



# Policing as Politics and Market in Sweden

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## Policing as Politics and Market in Sweden

- Policing as an activity performed, and a responsibility given to and held, by public, private and civil society actors.
- Policing as politics as governmental politics as well as policies and practices in local communities.
- A considerable gap in Sweden between the hesitant and anxious national politics of policing and the enabling local politics of policing.
- In Sweden there is an increasing public procurement based quasi-market for policing services.
- This is a type of community-level marketization of policing. Major decisions taken in/by municipal councils and by local public sector institutions.



# Marketisation of Policing in Sweden and Barriers to It

An apprehensive and anxious national politics of policing

“Why are the responsibilities of the different policing actors never discussed? Why does the public police continue performing tasks that are essentially non-police in nature? Is that about some kind of divine order willed by God himself, or what?”

(the spokesperson for a Swedish security industry interest organization)



# Marketisation of Policing in Sweden and Barriers to It

Can private sector policing services be provided for the common (public) good?

”it is not in our culture to look for co-operation with the private security industry.... To talk about privatization of the police, the military, or the prison system in Sweden is to engage in a highly sensitive topic. Right now we are just trying to put ourselves on the map, explain that we exist, tell about what we do, and make the point that we actually take responsibility.... We contribute to the good of society.”

(a security industry expert at the Swedish security-sector employers' association)



# Marketisation of Policing in Sweden and Barriers to It

- Significant political and administrative opposition and legal obstacles to marketization of policing
- There have nevertheless been clear developments towards an actually increasing marketization of policing in Sweden
- The story begins in the 1990s...



## An Anxious Politics of Policing in Sweden

- Problem: Public policing is a **finite resource**
- Solution 1: Buying private sector policing services?
- Solution 2: Selling public policing services?
- A new national crime prevention programme: law and order in society is "*everyone's responsibility*"
- Refining the responsibilities of the police through private security inclusion – "*the private security model*" (a solution never implemented)
- The introduction of voluntary (civilian) policing



## Private Security Industry Lobbying for a Division of Labour in Policing

- 2013: *SäkerhetsBranschen*, aims for "a more safe and secure Sweden" and for member companies to "act responsibly".
- Core tasks of the Police: protecting the public in emergency situations, responding to emergency calls, and investigating serious crimes
- Succeeded in pressuring the country's government into initiating yet another official investigation (in 2014) about division of labour in policing.
- The investigation was subsequently shelved



# Community-Level Marketisation of Policing

- Increasing marketization at the level of local communities. (1) Local police departments selling their services. (2) Municipalities are buying private sector policing services:
  - To carry out foot patrols in city centres, city districts and in public transportation systems in major cities
  - To patrol and secure government and administrative buildings, the parliament building, court buildings, city council meetings, the police headquarters, airports and shipping ports, local social services offices, accommodation units for homeless and asylum-seekers...
  - To investigate crimes
- The exact extent of this community-level marketization is unknown





## Community-Level Marketisation of Policing

- Examples illustrative of this process and its scope:
- Stockholm: Buying a comprehensive security concept ('Safe City')
- Landskrona and Luleå: Buying foot patrols
- Karlshamn: Buying crime investigations



# Recent Window of Opportunity for Further Marketization: External and Internal Threats to Law and Order

Perceived external and internal threats have opened a window of opportunity for the private security industry

- Terrorism
- Major influx of asylum-seekers, attacks against refugee accommodations
  - National Police Board allowed *ordningsvakter* to patrol 60 geographical areas & decided the industry itself be responsible for the training of *ordningsvakter*
- Unwanted citizen participation in policing



## Some Concluding Thoughts

- Likely that the tendency towards greater marketization of public policing will continue to intensify at the local level
- This trend unfolds apparently independently of the anxious policing politics at the national/governmental level
- In Sweden's public procurement-based quasi-market for policing services, private security companies have essentially come to perform public functions in society – presumably for public ends



## Some Concluding Thoughts

- Public sector institutions purchasing private sector policing services need to figure out how the public sector ethos of the contracting authority can be upheld
- When aiming to harness private security to public ends, we must remind ourselves that what exactly is ‘in the public good’ varies based on different tales of morality.
- Threats and fears can:
  - Drive the dynamic of community-level marketization of policing further
  - Prompt quick and out-of-the-ordinary decision-making leading to delegation of responsibilities to private-sector policing agents
  - Such changes tend to be legitimated only retrospectively and become seen as normal over time



*Thank you very much for your attention!*

**If you are interested in knowing more about my research:**

- Hansen Löfstrand, C., Loftus, B. and Loader, I. (2016) Doing 'Dirty Work': Stigma and Esteem in the Private Security Industry, *European Journal of Criminology*, 13(3): 297-314.
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- Hansen Löfstrand, C. (2015) Private Security Policing by 'Ethnic Matching' in Swedish Suburbs: Avoiding and Managing Accusations of Ethnic Discrimination, *Policing and Society*, 25(2): 150-169.