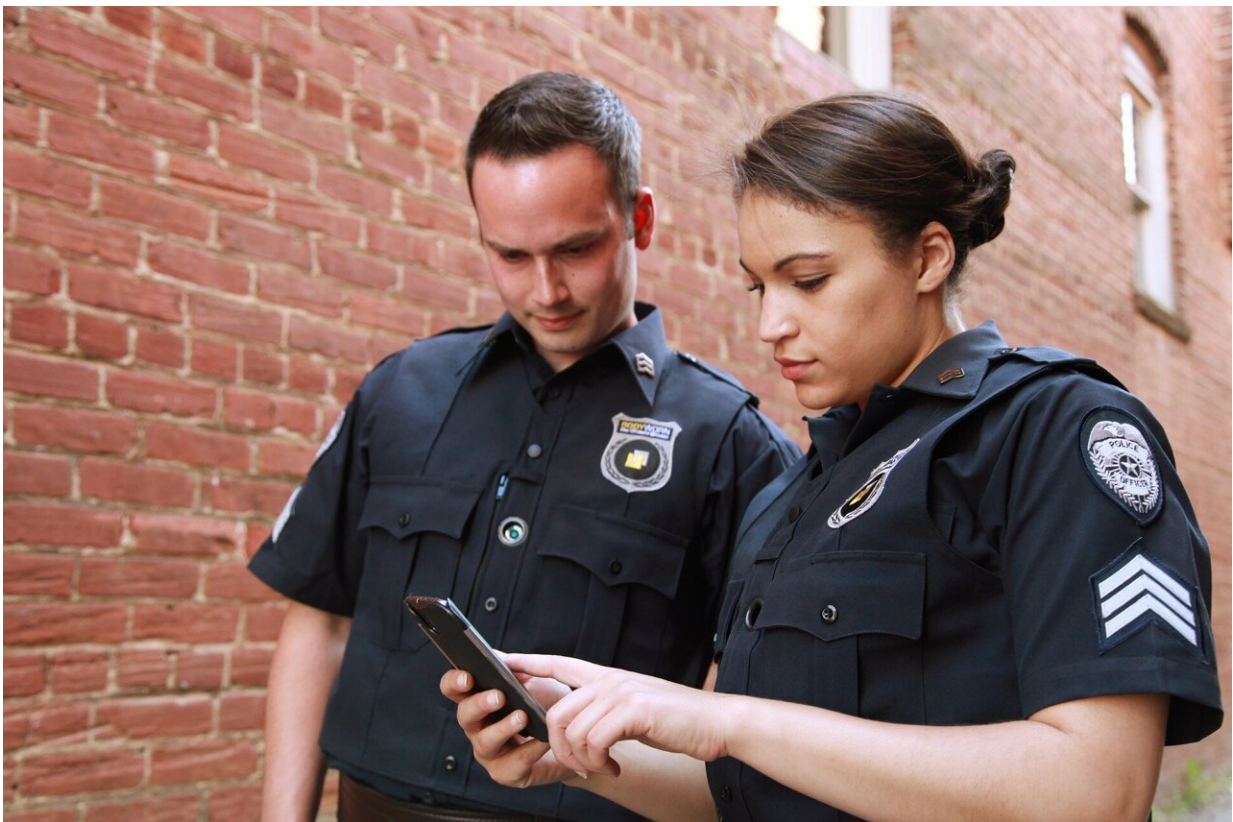


Thesis finds that recruitment of Swedish operational police officers needs to be broadened

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Can scientific methods be used to identify who is best suited for physically and mentally demanding missions? [In his doctoral thesis](#),

Peter Tedeholm explores the individual characteristics of Swedish operational police officers.

Peter Tedeholm has worked for 20 years as a [police officer](#) in the National Task Force and has a background in elite sports. Today, he is a special advisor for selection and performance development programs within the Police's National Operations Department (NOA). In September 2023, he defended his thesis that focuses on how the police can improve their selection programs.

"The [recruitment process](#) is critical. It all starts with selecting the right person, despite the importance of education and training," says Peter Tedeholm, who holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology, Karolinska Institutet.

Tedeholm has validated current selection processes by examining the personality, cognitive and physical abilities of operational police officers, with a particular focus on characteristics that are difficult to develop after the age of 25.

"Every human being is unique. We have distinct abilities and [personality traits](#) in addition to our knowledge and to some extent our skills, which determine suitability for [specific tasks](#)," he says.

To qualify for the National Task Force, candidates must have the right background and perform well on cognitive and physical ability tests and personality assessments. The selection process ends with a work test that is both physically and mentally demanding.

Requirements for an operational police force

Qualities such as emotional stability, being goal-oriented and being a team player are important. Perseverance, i.e. not giving up, is also highly

valued. In addition, very good physical abilities, especially high oxygen uptake, are needed to cope with strenuous tasks while maintaining focus. Good cognitive abilities are also required to solve complex tasks, stressful situations and to acquire knowledge quickly.

Peter Tedeholm has also identified several of these desirable characteristics in today's National Response Force.

"In addition to the characteristics, my thesis demonstrates the need for scientifically based job analysis for a more efficient selection process, not only for the National Task Force but for the entire police [force](#)," says Peter Tedeholm.

Changing recruitment

He emphasizes the importance of defining the different roles of the police as investigators, patrolling police, traffic police, negotiators, cyber police, youth and child investigators, spotters, response police, etc. to optimize recruitment accordingly. Today, there is one and the same selection path for everyone who wants to become a police officer.

According to Peter Tedeholm, we can consider whether the police profession is one profession or a large variety of several professional roles.

"Several recruitment profiles are likely to be needed to meet future needs. Without job analysis, we risk putting the wrong person in the wrong place, which is ineffective in achieving the overall goal of the police, i.e. to fight crime and make our country safe and secure. Going forward, we need to change how we recruit with two goals in mind: more police officers and the right individuals in the right place," says Peter Tedeholm.

Provided by Karolinska Institutet

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