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Media portrayal of a Swedish 'Crime Capital'

- A master's thesis focusing on newspapers'
depictions of shootings in Malmö

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During the past couple of years, shootings in Malmö have been given considerable amount of attention and not the least by the news media. The tabloids have often been dominated by headlines which indicate an increase of violent shootings in Sweden’s third largest city. Comparing shootings in Malmö to other cities in Sweden is a difficult task as the local police collects data based on different criteria, nevertheless comparisons are frequently made. The objective of this project is to examine how newspapers portray shootings in Malmö by analyzing articles from major newspapers in Sweden. This thesis focuses on the language that is used and in the light of moral panics theory it is discusses whether the news articles in question are instigating moral panics. It is evaluated what discourses are produced and reproduced by the language used in the context of shootings in Malmö through critical discourse analysis (CDA). The main findings reveal that news media tend to promote certain ideas about the severity and the circumstances regarding shootings in Malmö that are symbolic for the instigation of moral panics. In the context of shootings in Malmö the most frequent points that are raised is that shootings are “symptomatic”, shootings are becoming normalized and shootings pose a threat to “normal people” as well. The main implications from this project is that future research is needed on the subject of how data regarding shootings is collected by to police in order to conduct research similar to this. There is a need of a uniformity within the police regarding the definition and classification of shootings in order to facilitate research that compares shootings across the nation. As a follow up to the current project it would be beneficial to investigate the social reactions to the style of journalism discussed in this paper.

Keywords: moral panics, labelling, news media, critical discourse analysis, shootings, Malmö

Table of content

- 1. Background.....1**
 - 1.1 What we know so far – comparing numbers on the three major cities.....2
 - 1.2 Aim and questions4
- 2. Theory – Moral panics5**
 - 2.1 Definitions5
 - 2.2 What impact do moral panics have and what legacy do they leave behind?.....8
- 3. Methods and materials.....9**
 - 3.1 Discourse analysis and CDA.....10
 - 3.2 CDA as a three-dimensional model and an analytical tool12
 - 3.3 Critics towards CDA14
- 4. Previous research involving media, moral panics and labelling using CDA15**
- 5. Implementation.....16**
- 6. Results & analysis.....17**
 - 6.1 How frequently were shootings in Malmö reported in the Swedish newspapers in relation to the actual rates of shooting in 2006 and 2011-2014?17
 - 6.2. How do Swedish newspapers depict shootings in Malmö? Can any discourses be identified?20
 - 6.2.1 Shootings in Malmö are symptomatic of other social problems22
 - 6.2.2 Normalization and the threat of contamination against decent people & places.....25
- 7. Discussion.....31**
- 8. Conclusions34**
- 9. References38**
 - 9.1 Journals, reports and electronic publications.....38
 - 9.2 Literature49
 - 9.3 Newspaper articles (electronic)40
 - 9.4 Other sources (governmental, legal).....41

1. Background

In the early stages of 2015 one of the major newspapers in Sweden published an article urging the public that “something needs to be done” about the critical crime situation in Malmö (Kroon, 2015). The article describes a crime infested city by referring to recent happenings such as the case of Peter Mangs¹, gang wars, shootings, “illegal weapons flooding the streets” and the authorities’ slipping grip of a city on the verge of anarchy. The article in question demonstrates one of several examples where journalism regarding crime levels in Malmö depicts the city in such dark and upsetting ways. Is the city really as fearsome and dangerous as the article aims to describe it, or can the media’s portrayal be seen as out of proportion? This thesis evaluates whether the news reporting regarding shootings in Malmö can be seen as instigators of moral panics.

What can be said for certain is that the crime levels in Malmö haven’t been as low as in 2014 since The Swedish Council of Crime Prevention started measuring and collecting data in 1996 (Brottsförebyggande Rådet, BRÅ, Kriminalstatistik anmälda brott 2015). It’s been on a steady decrease for five years and in 2014 it hit the lowest rates ever recorded. The assumption is based on reported crime which could be argued for as the most reliable measure we have at this moment, even though some argue that the propensity for reporting crime may have decreased. The Swedish National Council of Crime Prevention (BRÅ) claim that shootings in public spaces gain a lot of attention on the news agenda and get tied to criminal conflicts (2015:4). There are certain difficulties in analysing shootings in Sweden. Overall there is not much knowledge about how shootings across the country have developed. Also, usage of the term “shootings” is problematic in and of itself because the official statistics place different type of shootings in different categories. Shootings leading to classifications such as homicides, murders, attempted murder and battery leading to death are separated from each other. Moreover, other crimes where guns have been used such as aggravated assault and vandalism do not have unique “crime codes” and thus they are not separated in the official statistics (ibid. 4). In other words, they are mixed up with what many perceive as violent shootings, e.g. shootings aimed to injure or kill another person.

¹ Peter Mangs was in 2013 convicted for two charges of murder and eight charges of attempted murder (Prvulovic, 2013). Jerzy Sarnecki, a Swedish professor in criminology, claimed that the crimes may have been hate crimes against immigrants (Lindelöv & Ohlsson, 2010).

To complicate matters further: The police in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö have collected data regarding local shootings, but not based on the same criteria. In their data collection they cover different geographical areas and counties, as for example Stockholm covers the whole “Stockholm county” while Gothenburg distinguishes “Grand Gothenburg” from the rest of the city and Malmö covers what belongs to “Malmö police region” (ibid. 4). Also, the different cities classify shootings differently. According to the same report from BRÅ, police in Malmö classify shots from slingshots and airguns as “shootings” while the other two larger cities don’t (ibid. 11). The definitional discrepancies may grant partial or alternative explanations to why Malmö are over represented amongst the three big cities in rates of shootings. Having this background information on the term “shootings” in mind it makes it even more problematic to interpret what newspapers mean when writing about so called shootings.

1.1 What we know so far – comparing numbers on the three major cities

In the same report as mentioned in the previous section, BRÅ has outlined the numbers in order to compare shootings in Sweden’s three biggest cities in table 4.

Tabell 4. Antal skjutningar och andel av totalt antal skjutningar, efter storstadslän och övriga.

	2006 Antal skjutningar	2014 Antal skjutningar	2006 per 100 000 i befolkningen	2014 per 100 000 i befolkningen
Stockholms län	72	99	3,8	4,5
<i>Stockholms kommun</i>	25	40	3,2	4,4
Västra Götalands län	83	69	5,4	4,2
<i>Göteborgs kommun</i>	46	45	9,4	8,3
Skåne län	51	77	4,3	6,0
<i>Malmö kommun</i>	18	47	6,5	14,8
Övriga län	99	120	2,2	2,6
<i>Övriga kommuner</i>	216	233	2,9	2,9
Totalt	306	365	3,4	3,7

BRÅ, 2015:11

The numbers show that shootings in Malmö have more than doubled in 2014 compared to 2006, as the numbers have remained almost the same in Gothenburg. In the following table (5), the three biggest cities are compared in terms of number of shootings between the years

2011-2014. What differentiates these numbers from the previous table is that the numbers are collected from the local police and the cities are divided into regions that differ from each other (as mentioned in the previous section). Stockholm “county”, police region of “Grand Gothenburg” and “police region” of Malmö are compared to each other.

Tabell 5. Antal skjutningar i Stockholms län, po Stor-Göteborg samt po Malmö 2011-2014 enligt polisens lokala sammanställningar.

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Stockholms län	97	46	90	88
Polisområde Stor-Göteborg	48	46	56	50
Polisområde Malmö	140	97	114	122
Summa	285	189	260	260

BRÅ, 2015:11

According to the police records above, shootings occurred a lot more frequently in Malmö compared to Gothenburg during 2011-2014. The most notable difference is probably in 2011 when Gothenburg recorded a rate of totally 48 shootings meanwhile Malmö recorded its highest rate during this four-year period at 140 shootings. As Gothenburg is a substantially larger city than Malmö, these numbers become even more interesting. When studying these numbers BRÅ (2015:11) emphasize the importance of what was previously mentioned in this thesis, which is the regional differences in how to classify shootings. In their statistics, the Gothenburg police only classify the act as a shooting if the weapon that is used fires projectiles with the help of gunpowder, a requirement not used by the police in Malmö. Another aspect to keep in mind which distinguishes Gothenburg from Malmö is that they have certain criteria that witness reports or forensic evidence can corroborate that a shooting has taken place. This evidence based corroboration is not essential in determining whether shootings have taken place or not in Malmö (ibid. 11). Shootings are thus not classified within the same definitional framework in Stockholm & Gothenburg as in Malmö. BRÅ analysed every one of the 260 reports regarding shootings which is the total number of shootings combined in the three regions in 2013, and concluded that a lot of the reported shootings in Malmö were “shootings” with Soft Air Guns and other types of air guns. When BRÅ excluded those numbers from the total amount of reported shootings in Malmö in 2013, only 29 out of 114 reported shootings remained (ibid. 11).

Moreover, BRÅ have concluded that police in Sweden are inconsistent when putting a crime label on a happening that’s involved a shooting (ibid. 12). It is not unusual that

different labels are used to similar events. An example of this is that a shooting against an empty parked car, a home or a facility can be labelled as everything from attempted murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault to vandalism and public endangerment. The crime labels used were also substantially harsher and more serious in 2014 than in 2006. This conclusion further implicates problems regarding analysis of shootings. Also, as this thesis will focus on how news media shapes public notions on shootings, this finding becomes even more interesting as news media tend to use the polices' crime labels in their journalism.

As the figures that are used in the tables above are based on reported shootings, it's important to bear in mind that shootings that were not reported are not included in the calculations (ibid. 13). However, judging from the publicity that shootings attract in the news reporting, they are happenings that do not usually go unnoticed which implies that the dark figures should remain somewhat low.

To say the least, making comparisons concerning shootings between cities/regions presents certain difficulties that sometimes shape the outcome of the results significantly and are too problematic to disregard in an analysis.

1.2 Aim and questions

The aim of this study is to discuss and examine how major newspapers in Sweden such as Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Aftonbladet, Expressen, Kvällsposten, Göteborgs-Posten and Sydsvenskan have portrayed shootings in Malmö during a six-year period (2010-2016) from a discourse perspective. The current thesis is based on the hypothesis that media tends to vilify Malmö by generating a notion that the crime (more specifically shootings) situation is more serious than it actually is in relation to the official numbers. In order to verify or falsify this assumption, this thesis aims to investigate newspaper articles and their contribution in constructing public views on shootings in Malmö. The questions that this thesis will revolve around are the following:

- How frequently were shootings in Malmö reported in the Swedish newspapers in relation to the actual crime rates in 2006 and 2011-2014?

- How do Swedish newspapers depict shootings in Malmö? Can any discourses be identified?

2. Theory - Moral panics

2.1 Definitions

Stanley Cohen has given large contributions on the subject of moral panics. In his anthology *Images of Deviance* (1971) he emphasizes the topic of the media's role in reinforcing or generating attitudes, notions and prejudices. The media acting as "society's mirror and reporter of news and 'facts'" is a simplistic view that Cohen challenges. With his critique, Cohen suggests an extension or development of labelling theory, where criminological studies shouldn't focus only on crime but extend their scope by including studies of norms of deviance. In the same anthology, Young (1971) raises the concept of moral panic and illustrates it with the case of marijuana users in West London. The example shows how the media found newsworthiness in reporting about marijuana users in West London which over-amplified its seriousness and thus gave it a lot of attention. In other words, something that wasn't considered a serious issue got turned into one. The misrepresentation of social problems leads to moral panics and a reinforcement of deviant behaviour. In accordance with labelling theory the media's fantasies become real in their consequences in a process of exaggeration and enforcement of stereotypes. This gives rise to a scenario where it's up to the good - the defendants of social control and cultural values (the police and other authoritarian figures) - to uphold order in a battle against the bad (the deviant classes, the drug users and bohemians). This public hysteria leads to an increase of social control, increase in media coverage surrounding the social problem or the specific group of people and a continuity in stereotyping the "deviants". This process, the aftermath of moral panics, is referred to as deviance amplification and described by Young as a spiral of mutual amplification by both sides involved leading to consequences that become real in practice.

Cohen (2004) defines moral panics as a state that societies find themselves in from time to time. This condition, episode, person or group of persons challenge societal values

and interests by their activities or behaviours and thus come to be seen as threats to the established social order. The issue or subjects in question tend to be given unfair and stereotypical representations by the mass media and the morally divisible line is marked by right-thinking people such as editors, bishops, politicians etc. The process is followed by experts uttering their diagnoses and solutions to the “problem”, ways of coping are evolved or resorted to, the condition disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. The objects of the panics are at times newly founded, but sometimes they have been around for long without attracting the attention needed to upset the morality of a given society. Sometimes the panic is purely episodic and is forgotten in matters of time, except in folklore and collective memory; at other instances it shows to have more serious and long-lasting effects and can lead to such changes within legal or social policy or how society conceives itself (Cohen, 2004:1).

According to Garland (2008:10) the meaning of ‘panic’ should in this case be interpreted in conventional terms as Cohen doesn’t explicitly explain what he means by it. In reference to the OED, panic is ‘a sudden and excessive feeling of alarm or fear, usually affecting a body of persons, and leading to extravagant or injudicious efforts to secure safety’.² As can be told from this definition, the word panic in itself describes the process when societies are subjected to moral panics. Starting with the beginning stages; deviant people or activities are targeted by the media, striking the public with an ‘excessive feeling of alarm or fear’, which further leads on to major efforts (rightful-thinking people giving diagnoses and solutions) to ensure that the problems are fixed by policy-makers.

Goode & Ben Yehuda (1994:33-36) have identified five key features or evolutionary stages that synthesize the concept of a moral panic. It is relatively similar to the description given by Cohen, but grants a more standardized view.

It starts off with (i) concern; a reported activity or happening which fuels anxiety and leads on to (ii) hostility which represents the stage where the subjects in question are portrayed as folk devils by “right-thinkers”. It is primarily at this stage that the mass media is used as the optimal tool for efficiently delivering the message and condemnation from the right-thinkers to society. The third (iii) characteristic is consensus which stands for the collectively unified opinion that has been moulded

² OED – Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd ed.

through the second stage. The fourth (iv) stage of the moral panic process is disproportionality and represents the overreaction to the extent of the conduct or the threat it poses. The last key feature (v) of what constitutes a moral panic is called volatility and stands for the emergence of the mass hysteria in combination with the media's heavy reporting. Goode & Yehuda mean that this episode can be very dramatic and intense but the panic and the attention the certain issue receives can dissipate suddenly too. According to Garland, this representation of moral panics has been highly influential within the studies of the subject. However, he points out that two certain dimensions of the definition are especially relevant in relation the concept developed by Cohen (2008:11). These elements are (i) the moral dimension of the social reaction, more specifically the expectations or the pressure put on society by the media to reflect upon and question the morality of the social problem/group/behaviour in question. The other element which Garland finds to be important is the idea of deviant behaviour to be "symptomatic". To illustrate this point, Garland refers to Cohen's original case study, and explains that society's rightful-thinking actors would never settle for the social problem in question but would always reach beyond it by linking it to other problems (Garland, 2008:11). For this reason, the term symptomatic describes how the social problem in question is only a symptom of a wider set of issues below the surface. The two elements highlighted by Garland above are what tie the true essence of moral panics together; namely the fear from certain social actors that an established set of values are under threat.

Another definition concerning moral panics, which also includes relevant characteristics such as disproportion, exaggeration and alarm, was developed by Hall et. al., (1978: 16). What differentiates this definition from the one introduced by Cohen is that its main emphasis is on the consensual quality of the out-of-proportion social reaction. Hall et. al., (1978: 16) speak of moral panic as when the 'official' reaction to a person, groups of persons or series of events is not proportionate to the threat posed. A moral panic is also signified by when 'experts' such as police chiefs, politicians, the judiciary and editors have different opinions on the threat and speak of the problem in terms of magnitude, diagnoses, anticipations and possible solutions. The media handles the 'problem' or issue at stake by emphasizing the increase in numbers or events of the social phenomena and depict it as a novelty.

Important to note is that the mass media are probably those who benefit the most from episodes of moral panic because of the huge buzz they raise which increases their sale numbers, provides entertainment for readers and generates further news as the story unfolds and provokes reactions from different parties and spokesmen. Additionally, exposing the deviant phenomenon to the limelight may impact it and make it develop which further generates more newswriting. Jock Young (1971) stretches as far as claiming that the commercial media have an “institutionalized need to create moral panics” (Garland, 2008:15).

2.2 What impact do moral panics have and what legacy do they leave behind?

Moral panics' maybe most significant property is that they raise attention and make things happen. Garland (2008:15-16) provides several examples of this, namely the mass imprisonment episode as a consequence of the panic about drugs in America. Also, Garland witnesses a clear trend towards increased levels of social control (supervision and restraint) due to the panic surrounding reoccurring sex offenders during the last decade. Moral panics may often appear to be short-lived but can in many have effects that last long. They can prompt the reorganization of social divisions and redistribute social status in addition to laying foundations of 'infrastructures of regulations and control' in a given society (ibid. 15-16). From my understanding, Garland basically points out how a given episode of moral panics affect the normative features and social classes in a society, and also that it can stimulate changes that transform the reactions from a given episode into institutionalized measures such as laws and regulations.

An important critique that can be raised against moral panics theory is how to distinguish panics based on nonsense and illusions from rational reactions to underlying social problems that deserve increased attention to generate debate and potential changes. Garland (ibid. 15-16) points to the observations of Ian Hacking to illustrate how a social problem like child abuse was highlighted and thus led to normative and social changes during the last couple of decades. Unlike cases where moral panics have been primarily based on more or less unsubstantial claims (satanic ritual abuse in the

U.K, the growth of a drug epidemic in connection to the hippie culture), there are serious social problems that deserve the attention from the media.

Another critique that has been raised against moral panics theory is that there are uncertainties about who earns the legitimacy to decide whether a social reaction is out of proportion or not. Simon Watney (1987) studied the phenomena and concluded that whenever sociologists consider a social reaction being out of proportion, they have relied upon their subjective attitudes and not an objective or scientific reality. The epistemological dilemma that Watney intends to raise is whether the object of concern (the issue causing the moral panic), can ever be interpreted with objectivity or if there are only several different subjective representations (ibid. 22). In the case of this project, I do not examine the social reactions that news media evoke and thus do not have to take a stance on this subject. This study rather focuses on the (attempted) provocation of a social reaction made by the news media.

3. Methods and materials

The method used in this paper is discourse analysis. The reason for choosing the current method is because it suits the objectives of the thesis better than other methodological approaches available. The meaning of this thesis is to investigate how shootings in Malmö are portrayed and to identify the discourses embedded in the newspapers articles which makes discourse analysis a useful tool.

The material in this project is made out of newspaper articles published by Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Aftonbladet, Expressen, Kvällsposten, Göteborgsposten (GP) and Sydsvenskan in the years of 2010-2016. The reason for choosing the four firstly mentioned newspapers is that they had the largest reach among news consumers online in 2015 (TU Medier i Sverige, 2016:7). Sydsvenskan and Kvällsposten qualify as appropriate sources for this project as they are all based in the two cities that the project focuses upon. The material used in the project is downloaded from a database called Retriever Research (Mediearkivet) which is a Nordic online news archive. In order to find the relevant articles needed, key words such as “skjutningar” (shootings), “skottlossning” (gunfire) and “dödsskjutningar” (lethal shootings) in combination with “Malmö” are used. This study does not focus on general shootings in Malmö, rather

solely on shootings in terms of violence such as those that are considered to be aggravated assault, manslaughter, murder or attempted murder. Also, whenever this thesis refers to “the media” it is a reference to the seven newspapers that are examined.

3.1 Discourse analysis and CDA

A discourse can be regarded as a verbal or textual system of how something is spoken of and how cultural and social norms affect the construction of our world and how our normative frameworks are shaped (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002:8-9). To reach a better understanding of what discourse means I include Foucault’s definition of a discourse to clarify the concept, although this study does not intend to primarily rely on this definition. Foucault explains discourses as ‘a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing – the knowledge about a particular topic at a particular historical moment’ (Hall 1992: 291). Discourses are never constructed by single statements, texts or sources. Discourses arise when a characterized way of thinking or a state of knowledge within a given topic appears across a range of texts and at several different institutions within society. When the different statements ‘refer to the same object, share the same style and ... support a strategy ... a common institutional pattern ... or a political drift or pattern’ (ibid. 291), then we can talk of a unified discursive formation according to Foucault. Discourse analysis is characterized by the fact that it focuses more on discursive relations, i.e. forms of linguistic expressions, than on relations between groups. Thus, this makes discourse analysis a study of societal phenomenon where language is at the centre of attention (Bergström & Boréus, 2005:305). This method can take various directions, but what all of the directions have in common is that they agree upon that language is not a clear and easily interpreted reflection of reality but rather a component which contributes to shape it and that they are all systematic studies of discourses (ibid. 305, 307). The concept of discourse has different interpretations and can be put in different contexts (e.g. discourse in linguistic contexts).

For this project, I have chosen to apply the concept of discourse based on the work of Norman Fairclough (Bergström & Boréus, 2005:307). The method/theory developed by Fairclough is known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The definition of discourse developed by Fairclough (1995:7) states that “... discourse is use of language seen as a

form of social practice, and discourse analysis is analysis of how texts work within sociocultural practice”. When investigating and analysing newspaper articles, discourse analysis offers effective strategies to deconstruct texts and to provide contextual insights which otherwise can be difficult to identify. Machin & Mayr (2012:5) claim that CDA is a common tool to analyse news texts and to bring certain underlying agendas to the light which may serve different ideological ends and purposes. The claim further supports the idea that it suits the objectives for this thesis as the aim partly consists of uncovering potential tendencies to exaggerate the crime situation in Malmö. According to Meyer (Wodak & Meyer, 2001:23), there is no a clear-cut and specified way to go regarding data collection in critical discourse analysis. A common procedure is much alike grounded theory where data collection is not considered as a certain phase which needs to be completed before moving on to analyse the results. Rather, after having collected a sample of data it’s a matter of analysing it to identify indicators for particular concepts, expanding these into categories and with the help of the results, point one in the right direction for collecting even more relevant data (ibid, 23). What characterizes this method of collecting data is that as a researcher data-collection is a never-ending process where new samples of data cumulatively constitute new knowledge by raising new questions and giving indications of what to look for.

As Bergström & Boréus (2005:305) mention previously, no matter the direction of the discourse analysis they are all on based on a social constructivist assumption. This view is shared by Machin & Mayr (2012:4) when explaining CDA, as they state that what various pioneers within critical discourse analysis have in common is viewing language as a social-constructivist mean: “language both shapes and is shaped by society”. The use of language in itself is not of a big interest within CDA, the perspective would rather shift its attention to what cultural and social processes and structures are embedded in it and consequently their cause and effect (ibid. 4). A fundamental assumption within CDA is that power relations are discursive, meaning that power is exercised and transmitted through discourses in society. For this reason, we can ‘study how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse’ (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:272). As power is integrated within discourses, Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999:9-10) raise the importance of putting the researcher’s role in the study of discourses under scrutiny. The researcher has to be self-critical and reflexive towards his or her own analysis and

position within the discursive field that he or she is operating within. Another strong argument within CDA is that there is a social world operating outside the boundaries of the discourses. An example of this is the greenhouse effect and political order in a given society, where certain social actors fight to shape the discourse surrounding climate change. Meanwhile corporations with financial interests in the fossil-fuel business argue against the severity of the greenhouse effect, other scientists and environmental organisations try to raise awareness about a catastrophic future that awaits with the current climate situation and bring it to the political agenda. Both parties are fighting to achieve hegemonic status for the ideas they represent within the discursive field in question, so called ideological discursive formations (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999:4). Whenever the ideological discursive formations reach a level of hegemony in a given discursive field, the order becomes natural and unable to question (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999:5).

Finally, the fundamental purpose of the CDA is giving rise to social change by illustrating the impact that discourses have on upholding social injustices (Jørgensen Winther & Phillips, 2000:70).

3.2 CDA as a three-dimensional model and analytical tool

Norman Fairclough's own version of critical discourse analysis is based on a three-dimensional model which I will explain in broad terms to provide a better understanding what this study will revolve around. The model reflects the main purpose of CDA, which is examining the relationship between social structures and discourses. It is built upon text analysis, discourse practice and social practice. I will not make use of every dimension equally as they all do not fully serve the purpose of this study. The reason for choosing Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis is that it provides three points of analytic entries. It allows the researcher to analyse data at different levels which provides different insights. It does not matter which one of the three dimensions one chooses to begin with, since when putting them together at the end of an analysis they are mutually explanatory and together contribute to a big picture (Janks, 1997:1).

The first dimension (micro-level), textual analysis, regards cases where the discourse is analysed in strict linguistic terms as for example when looking at the grammatical structures or the sentence construction (Fairclough, 2010:94). Within textual analysis, the term “text” refers to both written documents but also pictures (semiotics in general). A technique within the text analysis is called “syntax analysis” which basically urges to examine different aspects of sentence constructions. For instance, when examining newspaper articles about shootings in Malmö, I will look at the choice of words (e.g. dramatizing, neglecting) being used to describe the events and if the grammars used differ in any sense. Another concept that suits the aims of this study is *modality*, which is a measure of ideological or political bias embedded in a text. It basically looks at to what extent a certain writer can be tied to a certain content (Bergström & Boréus, 2005:323) and the degree of truth applied to something that is being said. The degree of approval or consent in a statement is measured by affinity. For example, “There are indications that shootings in Malmö have increased which may have an effect on feelings of safety” (low affinity) differs in levels of certainty from “Shootings in Malmö have increased and the city has become unsafe” (high affinity). Statements of low affinity can often be recognised when words such as “well”, “a bit” and “may” are used, i.e. words that indicate a cautious or forethought approach. High affinity is often characterized by statements using words such as “want”, “will”, “need to” etc. According to Fairclough (1992:160), different discourses use different forms of modality. Within the academic or scientific discourses, researchers are wary to make claims that are not backed up by solid data and thus tend to speak in terms of low affinity. On the contrary, the mass media have a tendency to present their own reflections and interpretations as if they were facts, by often using “... categorical modalities and partly by choosing objective rather than subjective modalities (for example, by saying ‘It is dangerous’ instead of ‘We think it is dangerous’). The media’s use of categorical, objective modalities both reflects and reinforces their authority” (Jørgensen & Philips, 2014:85).

Discourse practice is the second dimension (meso-level) of Fairclough’s model, and refers to how texts are produced, distributed and consumed (Fairclough, 2010:94). A tool that has been commonly used as an entry point to investigate how texts are produced within discourse practice is called *intertextuality*. The concept of intertextuality refers to building a web of relations between texts so that no text ever stands in an isolated

position. As the material in this project will be represented by newspaper articles, intertextuality in this case means that I will have to seek for patterns of how different articles are connected and how they are built upon each other; producing and reproducing discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2014:73-74). To look at how texts are consumed (or interpreted) by readers does not contribute to the aims of this study and will thus not be focused upon.

Social practice (macro level) is a term which explains how the relations between text and discourse practices are widened or extended to other discursive practices and non-discourse areas (Fairclough, 2010:95). The main purpose of the dimension of 'social practice' is to contextualize the discourse within the concept of power relations and hegemony. This stage more or less equals a socio-cultural analysis enabling an examination of to which extent the newspapers in Sweden may be influenced in their writings by the economic, cultural, social and political climate. In other terms, Fairclough urges the scientist to put discourses in light of the ideological and hegemonic structures that surround them.

3.3 Criticisms towards CDA

According to several authors within the subject of CDA, one should be wary not to assume CDA to be a method of doing discourse analysis. Rather, in CDA all methods used within the cross-discipline of discourse studies, and in other relevant areas within human and social studies, may be used (Van Dijk, 2015:466). Van Dijk, among many others, would not regard CDA as a separate analytical practice within discourse studies. A better way of explaining CDA would be to call it a critical perspective which infiltrates all types of discursive areas. Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999:16) defend CDA as a methodological approach by claiming that CDA is used to examine and analyse language but as an analytical tool its critical approach is insufficient and needs to be completed by other social theories. Fairclough explains that one should be careful referring to the concept of method as a technique or a "tool from a toolbox" which can be used whenever needed and then put back into the toolbox. Rather, he views CDA as theory as much as a method (Wodak & Meyer, 2001:121), or in other words a theoretical perspective on language and more generally semiosis (which includes visual language,

body language etc.). Critical discourse analysis is a theory and method which stands in a communicative relationship with other social theories and methods. This means that it stands under constant development in regard to how other theories and methods develop which makes it a fairly adaptive theoretical and methodological framework.

4. Previous research involving media, moral panics & labelling using CDA

Leung (2016) conducted a research project to examine the discourses that dominate the news agenda in Hong Kong regarding intimate partner violence (IPV). He concludes that there are certain notions which are reinforced and reproduced in the newspaper reporting, making it difficult for victims and survivors to seek help. The main findings show that the most eminent discourse identified was that the news media implies that the victims or survivors have themselves to blame for IPV and are thus responsible for solving the problem themselves. By using critical discourse analysis as his main approach, analysing the language and text used in newspapers revealed that news reporting in the two popular local newspapers in Hong Kong are perpetuating myths surrounding IPV by "...engendering unequal power relations..." (Leung, 2016:1). The findings also reveal five distinguished discursive frameworks on the reporting of IPV: "... (a) gender symmetry, (b) stereotyping the abuser, (c) labelling the abused, (d) blaming the victim, and (e) ignoring women's rights" (ibid. 1). The study brings powerful, oppressive and discriminating discursive frameworks to the light with the help of a methodological approach suiting the objectives of newspaper discourse investigation. It uncovers ideological purposes that are being served due to the reproduction of certain notions.

Nijjar (2015) used critical discourse analysis in combination with moral panics theory to examine the news reporting of the 2011 English riots in the British newspaper the *Daily Express*. The CDA used was, as in this project, based on the work of Fairclough (1995). One of the key findings was that the newspaper in question made use of two previous moral panics in Britain regarding youth criminality and poor parenting to explain the ongoing riots. In order to portray young people as folk devils of the ongoing social anxieties, the *Daily Express* implemented discourses which vilified them due to

their behaviour and clothing. Moreover, the seriousness of the riots was blown out of proportion by using words such “war” and “mass murder” to intensify the fuss and the depictions of the violent youth that stands as a direct threat to the social order. What the author argues as the most important finding to keep in mind for future research is how previous episodes of moral panics are reinvigorated and drawn on by the news outlets to interpret and explain new episodes of moral collapses and crises (ibid. 1).

5. Implementation

A problematic phase in collecting the newspaper articles was how to choose between those that were relevant for my study and those that weren't. For example, in various instances I found that newspapers at first reported about certain shootings as regular descriptive news that were simply stating what had happened, while a short time later they followed up with debate articles concerning the same shooting. My dilemma in this case was whether to count these two separate articles that addressed the same shooting as one news report or as two. Also, in some instances articles only mentioned shootings very briefly or without giving them too much attention, while at other times the entire articles were centred on the subject of shootings. If I as a researcher were to make the distinctions of which articles focus on and revolve around “shootings” and which only mention them briefly, the results become somewhat influenced by my subjective interpretation. On the other hand, including a too large cluster of articles bears the risk of including articles that appeared due to the fact that they included keywords such as “shootings” and “Malmö” in the same article but only discuss shootings in passing. In cases like this, I decided to include all types of articles that discuss violent shootings in relation to Malmö, even though the same shooting is being reported or discussed twice, because the more attention that shootings are given, the bigger the chance of raising awareness and instigating moral panics. As I had finished with the quantitative part of this study, i.e. counting the hits in the search engine, I moved on to distinguish the material needed to execute the discourse analysis. After going through the whole lot of the articles, they were subdivided into classifications of mere descriptive articles and debate articles. A majority of the articles published were written in mere objective and descriptive measures mainly stating facts such as e.g. who was shot, who did the shooting, when and where. Articles of this kind were not of any use for my critical

discourse analysis and were thus segregated from the rest of the material. The rest of the material that was kept are classified as debate or opinion-forming articles. The reason for keeping those was that they expressed opinions and ideological commitments apart from purely descriptive newswriting. Those are the type of articles that could provide substance and prove fruitful to the aims and questions of this thesis.

6. Results & analysis

This section aims to bind the results together with the methodological and theoretical frameworks. The results will reveal potential discourses identified in the news articles from a CDA perspective. It is also analysed whether potential discourses shaped by the media label and give rise to moral panics regarding shootings in Malmö.

The results are presented in the form of relevant quotations from the articles chosen, followed by brief analytical chapters where relevant concepts discussed in the methods and theory section will be used. This section is also divided into subtitles in accordance with Fairclough's three-dimensional model. In other words, the first element of the three-dimensional model (textual analysis) will be applied to the first question and the second element to the second question etc. The third dimensional aspects will be raised in the discussion section.

6.1 How frequently were shootings in Malmö reported in the Swedish newspapers in relation to the actual rates of shootings in 2006 and 2011-2014?

An interesting observation I made when browsing the Retriever Research search engine was the difference in number of hits when searching for "skjutningar Malmö" (shootings Malmö), "skjutningar Göteborg" (shootings Gothenburg) and "skjutningar Stockholm" (shootings Stockholm). The search only stretched between the years of 2010-2016 since I did not include any articles prior to 2010. Based on the seven newspapers that underpin the results of this thesis, the search including Malmö generated 812 hits while the search on Gothenburg generated 377 hits (Retriever Research, Mediarkivet. 2017-01-17) and 261 hits for Stockholm. This means that there was more than twice as many newspaper

articles published in the database including the keywords “shootings” and “Malmö” than “shootings” and “Gothenburg”. The figure when comparing Malmö and Stockholm is almost four times larger for Malmö than for Stockholm. This finding may not be of much substance and or use for the aim of the project, but can nevertheless serve as a mere indication of the propensity that newspapers have when publishing articles on the subject of shootings in relation to the three big cities. Although it should be raised that the majority of the hits constitutes of articles published by Sydsvenskan and Kvällsposten, which are both based in Malmö. This factor may generate skewed results and will also be illustrated in the table below.

The number of shootings in Malmö during the years 2006, 2011-2014 have been determined by the data collected and compiled by BRÅ. In the table below the number of articles that have been published on Retriever Research (Mediearkivet) during the mentioned years on the subject of shootings in Malmö are presented.

Year/Newspaper	DN	SvD	Aftonbladet	Expressen	Sydsv.	KvP	GP	Total
2006	0	1	0	0	3	1	0	5
2011	1	4	2	0	31	8	0	46
2012	3	9	6	10	38	26	9	101
2013	1	2	1	1	14	9	0	28
2014	1	0	0	2	16	7	1	27
Total	6	16	9	13	102	51	10	

By far, most articles published when conducting a search on database of Retriever Research (Mediearkivet) with the key words “skjutningar Malmö”, come from the two Malmö-based newspapers. The number is especially high for Sydsvenskan. Below I will reconnect to the previous tables that were first introduced in the background section of this thesis in order to compare the number of articles published on the media database and the official statistics on shootings.

Tabell 4. Antal skjutningar och andel av totalt antal skjutningar, efter storstadslän och övriga.

	2006 Antal skjutningar	2014 Antal skjutningar	2006 per 100 000 i befolkningen	2014 per 100 000 i befolkningen
Stockholms län	72	99	3,8	4,5
<i>Stockholms kommun</i>	25	40	3,2	4,4
Västra Götalands län	83	69	5,4	4,2
<i>Göteborgs kommun</i>	46	45	9,4	8,3
Skåne län	51	77	4,3	6,0
<i>Malmö kommun</i>	18	47	6,5	14,8
Övriga län	99	120	2,2	2,6
<i>Övriga kommuner</i>	216	233	2,9	2,9
Totalt	306	365	3,4	3,7

BRÅ, 2015:11

Tabell 5. Antal skjutningar i Stockholms län, po Stor-Göteborg samt po Malmö 2011-2014 enligt polisens lokala sammanställningar.

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Stockholms län	97	46	90	88
Polisområde Stor-Göteborg	48	46	56	50
Polisområde Malmö	140	97	114	122
Summa	285	189	260	260

BRÅ, 2015:11

If one compares these numbers with the numbers on shootings published by BRÅ in table 4 and table 5, the findings show that shootings in Malmö are in general underreported. This is especially the case in table 5 which is based on the official statistics collected by the local police in Malmö, whereas the numbers do not differentiate as much in the comparison with table 4. The reason that the reporting level is highly disproportion in 2012 in relation to the actual shootings rate most likely depends on that the reporting of gun violence in Malmö was given very much attention due to the case of Peter Mangs.

6.2 How do Swedish newspapers depict shootings in Malmö? Can any discourses be identified?

”HAR DU MÄRKT ATT BOMBER OCH SKJUTNINGAR HAR ÖKAT I MALMÖ?”

Högström, Expressen (2015:11)

In the quote above, the title of a newspaper article reads ‘HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT BOMBS AND SHOOTINGS HAVE INCREASED IN MALMÖ?’ in capital letters. The article builds on the fact that the journalist in question asked randomly selected people that very question and published their answers in the article. The title presupposes that shootings have increased in Malmö but does not relate to a specific timeline; it simply states that shootings have increased. It is unclear whether the journalist means that shootings have increased during the last year, the last 10 years or the last 50 years, which makes the title misleading and questionable. The formulation of the question, making an assumption with such a certainty, is a clear-cut example of high affinity. By asking people whether they have taken notice of increased levels of shootings in Malmö, they will probably expect the underlying assumption to be accurate which may as well influence their answer. In other words, it is a leading question.

”Den organiserade kriminaliteten med bombdåd och skjutningar har nästan blivit vardagsmat i Malmö. Oftast handlar det om uppgörelser mellan kriminella gäng, men det är oerhört obehagligt för Malmöborna och polisen menar att det bara är en tidsfråga innan fler enskilda drabbas. Malmö har jobbat en hel del på sitt rykte och har delvis lyckats få bort bilden av att vara en tråkig industristad. Målet är att bli en ung modern stad med intressanta evenemang, med internationellt uppmärksammade stadsbyggnads- och miljöprojekt och att kunna attrahera besökare och företagsetableringar, men bilden av Malmö som farlig stad finns också och påverkar våra möjligheter negativt.”

Sonesson, Kvällsposten (2011:2)

The example above is taken from an article in 2011 and is also written in style of high affinity. It basically says that shootings in Malmö have become normalized and it hurts the city’s reputation in the pursuit of attracting interests from investment companies and becoming a modern city in terms of events and projects. Although shootings mostly

occur in relation to gang affiliation, it causes a lot of discomfort for the residents of Malmö and it's only a matter of time before more civilians are hurt, according to the article. The quote includes assumptions and claims that are written in with a high sense of security about the effects shootings have in Malmö. The form of modality that is used in this instance is known by Jørgensen & Phillips (2014:84) as "truth", indicating that the writer fully commits himself or herself to the statement.

"Malmö. Tala sanning, visa att du bryr dig och fortsätt med vardagen. Så tycker psykologen Lars Olsson att föräldrar ska hantera barnens frågor och oro inför mord och skjutningar i Malmö."

Anjou, Sydsvenskan (2012:5)

The quote above demonstrates that violence and shootings in Malmö have reached the level of being known as an ideological discursive formation according to Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999:4) in the sense that shootings have become an integral part of Malmö and regarded as an unquestionable natural order. The article's aim is, with the help of a psychologist, to guide parents how to cope with their children's questions concerning murders and shootings in Malmö. In accordance with Cohen's (2004) description of moral panics, the consulting of expert opinions to learn about how to deal with social problems is one of the characteristics representative for moral panics.

"Malmö är på många sätt och vis en härlig stad. Malmö är också en laglös stad där man hur lätt som helst kan få tag i vapen."

Hansson, Kvällsposten (2010:28)

"Malmö: Två skjutningar på öppen gata spädde i helgen på Malmös mörka rykte som en stad präglad av våld och kriminalitet."

Hamberg, Göteborgsposten (2012:9-10)

The quotes above are further examples of how news media use objective modalities in their ways of describing shootings and crimes in Malmö. The use of categorical and objective modalities both reflects and reinforces the media's authority (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2014:85). What links both quotes is that the use of high affinity embedded in the style of writing is tangible. The first quote praises Malmö for being a nice city in

many ways, but also calls it a ‘lawless city’ where it’s very easy to get your hand on guns. The second concludes that two shootings in public reinforced the ‘dark’ reputation the city already has for bearing the stamp of ‘violence and crime’. The words within the inverted commas can also be regarded as key words in the constitution of a discourse. Both quotes are also examples of an ideological discursive formation which naturally assumes Malmö to be connected with high levels of criminality. The quotes contribute to grant the idea of shootings being natural in Malmö a hegemonic status within the discursive field of news media (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999:4).

Moreover, the tendency of using objective modalities and writing in styles of high affinity is an ongoing theme across all of the quotes that are presented in the rest of this paper.

6.2.1 Shootings in Malmö are unique and symptomatic of other social problems

Whenever a news outlet at first writes a descriptive news report on a shooting and sticks to the same incident by writing a debate article revolving it shortly after, reminds of a key characteristic that Garland refers to when describing moral panics. It supports the idea that social problems are described as “symptomatic”, by putting the shootings in a broader context in a debate article where the journalist can more freely link the shootings to other problems (Garland, 2008:11). In the debate articles, shootings can be depicted as mere symptoms of larger societal problems embedded in the structures or normative frameworks of society. An example of this is demonstrated in the introduction to a debate article in Aftonbladet below:

”... Bråken i anslutning till fotbollen måste tas på allvar, men är bara ett tecken på det ökade våldet i hela vårt samhälle. Jämför exempelvis den gängkriminalitet som medfört hundratals skottlossningar och flera dödsoffer de senaste åren i Malmö och Göteborg.”

Nordström, Aftonbladet (2014:7)

The quote highlights that violence among football supporters is just a sign of the general expansion of violence in our society. The journalist refers to ‘hundreds of shootings’ in Malmö and Gothenburg when exemplifying. A similar example of the “symptomatic” tendencies when reporting about shootings follows below in an article from Svenska Dagbladet (SvD):

”... Återigen brinner bilarna i . De senaste åren har staden med gängskjutningar och stora sociala problem fått ryktet som Sveriges Chicago ... Samtidigt i augusti 2016 toppar Malmö åter löpsedlarna. Och som så ofta handlar det om något negativt. Är det inte om skjutningar, som vintern 2012, så är det om dåliga skolresultat eller problem med segregation, trångboddhet och arbetslöshet. Malmö används av vissa som exempel på hur mångkulturen har misslyckats, hur stan är på väg ner i en gigantisk konkurs med laglöshet och sönderfall som resultat... Ett litet Chicago, men på skånska... Rubrikerna om Malmö har under de senaste åren varit nattsvarta. Låg skolrankning, näst lägst förvärvsfrekvens i landet, gängskjutningar, hög andel invånare på försörjningsstöd, rekordhög ungdomsarbetslöshet...”

Olsson, Svenska Dagbladet (2016:8-10)

The quote says that Malmö often tops the billboards but just as often the headlines are negative. It also says that the headlines regarding Malmö have been ‘pitch-black’ in the last couple of years and is heading towards a ‘gigantic bankruptcy’ resulting in ‘lawlessness and fragmentation’. If the billboards don’t highlight the shootings in Malmö, they write about the city’s bad school results, segregation, unemployment, many living off welfare benefits, the failure of multiculturalism and more. It is a signature mark for the classic ‘it’s not just this...’ before suggesting other related problems and making broader claims. This is one of the main points discussed by Cohen, i.e. linkages of social problems as a characteristic of moral panics instigation (Garland, 2008:11). The quote also reminds the reader of the infamous name that Malmö has acquired over the years, ‘a small Chicago’. The moniker is a reference to Malmö being the Swedish counterpart to Chicago in USA in terms of criminal levels.

”Hårdare straff för vapenbrott är dock inte hela lösningen, det måste till fler insatser. Vi måste lösa frågan med arbetslöshet, trångboddhet och utanförskap i utsatta områden för att komma åt orsaken till problematiken.”

Olsson, Malmö måste ta sitt ansvar, Kvällsposten (2012:2)

In this debate article from Kvällsposten (2012), a politician from the political party Moderaterna discusses statements made by the social democratic politician Ilmar Reepalu who argued that harsher punishments for possession of illegal firearms would improve the situation in Malmö. Olsson moves away from harsher punitive measures and links shootings to social problems such as unemployment, segregation and overcrowding. This point is a recurring theme within debate articles on the subject of shootings in Malmö.

”... Dödsskotten i Malmö hör ihop med den fattigdom och sociala isolering som finns i staden. Men den organiserade brottsligheten växer i Sverige och viktigast akut är att strypa tillgången på skjutvapen, enligt kriminologen Jerzy Sarnecki.

- Det gäller att plocka av gangstrarna så många vapen som möjligt, säger han. Den senaste tidens ansamling av dödliga skottlossningar i Malmö är unik, konstaterar kriminologiprofessor Jerzy Sarnecki, även om till exempel Stockholm, Göteborg och Södertälje också känt av väpnade uppgörelser bland kriminella.”

Palmkvist, Svenska Dagbladet (2012:12)

In the quote above there is another example of linkages between shootings in Malmö and social problems, where the journalist has consulted a professor within criminology to get an expert opinion. The consulting of an expert, or ‘right-thinking people’, to diagnose and provide solutions to a social problem is also apparent in this case which a key characteristic of the moral panics process is. The professor in this case also calls the situation in Malmö “unique”, which reminds of the point made by Hall et. al., (1978: 16) that a social phenomenon is depicted as a novelty. By having an expert in the subject concluding the shooting situation in Malmö as different to or unlike other similar situations, it leaves the reader with questions unanswered and provides a feeling mysteriousness to it which further instigates newsworthiness.

”Ett tiotal dödsskjutningar har skakat Malmö bara det senaste året. Nu vill Beatrice Ask skärpa vapenlagarna.

Justitieministern var i går i Malmö för att diskutera lösningar på gängkriminaliteten och det senaste årets dödsskjutningar. Och Beatrice Ask pressades hårt av polis och kommunpolitiker.

- Problemen i Malmö är exceptionella, sade Ask efter mötet och lovade en utredning om skärpta vapenlagar skriver DN.”

Reuterskiöld, Expressen (2012:18)

The quote above yet again conforms with the moral panics theoretical point about the consultation and condemnation from “right-thinking people”, in this case the former Swedish attorney general Beatrice Ask. As Garland (2008:10) states, after the deviant conduct or incidents have been targeted by the media, pressure is put on policy-makers to ensure interventions are made and problems get fixed. Ask speaks of Malmö the problems in Malmö as ‘exceptional’ and promises to evaluate if gun laws can be tightened up. The usage of the word ‘exceptional’ indicates rarity or anomaly, which is consistent with previous quotations that label Malmö as a ‘unique case’.

6.2.2 The normalization of shootings and the threat of contamination against decent people & places

The normalization of shootings in Malmö is maybe the most apparent discourse that the examination of articles has come up with. To avoid confusion, it is important to note that the term “normalization” used in this thesis does not refer to the concept used by Foucault.³ In this thesis, ‘normalization’ simply refers to a happening/behavior/action that has become so frequent that society regards it as a normal circumstance.

In several quotes ‘right-thinking people’ or experts emphasize how it’s purely coincidental or lucky that innocent people haven’t been hurt by the shootings. This discursive formation also reflects the threat of contamination, i.e. that shootings and crimes are increasingly contaminating parts of society and social life that have historically been protected from it. The core of moral panics is at stake here, as the articles attempt to alarm the public about how a set of established values or lifestyles are being threatened. The examples below will illustrate these points.

³ Foucault discusses the concept of normalization in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) as a process in the context of disciplinary power to create an idealized norm of conduct built on reward and punishment.

”Skottlossningar sker inte bara i skumma gränder sedan mörkret fallit. Kriminella avlossar i större utsträckning än tidigare sina vapen i fullt dagsljus och på platser där förbipasserande riskerar att skadas...

- Det är rena slumpen att ingen oskyldig träffats.

Ekmark, Sydsvenskan (2012:10)

The first quote more or less sums up the main content of the quotes presented in the current section. It points to how the criminal element of society has moved closer to and infringed upon the world of ordinary civilians. Not only do shootings only occur after nightfall anymore, but shootings in broad daylight have increased where bypassing people might get hurt. The current point refers to the discourse of the normalization of shootings in Malmö. The quote ends with the statement of a highly ranked police officer saying that it's purely coincidental that innocent people haven't gotten hurt yet.

”Rådet jag får: Kliv inte ur bilen

I Seved i Malmö härskar våldet på gatorna -människor är rädda och polisen syns inte till
En ung man går på en gata i och talar om rädsla. I våras var det skottlossning utanför hans lägenhet. Pang, pang, pang, tystnad, en ny salva... Varför måste denne unge man vara rädd? Den unge mannen har personligen inte blivit hotad, inte alls. Hans rädsla handlar om en stad som tycks falla sönder runt honom, bomberna som exploderat i området, skjutningar... En Malmöbo säger att jag inte bör gå ur bilen på Rasmusgatan i Seved. Det är första gången jag i Sverige varnas för att röra mig i ett visst område.”

Kadhammar, Aftonbladet (2015:18-19)

The quote from Aftonbladet focuses on the subject of fear of living in Malmö. The headline of the article comes from that a random residential from Malmö advises the journalist against stepping out of his car in Seved, Malmö. The article describes a young man who scared by the fact that the city he resides in seems to ‘crumble around him, the bombs that have exploded, the shootings’. In the extension of labelling theory, Young (2009:4, 6) argues that the media's fantasies become real in their consequences in a process of exaggeration and enforcement of stereotypes. When newspapers claim that people are scared, moral panics theory would argue that people will get scared. In reference to Young, by dramatizing the situation in Malmö with the current headline and the colourful portrayal of a crumbling city, the situation gets exaggerated and the stereotype of the dangerous Malmö gets reinforced. The writer claims that it is the first

time that he has been warned of a certain area in Sweden. By mentioning this, the situation is further dramatized as the case of Malmö is being depicted as unique.

”SKOTTEN GICK RAKT IN I BARNRUMMET

MALMÖ. Mitt i natten utbröt skottlossning i det lugna bostadsområdet. Ett av skotten trängde rakt in genom fönstret till ett sovrum där två små flickor bor.

- Det är klart det känns läskigt, säger barnens mamma.

Skottlossningen i det lugna bostadsområdet Gula Höja på Västra Skrävlingevägen i natten mot söndag kunde ha krävt liv. Flera skott avlossades, till synes vilt och utan hänsyn till att människor rörde sig i området.”

Andersson, Kvällsposten (2014:8-9)

In the introduction to the news report on a shooting, the writer in this article highlights that the shooting occurred in a ‘calm neighborhood’ and that one of the shots went through the window of the rooms where ‘two small girls live’. Shortly thereafter, it is again emphasized that Gula Höja is a “quiet neighborhood” and that several lives could have been lost as multiple gunshots were fired in a ‘wild manner and without respect for people that were moving around in the area’. The luck-factor reveals itself again as the fact that innocent bypassing people could have been hurt gets reported. By constantly repeating that the residential area is usually a ‘calm’ one, it’s an implication that crime doesn’t belong there and that crime is thus a threat to the set of values representing Gula Höja. The social problem of shootings have now extended its scope and found its ways to residential areas that have historically been unthreatened and safe for normal people.

”... Luttrade Malmöbor har med åren vant sig vid den våldsamma brottsutvecklingen. Gängkrig, sprängningar, skjutningar, brandattentat, knivdåd och mord. Vi har stålsatt oss för att fortsätta tycka om vår stad. Trivas i den. Känna trygghet. Vi har skakat av oss omvärldens svartsyn och deras öknamn på vår stolta kommun – Sveriges Chicago. Vi har fnyst åt tjänstemän och byråkrater i Stockholm som pekat på siffror och låtsats trösta oss med att inte alls toppar landets brottsstatistik. Vi misstror politiker och beslutsfattare som kommit med sina teorier och modeller vars främsta syfte tycks vara att framhäva sig själva och sitt partis, sin myndighets förträfflighet och skenbara handlingskraft. Vi har kämpat mot arbetslöshet, segregation, bostadsbrist, etniska och religiösa motsättningar. Men vi älskar vår vackra, levande och dynamiska stad. Fast det finns en

gräns, en smärtgräns. Många unga familjer i stadskärnan kom en bra bit närmare den gränsen i går eftermiddag. Jag råkade befinna mig i området och talade med ett par småbarnsföräldrar som bor i närheten av brottsplatsen på Amiralsgatan. De passerar dagligen gatorna där polisens efterföljande jagade fram. "Vågar vi bo kvar här? " "Finns det någon säker framtid för våra barn i den här gangstermiljön? ", var deras spontana reaktioner."

Klint, Kvällsposten (2015:10-11)

The article begins by pointing out how shootings and violence have become normalized in Malmö and that the residents of the city have gotten used to it being a natural part of their everyday lives. This has been a prominent theme in the majority of the debate articles that have been examined, which indicates that the ideological discursive framework has obtained a hegemonic status where the news media portray the situation as shootings belong to the natural order of life in Malmö. As presented in a previous article, Malmö is once again named 'the Swedish Chicago', although the article in question means that the label has been washed away but risks coming back. In agreement with one of Garland's (2008:11) crucial points in moral panic theory, the tendency to bring other social problems to the light once again resurfaces (the symptomatic quality).

"Lars Klint: Rädslan sprider sig – och rotar sig i Malmö

Ingen går säker ... Ingen zon är fredad ... Malmöborna är luttrade, oroade, framför allt förbannade. I de mest utsatta områdena sprider sig rädslan, och rotar sig fast. Polismästare Stefan Sintéus är bekymrad: - Deras beteende är så pass hänsynslöst att det finns en viss risk för tredjeman, sa han till Kvällsposten tidigare i veckan... Sprängningar och eldstrider är vardagsmat för Malmöborna. Förövarna går fria... Man vet bara att allt fler unga män ur de breda rekryteringslagren lättare får tillgång till allt farligare vapen, nu senast handgranattrenden. Och att de allt mer obekymrat, lättvindigt och skoningslöst är beredda att använda dem för att skrämmas, för att skada. För att döda. Politikerna bär förstås ett stort ansvar för misslyckandet, för segregation och utanförskap..."

Klint, Kvällsposten (2015:9)

The quote above incorporates several analytical dimensions that deserve to be raised. From the micro-dimensional perspective, the wording sets a dramatic tone ('no areas are safe', 'they ruthlessly aim to kill' etc.) and shows signs of a language characterized by an objective modality and high affinity (the fear is spreading, firefights are commonplace, they shoot to kill etc.). The discursive frameworks that have been raised

in this chapter are both imminent as the writer claims that explosions and shootings are happen on a daily basis in Malmö. Secondly, the journalist points to an expert or 'right-thinking person' within the subject who reaffirms that the ruthlessness of the criminals bears the risk of involving innocents. In connection to the previous section, the article also dooms the politicians for the failure of other social policies in the context of shootings such as 'segregation and alienation' (indicating that shootings are symptomatic of other social problems).

”Lars Klint: Våldet kryper allt närmare vanligt, hederligt folk. Inte nu igen.

Rosengård, Seved, Kroksbäck, Söderkulla. Bara de senaste skådeplatserna för det galna våldet i Malmö. Men bombdåd, mordbränder och skottlossningar inträffar i stort sett över hela stan. Och har en otäck tendens att krypa allt närmare vanligt, hederligt folk. Det är rena tillfälligheter som gjort att inga oskyldiga hittills fallit offer för de kriminella gängens senaste eldstrider och sprängattentat på öppen gata.”

Klint, Kvällsposten (2015:11)

The third quote from the third article by the same journalist working for Kvällsposten, grants a dramatic title saying that the 'violence closes in on normal, decent people'. The statement goes under the discursive formation of 'the threat of contamination', as the writer expresses fear of the threat that the violence may contaminate areas where normal and decent people reside. The 'crazy violence' in Malmö unfolds in all parts of the city and it is 'purely coincidental' that no innocent people have been victimized by the criminal gangs shootings and explosions. Once again, the luck-factor of the bullets missing ordinary civilians is raised but stands as a constant warning of that it should occur at any moment.

‘Den organiserade kriminaliteten med bombdåd och skjutningar har nästan blivit vardagsmat i Malmö. Oftast handlar det om uppgörelser mellan kriminella gäng, men det är oerhört obehagligt för Malmöborna och polisen menar att det bara är en tidsfråga innan fler enskilda drabbas...’

Sonesson, Kvällsposten (2011:2)

”HÄR ÄR SKOTTEN EN DEL AV VARDAGEN

■ ■ Malmö - en öppen, internationell och välkomnande storstad? Eller våldsamt, beväpnad och hård? Boende i Lindängen lever med våldet omkring sig: "Folk måste få utlopp och stimulans"

Malmö. Sprängningar och skjutningar har blivit vardag i Malmö. Det har blivit en del av vardagen för många Malmöbor.”

Salihu, Kvällsposten (2015:26-27)

The (partial) quote by Sonesson (KvP, 2011) from the previous section is yet again relevant as it incorporates the discourse of normalization of shootings and that shootings still coincidentally do not reach innocents. In the quote by Salihu (2015), the headline reads “HERE THE SHOTS ARE PART OF THE EVERYDAY LIFE” in capital letters. As it refers to a certain area it creates a dividing line between that part of society and the rest of it. It also links to the discourse that have been identified earlier in this section about how shootings are becoming normalized in Malmö.

”Malmö duckar för skott

Efter alla skjutningar i Malmö. i kan det vara lätt att bli avtrubbad. Men att se grova brott som vardag vore verkligt farligt.

Polisen sökte på söndagen efter en mörk BMW som setts i samband med dödsskjutningen vid köpcentret Mobilia. Andra sökte snarare svaren på varför det grova våldet så ofta hemsöker. Säkert inte minst de personer som blev vittnen till dådet på lördagen. Och många tänkte: jag kunde ha blivit träffad. Av vittnesmålen att döma var det ren tur att ingen förbipasserande skadades. Det beskrivs hur maskerade män avlossade 10-20 skott på den fyllda parkeringen. En förlupen kula sägs ha gått rakt igenom en bil, barnfamiljer sökte skydd i närliggande butiker och flera vittnen chockades. Men Malmö stad såg ingen anledning att sätta in någon stödgrupp. Pressavdelningen förklarar att krisberedskapen bara sätts in "i riktiga krissituationer när det händer större saker". Det kan läsas som att det i Malmö 2015 inte nödvändigtvis ses som en stor sak när någon skjuts till döds med tiotals skott mitt bland en massa människor... ”

Rehquist, Sydsvenskan (2015:4)

The quote above reproduces the same discursive features as previously by pointing out that the city council of Malmö shrugs off shootings as violence has become normalized. In the event described where a man was shot to death, the pure luck of innocents not becoming victimized is yet again emphasized.

”Häromdagen fick jag en hälsning från en vän som jobbar i Asien. Han läser Kvällsposten på nätet och han undrar vad som "hänt med det vackra fina Sverige, det råder ju rena Vilda Västern". Vänner förfäras över den brottslighet som råder i Malmö, där rån, skjutningar och misshandel hör till vardagen. Jag måste erkänna att jag blivit något hårdhudad de senaste åren. Jag reagerar inte längre instinktivt på allt det skit som händer i rikets tredje största stad. Det märkliga är att den galopperande brottsligheten tycks vara något som politikerna inte vill tala högt om...”

Hansson, Kvällsposten (2013:15)

The quote above is a recurring example of how journalists express themselves with an undertone of hopelessness and depravity. The journalist begins to make his point by referring to a friend of his who works in Asia who is disturbed by what ‘beautiful Sweden has turned into, it’s the pure Wild West’. The author of the article also writes that he ‘has to admit’ that he’s ‘gotten thick skin’ throughout the years, not even ‘instinctively reacting to all the shit that happens’ in the third biggest city of Sweden.

7. Discussion: How can an exaggeration of the seriousness of crime in Malmö be interpreted and what consequences may it have?

The third dimensional aspect of CDA, ‘social practice’, is evaluated in this section. The approach urges the researcher to examine how discourses are widened or extended to other discursive practices and non-discourse areas, and to identify what certain political currents can influence discourses in question (Fairclough 2010:95).

In one instance a journalist from Aftonbladet confirms the newsworthiness that shootings in Malmö bring by problematizing why the news media haven’t highlighted the progress that the city of Malmö has been making:

Nu hör det dock till saken att Gerell även i fjol bloggade om tystnaden som omgärdade utvecklingen av antal anmälda brott i "Sveriges Chicago". Den gången orkade knappt ens lokalpressen göra någonting annat än att gäspa. Jag skrev om kriminologens observation, Medierna i P1 spann vidare

och nyhetschefer och chefredaktörer som intervjuades harklade sig, erkände misstag och lovade bot och bättring. En uppräckning som uteblev. Det journalistiska intresset av att nyansera bilden av en stad som är kloaksajtarnas favoritexempel på invandringens ohyggliga konsekvenser fortsätter att vara närmast obefintligt. Det är mycket dystert.

Cantwell, Aftonbladet (2016:26)

Cantwell points out that whenever chief editors and news directors were asked about under-reporting positive crime news about Malmö they promised future improvements which haven't shown to be the case. The article leads in on the third dimensional aspect of CDA, which is uncovering sociopolitical currents that influence the dominant discourses. The article highlights that declining levels of crime don't interest the news agenda and that if it did, it would nuance the views given by right-wing political websites that blame immigration policies for crime levels in Malmö. A potential marginalization of positive news on crime levels in Malmö can be explained as that it conflicts with the dramatic and intimidating image that has been portrayed by the newspapers themselves. If the current depiction of Malmö as a violent city haunted by shootings generates more readers, it may not be in the economic interest of news agencies to contradict that picture.

The discourse of normalization confirms the point made by Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999:5), the discourse has reached a hegemonic status which in practice has made it unquestionable. The statements made on the normalization of shootings in Malmö are firmly made in the nature of an objective modality and with high affinity.

Reminding the public of the threat of contamination reproduces the notion of contamination in which the media contributes to the instigation of a moral panic. The threat of contamination factor may also lead to a division within society, giving rise to a 'we against them' scenario. It supports an assumption that segregation is a good thing in which 'normal' and 'decent' people can keep a distance to criminals and shootings (the origins of contamination). It supports a view which would argue that it is better if the shootings stay in the parts of Malmö that are typically characterized by low socioeconomic status and where the criminals reside. The notion of segregation being a positive thing for the public good can prompt certain ideological or political ideas. By taking Cantwell's (2016) example, if immigrants do get blamed for criminality in Malmö on far-right wing forums it may influence and reproduce ideological ideas which

would mean disadvantages for immigrants. The shootings can thus be explained as an example of the failed immigration and integration policy (see Olsson, 2016:8-10) and the failure of the political idea of multiculturalism. Whichever social group with specific social, cultural and economic characteristics that gets scapegoated for shootings in Malmö would become exposed to labelling and stigmatization according to moral panics theory. The stereotyping of the “deviant” group would lead to a ‘spiral of mutual amplification’, where the consequences in the battle between the guardians of the social order and the deviant group become real in practice. Putting it differently, in the situation where a certain social group are portrayed as the folk devils behind the shootings, the stigmatization would lead to more offending. Although in contrary to moral panics theory, deviance amplification hasn’t really been the case in Malmö based on the local police departments own numbers saying that shootings have remained relatively stable between 2011-2014. Unfortunately, as stated earlier, the official statistics are unreliable due to the different criteria in classifying shootings. Additionally, the news articles examined do not point out a certain social group responsible or associated with the shootings other than ‘criminals’. It should also be noted however, that labelling theorists like Cohen and Young were mostly talking about deviance, minor delinquency and ‘victimless’ offences rather than hard-core crime. Their critique of an exaggerated moral reaction was directed primarily towards shallow-end phenomena such as soft drug use, sexual deviance, and juvenile offending rather than to murder, rape or robbery (Garland, 2008:19-20). It would be difficult to categorize shootings as victimless crimes (even though shootings are not always aimed towards people), which could be an argument for claiming that moral panics theory is not entirely suitable for examining this issue.

As a consequence of the (perceived) increase in shootings, the political discourse has been affected which has led to legislative changes. As raised in the article by Reuterskiöld (Expressen, 2012:18), from which a quote is presented in section 6.2.1 on page 25, the general attorney of Sweden promised to start an investigation to make the legislation on gun crimes harsher as a direct consequence of shootings in Malmö. Within two years, the government published documents suggesting ways to change the gun laws and increase the punishment on several points on gun possession.⁴ Some alterations

⁴ The government’s official investigations: SOU 2012:85, SOU 2013:7, SOU 2014:7, Prop. 2013/14:226&, www.regeringen.se

in the existing gun laws were made, among others the punishment for “serious weapon felony” was raised from a minimum of at least six months to one year imprisonment (Lag (2014:894). For “extremely serious weapon felony” the minimum sentence has been raised to three-six years of prison time (Lag (2014:894). Legal adjustments have also been made regarding attempting, preparing or plotting to commit weapon felonies that are considered serious or extremely serious which have made the sentences harsher Lag (2016:513). Cohen (2004:1) argues that sometimes the (moral) panic is purely episodic and is forgotten in matters of time, except in folklore and collective memory; at other instances it shows to have more serious and long-lasting effects and can lead to such changes within legal or social policy or how society conceives itself. The intensification of the Swedish gun laws as a consequence of shootings in Malmö can according to Cohen be interpreted as a process where the moral panic has given long-lasting effects which have led to changes within legal and social policy. Arguably, an increase in shootings have led to a shift in the political and thus the legal discursive fields in Sweden.

8. Conclusions

The discourses that are identified in the news articles examined are the symptomatic feature of shootings, the normalization of shootings and the threat of contamination against decent people & places.

The symptomatic feature of shootings is a reoccurring theme within the articles and it problematizes Malmö as a city by linking the issue of shootings the other social problems. By using the classical moral panics rhetoric “It’s not only this, it’s also...”, the indication is that the shootings are only scratching the surface of the true socio-structural problems of the city.

The normalization of shootings is maybe the most frequent discourse identified. In summary, the journalists acknowledge shootings as a problem which has become an integral part of the everyday life in Malmö.

The threat of contamination against decent people and places is a discourse which talks of how the overall risk for “normal” and decent people to get shot have increased. It’s not only criminals that are affected by the “increase in shootings”, but shootings now have found their way to places where ordinary people reside or go. The current

discourse can be found supportive of the idea of segregation in society which would lead to stigmatization and labelling of certain social groups.

What is important to note about the conclusions of this thesis is that they do not aim to belittle or ridicule the fear of shootings in Malmö or any given society; on the contrary it is a subject that deserves attention as it's a serious issue which shouldn't be neglected. The real conclusions of this thesis rather indicate that one should remain reflexive and critical of news media representations and how they instigate moral panics, thus produce and reproduce the discourses which influence our ways of conceptualizing the social world. A central implication from this project is that future research is needed on the subject of how data regarding shootings is collected by the police in order to conduct research similar to this. There is a need of uniformity within the police regarding how to define and classify shootings in order to make it easier to conduct research that compares shootings across the nation. This would reflect a fairer representation of the actual statistics and thus decrease the risk of misinterpreting the numbers. The media would thus be able to give more of a just view of the situation on shootings to the public.

The articles that have been analysed have been taken from the opinion-forming sections of the newspapers. Based on the quotes that have been presented and analysed, it is prominent that it is seldom reported which sources the journalists use to get a hold of their information which they later base their claims on. This fact makes it even more worrying that the articles are written in the styles of objective modalities and high affinity. One of the main findings of this thesis is also that the different newspapers examined write in different set of styles. Noticeably, a clear majority of the quotes used to identify discourses have been taken from Kvällsposten or Sydsvenskan. A large share of the articles published by the other newspapers included were written in a descriptive and neutral fashion and thus of no use for the discourse analysis part. The opinion-forming articles published by Kvällsposten and Sydsvenskan are characterized by journalism of objective modalities and high affinity. What binds these two newspapers together is that they both have their stationary editorial offices in Malmö. Kvällsposten also confirm that their target audience is the south of Sweden (Kvällsposten, 2013). It was also interesting to note that several of the quotes highlighted in the results section are taken from articles written by the same journalists. This fact challenges the view that

news media in and of itself ‘have an institutionalized need to create moral panics’ (Garland, 2008:15), it may just suggest that some journalists do.

By reconnecting to the process of how moral panics evolve according to Ben & Yehuda (1994:33-36), some of the five steps that they describe are more apparent than others. The journalists behind the debate articles that are written on the subjects of shootings in Malmö show ‘concern’ and tend to speak for the concern of the public as well. The second stage which represents that ‘hostility’ is shown towards the deviant group or phenomenon is not as apparent as the first stage. The journalists are not hostile in their language or portraying the criminals of Malmö as the enemy (ibid. 34), they rather write in a tone of hopelessness or desolation. The third stage which is called “consensus” is characterizing for all the journalism that have been examined. Not only do the different journalists agree on the magnitude of the problem, but also quote police chiefs, academics, politicians or civilians who conform to the same ideas. This way, a unified front is established towards the threat. In all cases the shootings are condemned or given a status that they represent a ‘unique’ situation and thus Malmö gets labelled as ‘unique’. Disproportionality is the fourth stage and a very essential one as the whole foundation of moral panics theory relies on the idea that the social reaction is disproportionate or exaggerated towards the actual threat being posed. By strictly comparing the number of shootings reported in the news media and the official numbers on shootings in Malmö, the conclusion would say that they are under-reported. Initially, one could argue that this finding contradicts the hypothesis that newspapers are actively instigating moral panics by exaggerating the seriousness when reporting shootings in Malmö. However, this is the case under the assumption that every shooting should generate a newspaper article which evidently is not the case. In many instances more than one shooting is mentioned and discussed in one article, as presented in the quotes under section 6.2.1 and 6.2.2. Also, attempting to instigate moral panics can be done in other ways than by over-reporting the magnitude of a social phenomenon. This is a point of the thesis which reveals a limitation in CDA, where I as the researcher have to subjectively assess whether the low amount of articles can still have the quality to instigate moral panics. In this instance, it is admittedly a fair point made by Watney (1987:22) about the epistemological dilemma that the researcher cannot fully escape its subjectivity when applying moral panics perspective. The quality of a fewer amount of debate articles may lead to a greater impact on gaining attention than a quantitatively larger amount of

articles that lack the same opinion-forming qualities as debate articles. On the basis of several of the quotes, the journalists use a very dramatic terminology in their production and reproduction of discourses. Although this is not sufficient empirical material for this thesis to conclude that news media do give rise to moral panics in relation to shootings in Malmö. What can be said from a CDA and moral panics perspective is that the articles that this thesis has examined do include several of the features which conform to moral panics theory and reproduce certain discourses which have been identified.

The fifth and last concept in the moral panics hierarchy by Goode & Yehuda (1994) is volatility and speaks of the episodic nature of moral panics; they dissipate as quickly as they erupt. By looking at the quantitative data from the tables presented under section 6.1, the reporting in relation to amount of shootings have remained more or less steady, except for the year of 2012. This finding contradicts the concept of volatility and instead supports the idea that shootings in Malmö are not episodic in Swedish news reporting but have grown into something of a fortified topic on the news agenda.

The threat of contamination is heavily reported and is a strong factor in the reproduction of discourses regarding shootings in Malmö. In various articles the journalists emphasize that the shootings are becoming larger threats to our 'normal' and 'decent' communities and thus to our set of values. This point reflects moral panics theory quite fittingly as all moral panic theorists mentioned in the theory section are in agreement about this. Closely linked to the threat of contamination is the opinion that shootings have become normalized and are an integral part of everyday life in Malmö. The newspaper articles in question do also accord with the two important points made by Garland; the newspapers emphasize the 'moral dimension of the social reaction' and in many instances argue for the symptomatic nature of the shootings. Although in agreement on many points of moral panics theory, the unreliable measures of the recorded official statistics on shootings make it hard to determine how shootings stand in comparison to news reporting. What can be said in certainty is that there are journalists, mainly employed by *Sydsvenskan* and *Kvällsposten*, who write on shootings in Malmö with several characterizing features of moral panics theory. Whether this has actually resulted in moral panics cannot be told from this thesis; that would require an examination of how people are affected by the journalism in the current news articles. It would serve as an extension of the current thesis and a suggestion for future research.

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