# The portrayal of Crime

## Printed news media's representation of crime in Malmö

Linn Nilsson

Degree Project in Criminology
Master 30 Credits Two-year master
Criminology
August 2021

Malmö University
Faculty of Health and Society
205 06 Malmö

# The portrayal of Crime

## Printed news media's representation of crime in Malmö

Linn Nilsson

Nilsson, L. The portrayal of Crime. Printed news media's representation of crime in Malmö. *Degree project in Criminology 30 Credits.* Malmö University: Faculty of Health and Society, Department of Criminology, 2021.

In today's modern society we are highly exposed to different media in our everyday life, and individuals may spend a large part of their time taking part in media debates, news and other information shared on different media channels. Through this, news media have become an influential factor for how individuals in today's society perceive and construct reality, and consequently the public's perception of crime. This critical analysis strives to elucidate how crime in Malmö is presented in Swedish newspapers. This report is centered on which discourses emerge throughout the chosen empirical material, how different crime types are presented and how victims and perpetrators are constructed in this material. By studying how Malmö is presented through a commonly used news media source, it is possible to uncover how collective understandings of crime are created and affirmed, which is essential in order to be able to influence this established (but arguably somewhat radical) image. Newspapers' presentation of Malmö differs from the description of other major cities in Sweden, and Malmö is often illustrated as a dangerous or unsafe city with high crime rates. The perception of crime in Malmö given through the official statistics are overshadowed by news media's accentuation of violent and lethal crime. A skewed division of crime reporting, may therefore be an important factor for the public's perception of crime in Malmö. Crimes are depicted as an effect of larger societal problems and an integral part of everyday life. Few articles dispute the established image of Malmö as dangerous, and the few who do only briefly highlight this to an extremely limited extent, resulting in the preservation and reproduction of the majority's presentation of Malmö as a dangerous or unsecure city.

*Keywords*: crime, critical discourse analysis, Malmö, media, social construction.
*Total amount of words*: 8961

# Table of content


**INTRODUCTION** **4**
- Aim 5
- Disposition 5

**CONTEXT** **6**
- Social construction of media 6
- The presentation of crime in media - the public's fascination with crime news 7
- The prevalence of crime news and the law of opposites 7

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK** **9**
- Social construction and discourse 9
- Critical discourse analysis 9
- Central concepts within critical discourse analysis 11

**METHODOLOGY** **12**
- Material 12
- Method and procedure 13
- Data analysis 13
- Ethical considerations 15

**RESULT AND ANALYSIS** **16**
- Text 16
- Description or/and unfolding of events 16
- Description of victim/s 16
- Description of perpetrator/s 17
- Organized crime/gang criminality 17
- Political discussion and a call for change 18
- Discursive practice 18
- Social practice 19

**DISCUSSION** **22**
- Limitations 23

**CONCLUSION** **24**

**REFERENCES** **25**
- Referenced newspaper articles from the material 29

**APPENDIX** **30**
- Appendix 1 30
- Appendix 2 35

# INTRODUCTION

Discourses about crime are present in all human societies, and have engaged the attention of scholars in all civilizations throughout the eras. The discourses about crime are relative and carry parts of both legal and social dimensions as it should be highlighted that not all social deviances constitute a criminal act (Jimoh et al., 2007). As stated by Jimoh et al. (2007:65), ”crime is seen as violation of the socio-cultural mores and norms of a group which is frowned upon and which attracts sanctions from other members of the group”. Crime, as a social phenomenon, is increasing and has consequently become a concern, not only among the policy makers where authorities' concern of crime have been observed through for instance increased funding to the police and the implementation of different crime control measures, but also among the public (Jimoh et al., 2007).

The public is highly exposed to information through different types of media in today's modern society (Blomberg, Kroll et al, 2004), and crime is a prominent part of news presented to the public (Jimoh et al 2007). No matter the localisation or time of the event (Jimoh et al 2007). Media has gained an increased influence through this exposure, and plays a large part of how individuals in today's society perceive and construct their reality and various social phenomena (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Heber, 2007). It is important to critically review how crime is reported in the news, as the way news media portray events has a significant role in our understanding of crime and criminal acts in society (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). As stated by Kellner (1995:24), the image media presents to the public can influence and “shape our view of the world and our deepest values; what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil”.

This report strives to elucidate the portrayal of crime in news media in Swedish, specifically Swedish newspapers, in order to examine how crime is characterized in this empirical material. Specifically, through the use of Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis, hereinafter also referred through the abbreviation *CDA*, this report examines the language Swedish newspapers have used in their presentation of crime in relation to Malmö. By studying how Malmö is presented through a commonly used news media source, it is possible to uncover how collective understandings of crime are created and affirmed, which is essential in order to be able to influence this established (but arguably somewhat radical) image. In 2019, approximately 1.55 million crimes were reported in Sweden to the appropriate authorities; through either the police, customs or prosecutors (BRÅ:2019b). 53 808 crimes (4 589 registered under September) were reported in Malmö, of which 3 935 (292 registered under September) were offences against life and health (BRÅ:2021). Media have earlier referred to Malmö as Sweden’s Chicago, which highlights the image of a dangerous city (Schclarek Mulinari, 2017). According to many media descriptions, Malmö is perceived by the public to be in a serious situation, with high crime rates, which needs to be defended from continuous criminal activity (often referring to shootings and gangs) (Schclarek Mulinari, 2015). According Ekström et al. (2012), it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions about which city in Sweden have the highest crime rates due to the number of factors[1] which needs to be considered, but there are indicators which indicate Malmö, in comparison with Stockholm and Gothenburg, have the highest level of criminality. In addition, the same report also concluded that Malmö has the highest level of fear of being victimized and lowest level of

[1]Examples of factors indicated are, for instance, differences which can occur depending on the used data source and selected timeframe (Ekström et al. 2012).

trust for judiciary among its inhabitants, in comparison with Stockholm and Gothenburg (Ekström et al. 2012).

## Aim

The aim of this report is to examine how crime in Malmö has been presented in printed news articles during september 2019 in Swedish newspapers. Specifically, this critical analysis strives to elucidate how crimes conducted in Malmö are depicted in Swedish newspapers, and discusses some possible effects of this presentation. This through the following research questions:

- What discourses emerge throughout the chosen empirical material?
- How are perpetrators and crime victims constructed through their presentation in this media?
- How does the presentation differ between crime types, and are any specific crimes more reported than others?

## Disposition

This report has started with an introduction followed by the aim and research questions. The next chapter highlights contextual background and key concepts. The following chapter will be centered on the theoretical framework, further defining the interpretation of theoretical structure and key concepts. Next chapter brings up the methodology, highlighting material, method, procedure and structuring of data analysis. This chapter will also include an introduction of the ethical considerations. The following chapter presents the analysis and result of this report, defining the findings of the conducted analysis based on the data material. Lastly, this report will end with a discussion, limitations and conclusion.

# CONTEXT

## Social construction of media

Berger and Luckmann (1998) argue that reality is socially constructed. Individuals' perspectives and knowledge are constructed by society, and this constructed reality drives and influences individuals' behaviours. Reality is furthermore internalized through socialization, and language is a key mechanism of internalization (Berger & Luckmann, 1998; Burr, 2003). In today's modern society we are highly exposed to different media in our everyday life, and individuals may spend a large part of their time taking part in media debates, news and other information shared on different media channels (Blomberg, Kroll et al, 2004). Medias has consequently gained an increased influence and shown to play a large part of how individuals in today's society perceive and construct their reality and various social phenomena. Media has also shown to be an efficient way for different actors and institutions to disseminate not only information, but also, in many cases dominant, values to a large audience of the public (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Heber, 2007; Thornborrow, 2004). The written language articulated through media can therefore not only highlight, but also lead to creation of thoughts and behaviours, as it is often through media that individuals of the public receive knowledge about ongoing actions around the world and our own society (Blomberg, Kroll et al, 2004; Heber, 2007; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). Media have also been recognized as an important player in the public's definition of risk (Beck, 1992).

Language is of high importance, when constructing readers' perception of both reality and crime (Thornborrow, 2004; Bourdieu, 1998). Relating this to the social construction of reality, language can be seen as both a reflection and a deflection of reality and it can both include and omit information (Loge, 2005). Through this can language used in newspapers, as information is chosen to be included or omitted, influence the public's perception of, for instance, crime and criminality (Loge, 2005). Contextual features, and consequently tone of an article, is considered to be very likely to influence the readers perceptions, more so than other factors. For example, the use of additional sources in news reports. Secondary or additional sources are often pursued by journalists in order to maintain, or indicate, a level of objectivity. In this endeavor journalists have shown preference to seek out sources which may represent different sides of a specific case or particular issues (Martins et al., 2013).

News media is not unbiased, as it reflects how journalists choses to describe and convey societal problems, phenomena and measures (Blomberg, Kroll et al, 2004). Boudana (2011) argues that a journalist is essentially an author, and journalist objectivism can not be used as a synonym for neutrality or detachment. It is possible that news media may show some favor towards certains values, ways of thought or groups over others, and eventual bias may therefore not be entirely random, as values and ways of thought can be spread or promoted through its exposure in media could make these more dominant. Media may also present the ideological perspective of holders of power in society to a greater extent than others (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). One example of this could be police use of news media, which on occasion have been utilized to disseminate information to the public. Not only in order to achieve a particular objective, but also in an effort to increase the legitimacy of the police in society (Rostami, 2016).

## The presentation of crime in media - the public's fascination with crime news

Crime is a prominent part of the news presented to the public by media, no matter localisation or time of the event (Jimoh et al., 2007). In order to rationalize why crime features so prominently in news reports, Wykes (2001) states that ”crime news mobilises the extremes of value judgements: it is about good and bad, innocent and guilty, heroes and villains, victims and abusers. It is the site of our national conscience and moral codes” (Wykes, 2001:1). News reports, and mass media overall in accordance to Bourdieu (1998), may consequently, instead of replicating reality, create a distorted view of reality among the consumers of the public.

Crime news fascinates, or as stated in Jimoh et al (2007) “crime and violence make news reports juicy”, the public and consequently these stories sell well (Jimoh et al 2007, p. 64). Media operators, and by extension the media, may choose to feature crime and violence more prominently in order to make higher profit (Jimoh et al., 2007; Bourdieu, 1998). Media operators depend on support from the general public, in the role of consumers, in order to finance their production. A newspaper, for instance, can consequently not continue their production without any readers or any advertisers (Strömbäck, 2009). Pollak and Kubrin (2007) states that it is important to acknowledge potential biases in constructing and reporting, since “all news, no matter the source, has constructed newsworthy quality” (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007:59). There are, afterall, reasons why one event is selected to be covered in the news and another is not. If an event can be considered to disrupt expectations or can be considered a deviant occurrence, which is especially notedly characteristic of news reports on crime, it is often considered to be of a higher news value (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007).

## The prevalence of crime news and the law of opposites

Regardless of intent, there are some general ways news media decide to portray crime. Decisions which, as earlier mentioned, may create a distorted view of reality among the public, which in many ways may differ from the real world (Bourdieu, 1998; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Jimoh et al., 2007). Since media are a large part of how individuals in today's society perceive and construct their reality, and their opinion of the world around them, it could be asserted that individuals also construct their opinion of the crime situation in society from the information they receive, and interpret, from media (Jimoh et al., 2007). Media can be stated to be among the most influential sources of information used by the public to develop opinions about crime (Jimoh et al., 2007; Chermak, 1995).

But what crimes are considered to be newsworthy by the media? According to Jewkes (2004), there are several values which make crime newsworthy, for instance level of predictability of the crime, likelihood of consumers of media encountering a similar situation or be exposed to similar victimization, if offender or victim has a high profile in society, if young individuals are involved, level of violence or if the crime has an sexual aspect to it, among others. Jewkes (2015) specifies that new values affect likelihood of an event being reported, and the extent an event contains these values influences the events chances of being reported by media, and containing news values, is not a guarantee or a definite requirement for publication. It should also be acknowledged that news values can change over time (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). Medias preoccupation with crime news is however, often centered around crimes involving sex, violence, women and children, in diffrent combinations, as these cases often generates higher audience ratings and profit (Jewkes, 2015). Especially in cases where perpetrators or victims of serious crimes are women and/or children, as these crimes are more uncommon and therefore carry a higher news value (Jewkes, 2004; Jewkes,

2015), even if women are more likely to have a victim role in relation to violent crime (Pollack, 2001).

Interpersonal crimes, especially those of violent or sexual nature, have been found to be consistently over-reported in comparison to the official statistics of reported crimes (Jewkes, 2004). Chermak (1995:22) states that news media disorts “official knowledge of crime by overemphasizing violent crime”, and cases of rape, robbery and murder is therefore more reported than, for instance, shoplifting or motor vehicle thef. Reiner et al. (2003), refer to this distinction between portrayal, and representation, of crime in media in comparison to the official crime statistics, as the law of opposites. Where the characteristics of crime, criminals and victims portrayed by media differ, or can even be considered to be the polar opposite, to crime patterns suggested by official crime statistics (Reiner et al., 2003). Nowhere is the law of opposites more applicable in our modern society, than media's reporting of crime (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). While official crime statistics indicate a much higher degree of nonviolent crimes, such as shoplifting, than crimes of a violent character, news media reports suggest the opposite (Chermak, 1995), as about two thirds of crime news reported by media is centered on crimes of a violent or sexual nature (Reiner et al., 2003). Even if these crimes only represent less than 10% of the recorded crimes in the official statistics (Reiner et al., 2003). It is important to note that this centered portrayal of crime, especially acts committed against vulnerable individuals in society, may have a dual outcome (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). While these crime reports may be more pragmatic and economically rewarding, it may also raise public concerns for these crimes and invoke “greater public mandate for increasingly punitive forms of justice” (Jewkes, 2004:68). For instance through the public's calls for changes in the criminal justice system (Jewkes, 2004).

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

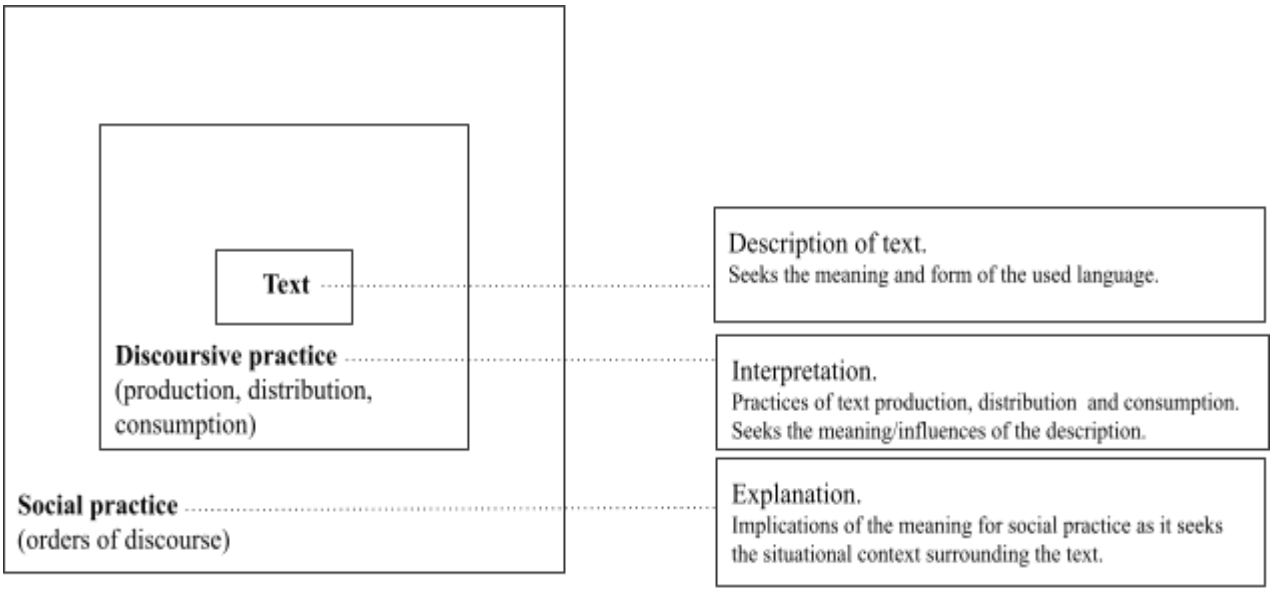
## Social construction and discourse

As earlier stated, according to social constructivism reality is socially constructed. Reality can, as individuals' perspectives and knowledge is constructed through social interaction, be constructed in many different ways and can differ between different people, cultures and societies (Berger & Luckmann, 1998). Language is a key mechanism of internalization and regarded as an important part of the social constructivist perspective, even if it should be acknowledged that language does not reflect an objective truth (Berger & Luckmann, 1998; Burr, 2003). Language is not objective, transparent or value-neutral, and should not be regarded as such as language is encoded with the power to shape and create reality (Chamberlain, 2013).

Discourse is a concept used by a variety of different disciplines, and interpretations differ (Fairclough, 1995b). This report will derive from Faircloughs (2012:458) interpretation of discourse, which states that “discourses include representations of how things are” and “how things might or could or should be”. Discourse is consequently a relational view of language, where language is viewed as a part of the social process which further relates to other parts (Fairclough, 2015) representing aspects of the world (Fairclough, 2003). In this work the language is  centered on the written rather than the spoken language, since the empirical material consists of texts. Referring to use of language as a way of examining discourse, implies that language will be viewed as a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1995b: Fairclough, 1995a).

### *Critical discourse analysis*

There are several interdisciplinary approaches within discourse analysis, which commonly strive to explore discourses, even if there are different perspectives in what discourses are or how these should be analyzed (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000; Bergström & Boréus, 2005). Regardless of direction, discourse analysis is based on a social constructivism assumption, where language does not directly reflect reality but rather helps shape it (Bergström & Boréus, 2005). This report will derive from CDA, or more accurately the theoretical and analytical frame-work developed by Fairclough, as the contemporary field of CDA is quite diverse (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000).




*(Figure 1)* *(Figure 2)*

*Figure 1:* representation of Fairclough's three-dimensional model (Fairclough, 1992:73)
*Figure 2:* description of Fairclough's three-dimensions (Fairclough, 1995).

CDA is often used to examine the relationship between social structures and discourses. CDA consists of three interrelated processes of analysis (the object of analysis, the means of which the object of interest is produced/received and the socio-historical conditions), which are analysed through a three interrelated dimensional model, shown above in figure 1, and constitutes as the analytical framework for CDA (Fairclough, 1995b). All three dimensions are touched upon in a communicative event (Fairclough, 1992). According to Fairclough (1995), the first dimension highlights the meaning and form of language, which in this report will be in the form of written language. The second dimension focuses on practices of text production, distribution and consumption, as it seeks for the meaning of the first dimension. The third dimension, the discourse is observed through a broader perspective and context, as it examines the situational context surrounding the text (Fairclough, 1995). CDA is therefore not limited to linguistic analysis, but rather based on a multifunctional view of text (Fairclough, 1995b; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), and focusing on a singular dimension could therefore be viewed as relatively arbitrary as all dimensions are essential and provide different perspectives. CDA aims to, not only analyze and criticize discourse, but to realize that these things are a part of a wider objective and "analyze and criticize, and ultimately to change, the existing social reality in which such discourse is related in particular ways to other social elements such as power relations, ideologies, economic and political strategies and policies" (Faircloughs, 2015:5). By deriving from CDA, it is not only possible to deconstruct the empirical material of this report, but also procure contextual insights which could otherwise be problematic to identify as CDA isa process of "description of text, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and the social context" (Faircloughs, 2001:91). Differentiating from the discourse analysis approach, which is often centered on description of meanings rather than interpretation (Faircloughs, 2001; Van Dijk, 2015). CDA is consequently, as Van Dijk (2015:466) puts it, a "discourse study *with an attitude*".

### *Central concepts within critical discourse analysis*

*Hegemony* can have multiple meanings depending on the interpretation. According to Fairclough (1992), hegemony is interpreted as a constantly changing negotiation process, through which a consensus of meaning is constructed. Hegemony is therefore used to describe the dominance or power over another (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

*Intertextuality* and *manifest intertextuality*, are concepts associated with the text production (Fairclough, 1992). Intertextuality refers to the interconnection between text, i.e. the relation between different text and communicative events based on past events (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000; Fairclough, 1992). Manifest intertextuality is a more concrete interpretation of intertextuality, which strives to specify what and when texts are associated with each other, for instance by referring to one another and consequently manifesting other individuals ideas in discourse (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000; Fairclough, 1992).

*Modality* is one of the linguistic devices used in CDA (Fairclough, 1992), and describes the level of affinity (agreement), which affects the construction of discourse and can be either subjective or objective (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). *Subjective modality* is the relation between an external entity or individual and a proposition, where it is clearly stated whose opinion is expressed and a degree of agreement with a proposition, while *objective modality* does not clearly state whose proposion is expressed it is instead based on the subject, as it refers to the relation between the referent and the asserted relation (Fairclough, 1992).

# METHODOLOGY

## Material

The empirical material in this report consists of news articles from Swedish newspapers, collected through Retriever Mediearkivet [Retriever media archive]. The choice to include both national and local oriented newspapers was made in order to get a deeper understanding of the information individuals are presented through this medium. Newspapers consist of a high degree of genuine news reports, but have a relatively limited areana (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007), even if it should be noted that newspapers can influence not only their readers but also passerby through their leaflets and headlines (Heber, 2007). Newspapers are still of interest to examine for this report's aim, due to the fact Sweden has one of the highest levels of reading newspapers in the world and therefore significant for the Swedish public (Heber, 2007). Insight can be achieved through studies of the information newspapers present to the Swedish public, and how this may influence their perception.

The keywords *brott AND Malmö* [crime AND Malmö], was used in order to collect material. The key word *brott* [crime] was selected, as the term crime is a common denominator used in this field. Subject matter was selected to be *brott och rättsväsende* [crime and judiciary], which removed articles in other fields, such as the medical field where the key words correspond with some terms[2], and printed press was selected to access only the printed articles. 2019 was selected to achieve a relatively contemporary picture without the impact and focus of the current ongoing global pandemic of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) first identified in december 2019, as the use of language and selection of contents is affected by times of crisis.

A preliminary search generated 3 502[3] matches during 2019. To minimize the amount of material, a month was selected, in this case September, from 2019. Resulting in 158[4] matches. To further determine the relevance of the articles, the following criteria were constructed. The articles needed to bring up crime in Malmö, either through a crime which had just occurred or an account of earlier crime in Malmö. Articles which did not fulfill this were excluded. Duplicates of articles and articles consisting of less than 200 words were screened out in order to focus on more problematizing articles. After this process, 68 articles remained, which were used as empirical material for this report.

Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) highlight the importance of reflexive and self-critical awareness regarding the analyzer's own role, work and position within the discursive field when conducting research and analyzing material. The data selection process of CDA, has been argued by critics to lack representativeness or rigor. Aiming for credibility and dependability through transparency regarding the data source and selective process is therefore important (Sriwimon & Zilli, 2017), as well as describing how the data has been obtained and that it has been obtained in a systematic manner. In regards to the selective process, it needs to be emphasised that the decision if an article fulfilled the criterias, was made by the writer of this report and possible implication of this process should be noted. As noted by Chamberlain (2013), one of the key outcomes regarding the constitutive role of

[2] For instance, matches regarding the term “(ben)brott” [broken bone].
[3] Excluding similar articles and duplicates.
[4] Excluding similar articles and duplicates.

language is that the neutrality, objectivity and the writer or researchers autonomy is questioned and problematized.

## Method and procedure

CDA is strongly based on theory, but as many of its theoretical claims are able to be transformed into instruments and methods of analysis it may be more appropriate to recognize CDA as an approach (Mayer, 2001). This report will use CDA as a part of both the theoretical framework and the method of analysis, however, in accordance with the aim, the focus will be on a criminological perspective rather than conducting a linguistic analysis. The presence of the three dimensions of CDA will therefore differ in their level of presence throughout this report since they do not equally correspond with the aim.

There are no set procedures for conducting a CDA according to Fairclough (1992), which is one of the major criticisms against CDA (Widdowson,1995). The vague methodology and analytical model are one of the most common criticisms regarding CDA, even if other criticism, for instance regarding the seemingly arbitrary selection of data and the limitations of the conclusions, is also highly debated. The criticisms are, however, often centered on problems which can be overcome (Sriwimon & Zilli, 2017; Widdowson,1995). The possibilities that CDA offers when studying news material are extensive in regards to actually contesting and challenging mass-mediated news, as it combines an adequate amount of interdisciplinary set of theories and methods of analysis with a broad range across different levels (Haig, 2008). CDA has also been stated to possess "the strongest principled commitment to applying its theoretical and methodological framework as a practical tool for ideological critique: in short, to praxis"(Haig, 2008:34).

Even if there are no set procedures, there are general guidelines. The guidelines may differ in their application in accordance to the specific nature of the study, but they identify general elements and considerations regarding data, analysis and result (Fairclough, 1992). By implementing CDA based on these guidelines proposed by Fairclough, CDA increases the ability to describe texts and discern other factors (Sriwimon & Zilli, 2017). Fairclough (1992) highlights his preference of a pragmatic, problem oriented approach. Starting with the data, the aim of the project is defined by identifying and describing a social problem or a preconceived notion which has a semiotic aspect, a process which also helps select the chosen material, then look for linguistic evidence in the selected material (Mayer, 2001). The text provides not only a base for assumptions on what discourses may be at work in this context (which are either confirmed or contradicted by repeating this process with the other related articles) but also helps identify indicators for potential patterns/concepts and underlying meanings (Mayer, 2001; Munirah Mohd Ali, 2014). After these steps a structural analysis of the context is conducted followed by an interactional analysis focusing on the linguistic aspects and finally an analysis of interdiscursivity (Mayer, 2001; Fairclough, 1992).

### *Data analysis*

In order to clearly structerice the findings of the conducted analysis, the analysis and results of this work will be divided into sections based on Fairclough´s three dimensions (1995b). These three interrelated processes of analysis (the object of analysis, the means of which the object of interest is produced/received and the socio-historical conditions) are analysed through the interrelated dimensions of discourse touched upon in communicative events,

highlighted in figure 1 and 2 (Fairclough 1995b). It was kept in mind throughout the whole process that a dimension is only one of three, and all dimensions are essential to reach a more comprehensive perspective of media's presentation of crime in Malmö and its potential effects. Quotes will be used to highlight factors, but as the material is originally in Swedish and an English translation[5] will be utilised in the text to conserve fluidity of language. Original Swedish version will be available for the more cohesive quotes as a footnote, as there is a greater risk that these are affected by translation.

The text focused on the linguistic features of the articles, such as the vocabulary, verbs, nouns etc (Mayer, 2001). To enable a clear overview of the material originating in empiricism (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000), a number of tables were created. Five tables divided the articles into five categories based on their topic: description or/and unfolding of event, victim/s, perpetrator/s, organized crime/gang criminality, political discussion/call for change.

Table 1: list of categories and the number of included articles. Note that the majority of articles were perceived to be centered on several topics, and were thus included in more than one category.

| **Category** | **Number of articles** |
|---|---|
| Description or/and unfolding of events | 35 articles |
| Victim/s | 11 articles |
| Perpetrator/s | 24 articles |
| Organized crime/gang criminality | 27 articles |
| Political discussion/call for change | 27 articles |

Two other tables were also created in a initial stage, one which divided the articles based on publication and one in accordance to crime types[6].

The discourse practice highlights text production, distribution and consumption. In order to analyze the text production, the assessment of news value and selection process of events is explored, while the distribution of text highlights the distribution of focus of the material. The discourse practice of text consumption explores how the public's interpretation of the material can be influenced, as cognitive processes differ between receptors. Information was therefore also gathered from previous studies and academic journals.

Social practice is of importance in order to view the material against its background, through both immediate and wider social and cultural contexts (Munirah Mohd Ali, 2014). In order to distinguish the social practice information was gathered regarding the conditions in Malmö and sociocultural aspects of value for elucidating the aim. To create a more cohesive picture of the sociocultural context information was also gathered from, for example, previous studies and academic journals.

[5] The translation between these language will be conducted by the writer of this paper

[6] Note see appendix 1 which lists the articles, which constitutes as the material, first in order of publication and secondly the publication date. Categorization of the articles and highlighted crime types is also noted in this table.

## Ethical considerations

Ethical principles must be taken into consideration, since these are directly related to the integrity of the research (Denscombe, 2003). There are four fundamental ethical principles which need to be followed when conducting research, beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice (Bryman, 2001). That means that participants must be respected, protected from damaging consequences from their participation, give informed consent and their privacy must be protected by the conductor of the specific study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Considering that this report is based on public material and lacks participants, ethical considerations have been limited. Nighter the individuals mentioned in the articles, or the authors of the respective articles have participated or are connected with this report as only the written published material, i.e. the specific articles will be utilized for the analysis. The legislation concerning any personal data and to follow data protection principles, is important when collecting and using this type of material, in order to ensure that the collection and process of data are fair and lawful (Denscombe, 2003). The empirical material will, as the material in this work has already been published and made public, not be censored to reduce the risk of identification. The reliability and availability of content can be seen as an issue when the material is obtained through a digital news archive (ie. internet-based). The validity of the articles were therefore controlled to follow the criterias for this report. Copies of the articles were also downloaded to a personal computer and later deleted after the reports completion.

# RESULT AND ANALYSIS

## Text

### *Description or/and unfolding of events*

All outlets show some degree of sensationalism. When describing an event or unfolding of an event, the language is utilised to highlight severity or significance of a specific article's subject. Based on a micro-dimensional perspective, the language is often used to set a dramatic, often emotionally charged, tone (such as “now women and children are also murdered” (Arpi, 2019:2) etc.). Journalists' usage of objective modality and high affinity formulation (such as “no one is safe” (Wadendal, 2019:6) etc.) highlights journalists own interpretation of events as facts and demonstrates newspapers' utility of authority (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). Usage of verbs (such as *killed* or *murdered*), nouns (such as *fatal shootings)* and names of or other reference (mother, child, woman, male) to victims or perpetrators were frequently found in the headlines or ingress of the articles. Headlines and ingress were the most emotionally charged, with comparatives and dramatic nouns and adjectives highlighting current events, victims or perpetrators. Which demonstrated journalists' efforts to attract attention of potential readers from even a quick glance.

### *Description of victim/s*

The amount of articles featuring female victims affected by serious violent crime was significantly higher than the articles featuring male victims. However, when comparing articles between female or male victims, there was no significant presence of gendered language in regards to different language patterns between the genders. The greatest impact on writing styles and tones was observed to be victims' perceived degree of innocence and social identity, for instance *mother of a small child* or *newly graduated student* which according to Terry et al. (1999) centers the victim in a social category. This is possibly utilised to create a sense of recognition and community with the reader, as the presentation of the victim complies with notions of the common individual in Sweden which consequently incorporates the victim into the perception of *us*. This has, through its continuous use, shaped the news reporting. The relation between spatial inequalities and crime is ignored, while the victims social identity, time and place of the event is put in focus.

Victims are portrayed to generate sympathy in the reader for the affected party, especially apparent in articles which featured young victims or where young individuals were directly affected by a crime. Articles featuring young victims put more attention on documenting victims' own perspective, feelings and potential injuries, while cases only featuring adults mainly focused on the perpetrator and took a more general argumentative approach highlighting crimes' possible effects in society. Demonstrating how journalists carefully select and frame aspects of events, instead of reporting events impartially.

### *Description of perpetrator/s*

*"At the center of the problem is a group of young men who grew up in vulnerable areas and have no faith in the future at the same time as they have a high level of violence and a lack of impact assessment"*[7] (Lindberg, 2019:2).

*Criminals*, *murderers*, *gang criminals* and *cold hearted killers* are some of the words used to refer to perpetrators in the material. The personification of readers differs more markedly between readers (*we/us*) and perpetrators (separated into *them/others*), than the personification between reader and victim (which is commonly included in a *us* grouping). According to one article by Carlsson & Lundgren (2019:8), perpetrators of violent crime in Malmö are expressed as individuals between 20 and 28 years old, with long criminal records, usually with Swedish citizenship but "almost everyone" has parents who have immigrated to Sweden. It should however be emphasized that ethnicity, perpetrators as victims, was seldomly explicitly stated in the material. Which is interpreted to correspond with the media institutions' advocacy for a multicultural Sweden (Schclarek Mulinari, 2020) and in line with the neutrality[8] that characterizes Swedish public policy (Eduards, 2012). The most salient features were found to be the individual's feelings of and connection with social exclusion and segregation in society (Carlsson & Lundgren, 2019). As exemplified in the quote above by Lindberg (2019), many perpetrators are stated to have grown up in neighborhoods classified by the police as vulnerable or particularly vulnerable. Areas, characterized, not only by social exclusion and parallel societal structures, but also their high concentration of criminals (Carlsson & Lundgren, 2019).

### *Organized crime/gang criminality*

Violent crime was the most common crime type featured in this material[9], a majority of which were presented through a relationship to gang affiliation. A commonly observed trend was that news reports started the article with an emotionally charged example, before focusing on a more comprehensive outlook on gang crime. Other descriptive words (such as *domestic terrorism*, *monsters*, etc), were utilised as synonyms to illustrate gang crime. Dramatic adjectives (*uncontrolled*, *ruthless*, etc.) were widely used to describe acts of gang violence.

*"Of course, they are Malmö residents and citizens like the rest of us - but they do not feel that way"*[10] (Carlsson & Lundgren, 2019:9).

As illustrated above, a separation between perpetrators of gang violence, or serious crime overall, and the rest of society clearly stated. Social exclusion, a sense of *exclusion* and *abandonment* of society is a prominent discourse regarding gang affiliation. Gang affiliation is mainly described to originate from individuals' search for identity, confirmation and context in this absent society. Habul et al (2019:B5) states that it "takes worse violence, ever bloodier deed"[11] for gangs to "fight for intimidation capital"[12]creating a violent inflation.

---

[7] "I centrum för problematiken står en grupp unga män som vuxit upp i utsatta områden och helt saknar framtidstro samtidigt som de har högt våldskapital och en bristande konsekvensanalys."
[8] Referring to the official line regarding the pursuit of racial – class – gender neutrality.
[9] See appendix 1 and appendix 2.
[10] "De är förstås Malmöbor och medborgare som vi andra - men de känner sig inte så."
[11] "det krävs allt värre våld, allt blodigare dåd".
[12] "för att kämpa till sig skrämselkapital".

Contradicting official statistics claiming that violent acts occur less often in recent years (Herkel, 2019). An increased *ruthlessness* and *indifference* for violence among perpetrators of violent crime in Malmö is salient. For instance, is this highlighted by the police chief in Malmö through this statement:

*"/.../ the ruthlessness among the criminals has gotten worse. They don't care where they shoot. They are also not so careful about how to leave a place, they do not hide completely. We see an increased indifference in this type of crime"*[13] (Herkel, 2019:8).

Highlighting an increased ruthlessness and indifference for where and when these "worse" acts are committed (Herkel, 2019:8). Further emphasizing that crimes are portrayed to now occur in Malmö during times and places in public, usually not associated with crime (for example "next to a preschool in the morning rush at Möllan"[14]) (Herkel, 2019:8).

### *Political discussion and a call for change*

*"We have areas like here*[15] *where every store has had to pay protection money, where the gangs rule and the school has failed completely. We have to include all parties /../ so we can help the people of Malmö out of this shit."*[16] (Wadendal, 2009:7).

The most salient ideology of journalists which came through, were focused on the call for change. A general consensus indicated that crime had become normalised in Malmö, as exemplified in the first part of the quote above. Open questions regarding how Malmö (or our society overall) can be made safer and what legislative changes would be necessary to implement in order to reduce violent crime, permeates the material. A prominent opinion was that a cohesive approach, and a more "intense struggle" (Kihlström:2019:19) (as an overall consensus indicated that politicians "just talk but nothing happens"[17] (Linné, 2019:14)), is necessary to overcome the insecurity in Malmö "following the recent wave of shootings and explosions in Malmö"[18](Davidson, 2019:4). Call for changes are commonly presented with emotionally charged examples, with comparative and dramatic nouns and adjectives highlighting events of a serious nature (as exemplified in the quote above by Wadendal (2009)). An argumentative tone was salient, often referring to possible future action to minimize violent crime either in general terms or through possible action of authorities, utilising objective modality to indicate some sort of some form of overall truth existing independently from the source.

---

[13] "/.../ hänsynslösheten bland de kriminella har blivit värre. De struntar i var de skjuter. De är heller inte så noga med hur man lämnar en plats, man döljer inte fullt ut. Vi ser en ökad likgiltighet vid den här typen av brott"

[14] "next to a preschool in the morning rush at Möllan".

[15] Referring to Malmö.

[16] "Vi har områden här där varenda butik har fått betala skyddspengar, där gängen styr och skolan misslyckats helt. Vi måste ha med alla partier /.../ så att vi kan hjälpa Malmöborna ur den här skiten."

[17] "bara snackar men det händer ingenting".

[18] "den senaste tidens våg av skjutningar och sprängningar i Malmö."

## Discursive practice

There are different publications, journalists and editors behind the texts, affecting both the content and selection process behind the text. The news outlet's publication policy is also linked to the production processes, affecting the creation and publication of content. Different newspapers may also attract different readers depending on which target group is intended. The newspaper's geographical coverage may also influence individuals' choice of reading material, as it is more common for people to read what is primarily intended for the city or area the person lives in (Heber, 2007). The assessment of newsworthiness is also an important factor to take into consideration, as not all stories are covered and published. An overrepresentation of news featuring crimes of a violent or sexual nature is apparent compared with their statistical occurance, and dramatic or sensational crimes were prioritised rather than more common, or minor, crimes[19]. Several articles featured serious crimes, such as shootings, but only a small proportion featured lesser or more common crimes, such as traffic violations, alternatively, or were not featured at all, such as shoplifting[20]. In comparison with threats to individuals personal property, the fear of victimization has shown to be higher in relation to threats to individuals personal safety (Jimoh et al., 2007) and articles featuring elements of such may consequently generate a higher profit for media agencies, as more papers are sold when articles have a higher news value. News values should be regarded to be influenced by journalists' choice of subject, use of language and selection of content, in addition to the interest of the public. The importance of news values should therefore be recognized as part of the news discourse.

Consumption of text depends on the public's interpretation of the material, as cognitive processes differ between receptors (Jewkes, 2015). Reception of media content is regarded as a dynamic process, where the receptors' own characteristics (gender, age, etc), earlier background, cultural patterns and experiences may affect how media content is received and interpreted (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004; Jewkes, 2015). Media content can therefore never be regarded as representative of the receptors' own views, since individuals always select and interpret media content based on their own characteristics, background, experiences and cultural patterns (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). It should therefore not be assumed that information portrayed in media has a uniform effect or reception among the receptors (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). Information may also be interpreted as more (or less) trustworthy based on language, for instance by drawing upon existing discourse or referencing to statements by authority figures (Thornborrow, 2000). Political and law enforcement voices represent the intertextuality in the material. Manifest intertextuality is especially pronounced in articles regarding perpetrators and gang crime, where investigative reports from, for instance, register studies conducted by universities, government reports, or other articles is cited. Statements by authorities or individuals presumed to have access to specialized knowledge is often perceived as more legitimate or true (Thornborrow, 2004) and is utilised to highlight event's gravity and significance. Giving the text more discursive power. The selection of subjects and informants addressed, could provide different rates of reliability depending on the reader's attitude towards these. The credibility of actors, in combination to the public's own perception (created or passed through communication between individuals), affects the degree of trust of the media outlets and discourse practitioners.

[19] See appendix 2.
[20] See appendix 2.

## Social practice

Through the lens of social practice, emerging elements were centered on how the picture of Malmö has been created through social processes originating from the language in the news media. News media are strongly intertwined with many social practices, and distinguishing between crime, perpetrators and criminal justice and their representations in the press can consequently be rather problematic (Jewkes, 2004). Journalists are able to not only feature acts with high news value, such as crime and violence, more prominently, but they can also put them into a broader situational context for the public's reading (Bourdieu, 1998). According to Schclarek Mulinari (2020), Malmö is often featured in newspapers through topics or features centered on crime, and in this material the relation to cases of shootings and explosions were especially prominent. Which could be argued to color the public's view of Malmö, as Malmö are separated from other cities in Sweden and highlighted as an anomaly from the norm.

*"The fact that innocent people are murdered in settlements between criminals is becoming commonplace in news reporting"*[21](Arpi, 2009:2).

States an article published in Svenska Dagbladet regarding shootings in Malmö, which highlights the normalization of violence in news reporting. Andersson (2019) states in one article that the high frequency of violent crime[22] reportage have normalized these reports and dezentitice readers' reaction towards this type of news. Statements that also recur in other articles. This widespread coverage of crime, and the high prevalence of violent crime[23] reportage may however result in a, arguably, misleading representation of crime and societal safety. Time and place of events were especially notable when the crime occurred in areas generally not considered to be threatening, separated from the vulnerable areas characterized by, what one article states as: "an economic but also a cultural and normative exclusion"[24] where "gangs flourish"[25] (Björkenwall & Ungerson, 2019:32).

*"Many people who express concern are normally at such a distance from the violence that they will not normally be affected. On the other hand, those who have the most to fear from being exposed and who thus have reason to feel high and growing anxiety, are those who are forced to live where the gangs, so to speak, play at home*[26]*"* Eklund (2019:2).

By establishing characteristics and other factors that are not attributed to one's own grouping (Brune, 2004), societal groups were constructed between us and the others. While the most salient separation was the differentiation between the law-abiding citizens and perpetrators (mainly those who commit serious crimes), others were also apparent. For instance, as illustrated in the quote above by Eklund (2019:2), the us is expressed as those who are "normally" distanciated from crime and solemany not "normally" affected, while the others were those "who are forced to live" in areas which have been characterized by gang activity and consequently "have reason" to feel fear for possible exposure to crime. According to Ericsson et al (2002), separation of areas illustrated in news media can be seen as a marking

[21] "Att oskyldiga mördas i uppgörelser mellan kriminella börjar bli vardagsmat i nyhetsrapporteringen."
[22] Such as news reports featuring shootings or explosions.
[23] Such as news reports featuring shootings or explosions.
[24] "inte bara finns i ett ekonomiskt utan också ett kulturellt och normativt utanförskap".
[25] "där gängen frodas".
[26] "Många som uttrycker oro befinner sig normalt på ett sådant avstånd till våldet att de normalt inte kommer att drabbas. De som däremot har mest att frukta för att bli utsatta och som därmed har anledning att känna hög och växande oro, är de som tvingas leva där gängen så att säga spelar på hemmaplan."

of deviations, through for instance the marking of problems and differences etc. by highlighting characteristics, such as economical exclusion, crime or gangs etc., from the other areas, insinuated to be the norm in Swedish.

> *"He[27] is also frustrated by the "dark picture" of Malmö that is painted in social media and ordinary media. /.../ "Once again I hear and see factual errors about Malmö."/.../ Sintéus received hundreds of negative reactions /.../ and even more thought that he painted a beautiful picture of reality and trampled on the concerns of Malmö residents."[28]*
> (Wadendal, 2009:7)

While a dark portrayal of Malmö, where "no one is safe"[29] (Wadendal, 2019:6), is predominant, it is not shared by everyone. Counter-arguments are, however, explained to be a way of beautifying reality (Wadendal, 2009). These arguments are only briefly highlighted[30] through quotes from singular informants and personified in singular, in comparison to the believers pluralis[31], as exemplified through the quote above. Conflicting the established, hegemonic, dark portrayal of Malmö could "challenge the liberal and social democratic values on which the welfare state has traditionally rested", in addition to disputating recent neoliberal standards (Schclarek Mulinari, 2020:54). Socio-political currents can influence dominant discourses, distinguishable in the material through the debate on how violent crime can be reduced through legislative changes. As crime with high prevalence can, through media coverage and public's reaction of such, put pressure on policy-makers to implement effective measures to reduce these acts.

[27] Referring to Stefan Sintéus, the chief of police in Malmö.
[28] "Han är också frustrerad över den "mörka bild" av Malmö som målas upp i sociala och vanliga medier/../Sintéus fick hundratals negativa reaktioner /../och ännu fler tyckte att han skönmålade verkligheten och trampade på Malmöbornas oro."
[29] "ingen är skyddad i Malmö".
[30] Should also be noted that there are no articles which are singularly dedicated on contradicting the dark image of Malmö in this material.
[31] This is also distinguishable when comparing the personification utilised in the quote above and the quote under the headline 'political discussion and a call for change' (which utilises a clear plural form).

# DISCUSSION

Today, news media plays a large part in how individuals perceive and construct reality and various social phenomena (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). But rather than reproducing an objective recreation of reality, news reports, or mass media overall, may create a distorted view of reality among the consumers of the large public (Bourdieu, 1998). Media's portrayal of reality is therefore not always compatible with the individual's perception of their own reality (Strömbäck, 2009). The material presents a skewed division of crime reporting, which may be an important factor for the public's altered perception of crime. Through news media knowledge of what affects and interests the public, media receive power by their consumers. Enabling media to have an impact on these individuals influence the creation of different realities (Jewkes, 2015). Media authority is therefore dependent on a certain invisible recognition from society, as power is exercised through media's creation and presentation of their own truth about reality or events that the public chooses to believe in (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). Swedish newspapers' portrayal of Mamö influences the perception of reality among the readers, and the perception of crime of Malmö given through official statistics is overshadowed by news media's accentuation of serious crime. Statements from authorities are often perceived as more legitimate, even if it can contradict individuals own interpretation of reality (Thornborrow, 2004). References to statements made by authorities, such as politicians or police, could be observed to be utilized to confirm the existence of factors contributing to the continuance of the dark portrayal of Malmö being perceived by the public to be a true depiction of reality. As only a few contradictory statements were observed. Based on the analysis of this material, it is difficult to name specific measures that could improve Malmö's presentation in media, as crimes are depicted as an effect of larger societal problems and an integral part of everyday life. In this material there were no articles which were directly centered on denying the portrayal of Malmö as a dangerous city. Contradictions were rather utilised to emphasize this portrayal through utterances of varying degrees of affinity, carrying a property of modality. Contributing to the reproduction of the media's portrayal of Malmö, and that this continues to be considered a true portrayal of reality.

A normalization discourse is apparent in this material, as the high frequency of crime reportage, especially violent crime, have normalized these reports and dezentiticed readers' reaction towards this type of news. The dezentiticed reaction could be derived from the established presentation of Malmö as a city with a high level of violent crime, beyond the control of the proper authorities. Highlights the significant role of the spatial in the hegemonic perceived community where crime occurring in areas perceived as safe has greater news value, and the separation between Malmö and other areas. Based on the prevalence of this purport, the illumination of Malmö dangerous have a high hegemonic status, but it is not shared by everyone and frustration is expressed among opponents (Wadendal, 2009). Journalist conducts a struggle for hegemony, by presenting opinions arguing against the established image of Malmö[32]. Journalists may argue to write articles based on factual basis, but contradicting an already established article is difficult, requiring a larger process than following an established image with hegemonic status. The link between intertextuality and hegemoni is therefore of high value, to contest and restructure orders of discourse as intertextual processes and hegemony have both effects and are affected by hegemonic struggles from a wider perspective (Fairclough, 1992).

[32] Through what is viewed as natural and unquestionable, i.e. the truth as the public recognizes it, in the specific discursive field (see Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

A dividation between the innocent, *we,* and the perpetrators, *them,* is portrayed in the discourse, by establishing characteristics and other factors, such as economical exclusion, crime or gangs etc, that are not attributed to one's own grouping (Brune, 2004), and the *we* were commonly insinuated to constitute the norm. For instance, is social exclusion a prominent discourse regarding perpetrators affiliated with gangs. Victims are included in the imagined national community, which needs to be secured against possible threats, dominantly portrayed through cases of violent crime or gang violence. Cases where women and/or children were affected by serious violent crime dominated the material, possibly because these crimes are more uncommon and therefore carry a higher news value (Jewkes, 2015). A large amount of news reports featured violent crime, rather than crime which are a more common occurrence according to the official crime statistics. In correspondence with earlier studies[33] regarding the law of opposites, the material highlights characteristics of crimes and victims which opposes the quantity and pattern indicated by official statistics of the specific crime. In addition to this, the emphasis of violent crime, or crime overall, may also give the public an impression of a rising crime trend and that relevant authorities and actors are unable to control the presumed level of criminal activity in society. The perception of crime may consequently put pressure on policy-makers to implement effective measures to reduce these acts. Jewkes (2015) argues that the perception of crime is closely associated with the news reports and fear of possible victimization could be a contributing factor when analysing perception of crime reported by media, as the current trend of reporting crime could generate a larger amount of fear of crime among the public. The perplexity of the law of opposites may therefore distort the public's knowledge of crime in society, in addition to highlighting newspapers' lack of objectivity, the impact of news value and the practicality of the law of opposites.

## Limitations

The focus of this report is narrow, and related facets of the news media's presentation of crime may therefore have been excluded. The results are not generalizable, as the empirical material is limited to news articles in Sweden collected over a short period of time. Differentiations between media sources, with different structuring agents, selected country and even timeframe may affect how information is presented to the public. Comparison between potential differences of different mediums, differentiations between morning newspapers and evening newspapers or between newspapers with different political positions have not been conducted. While mass media has been shown to have an impact on residents' perceived sense of security and fear of crime in Sweden (Heber, 2007), the subject has not been deeply elucidated in this report. Neither has this paper focused on potential effects which media coverage of crimes may have on criminal behavior, which by itself is a rather controversial debate[34].

[33] See for instance earlier studies conducted by, for instance Pollak & Kubrin, 2007, Chermak, 1995 and Reiner et al. 2003, as noted under the context of this paper.

[34] Clarification, debate regarding if media can be seen as a cause for criminal behaviour. A large amount of research utilised in this debate has shown a lack of correlation between factors and the results have been mixed. Making it difficult to exclude the potential impact of other factors (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Sheley & Ashkins, 1981).

# CONCLUSION

The key findings identified in this report could be regarded as part of different discourses (Fairclough,1995b). Malmö is portrayed to the public as a city in a serious situation, with high crime rates where crimes also occur in areas generally not considered to be threatening, and therefore requires to be defended from continuous criminal activity (commonly with references to gang criminality). Newspapers often feature Malmö through topics or features centered on crime (Schclarek Mulinari, 2020), and discourses regarding social exclusion, normalization, societal safety, violence, and construction of societal groups (through a separation of *we* and *them* based on marking of deviations) were prominent. Violence is featured as a societal problem in Malmö, and illuminated to be an integral part of our everyday life. Official statistics are overshadowed by the overemphasis of violent and letal crime, influencing the public's opinion and construction of reality. Few articles dispute the established image of Malmö as dangerous, and the few who do only briefly highlight this to an extremely limited extent, resulting in the preservation and reproduction of the majority's presentation of Malmö as a dangerous or unsecure city. Regardless of insight given by official statistics regarding crime in Malmö, the law of opposites have shown to be applicable. Whether this representation Malmö reflects the actual reality or not, may arguably not be of interest for newspapers in Sweden. The emphasis of a dangerous or unsafe city may have a higher news value, generating more readers. News media agencies may therefore have economic interest to not contradict this presentation of Malmö, as it could generate a higher profit. By maintaining this portrayal of Malmö highlighted in this report, the public accept this as a generally accepted truth, despite contradictions in the official statistics. Which, not only highlights the law of opposites, but news media's authority and influence on people's perception and construction of reality.

# REFERENCES


Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society : towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.

Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1998). *Kunskapssociologi: hur individen uppfattar och formar sin sociala verklighet*. (2. uppl.) Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand.

Blomberg, H., Kroll, C., Lundström, T. & Swärd, H. (2004). Medier och samhällsvetenskap In: Blomberg, H. (edt.), *Sociala problem och socialpolitik i massmedier*. (pp.11-24) Lund: Studentlitteratur

Boudana, S. (2011). A definition of journalistic objectivity as a performance. *Media, Culture and Society*, *33*(3), 385–398.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Om televisionen: följd av Journalistikens herravälde*. Stockholm: B. Östlings bokförl. Symposion

Brottsförebyggande rådet (BRÅ), (2019a). Kriminalstatistik - begrepp och definitioner. (URN: NBN: SE: BRA-787). Retrieved from: https://www.bra.se/publikationer/arkiv/publikationer/2019-03-28-kriminalstatistik---begrepp-och-definitioner.html?lang=sv

Brottsförebyggande rådet (BRÅ), (2019b). Kriminalstatistik - 2019 anmälda brott: slutgiltig statistik. (urn:nbn:se:bra-872). Retrieved from: https://www.bra.se/download/18.7d27ebd916ea64de5304e10e/1602746646227/Sammanfattning_anmalda_2019.pdf

Brottsförebyggande Rådet (BRÅ) (24 may 2021). Kriminalstatistik - anmälda brott. Retrieved from: http://statistik.bra.se/solwebb/action/anmalda/urval/sok

Brune, Y. (2004). *Nyheter från gränsen: tre studier i journalistik om "invandrare", flyktingar*

Bryman, A. (2001). *Samhällsvetenskapliga metoder*. (1 ed.). Malmö, Liber ekonomi

Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism. [electronic resource]* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Chamberlain, J. M. (2013). *Understanding criminological research. [electronic resource] : a guide to data analysis*. SAGE

Chermak, S. (1995), "Image control: how police affect the presentation of crime news", *American Journal of Police*, 14(2), 21-43.

Chouliaraki, L., & Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edinburgh University Press.

Denscombe, M. (2003). *The Good Research Guide: For Small-scale Social Research Projects*. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Eduards, M. (2012). Kroppspolitik: om moder Svea och andra kvinnor. Stockholm: Atlas.

Ekström, E., Eriksson, A., Korsell, L. & Vesterhav, D. (2012). *Brottslighet och trygghet i Malmö, Stockholm och Göteborg - En kartläggning*. Brottsförebyggande rådet, (URN:NBN:SE:BRA-473). Retrieved from: https://www.bra.se/publikationer/arkiv/publikationer/2012-05-24-brottslighet-och-trygghet-i-malmo-stockholm-och-goteborg-promemoria.html

Ericsson, U., Molina, I. & Ristilammi, P. (2002). *Miljonprogram och media: föreställningar om människor och förorter*. Trelleborg: Riksantikvarieverket & Integrationsverket.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity.

Fairclough, N. (1995a). *Critical discourse analysis: the critical study of language*. London: Longman

Fairclough, N. (1995b). *Media discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing Discourse*. London: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2012). Critical discourse analysis. *International Advances in Engineering and Technology*, 7, 452-487.

Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power* (3. ed.). London: Routledge.

Haig, E. (2008). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Discourse Strategies in Reports of Youth Crime in UK Radio News. 33-65. Retrieved from: https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/A-Critical-Discourse-Analysis-of-Discourse-in-of-in-Haig/4d4f4125a1fd625f747c466fecb4e39596c52daf.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: principles in practice*. (3. ed.) Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Heber, A. (2007). Var rädd om dig!: Rädsla för brott enligt forskning, intervjupersoner och dagspress. (Doctoral dissertation). Stockholm: Institution of Criminology, Stockholm University.

Jimoh, A., Julius, A. A., & Akanji, O. R. (2007). The Print Media and Crime: Values and Issues. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 2(1), 63–75.

Jewkes, Y. (2004). Media representations of criminal justice. In: Muncie, J. & Wilson, D. (Eds.), *Student Handbook of Criminal Justice and Criminology.* (pp.67-79). Routledge-Cavendish.

Jewkes, Y. (2015). *Crime and media.* SAGE.

Kellner, D. (1995). *Media culture : cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and the postmodern*. Routledge.

Loge, P. (2005). How to talk crimey and influence people: Language and the politics of criminal justice policy. *Drake Law Review, 53*, 693-709.

Martins, N., Weaver, A. J., Yeshua-Katz, D., Lewis, N. H., Tyree, N. E. & Jensen. J. D. (2013). A Content Analysis of Print News Coverage of Media Violence and Aggression Research. *Journal of Communication*. 63(6), 1070–1087.

Meyer, M. (2001). Between theory, method, and politics: positioning of the approaches to cda. In R. Wodak, & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 14-31). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Munirah Mohd Ali, S. (2014) Critical discourse analysis of headlines on the LYNAS issue in THE STAR newspaper. 1-10.

Pollack, E. (2001). *En studie i medier och brott*. Stockholm: Institutionen för journalistik, medier och kommunikation, Stockholm Universitet

Pollak, J. M. & Kubrin, C. E. (2007). Crime in the News: How Crimes, Offenders and Victims Are Portrayed in the Media. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 14(1), 59-83.

Reiner, R., Livingstone, S., Allen, J. (2003). From Law and Order to Lynch Mobs: Crime News Since the Second World War. In: Mason, P. (Eds.), *Criminal Visions: Media Representations of Crime and Justice* (pp. 13-32). Portland: Willan Publishing.

Rostami, A. (2016). Criminal Organizing: Studies in the sociology of organized crime. (Doctoral dissertation). Stockholm: Department of Sociology, Stockholm University.

Savage, J. and Yancey, C. (2008). The effects of media violence exposure on criminal aggression a meta-analysis. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 35(6), 772–791.

Schclarek Mulinari, L. (2015). ”Ni är inte välkomna i vårt fina Malmö”: Premisser för samhällsgemenskap i kamp mot organiserad brottslighet. *Sociologisk Forskning*, 52(4), 321-340.

Schclarek Mulinari, L. (2017). Contesting Sweden’s Chicago: why journalists dispute the crime image of Malmö. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(3), 206-219.

Schclarek Mulinari, L. (2020). *Race and order: critical perspectives on crime in Sweden*. (Doctoral dissertation). Stockholm: Institution of Criminology, Stockholm University.

Sheley, J., & Ashkins, C. (1981). Crime, Crime News, and Crime Views. *The Public Opinion Quarterly, 45*(4), 492-506.

Sriwimon, L. & Zilli, P. J. (2017). Applying Critical Discourse Analysis as a conceptual framework for investigating gender stereotypes in political media discourse. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 38(2), 136–142.

Strömbäck, J. (2009). *Makt, medier och samhälle: en introduktion till politisk kommunikation*. (First edition). Stockholm: SNS

Terry, D. J., Hogg, M. A. & White, K. M. (1999). The theory of planned behaviour: Self Identity, social identity and group norms. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 38, 225-244.

Thornborrow J. (2004). Language and the media. In: Thomas, L., Singh I. & Pecceii, J. S. (Eds.), *Language, society and power: an introduction*, (pp. 55-74) London: Routledge.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical Discourse Analysis. In: Tannen, D., Hamilton, H. E. & Schiffrin, D. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 466-485). (Second Edition). Wiley Blackwell.

Weitzer, R. & Kubrin, C. E. (2004). Breaking news: how local TV news and real-world conditions affect fear of crime. *Justice Quarterly*. 21(3), 497-520.

Widdowson, H. G. (1995). Discourse Analysis: A Critical View. *Language and Literature: Journal of the Poetics and Linguistics Association*, *4*(3), 157–172.

Winther Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. (2000). *Diskursanalys som teori och metod*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Wykes, M. (2001). News, Crime and Culture *[Elektronisk resurs]*. Pluto Press

## Referenced newspaper articles from the material


Andersson, T. (8 september 2019). Mordet som kan ändra synen på gängbrott. *Tidningen Ångermanland*. p.3.

Arpi, I. (1 september 2019). Nu mördas även kvinnor och barn. *Svenska Dagbladet*. p.2.

Björkenwall, R. & Ungerson, J. (29 september 2019). Kampen mot gängkriminaliteten kräver skarpa verktyg - Debatt Sprängningar och skjutninga. *Gefle Dagblad*. p. 32.

Carlsson, C. & Lundgren, L. (22 september 2019). Männen i Malmö bakom dödsskjutningarna. *Kvällsposten*. pp.8-9.

Davidson, K. (6 september 2019). Skarpa förslag mot våldet på paneldebatt. *Skånska Dagbladet*. p.4.

Eklund, S. (16 september 2019). Hårt mot hårt - på rätt sätt. *Borås Tidning*. p.2.

Habul, K., Palmkvist, J. & Thomasson,T. (22 september 2019). Så har de gått från buskörning till mord. *Sydsvenskan*. pp.B2-B5.

Herkel, P. (15 september 2019). Polischefen: "Vi ser en större hänsynslöshet". *Sydsvenskan*. p. 8.

Kihlström, I. (12 september 2019). Vi måste återskapa tryggheten i samhället. *Borås Tidnin*g. p.19

Lindberg, A. (1 september 2019).Vad är det för monster vi har att göra med? Sveriges samhällsväv trasas sönder. *Aftonbladet*. p.2.

Linné, P. (3 september 2019). Peter Linné: Vad hände egentligen med krafttagen och resurserna?. *Göteborgs-Posten*. pp.13 - 14

Wadendal, I. (6 september 2019). Tusentals engagerar sig för att sätta stopp för våldet i Malmö. *Svenska Dagbladet*. pp.6-7.

# APPENDIX

## Appendix 1

List of selected articles. First in order of publication and secondly the publication date.

| Publication | Headline | Publication date | Categorization | Crime type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aftonbladet | Tre veckor - tre kvinnliga offer | 2019-09-15 | Organized crime/gang criminality, description or/and unfolding of event, victim/s, political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Aftonbladet | Häktad för medhjälp till mord på Karolin, 31 | 2019-09-14 | Description or/and unfolding of event,organized crime/gang criminality, perpetrator/s | Violent crime |
| Aftonbladet | Vad är det för monster vi har att göra med? | 2019-09-01 | Political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| Blekinge Läns Tidnining | Man häktad för medhjälp till mord på Ribersborg | 2019-09-14 | Organized crime/gang criminality, perpetrator | Violent crime |
| Borås Tidning | Hårt mot hårt - på rätt sätt | 2019-09-16 | Political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Borås Tidning | Vi måste återskapa tryggheten i samhället | 2019-09-12 | Political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| Dagens Nyheter | Regeringen stänger inte dörren för anonyma vittnen | 2019-09-12 | Political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| Expressen | 23-årig man häktad för inblandning i mordet på Karolin | 2019-09-14 | Organized crime/gang criminality, perpetrator/s, description or/unfolding of event | Violent crime |
| Expressen | Man anhållen - misstänkt inblandad i mordet på Karolin | 2019-09-11 | Organized crime/gang criminality, perpetrator/s | Violent crime |
| Expressen | Tonårsflicka tog fast sexofredare efter bussturen | 2019-09-08 | Description or/and unfolding of event, perpetrator/s, victim/s | Molestation |
| Expressen | Polisspåren på mordplatsen kan | 2019-09-03 | Description or/and unfolding of event, | Violent crime |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | avslöja Karolins mördare | | perpetrator/s | |
| Expressen | Dödsskjutningarna har dubblats efter stora straffrabatten | 2019-09-03 | Political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Drugs |
| Fokus | Gängen är för oorganiserade | 2019-09-06 | Organized crime/gang criminality, political debate/ call for change | Violent crime, drugs |
| Forskning & Framsteg | Kameror leder till ökad trygghet | 2019-09-26 | Description or/and unfolding of event | Drugs |
| Gefle Dagblad | Kampen mot gängkriminaliteten kräver skarpa verktyg | 2019-09-29 | Organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| GT | Sverige söker hjälp i USA för att stoppa morden | 2019-09-14 | Organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| GT | Hedersmord är ondska - ren och skär ondska | 2019-09-01 | Perpetrator/s, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime, hate crime |
| GT | EU-migranter tvingas sälja sex | 2019-09-01 | Victims/s, organized crime/gang criminality | Prostitution |
| Göteborgs-Posten | Misstänkt för medhjälp till Malmömord häktas | 2019-09-14 | Perpetrator/s | Violent crime |
| Göteborgs-Posten | Samling mot gängvåldet | 2019-09-06 | Organized crime/gang criminality, political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Kristianstadsbladet | Män försökte köra genom tullen med 1 800 liter alkohol | 2019-09-14 | Description or/unfolding of event | Smuggling |
| Kristianstadsbladet | Peter Linné: Vad hände egentligen med krafttagen och resurserna? | 2019-09-03 | Organized crime/gang criminality, political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Knallebladet | Vi måste återskapa tryggheten i vårt samhälle | 2019-09-11 | Political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Kvällsposten | Morddömde Isac Drivhall Welin, 22, Överklagar till Högsta Domstolen | 2019-09-29 | Description or/unfolding of event | Violent crime |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kvällsposten | Männen i malmö bakom dödsskjutningarna | 2019-09-22 | Perpetrator/s<br><br>Highlight underlying factors | Violent crime, drugs |
| Kvällsposten | 65-årig man bands fast och knivhöggs i sin lägenhet | 2019-09-10 | Description or/unfolding of event, victims/s | Violent crime, attempted robbery |
| Kvällsposten | Europeiskt samarbete krävs för att bekämpa gängbrott | 2019-09-05 | Political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| Kvällsposten | Läkaren Karolin, 31, mördades - med sitt barn i famnen | 2019-09-02 | Victim/s, perpetrator/s, description or/unfolding of event | Violent crime |
| Kvällsposten | Mamman mördades i striden om miljonbytet från rånet | 2019-09-01 | Victim/s, perpetrator/s, description or/unfolding of event | Violent crime, robbery |
| Norra Skåne | De hade kunnat räddas | 2019-09-02 | Victim/s, political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| Nordvästra Skånes Tidningar | Anonyma vittnen ingen mirakelkur | 2019-09-12 | Political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Nordvästra Skånes Tidningar | Elcykelbatteri hett byte för tjuvarna | 2019-09-07 | Description or/and unfolding of event | Tieft |
| Norrtelje Tidning | Fängelser löser inga samhällsproblem | 2019-09-13 | Political debate/ call for change, perpetrator/s | Violent crime |
| Skånska dagbladet | Polis hittade knark och pengar hos rattfyllo | 2019-09-28 | Description or/and unfolding of event, perpetrators/s | Drugs, minor focus money laundering |
| Skånska dagbladet | Unga dömda för rån | 2019-09-24 | Description or/unfolding of event, victim/s | Violent crime, robbery |
| Skånska dagbladet | Kvinna lurades ta falskt körkort i Polen | 2019-09-19 | Description or/unfolding of event | Forgery, traffic violation |
| Skånska dagbladet | Fruktlösa larm om beväpnade personer | 2019-09-19 | Description or/unfolding of event | Gun crime |
| Skånska dagbladet | Åtalas för grovt hot och vapenbrott | 2019-09-18 | Description or/unfolding of event, perpetrator/s, victim/s | Violent crime |
| Skånska dagbladet | Personlig assistent stal från MS-sjuk | 2019-09-18 | Description or/unfolding of event | Tieft |
| Skånska dagbladet | Varnar för falsk polis | 2019-0917 | Description or/unfolding of event | Alleging a public office |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Skånska dagbladet | En i albansk knarkliga utlämnas | 2019-09-13 | Description or/and unfolding of event, organized crime/gang criminality, perpetrator/s | Drugs |
| Skånska dagbladet | Rättsligt råd synar bombmannens psyke | 2019-09-11 | Description or/and unfolding of event | Unlawful threats |
| Skånska dagbladet | Försökte muta en polis | 2019-09-07 | Description or/and unfolding of event | Attempted bribery |
| Skånska dagbladet | Skarpa förslag mot våldet på paneldebatt | 2019-09-06 | Political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime, others |
| Skånska dagbladet | Blottare ville visa upp sig | 2019-09-06 | Description or/and unfolding of event, perpetrator/s | Sexual offence |
| Skånska dagbladet | Tatuerare blev utsatt för dödshot och utpressning | 2019-09-03 | Description or/and unfolding of event | Blackmail |
| Skånska dagbladet | Smugglade cannabis i spanska växellådor | 2019-09-03 | Description or/and unfolding of event | Drugs, preparation for violent crime |
| Smålands dagblad | Misstänkt för medhjälp till mord häktas | 2019-09-14 | Perpetrator/s, description or/and unfolding of event | Violent crime |
| Smålands dagblad | Kulturen måste brytas | 2019-09-12 | Political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| Sundsvalls Tidning | Jobba blocköverskridande för att knäcka gängkriminaliteten | 2019-09-10 | Political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Svenska Dagbladet | Trots ministerns löfte - brist på resurser i Malmöutredning | 2019-09-30 | Political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Svenska Dagbladet | Tusentals engagerar sig för att sätta stopp för våldet i Malmö | 2019-09-06 | Political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| Svenska Dagbladet | Skott mot kvinna kan ha koppling till knarknätverk | 2019-09-02 | Organized crime/gang criminality, perpetrator/s | Violent crime, drugs |
| Svenska Dagbladet | Ivar Arpi: Nu mördas även kvinnor och barn | 2019-09-01 | Victim/s, political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Svenska Dagbladet | Gränslöst våld kräver ökat polissamarbete | 2019-09-01 | perpetrator/s, organized crime/gang | Violent crime |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | criminality | |
| Sydsvenskan | Han var ett ögonblick från att bli mördare | 2019-09-29 | Description or/unfolding of event, perpetrator/s<br><br>Highlight underlying factors | Violent crime |
| Sydsvenskan | Vård och skyddstillsyn straff för brutalt rån vid Vellinge ängar | 2019-09-25 | Description or/unfolding of event, victim/s | Violent crime, robbery |
| Sydsvenskan | Så har de gått från buskörning till mord | 2019-09-22 | Description or/unfolding of event | Central focus violent crime |
| Sydsvenskan | Avlyssnad greps med skarpladdad pistol | 2019-09-17 | Description or/unfolding of event, perpetrator/s | Violent crime (preparation) |
| Sydsvenskan | Nej, skjutningar och sprängningar är inte så bara | 2019-09-17 | Political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Sydsvenskan | Polischefen: "Vi ser en större hänsynslöshet" | 2019-09-15 | Organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| Sydsvenskan | Två rånare dömdes till sluten ungdomsvård | 2019-09-07 | Description or/unfolding of event, perpetrator/s, victim/s | Violent crime, robbery |
| Sydsvenskan | Polisen utreder koppling till flera mystiska dödsfall | 2019-09-07 | Description or/and unfolding of event | Violent crime |
| Sydsvenskan | Polisutredarna som följde bedragarnas spår | 2019-09-02 | Perpetrator/s | Fraud, tieft |
| Tidningen Ångermanland | Mordet som kan ändra synen på gängbrott | 2019-09-08 | Political debate/ call for change, organized crime/gang criminality | Violent crime |
| Västgöta-Bladet | Tonåring släpps fri efter handstilsprov | 2019-09-06 | Perpetrator/s, description or/and unfolding of event | Violent crime |
| Östgöta Correspondenten | Håll huvudet kallt i kamp mot brotten | 2019-09-09 | Political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |
| Östgöta Correspondenten | Kortsiktighet straffar sig | 2019-09-02 | Political debate/ call for change | Violent crime |

## Appendix 2

Table of crime types reported in the material, based on the article's central focus. Note that the total number in this table differs from the total sum of used articles, as some are centered on more than one crime type.

| **Offences** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Violent crimes[35] | 49 | 63% |
| | *32 of these 49, is centered on lethal violence as the focus of reporage.* | *Which corresponds with 65,31% of the total reported violent crimes.* |
| Drug offences | 7 | 9% |
| Robbery | 5 | 6% |
| Tieft | 3 | 4% |
| Sexual offences[36] | 3 | 4% |
| Property | 0 | 0% |
| Other | 11 | 14% |
| Total | 78 | 100% |

[35] It should be noted that the definition of violent crime can differ depending on the study and medium. Some interpretations only includes murder, manslaughter and assult, while others includes one or more crime types, for instance rape and robbery (BRÅ:2019a). In this specific tabel, the term violent crime is based on murder, manslaughter and assult, as for instance sexual offences and robbery will be highlighted in other speperate categories. Violent crime could be seen as an collective category, which consecountly also can be divided into different subgroups, in this case murder, manslaughter and assault, depending on the definition of the term.
[36] This report uses the term 'sexual offences' in this specific table as a general category for human sexual behaviours regarded by Swedish law and jurisdiction as criminal.