A sample of narratives in Swedish media on corruption

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Abstract

The public gets most of its information on crime from the media and this facts makes it so the information is second hand. The aim of this study is to examine how corruption is portrayed on in Swedish Media. Previous scholars have researched both media crime and corruption but what the media writes on corruption in Sweden remains unexplored. I address this fact by analysing news articles about corruption with the two theoretical approaches that Sutherland and Cohen has developed. I use a qualitative method in the form of narrative analysis which will be applied on the gathered material in the forms of articles. From the narrative analysis of the articles I have gathered three topics that I discus, Crime and Criminalization, The profile of the offender and Resolution and Moral panics. The study concludes with emphasizing two different ways that the media in Sweden portrays corruption.

Keywords: Corruption, Narratives, White-collar crime, Media.

Sammanfattning


Nyckelord: Korruption, Narrativ, White-collar Crime, Media
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1. Introduction

In this study I address the problem of corruption in Sweden, in particular I examine how corruption is depicted by the media. The analysis will be centred on the scrutiny of the narratives of written news articles on corruption that have been published in local newspapers.

But what exactly is corruption? One common definition of public corruption is that it is the misuse of public office for private gain (Svensson 2005:20). Crimes that may fall under this definition of corruption may be bribes, embezzlement and the sales of government property. Corruption is an outcome as well that reflects the countries legal, economic, political situation and culture. This can be reflected in that sometimes corruption can be seen as a fee, where bribes becomes like taxes. But bribes will not bring money to the government, and they are of a higher transaction costs then taxes because of the secrecy involved. Bribing has as well parallels to lobbying in the form of campaign contribution or other forms of buying influence (Svensson 2005:20).

According to Transparency international (2014:4) Sweden is ranked among the least corrupt countries. Even though corruption may be rare in Sweden the consequences when it happens is often severe. And if we examine society as a whole corruption can damage the public’s trust in authorities. At the organizational level, the affected workers may become unsettled. Where colleagues may feel betrayed and let down, this may as well damage trust to the others in the organization. But there are also cases where a huge part of an organization is corrupt where the offender in question may not be the only offender but just be the scapegoat. If we then consider what consequences corruption has on the individual level it is mostly the insider in an organization that loses when corruption is detected. Often because the taking a bribe is the most severe crime the insider commits, but on the offenders side it’s one of the least severe crimes that is giving the bribe (Skinnari, Ekdahl & Korsell 2014:5).

As corruption is low in Sweden it is hard to find cases of when corruption has occurred but not impossible. The media is a great source for finding material on crime, and also on corruption, even if the cases may be few Scholars have investigated many unlawful behaviour e.g. violence, threatens and extortions, but research on corruption remains limited (Skinnari,
Ekdahl & Korsell 2014:1). This is the reason for that I examine in this study how media in Sweden portrays corruption when it happens. Media portrays of crime are often focused on sensational depictions of violent offences. This has served an ideological function of deflecting away attention on structural problems and “political crimes”. However there has always been some place in the media for the crimes perpetrated by the rich and powerful, especially if scandalous circumstances are involved (Friedrichs 2004:17).

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to consider how Swedish media portrays corruption. I will examine cases involving private corporations and public officials in various forms of corruption such as, bribes, lobbying and tax evasion etc.

The questions in this study that I will try to answer is then:

- Dose media create moral panics when portraying corruption in Sweden?
- Are the offenders involved in corruption seen as white-collar crime perpetrators?
- Is media criminalizing the white-collar criminal?

1.2 Disposition

The remainder of this study is disposed as follows. In chapter two I present existing research on media reports and corruption. In particular, I describe international media analysis on crime and studies on corruption in Sweden that illustrates how corruption is viewed and perceived by the citizens. In chapter three I discuss two theoretical approaches that I will use in this study. In brief Sutherland’s theory on white-collar crime and Cohen’s theory on moral panics will provide the foundations for analysing corruption in the media. The fourth chapter outlines the method and character of this study. I will address the concepts that I use for the narrative analysis, and the material that is used in this study. The chapter also describes the problems of reliability and validity and how I have solved the problems, as well as research ethics. The fifth chapter presents the results, which were gathered from new articles and
editorials. In the results I interpret the narratives from these articles with the concepts that were described in the method chapter. In the sixth chapter I discus three topics that were raised from the result. The topics being, (I) crime and criminalization, (II) the profile of the offender and (III) resolution and moral panics. In these topics I discuss how the result may relate to the theories described in chapter three. The seventh chapter I conclude the study by trying to answer the research questions, as well as relating my findings to the existing research that were presented in chapter two.

2. Previous research

This section includes a review of the literature, media and crime. The former type of literature reports how the media talks about criminality. Scholars have shown that reports on criminality in media are consistent regardless to where it occurs and in what time. The latter literature focuses on corruption, where the focus is on corruption in Sweden. The research has shown that corruption in Sweden is not that high comparably to other countries but that there are corruption problems in Sweden regardless. The research also talks about how the public in Sweden perceives corruption. In the following section I discuss these topics in more detail.

2.1 Media portrays of crime

A great number of research suggests that how media portrays crime in news media and entertainment media differs from how crime actually are in statistics. It has also been repeatedly stated that media constructs “crime waves” regardless what the crime statistics says. Crime news tends to focus on individual crimes, and a great deal of street crime can be found both in the news section and entertainment section of newspapers (Doyle 2006: 869).

News on crime tends to relay somewhat heavily on police reports as sources, as they are availability, authority and how the information is controlled. Much of the concern on how media portrays crime centres on various hypothesized negative aspects on “crime news”. These hypothesized effects concerns is about mistaken public beliefs and consequent
attitudes about crime for example fear of crime and increased support for new legislations (Doyle 2006:870).

There are several frameworks in place for explaining how media can affect the fear of crime. Second hand information about crime can raise the citizen’s fear of crime and by doing so make them feel victimized. As individuals receiving media messages about crime can start to become victims themselves through the fear that the crime is creating (Kohm et al. 2012:71)

Information about crime is most commonly found in the media, where it is exposed to the citizens. In American studies there has been found that crime news are twice as common as political news and the coverage in Canada is very similar. Research about written news about crime is inconclusive. Where some studies show that the impact of fear is correlated to news articles about violent crimes. But other studies suggest that there is no impact of fear at all. Where the readers who are afraid of crime already protects themselves and by doing so feel safer (Kohm et al. 2012:71).

Content analyses on how media represent crime has often been focused on narrowly legally definitions and not the sociological definition of deviance. Some studies only consider news stories on particular criminal incidents. But others include many aspects from reports, articles, and editorials about how crime is generally. This variability estimates that the total portion of news that is focused on crime in some form ranges from 5 to 25 percent in the United Kingdom. The lower part of this percent comes from earlier researches on media, and the more recent research has found a higher proportion of crime related news (Reiner 2007:306).

In a historical study examined random samples of issues for The Times and the Mirror between the years 1945 up to 1991. In this study it was found that there was an upward trend on stories focused on crime. Just after the Second World War, criminal justice stories where only 2 percent in all the stories in the Mirror and 3 percent in The Times. But from 1985 up until 1991 it had increased to 6 percent in the Mirror and to 9 percent in The Times (Reiner 2007:307).

The pattern of crime in the news is remarkably similar in many places and times. In analyses of news reports it has been found that crimes of violence is featured disproportionately compared to the actual crime statistics. The findings have noted that there are a lack of
relationship between patterns and trends with how crime are reported and how the crime statistics actually are (Reiner 2007:307).

### 2.2 Corruption

Corruption has traditionally not been high on the political agenda in Sweden. This mainly due to a notion that Sweden is free of corruption. But from the mid 1990 this notion has started to change. There have been many scandals, mostly on the local government level that have turned the focus (Andersson 2002:103)

In Sweden corruption and abuse of power for personal gain has been traditionally rare exceptions. This in turn makes Sweden a good place to examine corruption precisely because of how rare corruption is in comparison to other countries. But that is not to say that Sweden is perfect when it comes to law and order. In the last two decades there have been cases where corruption scandals have been exposed. Sweden has as well been criticised in many ways about how it handles cases of corruption. The European Council has criticised how Sweden’s lack of formal regulations on political party founding, and Groups of States Against Corruption (GRECO) have criticised Sweden for lacking the means for handling cases of corruption and detect it in time (Linde & Erlingsson 2011:1).

Andersson (2002:101) talks about the danger zones of corruption in Sweden. When he studies the public sector he finds that there are many reported cases of bribe attempts where an official have direct interaction with a client. Many of the cases involved people that where entrusted with handling money. There are situations when politicians and upper level public servants use tax-payer money for entertainment expenses and privileged use of benefits. These cases has then led to public debates and in some cases even the court. It is the central government that has been involved in most of the cases. This is contrasted with legal cases on bribery where the local government is mostly involved. The national media pay most attention to events that involve the central government, but there are cases where local scandals did get attention on a national level. In the press survey that Andersson did, almost half of the cases involved politicians. This contrasts with the statistics where they represented only a fraction of the cases involved with bribes. He notes that this implies that politicians is
not the once who are most involved in corruption, but that when they are they are the once that gets the most coverage in the press.

Linde and Erlingsson (2011:19) in their study the effects of Public Perceptions of corruption on system support: the case of Sweden, has found that even tough Sweden has relative rare cases of corruption according to Transparency international, that the citizens in Sweden have an opinion that their politicians and public officials are corrupt. They found that nine out of ten citizens can “probably” or “definitely” take advantage of contacts to influence public officials. The results that Linde and Erlingsson (2011:20) found shows that in a country that is found in the “least corrupt” setting the citizens perception on corruption indecently effect the support for the political system, even though there is no correspondence between the actual corruption and the public’s perception of it. They also noted that it is worrying that the Swedish citizens believe that corruption has increased in the last decades, and the opinion is that the corruption will continue to increase further. This in the long term will have an eroding effect on general support systems in Sweden.

Bauhr and Oscarsson (2011:89) in their study on The Swedish peoples view on corruption (Svenska folkets syn på korruption) has found that there is a correlation between trust to other people and their view on how widespread corruption is. Whereas the people with more trust to other people view corruption less spread then people who mistrust others. As well that the citizens that trusts politicians, judges and CEO’s have view that corruption is not that widespread, and the citizens that mistrusts these views that it is. Also the people that is found works as politicians, judges and high up in the corporate structure, view their own group as less corrupt.

Bahur and Oscarsson (2011:94) also found that Swedish citizens consider that people who work in corporations are more corrupt then public officials. And they have found that it is more acceptable when a private doctor changes the queue for patients then when a doctor that is public employed dose it. This shows that there is a tendency in Sweden as well as in many other countries in how people judge corruption differently in the private and the public sector. The result also shows that Swedes are more tolerant of consensual corruption (where a private corporation gives a gift or a service to a public official) then of corruption where a service that the citizen has a right to gets a condition where the public official demands an “extra fee” for it to pass. If the opinion that corruption becomes more widespread gets more
common with the citizens, countries such as Sweden may find themselves in a “bad spiral” that is hard to break. When the citizens get the opinion that corruption is widespread there is a risk that this will in turn increase the actual corruption (Bauhr & Oscarsson 2011:94).

This literature review suggests that there is nothing written about how corruption is portrayed in the Swedish media. Thus I feel there is a need to contemplate this fact. In particular, it will be of great relevance to illustrate how is corruption portrayed in the Swedish media by looking at the narratives used by the media when they write about corruption that takes place in Sweden.

3. Theory

3.1 White-collar crime

According to Sutherland (1940:2). Crime is mostly committed by those who live in poverty or those suffering of psychopathic or sociopathic conditions that are associated with poverty is wrong. The samples that has led to this conception are biased. Because the sample does not contain the vast areas of crime that is outside of the lower class. This is the area of white-collar crime. White-collar criminology that occurs in business is mostly found in misrepresentation of financial statements in corporations. Also manipulation of the stock market, bribery, lobbying, misrepresentation in advertisement, embezzlement, and much more. These can be condensed down to two categories the first being misrepresentation of assets and values, and the second being duplicity in the manipulation of power. Sutherland (1940:4) describes that white-collar crime violates the public’s trust, and there for creates mistrust in society, which in turn lowers the social moral in society and creates social disorganization in a larger scale. Other crimes produce significantly less damage on society in the big picture. White-collar crime is real crime, but it is not often called crime, this can be seen with the offenders in white-collar crime, where the convictions are lower, and they are not often convicted in criminal courts. White-collar criminals are often segregated administratively from other criminals and they are not often seen as “real” criminals, not by other criminals, not by them self’s, and not by the public, or even in some cases criminologists. In contrast to the power that the white-collar criminal has, is the weakness
that their victims have. Many victims in white-collar criminality does not have the technical knowledge, they are consumers, investors, stockholders and they are unorganised and can’t protect themselves. Then there are three reasons as to why the generalized bias that the lower class is wrong. First the information is biased and omits almost all the behaviours that is found in white-collar crime. Secondly the generalization that crime is strongly causally linked with poverty is wrong as it does not apply on white-collar criminals. And third, conventional theories in criminology have a hard time explaining criminality, even in the lower classes.

When it comes to the case of white-collar criminology there are no single theory or explanation on how to understand all aspects of white-collar crime. But there is a need to be clear on what we are trying to explain. Is it crime, criminality or criminalization? Crime in the sense of a crime that has been committed or will be committed, criminality in general and criminalization were an individual is being criminalized for a supposed crime. Even if many theories are up for interpretation some theories become inherently better than others. Some aspects of white-collar crime is best understood with one explanation and others are with another. Where more individualistic white-collar crime are more readily explained by traditional mainstream theories, organizations and corporate forms of white collar crime are not that easily explained with them (Friedrichs 2004:215).

As the aim of this study is to consider how the media portrays corruption in Sweden, the theory I will use focuses more on the “crime” part of white-collar crime more than the criminalization.

Neutralization, rationalization and accounts are very important to understand white-collar criminology. White-collar crime offenders tends to be different from how we view an outlaw. In that they are contemptuous of the law and follow the standards of proper conduct. The white-collar offender will for the most part conform to laws and social conventions and are unlikely to identify with other offenders in society. One important way to understand how then they break the law is the concepts of; excuses, justifications, disclaimers and denial. Excuses tends to be more defensive in character, and justifications are more positive interpretations of an action. Neutralization is then a concept that pertains future or ongoing behaviour, and accounts, are invoked after the behaviour has occurred. Rationalization is linked on how to justify an illegal activity. In white-collar crime there are some steps that may occur. First they may deny of responsibility in that laws are vague and it was an
accident. Secondly is deny of injury by rationalization where the focus may be on that there were no economic benefit. Third they may deny that there where victims that were affected by the crime. Fourth is where they may condemn the condemners themselves by claiming that laws are interfering and are not needed for free enterprise. And also the fifth case, where they may appeal to higher loyalties by focusing on the need of the corporation or stockholders etc. Thus there are many forms of how white-collar criminals may rationalize their crime. Although the form of rationalization may vary on what the offence is. Tax violations may be a case of “everyone else does it” and defrauders may put blame on someone else (Friedrichs 2004:207).

3.2 Moral panics

In criminology, one thing that is crucial to understand is the reaction to deviance in society, both by the public and by agents of social control, and how information that is presented on a specific behaviour. In every society there is a set of ideas about what causes deviations in society, and a set of images about the typical deviant. And those conceptions leads to shape what is done about that behaviour. In modern societies the information that these ideas are built upon is received in second hand. That is, it has been processed by mass media, which means that the information has been processed and subjected to what constitutes as news and how that should be portrayed. That information is then also structured by that specific medias commercial and political constrains (Cohens 1987:16).

It is important to pay attention to the role that mass media has in defining and shaping social problems. The media has under a long time been working as agents of moral indignation in their own right, even if it is not a conscious effort. But their reporting of certain facts can be sufficient and creating concern, anxiety and even panic. When those feelings coincide with the perception that specific values are being threaten and in need of protecting, it creates the preconditions for new rules and social problem definitions. This in turn might result in a symbolic process which is called moral passage. Moral passage is the concept when the public change their designation of deviance (Cohens 1987:16).

Furthermore less concretely the media can create a diffuse feeling of anxiety of a situation, where the public do not know how they should cope with a situation, e.g. what is done about
it? Where will it end? This cannot continue forever. These vague feelings are crucial for laying groundwork for further enterprise. Mass media will talk about the normative concerns of the public by spreading certain moral directives in to the discourse of the public, which in turn can create social problems. This is exploited by moral entrepreneurs which is a concept of those who try to win the public’s support by these means (Cohens 1987:17).

4. Method

Text analysis is a common method in qualitative research, it is based on the research interpretations of the descriptions in text which are linked with the analysis as a whole (Sohlberg & Sohlberg 2013:112). In this study I will use long descriptions in the form of references and quotes that then will be linked with the theories to perform the analysis of the data.

To understand how media portrays corruption I will use a form of text analysis called narrative analysis as well as the theories described above to further interpret how and why corruption may be portrayed as it is. The reason that I use narrative analysis over other forms of text analyses is that I find that narrative analysis is excellent for determining how a text is portrayed to its readers, as narrative analysis is a relevant method for getting insight in to society and politics. Social actors are more understandable as “narrative creatures” then “rational creatures”. A narrative is a summary of something that has happened, and is made up of two parts, one “story” and one “discourse”. Narrative analysis has its background in the Russian formalism, the French structuralism and other literature theories work. Today narrative text analysis is used in many fields, some examples is, criminology, anthropology, psychology, medicine and genus studies. By analysing concrete narratives as those who you can find in media texts, it is possible to get an analytical grasp of the more abstract narratives and the assumptions that we take for granted, that has been neutralized and made almost invisible, but nonetheless guide our way to make the world understandable (Robertson 2012:260).
4.1 The narrative concepts

The narrative analysis is built on the concepts of *story* and *discourse*. The concept of story is the “what” part in a narrative, and the discourse concept becomes the “how”. The concept of story is in turn made up by five other concepts, where the first of them are *abstract*, which is a summary of the narrative. Then there are the concept of *orientation* that includes time, place, situation and participants. Then there the concept of *complicated actions* which are the movement of balance to unbalance. The fourth concept under story is *resolution* which is about what happened in the end. The last concept under story is *coda* which has to do with how the writer refocuses the perspective to the present. The concept discourse that makes up the other half of the narrative has a concept called *assessment*. Assessment has two different significances the first one being, how the action is commented on, and the second one is about how the content conveys it is significance to the story (Robertson 2012:230).

4.2 Preunderstanding

My preunderstanding on the subject of corruption is important to note. My preunderstanding on corruption before this study was somewhat limited. My perception of corruption were that it was connected to white-collar crime in some form. I also knew that corruption in Sweden is comparably low to other countries. My preunderstanding were then in a sense an understanding of the basic conceptions of corruption but it may not have been a normative understanding of corruption. My preunderstanding is as well contextual understanding, in the sense that the theories that I use creates my frame of thought which impacts the way I look at corruption and the media (Sohlberg & Sohlberg 2013:179).

4.3 Material and procedure

The material that I use in this study is from one of Sweden’s online newspapers, Aftonbladet which is the source of data for this study, is the online newspaper has the greatest amount of visitors each day of any other newspapers in online. The reason on why I only use one online site for gathering material is first that this way I eliminate duplicates of the same case being discussed again, e.g. articles on different sites. Furthermore the complexity in the material may interfere with this studies aim, e.g. there are more things that can be looked about how the media portrays crime, different newspapers have different ideologies and how do them compare etc.
I will compare these articles in how they portrays corruption. The articles had to be about corruption in some form and the corruption had to be in Sweden. The articles I use for this study are taken in chronological order were they fulfilled these criteria’s, in general I found that there were not much written about corruption that was taking place in Sweden and the focus were on organizations outside Sweden or politics outside Sweden. But the five that I use in this study are the first five that were found about corruption in Sweden written between 2014 and 2013. The sample for this study is thus a goal-steered selection, were I have chosen the specific articles over others to suit the aim of the study (Bryman 2008: 350).

A problem that I feared may occur was that there would be a lack of material. By just using one news site, and searching for an uncommon crime in Sweden there were fears about the lack of data on the subject. This was solved by just going further back in time until enough articles where gathered starting from 2014 and working back until 2013. The logic being that newer articles where better to understand how corruption is portrayed right now, and I am not comparing a change in how corruption is portrayed.

Keywords used for gathering the articles are Sweden, Corruption, Bribes, Lobbying, Organizations, Corporations and Banks. These keywords where used in Aftonbladets database where I chose the newest once first until I had sufficient amount of material. In total there were five articles that is going to be used in this analysis, two of them where labelled as news articles, two of them as editorials and one as news article under culture. The articles are written in Swedish and I will not translate the quotes that I will use from them, as by doing so it would affect how my interpretation of them.

From the start this study only had the aim to look for how corruption is portrayed in Swedish media. But after the narrative analysis of the articles I found three different topics that I analyse and discus. These three topics I then also made as research questions. The research questions I then point out were created after the narrative analysis and not before, they were not questions I looked for answers for but answers that I made questions for.
4.4 Reliability and Validity

This methodical approach has both advantages and disadvantages when using narrative analysis as my tool in this study. A problem that is inherent with narrative analysis is the matter of credibility. There is an importance on that the prime material is transparent. To circumvent this problem there is a need to go through the material step by step to show the reader how the conclusions has been drawn (Robertson 2012:252). Other problems with using narrative analysis in research is that the conclusions that I will draw with using this method may not be able to be reproduced by other researcher. As well as one who uses narrative analysis dose not only need to be good at reading and interpret texts. (Robertson 2012:254).

Reliability is the term that describes the extent that which studies can be reproduced. Qualitative research makes this demand often hard to fulfil. Often because it is impossible to “freeze” a social environment and the social conditions that qualitative research institutes. To work around this problem the researcher has to replicate other similarly research by using the same tools and similarly data as the previous scholars. Otherwise the things that the new researcher sees and hears will be different. In the case of this study that takes on a different perspective then previous research I try to be as detailed as possible with how and why I have interpreted the articles so that others can do the same, or be as close as possible (Bryman 2008:352).

Intern validity in qualitative research signifies the compliance between the researches observations and the theoretical ideas that is constructed. This is one of the strengths with using qualitative research as how qualitative research works makes it possible to make sure that observations and concepts complies with each other. The external validity consists of how the extent that the research can be generalized to other social environments and situations. This is a problem with qualitative research as the data tends to be limited (Bryman 2008: 353).

In this study I address the issues of validity by as I said being as thorough with how I interpreted the data. By doing so the lines I draw between the theories I use and the data I have gathered will be clear. The problem with generalization I try to circumvent by being clear that these are my interpretation and that the data may not be able to be generalized to
other settings even if they are similar. The conclusions that I draw will be more to serve as how it is in this case, and may be used as ideas for more in depth research in the same field.

4.5 Research Ethics

With the articles that I use for this study there are some ethical factors that has to be discussed. First is the factor of the names of individuals, both of the journalists that wrote the articles and then secondly of the names that they name in the articles. In some of the article individuals witch where accused of crimes where named, and in some of them they weren’t. But as the article that I use is public information I have made the choice to include the names that occurs in these texts. The main reason is that by doing so I will not change the source material and by doing so alter my interpretation of the articles (Trost 2014:41). In the articles we will only get the journalists view on the case, this is problematic when I try to determine the offender’s reasons. Therefore all my interpretations are from the information given from the journalist in each case.

5. Results

In this part I will do a narrative analysis on five different articles. The articles are presented with the newest one first starting from 2014 and then in chronological order back to 2013. Two of the articles are news articles, one of them is a news article that where filed under culture, and the last two are editorials. The presentation of the articles will follow the same format, where I use long quotes from the articles to show how I have interpret the concepts that I use for doing the analysis. First I will determine the concept abstract, followed by complicated action, orientation (made up of four parts, time, place, situation and participants), coda and resolution. After these concepts I will discuss the concept of discourse followed by a summary of how I interpret the narrative.
5.1 Narrative: Construction executive judge for bribery (Byggchef döms i stor muthärva)

The first article is a news article from 2014. That involves many different parties.


This is the beginning of the article and it serves for determining the concept Abstract: An executive for a big construction company has given construction work to entrepreneurs, in return they “sponsored” his luxurious sail boat now he has been judged and convicted to one and a half year in jail and has to pay to million SEK.

Enligt den utredning byggföretaget gjort använde sig chefen av nyutaminerade och orutinerade kolleger som han lätt kunde styra. 48-åringen startade ett företag för segling vid sidan av sin anställning, som finansierades genom sponsring. Sponsorerna, entreprenörer och med tiden underleverantörer till det stora byggföretaget, "sponsrade" inköpet av en segelbåt som användes som tävlingsredskap, vid bland annat Gotland runt (Andersson, 2014).

In the second paragraph of the article I determent the concept complicated actions: The executive has used unpractised colleagues that he could control, and he had a side business for sailing that was financed with sponsors. Some of the sponsors where entrepreneurs and subcontractors that where clients to the construction company.

En av entreprenörerna döms till villkorlig dom och 60 000 kronor i böter för bestickning och givande av muta. Den andre entreprenören frias. Ett företag döms att betala en miljon kronor i företagsbot. – Domen visar att brott inte lönar sig, säger kammaråklagare Thomas Forsberg vid Riksenheten mot korruption, som hoppar att utgången i målet får en avskräckande effekt. – Den här typen av brott snedvridar konkurrensen i en upphandlingssituation och kan få samhällsfarliga effekter. Den här mannen har haft stor makt att bestämma över vilka entreprenörer som skulle anlitas.”

Muthärvan upptäcktes då en bild av chefens segelbåt dök upp på Facebook med en av entreprenörernas logga på. Både chefen och de medåtalade entreprenörerna har förnekat brott och hävdat att det inte funnits något samband mellan sponsringen och uppräkningen av byggföretaget. En av entreprenörerna har uppgitt att chefen intygetat att sponsringen varit godkänd av företagsledningen. – Jag var helt öppen med seglingsprojektet på jobbet, har han sagt. – Mitt bolags avtalsprestation är därför inte att betraka som en otillbörlig belönning (Andersson, 2014).
From the four paragraphs above we can see the parts for Orientation: Time: Early 2014 when 3 persons got charged for bribery and taking bribes. Place: Stockholm, Sweden. Situation: An executive for a construction company is judged for taking bribes and have been convicted to jail for one and a half years as well as to pay two million SEK. Participants: The executive. Entrepreneurs, “unpractised colleagues”, businesses, prosecutor, attorney.

The executive has been judged for taking bribes and has been convicted to jail and as well to pay two million SEK in fines. The concept Coda: The executive is confused and will lodge an appeal against the judgement.

The overreaching picture that one gets from this article is that a crime has been committed and justice has been served. The readers should know about this crime and how it was committed even though the readers are not told how to react to it. But one also get the impression that corruption is something that happens in Sweden and that it happens in corporations where public officials are involved as titles such as “executive” and “entrepreneurs” are the ones committing the crime and the lower employees are the ones that are being used.
5.2 Narrative: Stop anonymous sponsoring of political parties (Stoppa anonyma bidrag till partier)

The second article is an editorial and was written in 2014. In the editorial no crime has been committed but talks instead about corruption in Sweden as a phenomenon.


In first paragraph I find the abstract for the narrative, where the abstract becomes: Sweden has in principle been free from corruption and bribery scandals in regards to other European countries, but Sweden is worst in the case of accounting for political parties donations. Corporations and private individuals can make large contributions to political parties without having to account for it.

Here I can also see the complicated action: The Swedish voters has the right to know whose interests drives the politics.


The concept of orientation in this article is spread throughout these paragraphs: Time: Early 2014. Place: Sweden. Situation: Sweden has gotten criticism from Greco in regards to the lack of regulations on politicians. Participants: Sweden, Greco, minister of justice.

The resolution and the coda is as following, resolution: A slow proposal to an amendment in the law. Coda: The slow proposal raises suspicions against Moderaterna and the extension risks spilling over to the other parties.

The discourse of this editorial is found in the article as a whole. The discourse: In this editorial the storyteller becomes all knowing, as the storyteller as in the journalist holds all the facts. The storyteller from the beginning to the end of the editorial tells the readers how it is. Sweden has been free from corruption, but not anymore Sweden is worst in some cases. The storyteller continues with this is not the first time Sweden has come under criticism from Europe, and we do nothing about it and/or drag our feet’s about it. In this case the readers gets told how to feel about the situation. Sweden is not perfect and our politicians dose nothing about it. There are different pictures of the participants, where some as Greco becomes a faceless accuser, and the readers take the face of Sweden, and we get a clear picture of the miniwester of justice that drags her feet’s for making legislations that should correct this criticism that has been thrown at Sweden. The journalist continues throughout the article to evaluate the situation without talking about ways to solve the situation.

The tone of this editorial is that we as citizens of Sweden should know that we do not live in a corruption free society. That we are worst when it comes to accounting for political parties donations. We should know that this is important to know, and we as the readers should want change on this matter. The readers should be angry that there is nothing done about this, and when it is done, it is sloppy. The readers should also know that this lack of change can have consequences in the future where it is not only Moderaterna that is in risk but every other party as well.

5.3 Narrative: Blundering city council (Bortgjort borgarråd)

This article is a news article that is filed under culture on Aftonbladet. The article is from 2013 and is about an offender that is suspected for taking a bribe.

In the quote above I interpret the concept of Abstract: Stockholm’s city commissioner of culture is investigated for bribery by National Unit Against Corruption. She is investigated in her role as City Commissioner of Real Estate, and is suspected for taking a bribe from the sports company AEG.

Tidningen Expressen har avslöjat att Sjöstedt bjöds på konserter i Las Vegas samt på basket- och hockeymatcher på olika platser i USA under våren 2009. Ett halvår efter resan slöt Stockholms stad ett avtal med AEG att sköta driften av Tele2 Arena i södra delen av stan (Aagård, 2013).

In the second quote I find the concept of complicated action that has occurred: City commissioner is investigated for taking a bribe.

Men det här är en fråga som lika mycket berör Sjöstedts jobb som kulturborgarråd. Allt sedan hon tillträdde har hon försökt uppmuntra fler kommersiella aktörer att finansiera kulturlivet i staden, samt se till att de institutioner som redan finns blir allt mer marknadsanpassade. Och med AEG har hon fått en extremt kommersiell aktör mitt i Stockholms musikliv.


The concept of Orientation that I interpret in this article is: Time: 2009. Place: Stockholm, Sweden. Situation: City commissioner investigated for bribery. Participants: City commissioner, AEG, National Unit Against Corruption, Expressen, Dagens Nyheter.
The Resolution: Stockholm’s tax-payers are paying for Tele2 arena instead of AEG. And the coda: AEG is paying for the city councils trips to USA and AEG does not have to pay taxes for Tele2 arena in Stockholm.

Discourse: In this article the storyteller takes on an all knowing perspective. Where the journalist knows everything that has to do with the event. The storyteller tells the readers how they should feel about the situation, which the offender that is accused for taking bribes is already an offender even though the accused haven’t been judged yet. Continuing by bringing up sources that seems to confirm the guilt in the accused. I also get a clear picture of the participants in the story. The accused is named as well as the executive for the company that has issued the bribe. There is a clear picture of what has happened and how and why it has happened. I as the reader becomes a by stander that have the storyteller besides us that tells us the narrative that has happened.

The overreaching tone in this article is that the city council is corrupt, as one of them has taken bribes, and the ones that takes the consequences are the taxpayers in Stockholm. One gets the impression in this case the official has been clumsy and should be ashamed. I as the reader should be informed about this and it is important to know who is to blame in this situation, and I get a detailed description on what the “perks” they get for taking bribes and as well from whom they comes from. There is also a tone in how the newspapers has found this and how different newspapers has exposed this case of corruption in city council.

5.4 Narrative: The secret billionaire accused of tax-avoidance (Hämliga miljardären anklagad för skatteplanering)

The following article is a news article preceding a TV-program where a billionaire is accused of tax avoidance, the article is from 2013

Hans bolagsnätverk redovisar knappt någon vinst och betalar knappt någon skatt. Trots det växer miljardären Bertil Hults företagsimperium i rasande fart (Clark, 2013).

The Abstract in this article is: The billionaire Bertil Hults company network dose not declare any profit and pays almost no tax, but his business empire grows in a furious pace.
Han är mångmiljardär, men hur många miljarder Bertil Hult faktiskt har är oklart. Och inte heller bolagsnätverket som han ägnat 48 år åt att bygga visar några större vinster eller skatteinbetalningar. Enligt Uppdrag Granskning pumpas nationella filialer på pengar för att minimera den skatt som bolagsnätverket betalar på eventuell vinst som istället hamnar på centrala konton i skatteparadis.

Bertil Hult, 72, grundade språkreferreget Education First i Lund 1965, efter att ha hört mamman till en språkresearrangör skryta om sonen som hade råd med en Alfa Romeo. Nu är Hults snabbt växande företag globalt och arbetsgivare åt tusental – men trots det en ganska obetydlig skattebetalare i många av länderna där EF verkar.

I kvällens Uppdrag Granskning målar EF-nätverket ut som ett spindelnät av nationella företag som skickar sina ekonomiska tillgångar till centrala holdingföretag i skatteparadis där tillgångarna omfördelas för att minimera vinstbeskattning.


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Following these paragraphs the complicated action is: The companies are worth trillions in revenue but the tax that is paid shows minimal revenue. But nevertheless the concern are growing in fast pace.


The Orientation that is found in the article is: Time: Before an episode of Uppdrag Gransknings arbete. Place: Sweden. Situation: In the tv-program Uppdrag Gransknings arbete the billionaire Bertil Hults company network is scrutinized for tax evasion. Participants: Bertil Hult, Uppdrag Gransknings arbete and Education First.

Gransking har Education First hört av sig och dementerat bilden av bolaget som målas upp i reportaget. (Clark, 2013).

The resolution and coda is found in the last paragraph, which shows the resolution: The Swedish crown princes and Husband were reported for accepting bribes and Bertil Hults was reported for giving the bribe, but it was dismissed. And the Coda: The attorney at the National Unit Against Corruption dismissed the case as it is not possible to do preliminary investigations on bribery against the royal family. Education First denies the accusation that are pictured in the program.

Discourse: The storyteller takes a somewhat objective stance where he informs the readers on what will happen. The journalist describes the content in the article from an all knowing perspective, where he informs from the side-lines on what has happen and will happen. I get the picture of a billionaire and his business empire witch are suspected of tax avoidance, and I get a picture as well of the party that is conducting the investigation i.e. Uppdrag Granskning. Uppdrag granskning is the good one in this story that will pull the bad guy, in this case the billionaire out in to the light. Where both participants are a big part of the narrative.

In this news articles the overreaching tone is that something is about to happen. Everything that is talked about is something that will happen later, on TV. But I as the readers also get the impression that this billionaire is a bad guy, and Uppdrag Granskning is the good guy that will catch him. It is not the readers that are called upon to act against the injustice that has happen, but the readers should judge him. The readers also get told that the royal family is involved and by association becomes bad guys as well.

5.5 Narrative: Can you buy a Swedish politician? (Kan man köpa en svensk politiker?)

This article is an editorial about lobbying from 2013.

The beginning of this article will serve as the Abstract: Can you buy a Swedish politician? The hope is not, but there is doubt. In other countries there are legislations about how parties and politicians finance their campaigns. By good reason, politics decides the preconditions for companies and individuals, and there is always strong interests that will change the rules to their advantage. What should one do about it?

In this paragraph I interpret the concept complicated action: There is no rules for lobbying. Sweden has received criticism from both the European Council and Transparency International.

Det är svårt att föreställa sig något annat land, utom en korrupt bananrepublik, där det största regeringspartiet vägrar berätta vem de får sina pengar ifrån, och vilka gentjänster denne någon kan tänkas vilja ha. I riksdagen har frågan drivits länge av Folkpartiet och Miljöpartiet. Socialdemokraterna satte 2010 äntligen ner foten och började förespråka en lagstiftning. Längst av alla höll Moderaterna emot.


The concept of orientation I interpret in the paragraphs above, Orientation: Time: After Sweden has received criticism for its lack of legislations in regards to lobbying. Place: Sweden. Situation: Swedish political parties dose not account for where they get their money and nothing is done about it. Participants: Sweden, The European Council, Transparency
international, Moderaterna, Miljöpartiet, Folkpartiet, Sverigedemokraterna,
Socialdemokraterna.

Låt mig ta ett exempel. Socialdemokraterna går till val på att begränsa vinsterna i de stora välfärdsbolagen. Det är alltså ekonomiskt rationellt för dessa företag, och deras ägare, att arbeta för att Stefan Löfven inte ska bli statsminister. Hur påverkar det intresset för att finansiera Moderaternas valkampanj?


Tvärtom (Pettersson, 2013).

From the last paragraph I interpret the concept Resolution: Sweden needs legislations against lobbying. As well as the concept Coda: There is nothing in the near future that will change the legislations against lobbying.

Discourse: The storyteller in this article tells the story from a personal point of view. Where the storyteller asks questions and then tries to answer them. The storyteller tells the story in the form of how she feels about the situation and describes the participants involved and how they act to form the narrative. She continues down in the article to describe what has happen and the lack to do something about the situation. By describing the actions of the participants and how they relate to each other.

The tone of the editorial is somewhat personal, as the journalist seems to speak directly to the reader as to have a dialog, but that in reality turns in to a monolog, but nevertheless the tone becomes personal. We as the readers get the impression that lobbying is a serious problem in Sweden, and that we have the right to know where the money in politics are
coming from. We are asked to take a stance against this, and damn the political parties that does not want to account for where the money is coming from.

6. Analysis and Discussion

To address the research questions the analysis of the narratives described in the previous sections will be focused on three different topics. The first being crime and criminalization where I will address the difference between those concepts in the narratives. The second topic will be about the profile of the offender where I will discuss how white-collar criminals are depicted. The third topic will be about the resolution in the narratives and how it may relate to moral panics.

6.1 Crime and Criminalization

Friedrichs (2004:215) talks about that in white-collar criminology there is no single theory that covers all spectrums of white-collar crime. But there is a need to know what we are trying to explain, is it crime, criminality or criminalization.

In the narratives from the five articles that I have analysed there seems to be two different themes on corruption. Some of the articles (see 5.1, 5.3) corruption is defined as a crime, which involves an offender or a suspect. But in the two editorials (see 5.2, and 5.5) corruption is talked about in the form of criminalization. The editorials (5.2 and 5.5) describes corruption in the form of lobbying as something that is very important to regulate in Sweden. Sweden lack the legislations against lobbying and these editorials emphasises the need to criminalize this action. This in regards with Linde and Erlingsson (2011:19) said about the public perceptions of corruption may be a reason for why the public feels we are more corrupt then we are. In the news article about the billionaire Bertil Hults (see 5.4) we have a different case, here I can see both the cases of crime and criminalization. The crime in question here is bribery but as it involved the royal family it had to be dismissed. One also have the case of his companies that are growing rapidly but that shows no profit to be taxed. The narrative in this article focuses first on the theme where tax avoidance should be
criminalized but then switches focus on the crime of bribery. The distinction between crime and criminalization is important to note, as crime and criminalization is very different and different theories are more suited to analyse them.

6.2 Profile of the offender

In the theory section I mentation that Sutherland (1940:2-10) have said that, white-collar crime can be manipulation of the stock market, bribery, lobbying, misrepresentation in advertisement, embezzlement, and much more. These crimes can then become two different categories where the first being misrepresentation of assets and values, and the second being duplicity in the manipulation of power. Sutherland also describes the power that the white-collar criminal has and the weakness that their victims have. Many victims in these crimes lacks the sufficient knowledge, as they can be consumers, investors, stockholders and they are unorganised and cannot protect themselves.

From the narratives that I have gathered there is only one offender, that being the case in the first article (see 5.1) where we have an executive that has been judged for taking bribes as well as entrepreneurs that has been judged for giving the bribes. In this narrative we have the case of duplicity in the manipulation of power, where the executive used his power in the company to get his way in the case of manipulating unpractised colleagues that he could control.

But there also a case of one person that were suspected of corruption, that being the city council woman (see 5.3). This person has not been judged for corruption as can be seen in the narrative, but the storyteller talks as if she were an offender. In this case I can also see the duplicity in the manipulation of power were she allegedly taken a bribe and then used her power as a City Commissioner of Real Estate to give a favourable deal to AEG which were one of the danger zones that Andersson (2002:101) described.

Friedrichs (2004:207-208) described that these three concepts that are used to understand white-collar criminals. These where neutralization which pertains future or ongoing behaviour, accounts which are invoked after the behaviour has occurred and rationalization which is linked to how the criminal justifies an illegal activity.
In the narratives where a crime is taking place I can see that rationalization and accounting is present. In the case of the executive I can see that he rationalizes and accounts for his crime. He describes that everything about the deal were conducted openly where everyone could see what was happening and no one objected to the deal. He also emphasizes that the sponsoring of his side business had nothing to do with the deal in question. The council woman that were allegedly an offender I interpret from her actions described in the narrative that she neutralizes and rationalizes the crime. That is as I interpret it she do not feel that a crime has been committed, the bribes are seen as gifts, and there is nothing wrong or even laws against it in Sweden. This is a form of consensual corruption which as Bauhr & Oscarsson (2011:94) have showed that Swedes are more tolerant of.

6.3 Resolution and Moral panics

The resolution for the narratives in the articles portrays differently in each case. The storyteller, that being journalists in these cases present different cases where corruption is involved some being actual crimes, and some being more about corruption in general. It all starts with a complicated action that has occurred and ends with a resolution to this conflict.

Cohen (1987:16-17) stated that in criminology it is crucial to understand the reactions to deviance that occur in society. The information that the public gets about crimes are often second hand have been processed by the media and have then been subjected to what constitutes as news as well how it should be portrayed. Then it is important to pay attention to how the media defines and shape social problems as has been described by Doyle (2008:869). By reporting on certain facts can create problems in the forms of anxiety and even panic, and when these feelings coincides with the perception that values are being threaten it can create a moral passage. When the media talks about normative concerns of the public by spreading moral directives to the discourse of the public it can create social problems.

In the narratives above, the resolution to the conflicts creates different feelings to the complicated actions that has occurred. In the first article (5.1) one get the impression that a crime has been committed and justice has been served for it. In the second (5.2) the complicated action in itself as I interpret it creates a feeling of anxiety that the resolution dose not eliminate. The third (5.3) gives the tone that something are being done about the situation
(the investigation) but the resolution creates anger by laying the consequences on the citizens in Stockholm. The fourth (5.4) may create a feeling of hopelessness as there are nothing being done about the situation. The fifth (5.5) may create a feeling of anxiety as there seem to be a lack for legislations in our politics.

This is how I interpret the information that is being given to the readers of these articles and as such the media and by doing so the media has shaped these social problems and given the readers impressions on how corruption is in Sweden. In this articles there are some cases where there is a good resolution to the conflict but some of them lack a resolution that eliminate the conflict that the article has brought up. For example there seem to be values in Sweden that are threaten, as the narrative in these stories (see 5.2 and 5.5) seem to claim this is a new problem which in turn may make the readers feel victimized as Kohm et al. (2012:71) described. This may create a moral passage where the public changes their opinion on what is designated as deviance and as such making these problems more important in Swedish society.

### 7. Conclusions

How is corruption portrayed on in Swedish Media? By analysing these five articles about corruption I have interpret two different ways in how corruption is portrayed in Sweden. The first being where the tone of the narrative is objectively, we as the readers get the information presented to us from a third party that is reporting on the cases that are happening (see 5.1 and 5.4). But the second one is the other three narratives where the storyteller talks in a more subjective tone, in these cases the storyteller wants a reaction from us the readers, we should feel something about these actions that occurs in our society. First in the form of a clumsy city council woman (5.3) who have done an action that we should condemn, but also in the cases where we as Sweden lack legislations against lobbying (5.2 and 5.5) where the feeling may become anxiousness that our government do not take appropriate actions against this.

As the public gets most of its information on crime from the media I think that this more reaction based narratives may be a cause of why the citizens in Sweden may feel that we are more corrupt then we are as Linde and Erlingsson (2011:19-20) pointed out.
7.1 Recommendations for further research

When doing this study I have limited myself to only using one news site to gather my material. One of the reasons for doing so was to eliminate articles from different sites that writes about the same case, as this could be its own study in its own right to compare if different sites uses different narratives in the same cases. One thing that could be done in the future is to compare different news sites and see how their ideologies may affect the narrative. Other things that has occurred to me by doing this study would be to look if there is a difference in narratives between cases where corruption is the crime and where street crime is the case. To see if there is different narratives between white-collar crime and street crime.

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**Material**


http://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/article18043594.ab

