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Policing in Finland, Procedural Justice or Societal Norm?

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The Nordic countries have an image of, among other things, cleanliness, organisation and safety.

The Finnish police. As with the other Nordic policing organisations, appear to conduct their duties in a calm and non-confrontational way.

Currently the Finnish police serve a population of just over five million people with around 7500 sworn officers.

In order to discover to what extent the popular image corresponds to reality, I conducted a small scale study of the attitudes and values of individuals involved in policing in Finland.

As I would be examining how policing professionals think about their work, I decided that qualitative data collection would be to most productive approach.

To that end, I invited policing professionals in the greater Helsinki area to take part in one of three focus groups.

Four Focus Groups

Forensic
Laboratory
Personnel

Administrative
Personnel

Police
Investigators

Crime Scene
Examiners

Points of interest

- What is a good result?
- Do all members of the criminal investigation process have the same understanding of what a good result is?
- Possible weak links
- Are we/can we all pull in the same direction?
- Motivation (*justice/punishment of offender...*)
- Justice (*apprehension of offender/imprisonment of offender/restorative process*)
- Results (*is there a point where effort outweighs possible results*)

Forensic
Laboratory
Personnel

Administrative
Personnel

Impartiality
and
Motivation

Police
Investigators

Crime Scene
Examiners

This was a qualitative study of a small sample, so findings are not generalisable

There may have been issues with the group dynamics, or possibly participants saying what they think is expected of them.

However, issues related to impartiality and motivation were so prevalent that they were unlikely to be simply coincidence. But they seemed too good to be true.

The World Economic Forum
(2016)

The most independent judicial system in
the world

European Commission
Eurostat (2017)

The most trusted police in Europe

POLAMK Barometric
Survey (2018)

95% Public satisfaction with the police

But...

All of this good stuff neglected to take into account the environment in which the Finnish police are operating.

Finland became an independent nation in 1917

Finland has a population of just over 5 Million people

Finland's industrialisation began, in earnest, after WWII

Finland has been culturally and linguistically isolated until very recently

Finland has a strong national identity

Finnish society gives the appearance of being very homogeneous

Questions to be answered in relation to this study

Is there a degree of ethnocentrism?

Are the Finnish police the victims or benefactors of restricted resources?

Is there procedural justice in Finland?

If so, is it by design or a fortunate accident?

Does it really matter?

Thank you for listening

Any questions?

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