"City in Fear": Media Representations of Single Repeat Perpetrators and Gendered and Racialized Fear of Violence in Public Space

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Abstract

In Sweden, several cases of single repeat perpetrators in public spaces have raised public concern. These cases all represent situations in which one individual perpetrator affects a larger group of people in a specific time and place. By analysing journalistic reporting of four cities/towns described as "in fear" based on the acts of three separate serial rapists/sexual offenders and one shooter, I intersectionally examine responses and reactions to such specific threat to be able to contribute to a better understanding of how fear of violence affects urban geographical imaginations. These four cases in Sweden (The Haga Man, the Örebro Man, the Hagfors Man, and the Malmö Shooter) involve a consideration of how one specific individual influences narratives of fear and crime as a generalized pattern of gendered and racialized fear of violence in public space. The analysis revealed two different but interdependent stories, one based upon the concern to keep women "safe," and the other dependent upon racist threats and hate crimes.

Keywords

Fear; single repeat perpetrators; gendered violence; racist threats; public space; Sweden

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Introduction

> It means everything to Umeå that the Haga Man has been arrested. Not just the obvious facts that women can feel safe again and the victims can obtain redress through the Haga Man's being behind bars. No, this has a broader significance as well. The Haga Man has gnawed into Umeå's soul. Bit by bit, year by year. He has stolen the image of Umeå as an open, tolerant and safe city. He has made Umeå synonymous with fear, rape and a criminal who can slip through the police nets. (*VK,* 30 March 2006, news article)

In Sweden, several cases of violence committed by single, repeat perpetrators in public space, have raised public concern, as the case of the "Haga Man" in Umeå illustrates in the quote above. These cases represent a situation in which one individual strongly have influenced the general pattern of fear of violence. Most serial perpetrators found in the media reporting in Sweden are men who attack women in public space; *Hagamannen* (the Haga Man), from 1999 to 2005, involving brutal rape and attempted murder, in particular, in the district of Haga in Umeå; *Farstamannen* (the Farsta Man) was a rapist in the area of Farsta in Stockholm in 1991; *Södermannen* (the Söder Man) in the area of Södermalm in Stockholm and the area of Haga in Gothenburg during the 1970s and 1980s; *Finspångsmannen* (The Finspång Man), a rapist, in the city of Norrrköping in 2007; *Örebromannen* (the Örebro Man) 14 assaults on women and girls in Örebro 2005–2010; *Enskedemannen* (the Enskede Man), August 2006, who attacked five women in Enskede, south of Stockholm; *Johannebergsmannen* (the Johannesberg Man), a rapist, in Gothenburg 2009; and *Hagforsmannen* (the Hagfors Man) in Hagfors 2014 who committed rape, attempted rape and sexual assault (*SvD*, 8 October 2006). However there are also two cases in which one man targeted and shoot at people of colour. The first is *Lasermannen* (the Laser Man) who, between August 1991 and January 1992, shot a total of eleven people in various attacks in Stockholm and Uppsala. The victims had dark hair or dark skin in common. The second was *Malmöskytten* (the Malmö Shooter) 2009–2011, who committed shootings in Malmö, mainly directed against persons of immigrant background. These serial perpetrators change public crime discourses in particular places at particular times and these perpetrators become media stories. The gendered and racialized consequences of such crimes shape the geographical imaginations of public spaces, and the ways they play out have not been extensively researched. By analyses of media reports of places described as "ravaged" by serial perpetrators, this paper aims to problematize such

representations of a "besieged place" and a "city in fear," and, in so doing, defining who is the "respectable citizen" based on victimhood and violence.

This paper analyses news reports from four cities/towns in Sweden that have been "under threat" from three different serial perpetrators and one shooter (The Haga Man, The Örebro Man, the Hagfors Man, and the Malmö Shooter). These four cases have been chosen because they are all places that the media have described, labelled, as being "in fear" i.e. a city in fear or a town in fear. How, then, can we understand these stories about places "in fear?" How do we pry apart our representation of places—as entertainment, as reflections of prevailing gendered and racialized power relations, or as stories that have certain given frames and positions?

This study grew from an idea that it exist similar or even shared, as well as repeated and recurrent, narrative of cities in fear in different media reports. My analysis showed that there was not one, but two, different yet related narratives. These stories of cities in fear are one connected to notions of "vulnerable" citizens: vulnerable women and one to vulnerable Other. These two different stories place the focus on bodies and spatial power relations in public space in terms of how bodies are organized, represented and formed by threats in different ways. I examine how these places are represented and who is represented as being a potential victim and in fear in the news reports. By focuses on how media reports on responses and reactions to such a "threat", this paper contributes to a better understanding of how fear of violence affects urban geographical imaginations.

Setting the Scene

Representations of places are socially and discursively constructed (Creswell, 2004; Massey, 2005). In relation to the media reports about the perpetrators, it is therefore crucial to raise the issue of how representations of local places are mediated through narratives, i.e. the news stories. In other words, the spatial context matters in these different narratives. Hence I present the four selected cases who have raised public concern in Sweden. These four cases have all been media stories, and have all been the object of radio documentaries/radio programs and podcasts.1

Naming the Perpetrators: Representing Places

Description of the perpetrators invoke descriptions of the "dangerous other." The notion of the dangerous other can be seen in the geographical and social distancing of threat that many people employ in order to feel safer: the belief that violence happens to people different from us, in places we would not go (Pain, 1997).

1Verkligheten i P3, *Gratis tjejtaxi i skräckens Hagfors,* 22 October 2014; P3 Dokumentär, *Hagamannen*, 22 November 2009; P1 Konflikt, *Serieskytten, skräcken och samtiden*, 22 October 2011; Aftonbladet story, *Historien om ett brott Örebromannen*

This is also reinforced by fear discourses on danger in the form of unpredictable strangers. Fear tends to focus on the stranger in the street, encouraged by crime-prevention literature and the local media (Pain, 2000). These four different repeat perpetrators are represented as an unknown and dangerous stranger in the news, which also makes the threat diffuse and abstract.

Figure 1: Map of Sweden. Map designed by Karolina Hull, 2020

Umeå is a city of about 88,000 inhabitants; between 1998 and 2006, eight women were assaulted by the same rapist when walking home at night from Umeå city centre. The attacks occurred outdoors and involved severe physical violence, in some cases even attempted murder. The first assaults occurred in the centre of the city in the Haga neighbourhood, and the perpetrator came to be known as *the Haga Man,* locally and nationally. On numerous occasions, descriptions of the perpetrator were given by the police and published in both local and national media. The description of the Haga Man as a man of "normal" Swedish appearance and as *light-skinned* provided an ethnic dimension, separating the perpetrator from men of colour. In other words, the media depicted the Haga Man as not fitting the stereotype of the "dangerous other." He was arrested in March 2006.

Örebro is a city with about 120,000 inhabitants; to some extent, it is still an industrial city, but today the university and the university hospital are two of the largest employers. Between the years 2005 and 2010, there were repeated sexual assaults on girls and women in Örebro that were connected to one perpetrator (he was convicted to 14 assaults). The perpetrator became *the Örebro Man* in the national media. The portrayal of the Örebro Man was vague, focusing on his use of a bicycle in darkness to surprise and attack his victims from behind, violating them while uttering death threats (*Aftonbladet,* 6 July 2011). He was arrested in 2010. The attacks are often referred to as being historically the largest prosecution of assaults on women in Sweden.

Hagfors is a small community, with about 4,800 inhabitants. In 2014, several women were assaulted in Hagfors (15 assaults on 11 occasions). It was described as a "wave of assaults," and over time they were all connected to one man who became known as *the Hagfors Man* in the national media. The perpetrator is described as relatively young, and in a press release the police says that he has "slim physique and he is described as dark-skinned or slightly dark-skinned" (*Aftonbladet*, 7 October 2014). He was arrested later that year.

Malmö is Sweden's third largest city, and it has been severely affected by deindustrialization in recent years. Malmö has the highest proportion of inhabitants from immigrant backgrounds in Sweden (Schierup and Ålund, 2011). As of 2012, almost one-third of Malmö 'residents had been born abroad, and the vast majority of these immigrants came from a non-Western European background (Scarpa, 2015). Malmö is also one of Sweden's most segregated cities. During late 2009 and 2010, there were a number of shooting incidents in central Malmö, where the common denominator was that several of the victims had what the police described as immigrant backgrounds. The attacks were in public and semi-public spaces: several shots were also fired at people in their homes, at a mosque, in a snack bar, and people in parked cars. The shooter was very vague described as a man wearing a hood, with good local knowledge. The shooter was named *the Malmö Shooter*. He was arrested in November 2010 and was in 2012 convicted of two murders, four attempted murders and three counts of serious assault. Concerns regarding the Malmö Shooter raised many questions and several of the shootings were defined as hate crimes.

In naming these men, media reports connect these serial perpetrators to a specific place. Here, I would like to emphasize in particular how these perpetrators become "the Man" with the exception of the Malmö Shooter. The images of these perpetrators speak to the gendered and racialized narratives underlying these acts of violence, which then come to shape discourse and experience of public space.

Representing Place

This paper concerns media representations of place, where place is perceived as flexible, in process and constructed through power relations (Massey, 1994; 2005), and where power is understood as relational and productive (cf. Foucault,

1980). I draw upon Agnew's (1987) definition of three aspects of place as "a meaningful location": location, locale and sense of place. This means that places are located, that they are material settings for social relations, and that people have subjective and emotional attachments to a place. In other words, "places are constructed by people doing things and in that sense are never 'finished', but constantly being performed" (Creswell, 2004, 37). Hence, places are constantly produced and reproduced in connection with other places.

The power to define, describe or characterize place provides an example of the ways in which social structures and institutions maintain certain forms of power, through discursive naming of places into categories and defining the terms on which they are engaged in the social and economic worlds (Martin, 2000, 381). When analysing media reports on places in fear, I do think it is important to problematize this in terms of geographical imagination. The geographical imagination can be seen as assumptions concerning how space, and relations in space, produce and shape processes and changes, and how these are spatially expressed and materialized, as materiality, representation, and imagination are not separate worlds (Harvey, 1996, 322). Hence the geographical imagination becomes "tool to describe and analyse the power within the literal and metaphorical ways people imagine and render space" (Gieseking, 2017). As the news reports about these perpetrators came to be reproduced in a specific way the threat posed by the serial perpetrator became part of an unwanted place imagination.

My theoretical framework draws on neoliberal forms of rule, where place-making and place-branding are rationalities, the concept of "the respectable citizen" is highlighted and where "respectability […] becomes central to the production of the neoliberal individual who can show that they have a right to belong, be recognised and protected by the state" (Moran and Skeggs, 2004, 12). In sum, I start from an understanding of the city as a social, cultural and material context in which norms, values and patterns of behaviour are perceived, produced, reproduced, and resisted; where different groups have different opportunities to feel safe, to move freely, and to claim the urban space, and where the power to transform a place is not distributed equally.

Gendered and Racialized Practices in the Production of the Fear of Violence in Public Space

This article is situated within the broader research field geography of fear, where feminist geographers have examined how fear is related to power relations in space and how the meaning of fear may differ depending on circumstances since the late 1980s (Koskela, 1999; Listerborn, 2002; Listerborn 2016; Valentine, 1989). Koskela (1999), for example, shows how fear modifies women's spatial realities; I follow her argument that fear is both a matter of personal spatial relations, constraints, and use of space, as well as a question of the production and reproduction of space: "Space is not just a medium for interaction, but also produced in this

interaction" (Koskela, 1999, 112). Hence, fear and the patterns and interactions conditioned by it also produces space (Kearn and Mullings 2013).

Different constructions of gender, produced through socialization and reinforced through media representations, give women and men distinctive ideas about typical victims and perpetrators of crime (Hollander, 2001; Stanko, 1997). Such crime discourses typically position women and older people as vulnerable, whereas the criminal is usually depicted as a young man and often as a person of colour (Hollway and Jefferson, 2004). However, as Day (1999) argues, it is misleading to speak of women fear as a uniform fear across race, class and gender, as experiences of race and fear often are unpredictable and difficult to map. The understandings and constructions of "woman" and attempts to define a single woman subject can exclude a range of experiences and positions of being woman (Heyes, 2013).

The experience of being feared in a public space is more often a problem for those in the position of "the racialized other" than for a privileged white person. The problem of fear in public space is typically constructed from a white perspective (Day 1999), as whiteness represents the societal norm and white people tend to think of racial identity as something that other people have, and fail to recognize the implications of their own whiteness. Whiteness tends to be "invisible" and therefore normative in defining cultural values (Frankenberg, 1997). Also in Sweden, different ethnic/racial groups have stratified life possibilities and circumstances in Swedish society (Wigerfelt et al., 2014).

Analysing the news reports of cities "in fear," I have relied upon intersectional approach to capture the complexity of fear of violence and spatial gendered power relations, for "place is not only shoving variability of intersectional relations but rather configure them" (Rodó-de-Zárate and Baylina, 2018, 549). Thus, I have used intersectionality as a methodological approach to study how different forms of discriminatory power relations are represented in the news articles, and it helps me to poses questions about how gender and ethnicity articulate the exercise of power at different levels in society, and how this is linked to greater exposure to discrimination (de los Reyes and Mulinari, 2005).

Media, Fear and Place

Here, media representations of cities "in fear" change discourses of fear and safety, and hence become part of the description of these places. Representations are important as they have real material consequences as re-shaped by geographical imaginations of what places are and should be (Eriksson, 2008, 1). There is an extensive body of literature on the relationship between media representations of crime and fear of crime (e.g. Sandstig, 2010; Williams and Dickinson, 1993), discussing the influence of media descriptions of people's awareness of and responses to crime. While it is difficult to show the ways the media have an impact on people's fear of violence, they do contribute to public narratives (Heber, 2007).

The everyday lived experiences of people are affected by how these perpetrators are represented through a series of discourses and counter-discourses between national and local newspapers.

Media discourses name and situate people and places according to the role they deem for themselves in society, but these discourses are not uniform or uncontested as major media may reinforce certain themes that recur through the discursive constitution of place representations (Martin, 2000, 401). Hall et al. describe the social production of "news" as "the end-product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories" (Hall et al., 2013, 56). What ultimately ends up as the content of a newspaper is also determined by what the audience is interested in, what the editors think the audience is interested in (Heber, 2007, 175), as well as who pays for certain things to be printed. As Martin (2000, 401) argues, "we cannot view the media as a singular entity with an inflexible, purely hegemonic power over place portraits."

Sweden is often portrayed idyllic, progressive, modern, etc. For example, gender equality was integrated into official representations of the Swedish state in the early to mid-1990s. At the same time, the image of "the gender-equal country" also makes it more difficult to address prevailing gendered inequalities and also constructs specific versions of femininity and masculinity that women and men need to fit in order to meet the expectations of being gender-equal (Sandberg and Rönnblom, 2013). Sweden has consistently been depicted as one of the world's most "modern" states, with rational institutions that provide democratic, just and efficient solutions to collective problems (Jezierskaand Towns, 2018). Yet these claims to modernism and civilized society are dependent the racist whiteness of a primarily white population. Hübinette and Lundström write that, "in contemporary Sweden, hegemonic whiteness is, for us, upheld through a colour-blindness that constantly reinscribes whiteness as the normative, yet unmarked, position that, for example, effectively forecloses, silences and excludes experiences of everyday racism among non-white Swedes" (2014, 426).

Analysis of the Swedish media has revealed that the crimes reported in the media do not reflect actual crime rates. Instead, the media carries more reports when crimes are unusual, exciting or violent. The most common crimes are described least often and random violence is given a larger space (Heber, 2007). Often, "fear" as a term was used in a broader sense and there was a general tendency to highlight and focus on people's fear regardless of the news. Heber (2011) argues that fear of crime did not become a focus of media attention in Sweden until the 1990s. Since then, Swedish newspapers have come to focus on the victims of crime. The offences described in the Swedish media are often violent and of an exceptional nature (Heber, 2014). A significant aspect of media coverage is that it disproportionally reflects images of people of colour (Bredström 2003). Media descriptions of crime also represent a form of entertainment, and there is a connection here between fascination

and fear of crime (Heber, 2011). Hence, the media reports of places "in fear", under threat from a serial perpetrator involve an interpretation of these places.

Methodological Considerations

My analysis has focused on stories of cities in fear, and common themes and common imageries have been identified. Articles published in Swedish newspapers were selected and collected from searches of the *Mediearkivet* database which provides access to articles in most of the major Swedish daily and evening newspapers. I first used the keywords: *Hagamannen* (the Haga Man), *Örebromannen* (The Örebro Man), *Hagforsmannen* (The Hagfors Man) and *Malmöskytten* (the Malmö Shooter). This search resulted in articles published in both the local and national press. I did not define my search by newspaper, but kept it open to also gain an understanding of which events were discussed locally and which also received national attention. After the first set of results, I extended the search with the keywords: *Umeå AND assaults, Hagfors AND assaults, Örebro AND assaults*, within the specified time periods. For media reports in Malmö, I searched for *Malmö AND shootings, Malmö AND shot*. Regarding Malmö, there were fewer reports. The perpetrator was not given such a clear label and I therefore had to expand my search to include a broader media coverage.

I have chosen to delimit my analysis to a description of the "city in fear," and thus to the media reporting that takes place before the perpetrator is arrested. The text examines consequences of threats from a single repeat perpetrator, but it is not particularly concerned with the perpetrator, or any speculation on why these assailants—all men—perpetrated violent assaults. Rather, it addresses how media reports about fear of violence and gendered power relations in public space during the period of threats from a specific man. Thus, the focus is not on the perpetrator as a person, but rather on the situation of threats that inhabitants had to deal with as a new, unwelcome element in the context of life in the city. After the arrest and when the perpetrator is presented with full name, much of the reporting tend focus on the individual.

I started the analysis by returning to material from a previous study (Sandberg, 2011), in which I limited the search to the period between 1998 and 2006, during which I monitored the local and national media coverage of the Haga Man phenomenon. As the search word: Hagamannen, in January 2015 gave 4,100 hits; I have chosen to concentrate my analysis by delimit the number of newspapers and by focusing on the descriptions of acts during the course of the attacks. From this search, 927 articles published in the major Swedish newspapers (*Aftonbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter* and *Expressen*) and the local paper *Västerbottenskuriren* (VK) were identified.

I extended my study by including the three other cases and an initial screening among the articles was based on the headline and the introduction, which were included in *Mediearkivet*. The remaining newspaper articles (Hagfors 16,

Örebro 185, Malmö 276) focus on consequences of the threat from these perpetrators.

The articles were analysed in order to obtain an idea of which aspects the media chose to highlight in relation to these perpetrators, and possible changes in emphasis and major themes over time. These news representations are analysed in terms of textual features, as Eriksson (2010, 51) argues that "these features are part of the representations and highlight the journalistic practices used and the choices made when writing news articles." Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyse and report patterns within the acquired data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I have therefore started from a selection that is content driven. This approach provided a useful interpretative strategy for understanding the newspaper reports, as it encouraged me to make cross-comparisons between four different perpetrators and places. All articles were written in Swedish, and the analysis was done on the Swedish articles. I have then translated the selected quotes.

City Under Attack: 'The Threat' and Place Representation

The four cities/towns, Umeå, Örebro, Hagfors and Malmö, have been described as being "in fear" in relation to a threat from one perpetrator in news report. In Livholts' (2008) study of Umeå, she argues that, in presenting an image of the perpetrator, local and national media were actively involved in shaping both the discourses on security and assaults in Umeå, and the image of the perpetrator. In a very similar way, this construction of a city/town "in fear" is accomplished in the representations of each place in the media stories, as seen in these quotes:

> The safety is gone, in just over a month. (...) The concern about the escalation of violence is also heard on the streets of Hagfors. - People here are angry and afraid. It is terrible that one man should get to put fear into an entire community. (*Aftonbladet*, 8 October 2014, news article)

> Something has happened to the atmosphere in Umeå. These days, many people live in fear of a rapist. When darkness settles over the city at three o'clock in the afternoon [in mid-winter] you would rather not go anywhere alone, if you're a woman. For years, the dreaded Haga Man raped and abused women in Umeå. (*DN* 18 January 2006, news article)

> Örebro – a city in fear. On Tuesday night, the rapist struck again. Now, eleven women have been attacked within six months – in the middle of the residential buildings in Örebro. (*Expressen*, 28 April 2010, news article)

> This autumn Malmö was a city in fear since several people had been shot at. The fear escalated as it turned out that it was people of foreign

appearance who were shot at. (*Sveriges Radio,* 29 December, 2010, Webpage)

The media presented stories of the attacks and created an image not only of the perpetrators but also of the place-specific situation during the time of the attacks. This is perhaps most apparent in the personal reportage about people who describe their feelings of unsafety.

> The shots have been into cars, the gym and on the street. One person has been shot dead and twelve people have been injured. The fear of the Skåne Laser Man in Malmö is spreading. Everyone feels threatened and cursed. "Of course you are afraid. What might have happened if my ten-year-old daughter had been shopping? The store is just over there, and she often goes there in the evening," says Wissam Moussa, 33. The police have called on people with an immigrant background to be careful. After the attack yesterday not even your home can be considered safe. (*Expressen*, 22 October 2010, news article)

Here, a comparison and reference is made to The Laser Man (Lasermannen), a convicted murderer and attempted serial killer who from August 1991 to January 1992 shot eleven people, most of whom were immigrants, killing one and seriously injuring the others. He first used a rifle equipped with a laser sight, hence his nickname. When police warn those potentially in danger it emphasized the seriousness of the situation. In Malmö, the police sent out warnings to people with an immigrant background to be careful, however, as the situations that prevailed in Malmö, not even the home were safe. It was impossible to be careful. In Örebro, women are warned in a similar way, to watch out and be careful.

> Örebro Police's information officer Annika Haaster now warns women to go out in Örebro at night. - One should exercise caution. You should not go out yourself in the evening or at night. It feels awful to have to say so. (…) But since we have a man who has committed a number of assaults and we have not got hold of him, I have to say it, she continues. (*Sveriges Radio, P4 Örebro,* 11 October 2010, webpage)

Here, the city becomes one unsafe place. Common among these four cases is a spatialized imagination of fear, all of which are localized to a city/town and not, in comparison, inducing a space of national fear. The threat is also connected to one man in each city/town, which can be understood as a sort of "the – Man" phenomenon. The Man, i.e. these different perpetrators, becomes *the* threat and the public discussion that followed the attacks are part of the contextual description. The public discussion ended up being exclusively about public space; hence, there was no space and no possibility to recognize that women are most likely to suffer from violence in the private sphere. These places were naturally not completely isolated exceptions, i.e. where women were not afraid before the assaults; however, the

stories almost symbolize a turning point as the assaults came to be part of the representation. As these unknown perpetrators, in public space in specific cities/towns at specific towns become *the* threat, which results in a silence around and even a denial of structural/systematic violence. Therefore, these representations of the city in fear need to be problematized and we need to ask which bodies, are positioned as being in potential victims and as in fear?

Potential Victims and Ideal Victims

In these descriptions of cities in fear there are also clear descriptions, positioning and grouping of potential victims. Christie (1986, 18) defines an ideal victim, a person or a category of individuals who, when hit by crime, most readily are given compete and legitimate status of being a victim. Christie continues that an ideal victim as a sort of public status. Hence, the ideal, victim is usually a vulnerable, respectable and blameless individual suffered at the hands of an anonymous and comparatively powerful individual.

The victims of the Haga Man, the Örebro Man and the Hagfors Man were seldom described, with the exception of how the media reported about the victims of the Haga Man in terms of their different ages (from 14 to 51 years): "The 22-year-old woman was brutally raped at Umeå University in March 2000. She was left crouched in the snow, barefoot and bleeding" (*Aftonbladet*, 18 June 2006, news article). The descriptions of the victims are closely connected to direct descriptions regarding that all women are potential victims in relation to the Haga Man, the Hagfors Man, and the Örebro Man. The assault in December 2005 in Umeå (Haga Mans last assault) was on a 51-year-old woman, who was seriously injured and fought for her life. Before that, all women in Umeå had been described as potential victims in the media, but younger women's vulnerability had been particularly emphasized. Women who previously had not seen themselves as being particularly at risk became aware that all women, regardless of age, were potential victims and a shift in female victimization that occurred after the last assault (Sandberg 2011).

> There are 55,638 women in Umeå. The 'Haga Man' held them hostage. All were his prisoners; children, middle-aged and old, because he crossed into their lives, forcing them to stay at home or to walk paths they otherwise would not have taken. But above all, he got inside their heads. (*Aftonbladet*, 30 March 2006, news article)

All women that are affected and made into potential victims in Umeå is here represented as all women in Umeå Municipality. Such depictions also found in relation to the violent acts in Hagfors and Örebro:

> He biked up an unknown woman who was on his way home, assaulting her and subjecting her to a rape attempt. The young woman became the man's first victim. The assaults continued - and became coarser, more violent and brutal every time. He scared the whole of

> Örebro. Women carried assault alarms and a girl taxi was introduced. (*Aftonbladet*, 11 October 2018, news article)

> The hunt for the so-called Hagfors Man, who is suspected of a large number of assaults on women, is in full strike. - Women are terrified. They have knives in the drawer inside the front door. It should not have to be like this, says Jessica Björkqvist. She is upset, frightened and engaged. (*Värmlands Folkblad,* October 13 2014, news article)

Women's fear is not uniform (Day 1999), but these news reports keeps writing about it as such, as a shared fear among all women—the final article even reduces all woman to a single "she" who is "upset, frightened and engaged." All women were positioned as potential victims and discursively interlinked with the society surrounding and supporting them. As all women are described and positioned as potential victim's fear the threat is also represented as something that is experienced the same for everyone.

Normative discourses around Swedishness prevailed in the media as a quiet understanding of what bodies and looks are considered Swedish—white, blonde, and blue-eyed—played out across all of the reporting. In other words, the white women's body has the function of being the central node where racialized, gendered and heteronormative boundaries are drawn, secured and monitored (Mattson, 2010), despite that fear in public space is shaped by ones complete identity—including race, class and gender (Day 1999, 325). Yet the reporting fixate on describing fear as affected by gender alone. The threat against women in creating a one united "us," as all women are made into potential victims. While the threat from a serial rapist in Umeå is easy to understand, "women's fear" was assumed to be part of everyday life:

> If you have been raped in Umeå, you probably have not had to answer questions about whether you have practised group sex or anal sex at any point in your life, or if you have had sex at all, or if your skirt was too short or your lipstick too red, or if you were drunk when you staggered home at night. In Umeå, women's fear has become the norm, making it easier to understand. (*Aftonbladet*, 15 June 2006)

Lindgren and Lundström (2010, 310) problematize the perception of who it was that came to be positioned as potential victims as they discuss the Haga Man's victims as "ideal victims": those who do not know the offender, can be said to be weak in relation to the offender, are conducting legitimate everyday affairs, and are blameless for what happens—and the offender is unambiguously bad. In this way, the fear of this particular perpetrator becomes something that is an understood. Underlying this seemingly general concern are assumptions that women needs to be looked after, taken care of and protected, thereby reinforcing the position of female vulnerability.

The description of the victims and potential victims in Malmö tells another story, partly because it took a while before it came to be understood as a racist threat. The Malmö Shooter's victims were described as having an "immigrant appearance" and a "foreign appearance." Hübinett and Lundström (2014,426) argue, that "the most important idea of the hegemonic whiteness of contemporary Sweden is that being white constitutes the central core and the master signifier of Swedishness, and thus of being Swedish a Swede is a white person and a non-white person is therefore not, and cannot fully become a Swede." With this insight, it is understood that the threat from the Malmö Shooter created a division of Malmö residents in terms of being at potential risk or not based on skin colour. This is also a distinct difference in the reporting of the victims, as in the description of the 16-year-old boy who became a victim in Malmö in July 2010.

> What speaks against the 16-year-old is a randomly selected victim is that he is known by the police earlier for various offenses.
>
> - And he was also not very talkative about who shot him, said Lars Lindwall (county security officer at the Skåne police). (*Kvällsposten*. 16 July 2010, news article)

The police connected this attack on a 16-year-old, who was shot on the way to a football training, to investigation even though the shooter never admitted to this attack. However, at the same time the victim was questioned, and therefore not considered to be blameless for what happened to him, even though there was no evidence that he did not know the perpetrator. A 16-year-old boy, known by the police, is hence not considered as an ideal victim as compared to (white) women of Swedish descent seen in the cases above:

> The fact that some of the victims had a criminal background – according to the police, it's more than a third – may have misled the police into believing that some of the shots were part of conflicts between gangs. (*Fokus*, 11 March 2011, news article)
>
> The day after the shots in the gym, Lars-Håkan Lindholm of Malmö police was asked the question: Is it time to warn the public? Lindholm's answer: "No, we do not believe it is. It would only arouse concern. We do not see any kind of danger to the general public. We do not think the general public is the target of all this." (*Expressen*, 26 May 2012, news article)

As this quote shows, the potential victims in Malmö were thus not positioned as innocent victims, and hence not as ideal victims, at least not at first. This is an example of what Hübinett et al. (2012, 42) describe as the way in which, in Sweden, there is a normalized and institutionalized way of not seeing the privileges of whiteness and the discrimination to which non-white Swedes are exposed. The description of "the general public" above positions an "us" and a "them." There is a general public, but here the general public only includes white people, and people of

colour are marked, again, as "Other" in Sweden. Wigerfelt et al. describe how these serial shootings in Malmö can be seen as part of an historical continuity, where racism has assumed differing expressions and intensities at different periods, and how these "actions exemplify the violent and extreme expressions of racist hate crime that are directed against non-whites in Sweden" (2014, 1). These media descriptions of victims and potential victims show how the media conveys representations that are both patriarchal and racist, and how white masculinity functions as a structuring characteristic of society.

A Rallied City: Sexualized Violence, Vulnerable Women and a Collective Concern

In the media reports from Umeå, Örebro and Hagfors, a pattern regarding "vulnerable" women and women's fear of violence as a collective concern emerges. There are articles presenting interviews with frightened women restricted by their fears, with men who were angered by the perpetrator and proclaimed that the attacks must be stopped, and reports of initiatives raised to start various projects to keep women safe. Women's fear became an issue for everyone, and during the time of the attacks several newspaper reports describe how "everybody," à la "the whole city,'" started to become engaged in promoting women's safety. The shared commitment of an imagined community is created to unite against *the* threat / *the* Man, but at the same time it contributes to strengthening roles and power relations. These media narratives also fail to address structural violence and rape culture, and perhaps even create openings for vigilantism. There are thus potential risks connected to pointing out and targeting groups in different ways, as the following quotes show across these acts of violence:

> One of the strongest distinguishing features of people living in Umeå is their commitment. Self-defence courses are being arranged, young men escort their female friends, students have full control over how they get from the pub, and there are discussions of how the male role is perceived. Umeå's way of uniting to face this external threat is unique. (*VK* 27 January 2006, news article)

> Hagfors' population rallied and are themselves patrolling the streets. (*Aftonbladet*, 8 October 2014, news article)

> "Now, I put my foot down. Are you with me?" She wrote to some 40 associates. The message spread like wildfire to over 23,000 people and 3,884 had soon joined. On Friday night around 1,000 people gathered to walk the streets and make the city safer. (*DN*, 22 January 2011, news article)

This engagement in Umeå, Hagfors and in Örebro shows that this fear is understood and taken seriously and represents a threat to which a proverbial everyone could relate. References were made to specific projects (and persons) and this provided an image that people not only cared, but acted, and in doing so took

initiatives aiming to provide safety and, in one way, also taking a kind of spatial responsibility by changing the social and design elements of the production of public space:

> The repeated attacks have got the municipality to keep the streetlights on a little longer in the evening than usual. According to the municipality, it is about the outer areas of Hagfors where the lighting usually goes off at 22:30. Meanwhile, the police are urging women in Hagfors to practise caution. (*Aftonbladet*, 7 October 2014, news article)

> On Friday and Saturday evening last week, many people biked together in Örebro. They wanted to prevent more attacks and create safety for the women who were out. (*Nerikes Allehanda,* 7 April 2010, news article)

An awareness emerged that "it can happen" in Umeå, in Örebro and even in Hagfors, and hence (white) women's vulnerability and fear became a common concern. Protecting women became an expression of a collective concern for the safety of women. This commitment is described in terms that, at last, something good came out of this threat. However, the focus ended up on the threat from "the Man", the individual perpetrator rather than becoming a public discussion about men and sexualized violence against women. The discussion on women's fear of violence and men's violence against women in public space was not placed in a broader perspective. It thus lacked a focus on how fear of violence is part of and contributes to the construction of racialized and gendered power relations in public space. The focus on these individual perpetrators did not come to challenge long-term, white, male power structures in public space.

A Divided Malmö: Shootings, Hate Crimes and the Vulnerable Other

> The situation in Malmö tells a different story.

> I'm writing an article on the situation in Malmö for tomorrow's paper. It is not about any city in fear. The people I talked to in the place express fear, but also a disappointment with the police that it has gone on for such a long period of time. (*DN*, 27 October 2010, news article)

> Rakel Chukri has described the autumn of 2010 as a time when she was painfully aware of her brown hair. The serial killer did not instil fear into an entire city, she says, but only half of it. (*Expressen*, 26 May 2012, news article)

The threat created fear among Malmö's residents by, especially residents of colour and the immigrants among them, both men and women (Göteborgs Posten, 13 May 2012, new article). During the time of the attacks and compared to the narratives of the other three cities/towns, Malmö is described as both a city in fear and also as a divided city:

> People's everyday routines and habits have to some extent changed. "People do not go out as often, especially when it's dark. One stays indoors and avoids the windows," says Landin. (...) The shots have primarily affected persons of immigrant background, but the fear among residents is great no matter where you come from. "Maybe I did not feel such a big personal threat, but I am are still worried about the society." (*Gotlands Tidningar*, 27 October 2010, news article)

The threat is targeting people based on skin colour. Which means that there are descriptions of vulnerability but also, as in the quote above illustrates, of privileged position of not being a potential victim. These descriptions create a division: a clear "us" and "them" in the divided city. This divide clashes with the current and important place imagination of the Swedish context as far-sighted, tolerant and non-racist (Pred, 2000). This divide has also resulted in the denial of the existence of racist structures in present-day Swedish society and an emphasis on racial categorizations (Wigerfelt et al., 2014, 2). The victims recognized as "Other" illustrates how Black, brown, Latinx, Middle Eastern, Arab, Asian, and other non-white people are constantly subjected to racial harassment and discrimination (Schmauch, 2006; Wigerfelt et al., 2014). As we get a story about the Other as a potential victim there is also a geographical and social distancing of threat so that risk is not placed on white people in Malmö.

Unlike the reports from Umeå, Hagfors and Örebro, there are no descriptions of the city uniting and coming together in Malmö. There is neither a clear story about the threat as a common problem and therefore this is not about a shared commitment, nor is there a story about people coming together in the same way to promote safety. This resonates with how, Hanhardt (2016) describes how the reification of safety for certain white, middle-class bodies reinforces racial and class stratifications. She adds that attacks on bars have interpreted as attacks on the larger GLBTQ community, and, in turn, these events have been the grounds for political mobilization and solidarity. However, this does not prove as clear in Malmö were such political activities and solidarity in Malmö only benefitted some people. There were, however, some actions taken in Malmö as well. The municipality, for example, opened a helpline in Malmö for victims and relatives, and others who needed it.

The quote from *Aftonbladet* describes such brief, almost sweeping descriptions that exist about mobilization for security and against the shootings in Malmö: "Yesterday, about 20 people from various religious communities gathered on the site to protest against the shootings" (*Aftonbladet*, 24 October 2010, news article). This very manifestation mentioned above is recurrent in the reports. But the description stops at the fact that the manifestation has taken place; there is no reporting about or from the actual manifestation itself. There are some descriptions about that there is something uniting in the threat, as illustrated in the quote below. However, these are rather vague reports, without descriptions of how this actually is manifested and what it means:

> [The Malmö Shooter] has created a sense of community and a fighting spirit of the people of Malmö. This is after all a great city with great people and unfortunately the people outside have a distorted view of Malmö because all they have heard has been negative recently. (*Gotlands Tidningar*, 27 October 2010, news article)

Presumably, there were activities and residents coming together and supporting each other; however there is a remarkable silence regarding this aspect in the media material. Such stories do not appear in the news reports. This might be because that there were few manifestations, and call for actions or that such collective actions in Malmö did not make the news in the same way. Or are some victims just considered as less worthy of protection?

As certain names are not mentioned in the news and certain images not shown we need to raise the question Butler (2016) asks: how do societal norms govern whose lives are grievable and whose lives are not? The fact that report about collective engagement is absent here can probably be explained in part because attending night walkers do not protect against a gunman in the same way as there is a belief that people's presence prevents assault and sexual abuse in public space. It is also important to ask if it is connected to the fact this sanctions the shooter because of who he is shooting. Bodies on the streets might not protect against shots, and the shootings did not just take place in public space. However, despite this, it is important to acknowledge the differences here as well as the silence, all of which send a message about how violence is understood and injustice is perpetuated. There was no ground for political mobilization in relation to the threat from the Malmö Shooter.

City in Fear and Unwelcome Place Representations

Places become what they are made to seem in representations (Molina, 2007), and the shootings in Malmö were represented as a problem that affected half a city. At the same time, the shooter was also described as an image problem (Gardell, 2015, 324). This representation of the threat as an image problem needs to be understood in terms of power relations because it involves processes of exclusion as less attractive aspects are left out of official communications. This is not something unique to Malmö. We see the same argument in Umeå and Örebro, after the serial rapists were arrested, as it became important to work to counteract the connection between the city and the perpetrator.

> When the people of Malmö, led by Sydsvenskan, went on the counter-offensive in the autumn with a praise campaign, it was specifically the city that would be cleansed. "We Love Malmö!" (*Sydsvenskan*, 23 January 2011, news article)

> But there is light, and that light is love of the city. This love of the city has been tested thoroughly in recent times. The shootings destroyed a lot of what has been built up. But it is precisely now that

love is most needed. We must never forget that Malmö is a city associated with development and the future, that Malmö is a city that lives by its diversity and hope. (*Sydsvenskan*, 22 October 2010, webpage)

Umeå is a safe city to live in, with a low crime rate. We've known this for a long time. There was, however, a disturbance for a short time in connection with the Haga Man and his brutal assaults, during which the media conveyed an unsafe image. (Holmlund, Lennart Local Government Commissioner in Umeå, 29 October 2008, Blog)

What do you think of when you hear the word Örebro? "Nothing special", most respondents replied a couple of years ago. Today, an accused serial rapist and a suspected murderer later, it sounds different. *DN* has visited a town that fought tooth and nail against the black headlines and actual fear. (...) I think it will be difficult to wash off the brand, which particularly that series of rapes gave the city. (*DN*, 7 March 2011, news article)

These kinds of "defence" of the image of the city can be considered a response to the media representations and a strategy to overcome the fact that the perpetrator had been part of the creation of an unwelcome geographical imagination. The threat from the serial perpetrators becomes one of the less attractive aspects of these places. Thus, it became important to show that, after all, this is a "good" place.

There is, however, an important difference here, where it in Malmö is about creating a common we, i.e. a united Malmö, a Malmö that is not divided by skin colour and that has hope for the future. In Umeå and Örebro's the focus is more about to emphasize that the problem is gone and that the perpetrator is arrested. The need to defend the city to white, middle class, patriarchal norms and/or show different stories, demonstrates today's perception that representations of places are important. This relates to a place-branding context as cities all over the world are today promoting themselves to attract both investment and people.

Concluding Discussion: Paradoxical Representations

This analysis reveals two different media stories about the city in fear, one connected to vulnerable women and one to the vulnerable Other. Hence, these two different narratives of city "in fear" shows a paradoxical representation regarding defendable subjects' and victimization. These threats categorize the potential victims and the powerless into a common group (Listerborn, 2015); i.e., grouping all women or all people of colour as vulnerable. The city in fear in terms of women's fear of assault in Umeå, in Örebro, and in Hagfors, is a story, a shared narrative, of a collective concern to keep women safe and of places where safety for all becomes a common concern. The city "in fear" of hate crime in Malmö becomes a story of an othering of vulnerability and of a racialized and divided city. In that, these places show the variability of intersectional relations and how media representations of

place configure both places and the bodies within them. As media is actively involved in shaping the discourses on safety, security and assaults in these particular places, these findings illustrate how media stories of fear and assaults become part of a city imagination and, hence, a way to visualize and articulate prevailing gendered and racialized power relations.

The question Ahmed (2004, 68) asks in her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, "Which bodies fear which bodies?" thus becomes the central point of my paper, and remains critically unaddressed in the media narratives I have presented. In all cases, it is the white, male body that constitutes the threat and never plays the victim. Thus, the white, male body has no need to be afraid. This once again illustrates the privileged position of white, middle class, cisgender, heterosexual, Swedish-at-birth, middle-aged, able-bodied, male bodies. However, the threats make (all) other bodies visible as (gendered and racialized) vulnerable bodies. Where these female bodies are represented as potential victims, the threat becomes a common concern. The great commitment that turned out for women's safety in Umeå, in Örebro and in Hagfors shows the position on women's bodies should be, and need to be, protected. Therefore, it is important to ask the question: which bodies are not afraid? As half of Malmö is described as not being affected by the threat, by implication, then, the white Malmö is not afraid. A Malmö "in fear" and under threat reveals the racialized spaces of Malmö. The threat from the Shooter organizes not only individual bodies, but the whole city.

In concluding, I want to stress the problem of individualization, i.e. how women's fear in Hagfors, Umeå and Örebro was in each case conceptualized as the consequence of one man's crime, which means that women's fear of violence in public space was individualized in relation to a particular perpetrator. In reference to the Malmö Shooter, Gardell (2015), in the book *Raskrigaren*, asks the rhetorical question: why did the city of Malmö not do anything? Why was the opportunity to discuss racism in society not seized upon? There are clear parallels with the situation after the Haga Man's arrest, when there were attempts to "explain" his behaviour or look for signs of deviance rather than to raise questions about the attributes ascribed to rapists and to challenge the image of men who rape (Sandberg, 2011).

The discussion on women's fear of violence and men's violence against women in public space was not placed in a broader perspective. The discussion stops at the individual perpetrator rather than becoming a public discussion about sexualized or racist violence. It thus lacks a focus on how fear of violence is part of and contributes to the construction of gendered and racialized power relations in public space. When the perpetrator was arrested, it was believed that the problem was also solved. The individual perpetrator had become a problem, *the* problem. However, there are recurrent descriptions of how it is difficult to regain the feeling of safety. The individual perpetrator and the specific problem are gone, taken care of, imprisoned, but the structures are neither challenged nor changed. The focus on a single individual perpetrator did not come to challenge long-term (racist and

gendered) power structures in public space. The attacks challenged and changed place imaginations; however, racism is not over (Gardell, 2015), and violence against women and people of colour, especially immigrants and refugees, has not stopped.

Acknowledgements

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