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Stevnsborg, Henrik; Finstad, Liv

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Reflections on a Journal

Liv Finstad and Henrik Stevnsborg

henrik.stevnsborg@jur.ku.dk

We have been invited to assess whether the Journal *Nordisk Politiforskning* (today: *Nordic Journal of Studies in Policing*) through its existence 2014–2019 has met its four specific goals:

- a. To present and publish new knowledge and research in the field of police research, police science and policing in the Nordic countries.
- b. To contribute to the development of the field of police research, as well as the spread of relevant research within academia, among practitioners, managers, the education system, the authorities and the media.
- c. To play an independent critical role in the subject development.
- d. To strengthen the academic quality of the academic field, as well as publish articles by practitioners who conduct research in their own field.

We have therefore read (or re-read) all the contributions to all the 12 published issues of the Journal. Without commenting on the individual contributions, we should like to note that a fine balance has been struck between the open issues with a mixed content and the thematic issues.

By means of the open issues, the editors have succeeded in presenting a police research which bears evidence to the fact that “Police Research Methods need not be limited to stories from ethnographers and field research struggling to get access, and the critical insider/outsider positions” (Editorial 2018:2). Even if sociologically tinted police research has been dominating, the journal has opened up for articles within the field of police history and police law, as well. The open issues of the Journal thus serve as an important channel for the multifarious Nordic police research, which does not fit into a pre-defined thematic context.

In the thematic issues, focus has been on the following themes: recruiting police officers, police culture, policing in high-tech societies, police reforms, and methods in police research. The themes are all apt and must without discussion, be considered relevant to anybody with even the slightest interest in police and policing. As to content, the editors have succeeded in turning these thematic issues into rather harmonious products, which must have been quite a task!

If, therefore, the overall question is whether the Journal has met its four specific goals, the answer is yes. We have, however, some comments on some of the goals.

The authors of the 47 scientific articles, which have been published in the Journal between 2014 and 2019, are resident in the following countries:

- Norway: 21 articles
- Sweden: 14 articles
- Denmark: 7 articles
- United Kingdom: 3 articles
- Finland: 1 article
- Germany: 1 article

At a first glance, this distribution seems to reflect the location of the strong police research environments in the Nordic countries. This is, however, probably neither the sole, nor the best explanation of the uneven distribution of authors, but rather a reminder to the editors that efforts should be made in order to make the Journal more truly Nordic.

As of 1 January 2020, the Journal started to accept contributions in English only (albeit with an abstract in the authors' native Nordic language). Maybe this change in language will make the Journal more attractive to Finnish police researchers, who today obviously prefer other channels of publication than the Journal. The Journal is not very well known outside the Police University College, a fact which faces the Finnish editor with quite a challenge. In regard to Iceland, the situation is even more troublesome. Hitherto, no Icelandic articles have been published in the Journal. To redress this defect, maybe Iceland ought to be represented on the editorial board.

Another imbalance should also be noted, namely the gender-imbalance among the authors. 46 authors are men, while 24 authors are women (34 percent). It is highly unlikely that these numbers reflect the actual distribution of gender between police researchers in the Nordic countries. "Outreaching" editors are therefore needed in this case, too. Excellent female researchers with intriguing subjects exist "out there". They should be encouraged to publish in the *Nordic Journal of Studies in Policing*. A better gender balance contributes to strengthen the relevance as well as the quality of an enterprise, in general. We take for granted that this of course applies to a journal, too.

The field of police research is developed, when articles are commented upon and discussed in subsequent issues of the Journal. Scientific dialogue invigorates the role of a journal as an important channel of publication, no matter whether the comments are positive or negative. An excellent example of this was seen in the debate on method in connection with research on the background of police students (2015:1, 2015:2 and 2016:2). Here, the Journal proved its potency as a top-level scientific debating forum. On this background, the editors may consider whether an article should be selected from each issue and an "opponent" be asked to write a succinct text with a view to the development of the field of police research, based on the selected article. The "opponent" might be a practitioner, who could discuss the practical relevance and importance of the new insights of the research presented in the article.

The above comments are reflections meant for the editors' further consideration. Our only criticism is aimed at the review section of the Journal. The reviewed books are all relevant from a police research angle, and the reviews are generally informative, but it seems as if the books are chosen for review at random, and some issues feature no reviews at all. It is difficult (if not impossible) to distinguish a clear line in the review section. It is fine to review books published in non-Nordic countries, but since the primary goal of the Journal is to "present and publish new knowledge and research in the field of police research, police

science and policing in the Nordic countries”, we wish for more, and systematic, reviews of Nordic publications.

Two more final wishes: first, that the thematic issue on Police and Artificial Intelligence, which was announced in 2019:1, is made a reality, and, second, that the editors must have all the best of luck in their future work with the *Nordic Journal of Studies in Policing*.