

The police can and do learn

Tracing policy changes in the police work against organized crime

Fredrik Fors

Introduction

- Background – part of dissertation in criminology: police methods against organized crime
- Police learning and policy changes
- Proactive and intelligence-based police work
- Police preparedness
- Similarities and differences between ordinary police work and police work against organized crime

Introduction, case studies

- Four cases of aggravated robberies:
 - Cash-in-transit vehicle at the highway, Hallunda, Stockholm 2005
 - Post terminal Gothenburg, 2008
 - Shootout and attempted robbery at cash depot in Umeå, 2009
 - Helicopter robbery at Västberga cash depot, Stockholm 2009

Hallunda, August 2005

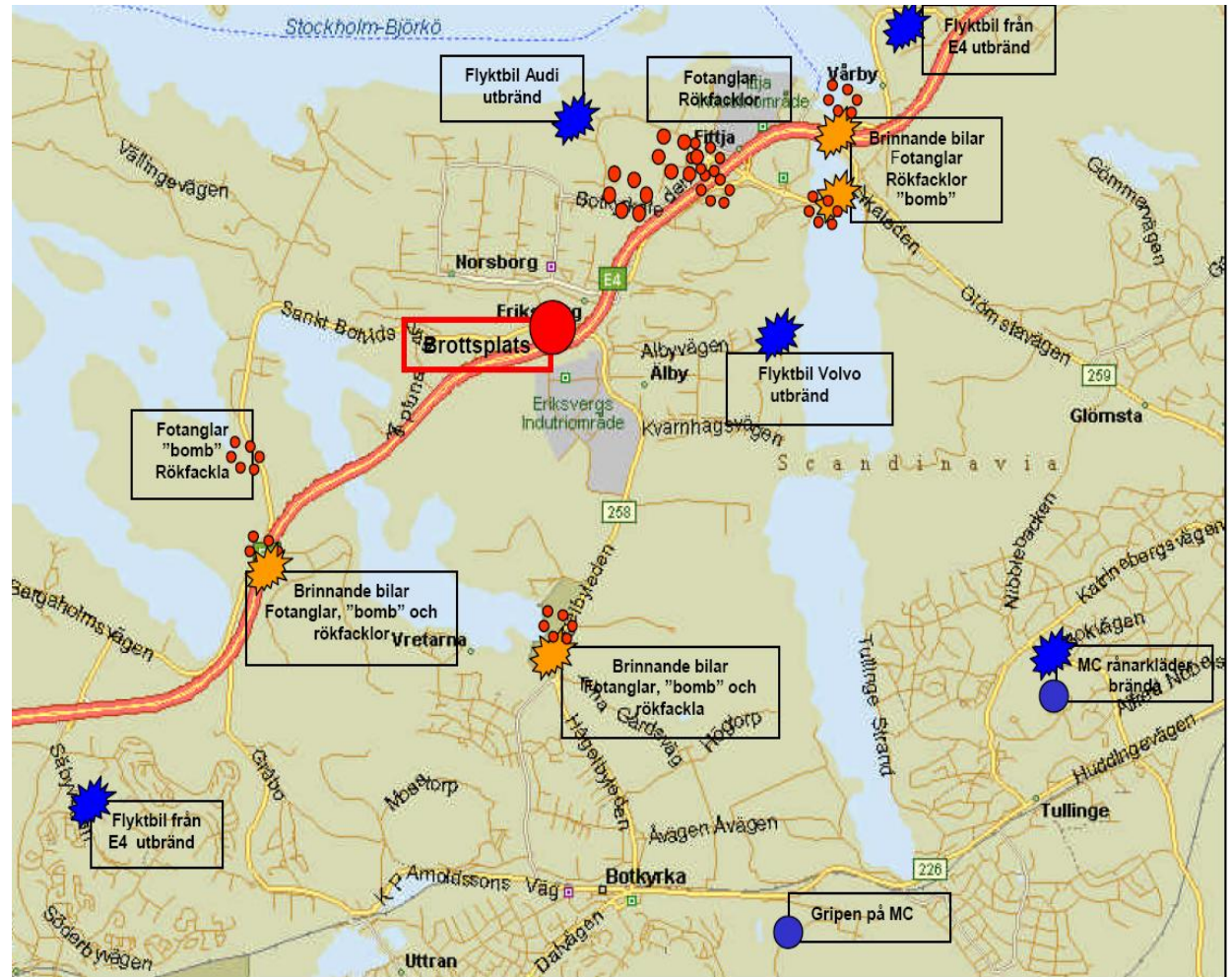
- Major robbery, 20-30 persons involved
- Cash-in-transit vehicle with 73 Million Swedish Kronor (1 h late)
- The robbery had been rehearsed at least three times
- Robbery during the rush hour, 4 cars with a total of 4-6 armed robbers followed and stopped the vehicle

- (Aftonbladet 2005)



Hallunda, August 2005, continued

- Cars set on fire, caltrops spread out, dummy bombs, and smoke grenades in eight different locations in order to delay the police
- 15 Million Swedish Kronor robbed
- Half a dozen of the robbers convicted
- (Map from the preliminary investigation, Police Authority Stockholm, 2007)



Akalla, August 2005

- Robbers used a construction vehicle in order to break into a cash depot.
- Just prior to the entry in the depot in Akalla, north-west of Stockholm, an ATM was blown up north of Stockholm
- The perpetrators robbed the depot of 26 million Swedish Kronor
- Three of the criminals were sentenced for complicity to aggravated robbery to between two and five years of imprisonment



(Swedish Television)

Problems, summary

- > 40 aggravated robberies a year against cash-in-transit vehicles 2000-2005 (since the 1990s)
- Half a billion Swedish Kronor robbed, most of that not retrieved
- Aggravated robbery of a cash-in-transit vehicle at the highway, Hallunda; aggravated robbery of a cash depot, Akalla, both Stockholm, both August 2005
- Impetus for the society in general, and the Police in particular: What do we do to stop these robberies?

What is learning?

- [Single-loop] learning is achieved when organizational members detect and correct divergences and flaws in the organization and its procedures [...in order to...] permit organizations to carry out and achieve present policies and objectives.

- (Argyris and Schön 1978)

What has happened since 2005?

- Nickel organized in 2005, followed by National robberies coordination [Nationell rånsamordning] in 2008, both at the Swedish National Bureau of Investigations [Rikskriminalpolisen]
- Decisions taken by both the Swedish Work Environment Authority [Arbetsmiljöverket] and by the Swedish Transport Workers union [Transportarbetarförbundet] during the fall of 2005 to temporarily stop the use of cash-in-transit vehicles from certain companies in the most affected regions of Sweden

Nickel

- Objective: reduce the spectacular robberies, imprison perpetrators
- Overview of the 355 reported attempted and accomplished robberies that took place during 2000-2005; focus on 56 interesting cases
- Four different categories of robberies:
 - Sidewalk robberies
 - ATM robberies (ATMs blown up)
 - Cash-in-transit vehicles
 - Cash depots
- Mapping out perpetrators of the robberies, their sentences, backgrounds, networks

Nickel (continued)

- Contacts with the uniformed police in order to improve first responder SOPs; improved crime scene investigations
- A lot of cooperation with banks, security companies, technological companies - to make it harder to get to the money in the vehicles
- International cooperation with Europol and Interpol
- Law 2006:517 concerning security companies
- Demands to increase the security for cash-in-transit vehicles: risk assessments, demands for end-to-end systems, GPS and alarms in the vehicles, demands for permanent destruction of money if they are taken with force

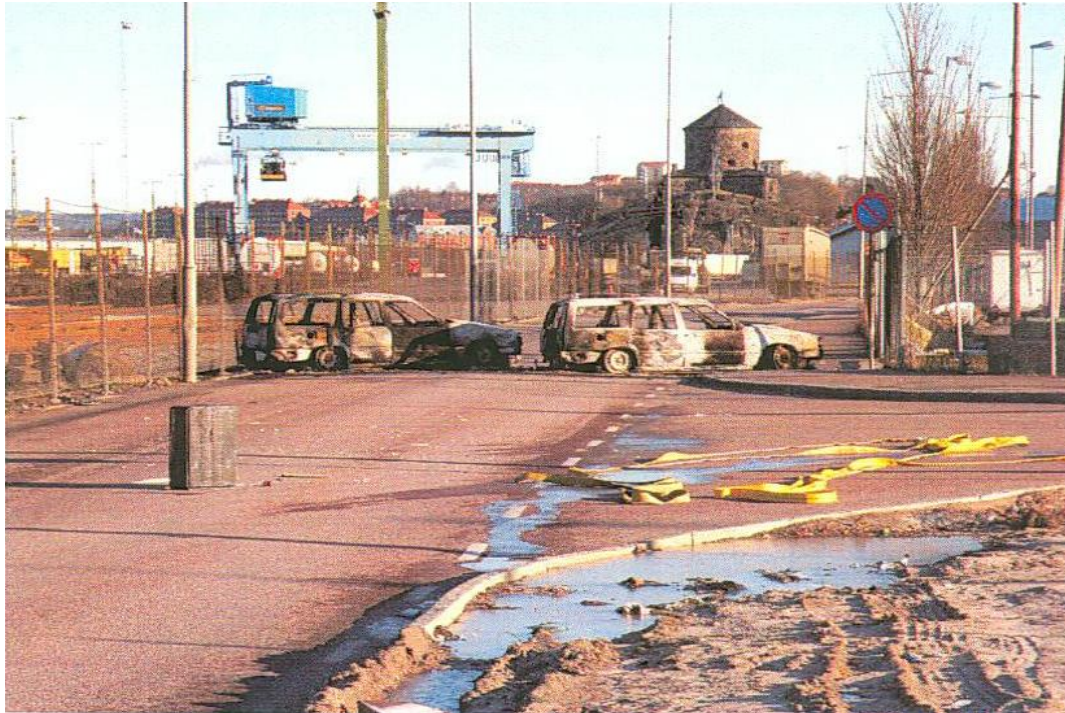
More changes since 2005

- General (police) work against organized crime:
 - Target lists: a national list (Alcatraz) established in 2006, revised regularly, containing 100-116 individuals in Sweden, MC gangs making up from 2/3 down to ~50 %
 - "GOB" at national and regional level: cooperation between police authorities and a range of civil authorities, for example the Social Insurance Agency [Försäkringskassan], the Enforcement Authority [Kronofogden], and the Tax Agency [Skatteverket]: Using expertise from outside the police.
 - Regional and national projects within the police, but also in cooperation with other (regional) authorities: stopping criminal gangs from establishing in a certain region; stopping organized drug smuggling; imprison individuals

Effects of learning/change

- Proactive police work
- 80 % reduction of the amount taken, 40 persons imprisoned
- Few (no) spectacular robberies of cash-in-transit vehicles
- Model for cooperation with the private sector (security companies): quicker changes when problems occur
- Constant level of robberies: 40/year
- Displacement effects:
 - Sidewalk robberies
 - Robberies of cash-in-transit vehicles and cash depots abroad
 - Other criminality (bank robberies 2008)
 - A few spectacular robberies of cash depots in Sweden

Post terminal Gothenburg, 2008



- Aggravated robbery against the Post terminal in Gothenburg, January 2008.
- The robbers destroyed police helicopters, sat cars on fire, put out boxes with the word "Bomb" on and spread caltrops in the streets in order to prevent a police intervention.
- The robbers escaped with a small amount of money, but were later arrested and convicted.
- (preliminary investigation, Police Authority, Gothenburg 2008)

Robbery of cash depot in Umeå



- Attempted armed robbery against a Loomis cash depot in Umeå, northern part of Sweden, May 24, 2009
- The cash depot was kept under surveillance by the Swedish National Counter Terrorism Unit
- The police officers moved in and a fire fight begun. The police fired ~80 rounds, the robbers ~35 rounds. One robber was critically wounded, a police dog was killed, no police officers wounded.

(preliminary investigation, National Bureau of Investigations, 2010)

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CRISMART

Västberga helicopter robbery 2009



- September 2009, Västberga, outside Stockholm: robbers used a helicopter to land on the roof of a cash depot.
- Bomb threat against police helicopters; caltrops spread to slow the police down.
- The robbers escaped with 39 million Swedish Kronor.
- Many of the robbers were arrested and sentenced, but the money has not been retrieved.
- (preliminary investigation, National Bureau of Investigations 2010)

Effects on the robberies 2008-2009

- Better intelligence situation for (parts of) the police concerning likely suspects; several of the suspects of the robberies in 2008 and 2009 had been put up on “target lists”
- Shorter reaction time for (parts of) the police, given the intelligence about likely suspects
- Potentially: a shorter learning span, the law 2010:305 included protection of cash depots, and the government used aggravated robberies as one of the reasons for new legislation.

Summary

- Do the police learn?
 - Yes, to some extent. But the criminals learn as well.
- Theories about police methods, and about organized crime, but where are the theories about police methods against organized crime?

Questions?

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