or mishandling a situation. He explained that the issue isn't necessarily that managers are fearful of tackling harassment; instead, it pertains to their insufficient expertise in effectively handling such situations (P9).

Work-related stress among police officers (Article III)

Results on the work stress subscales showed that both male and female police officers reported the subscales "impact on significant others" and "operational stress" as the two most highly rated kinds of work-related stress. Female police officers scored higher than their male counterparts on all work stress subscales, with statistically significant differences in "impact on significant others" and "operational stress" (Table 4).

Younger female police officers reported higher stress in the "self-image" subscale, whereas "operational stress" was higher among younger male police officers. Also, female police officers with more job experience had less stress in "self-image" and "confrontation with death". Also, male police officers who were married or had any other type of intimate relationship reported statistically higher stress in the "confrontation with death" subscale compared to the single group. Comparing stress among

three work-type groups of police officers—patrol police officers, investigators, and other internal police officers—indicated that “operational stress” was significantly different in different work-type groups only in male police officers, and male police patrol officers reported higher “operational stress” compared to the two other groups. Also, stress in “impact on significant others” and “operational stress” were scored higher by the male police officers who worked in two/three shifts plan compared to those who only worked the day shift.

There were no differences between the stress subscales and birthplace, managerial position, having children, and educational level among male and female police officers.

Table 4. Work stress subscales by gender in police officers

Stress subscales	Police officers								Mann-Whitney U	Z	p
	Male (n = 107)				Female (n = 45)						
	Min-Max	Mean	SD	Median	Min-Max	Mean	SD	Median			
Organizational	.1-8.1	2.7	1.5	2.7	.9-8.6	3.1	1.4	2.8	2091	-1.28	.201
Impact on significant others	0-7.3	3.6	1.9	3.6	0-8.6	4.4	2.4	4.7	1858.5	-2.22	.027
Operational	0-7.7	3.3	1.9	3.2	0-8	4.1	2.4	4.3	1872.5	-2.16	.031
Self-image	0-6.8	2.7	1.5	2.8	0-6.3	3.2	1.6	3.2	1964	-1.79	.073
Confrontation with death	0-7	2.7	1.7	2.5	0-6.5	3.2	1.8	3.3	2013.5	-1.59	.111

[Source: Rostami, et al., 2023]

Relationship between work stress and sexual and gender-based harassment

Studying work stress subscales between police officers who had any experiences of sexual or gender-based harassment indicated that female police officers who had experience of gender-based harassment scored higher on “confrontation with death stress” than female police officers without experience of harassment. This difference was not significant in male police officers. Both male and female police officers with experience of sexual harassment reported higher stress in the “self-image” subscale. In addition, male police officers with experience of sexual harassment reported higher “operational stress” than male officers without experience of sexual harassment. Female police officers who had experienced sexual harassment reported higher “confrontation with death stress” than female police officers who had not experienced sexual harassment.

Regarding the strong correlation between sexual and gender-based harassment, two sets of multiple regression analyses were implemented to assess the explanatory effects of sociodemographic factors, and of sexual and gender-based harassment on different subscales of work stress. The first set of multiple regression analyses was conducted for each subscale of work-related stress (dependent variable) and gender, job experience, and sexual harassment (independent variables). The results indicated that the variance in the independent variables could explain 4% (confrontation with death stress) to 13% (self-image stress) of the variance in the different stress subscales (except for organizational stress). Gender was found to be a significant contributor to this explained variance, except for “confrontation with death stress”. Even after controlling for gender and job experience, a noteworthy relationship between sexual harassment and both “operational stress” and “self-image stress” remained significant.

Applying a similar approach, the analysis using gender-based harassment as the independent variable (instead of sexual harassment) revealed that the variance in the independent variables could explain 4% (confrontation with death stress) to 9% (self-image stress) of the variance in the different stress subscales (except for “organizational stress”). Gender and job experience were the main predictors of these variations. After controlling for gender and job experience, no significant association was found between gender-based harassment and the various stress subscales.

Job satisfaction in police officers (Article IV)

Analysis of the job satisfaction data showed that both male and female police officers rated the “people on present job” subscale as the highest aspect of job satisfaction. The job satisfaction subscales with the lowest score in both male and female police officers were “opportunity for promotion” followed by “pay”. A comparison of job satisfaction between male and female police officers showed that although female police officers reported less satisfaction in “job in general”, “work on present job”, “pay”, and “opportunity for promotion” than their male counterparts, the differences were not statistically significant between these two groups (Table 5).

Results indicated that the older and more experienced officers had less job satisfaction in “job in general” and more satisfaction in “pay”. Police officers in managerial positions reported statistically higher job satisfaction in “pay” and “opportunities for promotion” but lower

satisfaction with “supervision” compared to other officers. A comparison of job satisfaction between the two work-type groups (external and internal services) indicated that police patrol officers (external service) had higher job satisfaction in “job in general”, “work on present job”, “opportunity for promotion”, and “supervision” compared to internal services officers. In addition, police officers who worked on a two or three-shift work plan reported higher job satisfaction in “job in general”, “work on present job”, and “supervision”, but lower satisfaction in “pay” than those who only worked the day shift.

Table 5. Job satisfaction subscales by gender [Source: Rostami, et al., 2022]

Job satisfaction	Male	Female	Total	t	P
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
People on your present job	46.1 ± 9	47.5 ± 6.6	46.5 ± 8.4	.90	.369
Job in general	44.6 ± 8.7	42.5 ± 9.3	44.0 ± 8.9	-1.30	.196
Work on present job	38.3 ± 7.9	35.4 ± 10.1	37.5 ± 8.6	-1.70	.093
Pay	33.7 ± 14.5	31.4 ± 15.3	33.0 ± 14.7	-.88	.382
Opportunities for promotion	21.7 ± 17.5	18.9 ± 17.3	20.9 ± 17.4	-.89	.378
Supervision	42.6 ± 8.8	43.5 ± 8.3	42.8 ± 8.7	.58	.565

[Source: Rostami, et. al., 2022]

Relationship between job satisfaction, work stress, and sexual and gender-based harassment

Assessing the correlation between job satisfaction subscales and different facets of work stress revealed a significant relationship between job satisfaction in “job in general”, “pay”, and “supervision” with “organizational stress”. Moreover, all stress subscales showed a negative correlation with job satisfaction in “pay”. In addition, officers with higher “operational stress”, “self-image stress”, and “confrontation with death stress” reported lower satisfaction in “pay”. Also, “operational stress” had a positive correlation with satisfaction in “opportunities of promotion”.

There were no significant associations between job satisfaction subscales and having experience of gender-based harassment. There was a positive relationship between job satisfaction in “work on present job” and experiencing sexual harassment in bivariate analysis, but the association disappeared after controlling for the variable “type of work” in multivariate analysis.

In the hierarchical multiple regression analyses (method: enter), each facet of job satisfaction was used as the dependent variable, the sociodemographic variables (gender, type of work, job experience, and managerial position) were entered as block 1 and the work stress subscales were added as block 2¹. The results showed that the variance in the sociodemographic variables could explain between 5.8% (work on present job) and 16.8% (pay) of the variance in job satisfaction facets.

The variance resulting from the combination of sociodemographic variables and stress subscales (block 1 and block 2) accounted for 11.8% of the variance in “work on present job” and 25.6% in “pay”. Organizational stress was the most often predictive factor concerning various job satisfaction domains and was found to explain between 33.6% of the variance in “opportunities for promotion” and 50.4% in “supervision” after controlling for other variables.

¹ According to nonsignificant relationships between sexual and gender-based harassment and job satisfaction subscales in bivariate analyses, these factors were removed from the hierarchical multiple regression analyses.

Discussion

Sexual and gender-based harassment against police employees in European countries

The main part of the literature in the European police context focused on sexual harassment, while gender-based harassment was either neglected or studied combined with other concepts, such as work-related discrimination or gender-based discrimination. A possible explanation for the lack of interest in research on gender-based harassment could lie in the perception that sexual harassment is perceived as a more sensitive, serious, and problematic issue compared to gender-based harassment. Moreover, there are more explicit behavioral manifestations of sexual harassment, whereas gender-based harassment is frequently intertwined with other forms of gender discrimination. This entanglement could influence researchers to prioritize the investigation of sexual harassment over gender-based harassment in their studies.

The reviewed articles highlighted the presence of sexual harassment within the realm of police work. In qualitative studies, the problem emerged in the narrative of interviewees, whereas the quantitative studies reported the prevalence of sexual harassment either in total or by prevalence of specific types of sexual harassment, such as sexual comments and sexual behaviors. However, the diversity in research methodologies and the use of different sexual harassment questionnaires have hindered direct comparisons of prevalence rates across various studies and countries.

Notably, the studies that employed questionnaires that encompassed multiple items on sexual harassment tended to report a higher prevalence of sexual harassment compared to those using a single, more generalized question about experiencing sexual harassment (Svedberg & Alexanderson, 2012). A similar pattern has emerged in several studies conducted in academic contexts (Fedina et al., 2018). This underscores the significance of precisely defining and elucidating the concept of sexual and gender-based harassment for survey respondents. When individuals are asked a broad, general question about their experiences with sexual and gender-based harassment, their interpretations and definitions of the problem may vary. However, asking more detailed questions covering different facets of sexual and gender-based harassment can help

respondents clarify the issue and reach a common understanding, thus leading to a clearer and more accurate assessment of the problem.

Among the reviewed literature, some quantitative studies indicated a connection between sociodemographic factors, such as gender, age, education, work experience, and job type, and sexual and gender-based harassment (Brown et al., 2018, 2019; de Haas et al., 2010; de Haas & Timmerman, 2010; Hershcovis et al., 2010; Rostami et al., 2022; Steinþórsdóttir & Pétursdóttir, 2018; Svedberg & Alexanderson, 2012). These results highlight the importance of considering all relevant sociodemographic factors in research design, selection of target groups, data collection, analysis process, and interpretation of results.

While a limited number of quantitative studies (Hershcovis et al., 2010; Steinþórsdóttir & Pétursdóttir, 2018; Svedberg & Alexanderson, 2012) assessed the perpetrators of sexual and gender-based harassment (e.g., their gender and whether they were from inside or outside the organization), the majority of research did not explicitly focus on perpetrators. The studies either did not pay attention to the perpetrators or focused solely on internal perpetrators (colleagues and supervisors). Considering the role of perpetrators' characteristics in scrutinizing the consequences and underlying mechanisms of sexual and gender-based harassment (Hershcovis et al., 2010), taking into account the characteristics of perpetrators could provide valuable insights when studying sexual and gender-based harassment.

The studies on the consequences of sexual harassment in the European context mostly concentrated on individual-level consequences, such as job satisfaction, intention to quit, and overperformance demands. Some studies examined the adverse effects of harassment on overall health by examining the association between sexual harassment and stress, sickness-related absences, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from a mental health perspective. There is a lack of studies on the consequences of sexual and gender-based harassment at organizational and societal levels as well as on the physical aspects of health, personal life, quality of life, and various psychological issues at the individual level.

Despite research in other contexts that showed a lower risk of sexual harassment in organizations that have proactive policies and procedures to prevent and monitor sexual harassment (Gruber, 1998; Harned et al., 2002), de Haas and colleagues (2010) found that sexual harassment remained a workplace concern, even when comprehensive sexual harassment policies were in place. This underscores the necessity

for heightened efforts to address and prevent this issue. The lack of a statistically significant decrease in the occurrence of sexual harassment following the implementation of comprehensive sexual harassment policies within police organizations indicates that these policies may either lack completeness (McDonald, 2012), or may not be effectively implemented. Given the established culture of male dominance in the police organization, it is clear that a sustained effort over time is required to achieve meaningful change. However, it is necessary to constantly scrutinize and enhance both the policies themselves and the process of their implementation to comprehensively address the complicated dimensions of this issue and ultimately provide a safer and more supportive workplace environment.

One of the reviewed studies was a qualitative study on digital harassment among female police officers (Twitter-based) (Watson, 2022). Over the past few decades, the widespread use of computers and smartphones for communication, and the exchange of messages, photos, videos, and voice messages, in addition to engagement on various social platforms, has greatly facilitated information flow and communication. The ease of access and the potential for anonymity in using these technologies have unfortunately enabled negative applications, including bullying, abuse, and sexual and gender-based harassment (Killean et al., 2022). Consequently, it is important to consider these communication technologies when examining sexual and gender-based harassment, both within the realm of police work and in broader society.

Sexual and gender-based harassment in Swedish police officers

Both male and female police officers experienced gender-based and sexual harassment, but a statistically higher percentage of female officers reported gender-based harassment than male officers. In limited studies, sexual harassment and gender-based harassment were separately assessed, and most of them considered gender-based harassment part of sexual harassment and reported higher levels of harassment of female officers compared to their male counterparts (de Haas et al., 2009; Lonsway et al., 2013). The findings of this study are consistent with studies that showed that female police officers often encountered higher levels of gender-based harassment such as gendered banter and sexist jokes (Alexander, 2019; Silvestri & Tong, 2022), underestimation at work, questioning of their abilities and competence in police work, and the assignment of some specific gender-related duties, such as those

associated with traffic policing or working with women and children (Holloway, 2018; Silvestri & Tong, 2022). In the process of gendered socialization and the establishment of gender roles and norms, women are expected to embody qualities of passivity, nurturing, and compliance (Nicolson, 2015). The role of female police officers contradicts these preconceived feminine roles, disrupts the prevailing dichotomy between masculine and feminine roles, and is perceived as interfering in a traditionally male domain. Additionally, according to the gendered organization (Acker, 1990) masculine norms and values underlie all organizational principles, rules, and practices in police organization. Therefore, the ideal police officer is characterized based on heterosexual masculine traits, and those who deviate from these characteristics are considered non-ideal police officers. As a result, female police officers, as a part of the disadvantaged “other” group, often encounter discrimination and gender-based harassment from their male colleagues and supervisors—most of whom belong to the advantaged group. The prevalent blatant and subtle manifestations of gender-based harassment among female police officers and managers underscores the critical need to stress and scrutinize this concept as a key indicator reflecting the fundamental essence of organizational culture. Our interview experiences highlighted a direct correlation drawn by police officers between the occurrence of gender-based harassment in female officers and the broader issues of gender equality within the organizational framework. Therefore, it is crucial to separately examine gender-based harassment distinct from sexual harassment to present a clearer and more comprehensive illustration of the prevailing masculine norms and values within organizations.

In contrast to gender-based harassment, there was no significant difference in the experience of sexual harassment between male and female police officers. Interestingly, male police officers reported slightly higher (but not statistically significant) experience of sexual harassment from their colleagues and supervisors compared to their female counterparts, which contradicts previous studies that have reported a higher prevalence of sexual harassment among female officers. Analysis of sexual harassment in the present study clarified that the most reported sexual harassment item was “sexual comments and jokes”, and the majority of these incidents were attributed to male perpetrators. As police officers explained, this form of harassment is rooted in a prevalent toxic jargon within the masculine police culture which has been accepted as a normalized language in the police work environment. In a gendered organization (Acker, 1990), language as part of the cultural symbols and images of an organization serves to perpetuate and reinforce masculine

norms. Accordingly, the slightly higher percentage of sexual harassment among male officers can be attributed to the prevalent use of sexual jargon in police work, especially among male officers. This finding reflects a male use of sexual language as a way to undermine and degrade not only women but also other men. Men apply sexual harassment as a means to express their masculinity, power, and dominance over other “inferior” masculine forms in the masculine hierarchy (Vojdik, 2013). While some men may attempt to legitimize and normalize sexual jargon as a coping strategy to alleviate the high stress of police work or to enhance cohesion and camaraderie among fellow officers (Dougherty, 2001), it’s important to note that many male and female police officers perceive such behavior as problematic and degrading. This toxic masculine jargon is prevalent among male police officers and in male-dominated work groups; therefore, a high percentage of male officers might experience such harassment.

An alternative explanation for the high reports of sexual harassment by male officers could be attributed to heightened awareness of and sensitivity to sexual harassment in both the workplace and in broader society. Following the #MeToo movement, strong gender equality discourse in Sweden, and efforts by police authorities to reform the organization, there has been a significant surge in awareness regarding sexual harassment. This awareness might have contributed to greater recognition of incidents, not just among women but also men. Therefore, an increased number of men may acknowledge and report instances of being targeted by sexual harassment.

Although toxic masculine language is predominantly observed among male officers, some female officers might also adopt this language to align themselves with the prevailing norms and culture of the privileged group. This compliance among certain female officers plays a role in normalizing, legitimizing, and perpetuating such derogatory language. Consequently, this normalization contributes to creating a hostile environment that facilitates the occurrence of sexual and gender-based harassment and complicates addressing such harassment.

Besides the toxic masculine jargon in the police work environment as an organizational factor, results indicated a persistent culture of silence in the police organization. Although participants highlighted a notable shift in recent years, the prevalent culture within the police work environment is still marked by a significant silence regarding such issues. Officers outlined various reasons for this silence, including fears of potential consequences, feelings of isolation, reluctance to engage in conflicts or

gossip, insufficient support from colleagues and the organization, uncertainty about the outcomes of reporting, and the fear of being labeled disruptive to team cohesion. These results align with the findings from the #Nödvärn campaign in Sweden, which underscored a pervasive culture of silence discouraging individuals from reporting or confronting sexual harassment (Frisk & Hjort, 2019). Studies examining sexual harassment in various work contexts in Nordic countries, including Sweden, have reported patterns of under-reporting and a prevalent culture of silence (Keisu et al., 2022; Svensson, 2020). The decision to remain silent can complicate efforts to address sexual harassment, perpetuate the problem in the work environment by allowing perpetrators to act without consequences, and deprive targets of necessary support. This culture of silence reinforces a culture of inaction, which contributes to the persistence of sexual harassment (Hershcovis et al., 2021).

Furthermore, as police officers in this study outlined, police managers at all levels have a crucial role in addressing sexual harassment. While some managers took a serious stance and demonstrated zero tolerance toward sexual harassment, others showed indifference to the issue and prioritized other concerns over addressing such harassment. Moreover, some managers not only neglected to address the problem but actively contributed to it through inappropriate behavior and by promoting a hostile work environment. According to Swedish legislation, sexual harassment is considered a form of discrimination under the Discrimination Act (2008:567) and a potential form of victimization regulated by the Work Environment Act (1977:1160). Swedish law mandates organizations enforce a zero-tolerance policy concerning sexual harassment and implement essential measures to prevent and address such incidents. Consequently, managers play a pivotal role in addressing the issue and in providing a safe and inclusive work environment. Research on sexual harassment suggests that training managers is an effective strategy to combat sexual harassment in the workplace (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020). A need for comprehensive training for managers was reported by police manager participants in this study, as well. Incorporating managerial training as part of a holistic program is crucial to prompting a fundamental cultural shift within the organization, which includes altering organizational structures, policies, procedures, and support systems to actively prevent and address sexual harassment (Perry et al., 2019).

Police work stress

Among the assessed male and female police officers, the subscales “impact on significant others stress” and “operational stress” were the highest-scored stress. These results aligned with some studies that indicated some intervention-related stressors, such as “exposure to battered or dead children”, “killing someone in the line of duty”, “fellow officer was killed in the line of duty”, and “situations requiring the use of force” as the most stressful events in police officers (Violanti et al., 2016; Violanti & Aron, 1995). However, the results are contrary to some other studies that reported organizational stressors (context stressors) as the main perceived stress among police officers (Collins & Gibbs, 2003; Houdmont, 2017; Shane, 2010). The different findings might be due to the differences in organizational stressors, which are related to organizational culture, bureaucratic attributes, and organizational budgets (Paais, 2018; Peterson & Wilson, 2002) in different countries (research contexts). Also, studies differ in how they measure the stressors based on police officers’ experiences as perceived stress, or the probable stressors that can occur in their work. Moreover, findings can differ based on the more frequently experienced stressors (organizational stressors) or the more stressful events in police work, which might happen less frequently (operational stressors). In addition, applying diverse questionnaires for stress measurement complicates comparisons of results. For example, some stressor items (e.g., colleague injury or death in the line of duty, and family life threats), which were considered under “impact on significant others” in the questionnaire used in this study were categorized as operational stressors in other stress-assessment instruments. Also, police officers in PVAs encounter more serious and critical police interventions than officers in other areas, and this persistent exposure could serve as another rationale for their heightened reports of operational stress.

Both “impact on significant others” and “operational stress” were significantly rated higher in female police officers than in male officers. This is consistent with the findings that showed higher stress among female officers involved in dangerous events than among male officers (Violanti et al., 2016). Also, Bartol et al. (1992) found that women reported more stress when facing tragedy and the occasions associated with responsibility for the safety of the citizens and their colleagues. Female police officers who are involved in police interventions—a role traditionally considered masculine within police culture—encounter additional pressure to demonstrate their competence to both their fellow officers and individuals involved in criminal activities. This additional pressure can result in a higher level of stress experienced by this group.

In line with previous research, the obtained findings confirmed that younger and less experienced police officers reported higher levels of stress in both operational and organizational aspects (Balakrishnamurthy & Shankar, 2009; Queirós et al., 2020). Getting older and gaining more work experience in exposure to diverse stressors helps individuals effectively manage stress and develop proper coping strategies for various stressors. Furthermore, more work experience in police interventions enhances their job proficiency, self-esteem, self-image, and work performance, which subsequently leads to reduced feelings of stress (Bannerman, 1996; Lester, 1986).

Male patrol police officers showed higher levels of “operational stress” than their counterparts in the other two groups—investigators and other police officers who work internally. This heightened stress may be attributed to their constant and direct exposure to threats and dangers during police interventions (Abdollahi, 2002; Acquadro Maran et al., 2015). In contrast, as female officers constitute only 21% of patrol officers, the relationship is not as evident for them as it is for male police officers. Moreover, male police officers who work two and three shifts reported higher stress in “impact on significant others” and “operational stress” than those who work day shifts. Officers working afternoon and night shifts are faced with more stressful events (Ma et al., 2015), less job control, less discretion, and more harassment than those working a fixed day shift (Nabe-Nielsen et al., 2009), which may explain the higher stress scores in police officers who worked two and three shifts. Since most of the police who worked in two and three shifts were male patrol officers, the significant association is clearer in male police officers.

Sexual and gender-based harassment and work stress

Results indicated that the male and female officers who had experienced sexual harassment reported higher “self-image stress” and higher “operational stress”. As mentioned earlier, sexual harassment is used as a weapon to degrade others; therefore, sexual harassment can have a profound impact on the self-image of police officers and induce greater stress, regardless of gender. Police officers during police interventions were found to be more likely to experience degrading comments and behaviors of a gendered and sexual nature, particularly from criminals and citizens, which can heighten the “operational stress” in police officers.

Police officers' job satisfaction

Job satisfaction in the “opportunities for promotion” and “pay” dimensions was scored lowest by police officers which showed a common dissatisfaction in these two subscales. Police officers who are dissatisfied with opportunities for promotion and pay feel that their efforts are not valued by the police organization and the system deprives them of the benefits they deserve (Bonifacio, 1991). This sense of injustice and deprivation can lead to various negative outcomes, including high employee turnover, increased psychological pressure, and reduced organizational commitment, work performance, and productivity (Paoline & Gau, 2020). According to the significant role of pay and promotion in the extent of satisfaction with the job (Brunetto & Farr-Wharton, 2002; Dantzker & Surette, 1996), extrinsic factors such as salary and more opportunities for job promotion need to be considered when attempting to improve job satisfaction among police officers.

Although female officers scored lower in 4 domains of job satisfaction, the statistically nonsignificant differences in job satisfaction between male and female police officers confirm other studies in the police research field (Dantzker & Kubin, 1998; Love & Singer, 1988; Maurya, 2019; Sousa & Gauthier, 2008), showing only a slight role of gender on job satisfaction. Gender equality has been a cornerstone discussion in Swedish society and in the work environment at different levels. Sweden has had a leading position in gender equality among European countries since 2010 (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). Also, the Swedish police organization has a mission to promote gender equality in the organization, and in this attempt, there is an almost equal overall gender distribution, with 46% female police employees (although not in all types of police work) within police organization (The Swedish Police Authority, 2022). Accordingly, the small gender difference in job satisfaction in the obtained results could be explained by the more gender-equal working conditions in Sweden and in the Swedish police organization. Working in an environment with equal working conditions for women and men decreases the gender gap in job satisfaction (Perugini & Vladislavjević, 2019; Pita & Torregrosa, 2021).

Work stress and job satisfaction

Organizational stress was negatively correlated to job satisfaction; “job in general”, “pay”, and “supervision”. In addition, organizational stress was the most common predictor of job satisfaction domains among police officers. This finding is in line with the other studies that have displayed

the more significant role of organizational stress and organizational characteristics in predicting job satisfaction in police officers than operational stress and job characteristics (Brough, 2004; Juncaj, 2017). Therefore, stress factors linked to the organization, such as inadequate pay, insufficient organizational support and supervision, a shortage of human resources and equipment, and ineffective administrative practices, can more adversely impact job satisfaction than operational stress and the traumatic events inherent to police work. Indeed, organizational constraints and demands are often perceived as hindrance stressors that negatively affect employees' work outcomes and job satisfaction (Horan et al., 2020).

Interestingly, despite the higher operational stress that the police patrol officers usually dealt with, they had greater job satisfaction in “job in general” and “work on present job” than internal officers. Higher job satisfaction among police patrol officers can be attributed to a sense of professional pride associated with being considered a “real police officer” (Camlibel et al., 2021). Additionally, research showed those who have a diversity of job responsibilities report higher levels of satisfaction (Johnson, 2012). Given that police patrol officers regularly face diverse situations and tasks, their increased job satisfaction can be attributed to the greater diversity in their daily work routines. Police patrol officers reported higher satisfaction in “supervision” and “opportunities for promotion”, and these can positively affect general job satisfaction in this group. Further studies in this field are needed to examine job satisfaction among police patrol officers in comparison to other police employees in the police organization.

Sexual and gender-based harassment and job satisfaction

Based on the findings of the study, while organizational stress emerged as a significant predictor of job satisfaction, there was no significant association between experiences of sexual and gender-based harassment and the various subcategories of job satisfaction among police officers. These results differ from prior studies (Hershcovis et al., 2010; Hutagalung & Ishak, 2012; Willness et al., 2007), which have reported detrimental effects of sexual and gender-based harassment on job satisfaction in police officers. An explanation for this result could be the normalization of such harassment within the police profession. In the present study, the most frequently reported form of harassment was “sexual jokes and comments”. Police officers might perceive such comments as an inherent component of police culture—an unfortunate but accepted aspect of their job that they must tolerate and manage to

cope with. Also, Herscovis and colleagues (2010) indicated that sexual harassment from external sources had no significant correlation with job satisfaction, whereas job satisfaction was associated with internal harassment. In our study, a higher proportion of reported harassment originated from external sources (citizens and criminals). This might elucidate the lack of a significant relationship between job satisfaction and sexual and gender-based harassment. Future research should delve deeper into the perceptions of police officers regarding harassment and its intricate relationship with their job satisfaction.

Methodological consideration

The use of multiple methodologies in this project helped enhance the comprehensiveness of understanding various perspectives. Moreover, due to the interdisciplinary nature of the project, the research team consisted of researchers from diverse disciplines including police work, health science, psychology, gender studies, and law. The inclusion of expertise from diverse fields contributes to a broader outlook on the sub-studies and the project as a whole. However, it is important to acknowledge the challenges of applying this approach and combining studies with different methodologies as a compilation. Balancing these interrelated aspects within a single thesis presents the challenge of addressing each dimension coherently and ensuring that they contribute to the main research objectives. Also, employing a multi-method approach, including quantitative, qualitative, and scoping review methodologies, has been both a strength and a challenge. While this approach enriches the depth of my research, it makes it difficult to synthesize these diverse methods in a way that complements each other and provides a coherent synthesis. Additionally, it has been challenging to synthesize findings from these different methodologies based on the diverse research questions, while maintaining consistency and coherence across the findings.

Furthermore, it is necessary to note that the participants in the current research were [majority] white, middle-class, cisgender Swedish police officers (no one mentioned other gender options in the questionnaire and few police officers mentioned are originally from countries other than Sweden). Regarding the concept of intersectionality, the positioning of individuals within the intersecting various factors, such as gender, social class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, and able-bodiedness, result in unique experiences. Therefore, an individual's experience cannot be categorized merely by one or two of these social factors (Collins, 2015;

Crenshaw, 1991). Although, due to the limited availability of data on other intersecting factors, I had a primary focus on gender as the main positioning factor, I acknowledge that one's experience is strongly influenced by their unique position within various intersecting categories. In future research, I would like to delve deeper into the complexities of intersectionality and explore how the intersection of various factors can shape the experiences of individuals.

In the subsequent part, I outline the quality criteria and the limitations of the studies based on three differently employed methodologies.

Scoping review study (Article I)

To ensure the quality of this study, a protocol was prepared based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis extension for Scoping Review (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018). This protocol served as the guiding plan for the study, ensuring methodological consistency and transparency. It was also registered with the Open Science Framework (OSF), a reputable platform for documenting scoping review protocols, enhancing the study's credibility and transparency. The Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework was applied to clarify and enhance each stage of the review study. This systematic framework provided a structured approach, enhancing the dependability of the study by ensuring that all key elements of the scoping review, such as data collection and synthesis, were carefully addressed.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were iteratively revised, according to the study's objectives and the available literature. This iterative process ensured that the study included the most comprehensive and relevant set of search results, to improve the credibility of the study's findings. To further enhance the reliability and comprehensiveness of the data collection process, it was conducted across nine different databases, under the guidance of an expert librarian specialized in this field.

All authors were involved in the process of data selection in this study to minimize the risk of oversight and improve the dependability of the findings, and a two-step data analysis approach was adopted. Two independent reviewers rigorously analyzed the data, and any disparities or disagreements were systematically addressed through discussion and resolution, ensuring the reliability of the results.

The review relied solely on research and articles published in English in European countries. Therefore, considering the linguistic diversity across

Europe, some potentially valuable studies and articles might be excluded during data collection. Additionally, the exclusion of grey literature presents another limitation. Although the exclusion of grey literature could enhance the quality of included studies, it may have restricted the scope of the study and limited our understanding of the problem, strategies, and services in diverse European countries.

Mixed methods/qualitative study (Article II)

Using mixed methods and the integration of qualitative and quantitative components can help the researchers verify findings across methods, elaborate the findings from one method, and broaden the scope and comprehensiveness of findings (Cresswell & Plano, 2018). Multiple forms of triangulation in this study can enhance the credibility of the study: 1) methodological triangulation by applying both quantitative and qualitative methodologies; 2) data triangulation by designing three forms of data collection; and 3) investigator triangulation by involving several researchers from various disciplines in the research team.

The methodological considerations of the quantitative component are explained in the next part ([quantitative study](#)), and this part is focused on the methodological consideration of the qualitative part of the study. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, qualitative researchers are obligated to articulate four fundamentals: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In the qualitative part of this study, to ensure the credibility of the study, we had a purposeful sampling among the 41 volunteers from the quantitative data collection phase. Seventeen interviewees with diverse characteristics in terms of gender, working area, type of police work, and work position were invited to the interview. Overall, the participants were a fair representation of police officers, and saturation was achieved with 12 individual interviews and one group interview. In order to enhance credibility, all researchers were involved in the process of data collection and all interviews were performed by two researchers (the author was present during all interviews). Also, in the process of data analysis, the transcripts were rigorously analyzed by the author and reviewed by another researcher to ensure the comprehensiveness of the data analysis and reduce the risk of overlooking any possible results.

To enhance the dependability of the study, two separate interview guides were designed for individual interviews and the group interview to cover the main themes and minimize the risk of inconsistency during the interviews. Also, a comprehensive description of the context of the study,

the participants, and the processes of data collection and data analysis was provided as a “thick description” to help readers and other researchers understand the degree to which the study might be applicable to other contexts. As Stahl and King (2020) explained, “transfer in qualitative research is not a recipe, but rather a suggestion that must itself be researched for its applicability to a new context.” (p. 26). Therefore, the transferability of the findings needs to be viewed with caution.

One of the limitations in the qualitative phase of the study was the lack of Swedish language proficiency of the author. In order to guarantee dependability in all interviews, a Swedish native speaker was always the main interviewer. The transcripts were translated into English, which could be a potential risk to the dependability of the study. To mitigate this risk, two different translators were used for the translation process. Additionally, a native Swedish speaker reviewed the transcripts in both Swedish and English to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the extracted results.

Quantitative study (Articles II, III, IV)

All the quantitative findings presented in this project are derived from a data collection conducted using a cross-sectional approach. Cross-sectional surveys are designed to assess a specific attribute within a defined population at a specific moment in time. However, it is important to acknowledge that cross-sectional studies face a significant challenge in establishing causal relationships based on the data collected within a limited timeframe and the choice of predictor and outcome variables depends on the investigators’ hypothesis (Hulley et al., 2013). The use of a cross-sectional study design in this research restricted the ability to interpret the causal relationships between sexual and gender-based harassment, work-related stress, and job satisfaction based on the data derived from the study, and the choice of the predictors and outcomes variable was influenced by the theoretical framework applied in this study.

To ensure internal validity and exclude the risk of selection bias, all police employees working in the three particularly vulnerable areas in the Stockholm region were invited to participate in the study. The response rate was 54% in general and was different in the three areas (Rinkeby 39%, Botkyrka 58%, and Södertälje 62%). Data collection for this study was initially planned to coincide with the third round of Mared data collection through an additional set of questionnaires (including the job satisfaction questionnaire and sexual and gender-based harassment questions). To avoid redundancy, we excluded sociodemographic questions that were

already part of the Mareld questionnaire set. Due to the limitations posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mareld research team decided to reschedule data collection, and the data collection of this study was conducted one month after the Mareld data collection. However, since both sets of questionnaires contained common sociodemographic questions, and the participants in each data collection were not exactly the same, there were challenges in matching each questionnaire with the sociodemographic information from the Mareld questionnaire. Consequently, the limited number of participants, especially female officers, restricted the analysis and comparison of the data (e.g., based on the types of work as civilian employees and police officers, or different types of harassment). Also, this problem constrained our ability to consider the intersectionality of various factors that could potentially influence the outcomes of the study.

To ensure reliability, it is essential to use valid and reliable research instruments. The Police Stress Identification Questionnaire is a standard questionnaire designed and validated for the Swedish police context. The Job Descriptive Index is a popular valid and reliable instrument for measuring job satisfaction. The questionnaire has not been validated in Sweden. The process of translation to Swedish was performed in this study with permission of the JDI office at Bowling Green State University. The questionnaire on sexual and gender-based harassment is designed by the research team. The questionnaire was not a standard questionnaire which could be a source of bias in data collection. To improve reliability, the questionnaire was tested in a pilot study and revised based on the results and the experts' suggestions. Moreover, the measurement of gender-based and sexual harassment relied solely on the reported incidents experienced by the participants, making it impossible to assess the severity of the experience for the respondents. Furthermore, our analysis focused on the presence of harassment (whether participants experienced it or not) without evaluating the frequency of these occurrences. As a result, the findings do not distinguish between a single incident of harassment and instances that might have happened repeatedly.

Applying the recently developed stress questionnaire, as well as the inclusion of researcher-designed questions on sexual and gender-based harassment, made comparing the outcomes of this project with other relevant studies challenging.

There is a limitation in terms of the generalization of the study. The participants of the survey are not representative of all police officers in

Sweden or other European countries. Varied work environments, such as those characterized by differing levels of risk, urban or rural settings, and differences in management style, organizational policies, and procedures, might potentially influence outcomes. As a result, these findings may not be applicable or generalizable to other groups of police officers operating in different regions.

Thesis implications

Despite the limitations of the thesis, the current project could contribute to the police research field and the Swedish police authority in improving the police work environment. The implications for research and practice are outlined below.

Research implications

The findings of the quantitative and qualitative phases in the Swedish context, along with the overall findings from the scoping review on sexual and gender-based harassment in European countries, present several compelling implications for future studies on sexual and gender-based harassment, work stress, and job satisfaction in police work. These implications can contribute to a deeper understanding of these issues and guide future research endeavors, particularly in Sweden and in the broader European context².

Additional studies, especially those applying an intersectional perspective, considering multiple factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, type of police work, and work area simultaneously in larger and more representative samples of police employees are recommended. This approach can provide a more nuanced understanding of how these intersecting factors contribute to the work environment in terms of stress, harassment experiences, and job satisfaction. The current study was focused on police officers in PVAs in the Stockholm police region. Comparative studies, including various vulnerable areas and comparing them with invulnerable areas, can present valuable insights into the differences and similarities of work-related factors in these areas.

As mentioned earlier, some studies applied single-item questionnaires to measure concepts (e.g., sexual and gender-based harassment and job satisfaction) that would adversely affect the reliability of studies and limit the comparison of the results obtained from other studies. Therefore, it is suggested to employ multi-question measurements in research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the concepts—both separately and in relation to other work-related factors.

² More research implications in the field of sexual and gender-based harassment in European countries are available in the first article.

Additional investigations into the relationship between gender-based and sexual harassment and police officers' job satisfaction could provide valuable insights into this relationship. Factors such as the source and severity of harassment, as well as the coping strategies to deal with these stressors, could be crucial in gaining a better understanding of the underlying mechanism. Also, qualitative studies on how police officers define and perceive job satisfaction in policing can help us understand the perceptions of job satisfaction and relevant factors in the context of police work.

As with other study concepts, a clear definition and a clear theoretical base of sexual and gender-based harassment can guide researchers to formulate hypotheses, interpret their findings, and design more rigorous studies. Therefore, it is suggested that we apply a clear definition and theoretical foundation when studying sexual and gender-based harassment, especially in quantitative studies. Furthermore, although the core drivers of gender-based harassment and sexual harassment often overlap, assessing gender-based harassment as a concept that is independent and distinct from sexual harassment can help us distinguish between different forms of harassment and their effects. Considering the different mechanisms and consequences of sexual and gender-based harassment from various sources of harassment (insiders and outsiders), we strongly recommend other researchers incorporate the source of harassment into their research.

Further qualitative studies on the perceptions of police officers, police managers, and policymakers in police authority on sexual and gender-based harassment are needed to better understand what they perceive as the problem at individual and decision-making levels within police organizations.

Addressing these research implications would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between sexual and gender-based harassment, work-related stress, and job satisfaction within the police force, ultimately leading to more research-based evidence to improve the policies and interventions aimed at enhancing the police work environment for police officers.

Practical implications

The findings of this research could have important implications for policymakers and police authorities to improve the working conditions for

police officers. In light of these findings, there is a need to address sexual and gender-based harassment as a persistent critical issue within the police work environment, and as a significant work-related stressor.

Considering the significant adverse effect of organizational stress on the job satisfaction of police officers, police authorities need to pay more attention to addressing organizational sources of stress—which are fortunately more controllable—to improve working conditions and enhance job satisfaction in police officers. Furthermore, as police officers reported the lowest satisfaction levels in “opportunities for promotion” and “pay”, it is crucial for police authorities to reassess and refine these aspects of police work by clarifying the process of work promotion, ensuring equitable opportunities for promotion, and attempting to provide better salary and fair compensation packages for all police officers.

Although the police organization experienced significant changes over recent decades to provide a more gender-equal and inclusive workplace environment, the findings of this thesis highlighted the organizational factors that strengthen the occurrence of harassment and make it challenging to tackle such harassment. Cultural issues, such as toxic jargon and the culture of silence, as well as the lack of training and competence at the managerial level to address such harassment, underscore the necessity for continuous organizational efforts in these areas. Beyond the annual statistics, there should be a comprehensive assessment of policies in terms of their comprehensiveness, clarity, implications, and real-world impact.

Besides the organizational implication, in light of our experiences during interviews with police officers regarding sexual and gender-based harassment in the police work environment, sharing the findings of this research, especially those related to sexual and gender-based harassment, could offer police officers valuable insights into their work environment. These insights could shed light on the concealed aspects of their workplace and motivate them to take an active role in providing a more equitable and inclusive work environment. By sharing our research findings, we aim to empower police officers to contribute to a more inclusive and respectful workplace culture.

Concluding discussion

This study aimed to assess sexual and gender-based harassment, work stress, and job satisfaction in police work. The research sought to assess these factors and their associations through a gender lens and shed light on these critical issues within the police work environment.

One of the main foci of this study was gender-based and sexual harassment in the police work environment. While both male and female officers reported experiencing sexual and gender-based harassment, female officers stated a statistically higher percentage of gender-based harassment compared to male officers, which indicated the persistence of gendered values and norms in police work where a woman is still considered a token figure that does not comply with the masculine principles of police work and could be degraded and humiliated by sexist comments, being ignored, and through persistent questioning of their capabilities. Also, quantitative findings surprisingly showed no gender difference in experiencing sexual harassment among police officers, and male officers even reported a slightly higher percentage of sexual harassment directed by their colleagues, who were mainly men. Furthermore, both male and female officers reported similar percentages of having experienced sexual harassment. Sexual jokes from colleagues and supervisors were reported as an important manifestation of sexual harassment in the police workplace. This behavior is linked to a prevailing toxic jargon among police officers that is rooted in the masculine norms and values embedded within police organizations. As this jargon is more common and harsh among male police officers, it could be perceived more frequently by male officers. From a feminist perspective, in the competitive environment of police work, some male officers employ sexual harassment as a tool to express their power and dominance in a hegemonic way over other male and female police officers. Also, some female officers can easily engage in sexist or sexual jargon within their work group as a way of conforming to the privileged group and dominant culture. When female officers use such language, it may be perceived as acceptable language by their colleagues, perpetuating the problematic culture, and making it challenging to address the issue.

Due to the evolution of police culture during recent decades, there is not complete silence about sexual and gender-based harassment, but the results revealed that the culture of silence is still a significant barrier in raising and addressing such harassment, which leads to harassment remaining a persistent issue in police work. Additionally, this study

emphasized the importance of managers and their abilities to address sexual and gender-based harassment. It underscores the need for training and support for police managers in navigating these issues within their organization.

The results on work stress showed that both male and female police officers identified “impact on significant others stress” and “operational stress” as the most stressful subscales of work-related stress. However, female officers reported higher levels of stress in these subscales compared to their male counterparts. This gender difference underscores the higher level of work pressure and challenges that women officers face during police interventions and critical situations where they feel a need to prove their competence and decisiveness to their male counterparts, criminals, and the public. Also, the study revealed the association between experiencing sexual harassment and higher stress in “self-image stress”, “operational stress”, and “confrontation with death stress” subscales. The findings show how using sexual harassment as a demeaning weapon can specifically target the self-image of police officers, and heighten stress during police interventions and encounters with dangerous situations.

Examining job satisfaction among police officers showed that officers generally felt satisfied with “people on their present job”. However, dissatisfaction was prevalent in areas such as “opportunities for promotion” and “pay”. There was no statistically significant gender gap in job satisfaction, which could be explained based on the more generally gender-equal working conditions in Sweden and in the Swedish police force. The results highlighted the negative role of everyday organizational stress on police officers’ job satisfaction. Additionally, a notable finding revealed that despite higher work-related stress, police patrol officers reported greater job satisfaction in various aspects compared to their counterparts working as internal service officers. This could be attributed to the positive role of a variety of responsibilities for patrol officers and the feeling that being a patrol officer is real police work. Surprisingly, there was no significant association between sexual and gender-based harassment and various aspects of job satisfaction. Sexual and gendered-based harassment are perceived as stressful by police officers, however, regarding the normalization of these harassments, police officers, during the cognitive appraisal process, perceive sexual comments and jokes—mostly perpetrated by outsiders—as an unfortunate part of their work environment which should be accepted and tolerated in their everyday work. However, more studies need to confirm these results and explore possible underlying processes.

The qualitative and quantitative findings of this thesis in the context of Swedish police work and the broader European context revealed that although substantial changes in work culture have occurred during recent decades, the issue of sexual and gender-based harassment remains persistent. This finding underscores the need for more attention to sexual and gender-based harassment as detrimental phenomena in the police work environment, and to the underlying organizational (cultural and managerial) mechanisms related to such harassment. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of recognizing harassment as a significant stressor for police officers, which can negatively affect both individual officers and police organizations.

In conclusion, this exploration highlights the persistent challenges faced within police work environments regarding sexual and gender-based harassment, work-related stress, and job satisfaction. The findings underscore the need for continuous revision and change in organizational culture and policies toward these critical issues. The negative impacts of organizational stress urge the implementation of interventions to mitigate the controllable stressors and the detrimental effects on officers' mental health and job satisfaction. Moreover, addressing sexual and gender-based harassment requires a concerted, unified effort to challenge the normalization of such behaviors, break the prevailing silence, and provide support to those affected. This necessitates organizational changes and proactive measures, empowering both managers and officers to collaboratively create a workplace founded on respect, equality, and inclusivity. The implications drawn from this thesis offer the potential to create a safer and more fulfilling workplace that prioritizes the overall well-being of each police officer.

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