

# The symbolic meaning of the Swedish concept “trygghet”

– between welfare and punishment

# Can trygghet be translated?

- Absence of fear of crime
- Safety
- Security
- Trust
- Tranquility, peace

# **Trygghet in Swedish crime policy debate**

- Explicit goal
- Subjective feeling
- Physical environment
- Unifying

# Previous work

- Symbols and substantialities in Swedish electoral debate 2014
- Duality in symbolic statements
- Symbolic statements that signals humanity and Nordic exceptionalism used in order to legitimize punitive measures
- Trygghet as an inherent of this contradiction



# Trygghet as a symbol

- Social Democracy and the creation of the welfare state
- The use of the concept in crime policy debate
- Which solutions are being offered with reference to trygghet?
- What discursive work does trygghet do for the political parties?

# Trygghet – preventing crime

- Linking crime policy and welfare policy together
- From anger to otrygghet – navigating the feelings of the working class
- Otrygghet leads to crime – the traditional Social democratic understanding
- A reliable welfare, for everyone

# **Trygghet – consequences of crime**

- Crime leads to otrygghet – the dominant understanding today
- The general public and the crime victim in focus
- The judiciary foster the general welfare and our trygghet

# The discursive work of trygghet

- Unifying?
- Sweden as fundamentally safe
- Increased penalties and police expansion in the name of trygghet
- The unthreatening crime victim



# Trygghet and the relation to punitiveness

- Legitimizes punitive measures
- Widens the promise of what crime policy can achieve
- Limiting change
- Benevolent violence?

# Benevolent violence

- Barker (in press)
- Swedish state's response to begging
- When coercive means are used to uphold the state's ameliorative goals and when the state's ameliorative practices have violent effects
- A duality inherent in the Swedish welfare state
- Our own kind of punitiveness?





**Thank you  
for listening**