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# Often too late to the party?

The difficulties in intelligence-based policing  
against organized crime

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# Overview

- Part of dissertation in criminology: police methods against organized crime; aggravated robberies against cash-in-transit vehicles and cash depots
- Background: 30-50 aggravated robberies against cash-in-transit vehicles and cash depots between 2000-2005 by robbers often using automatic weapons and explosives. Target hardening, among many other methods/technologies drove down the amount of organized robberies
- Case description 1: the Umeå shootout
- Case description 2: the helicopter robbery
- Understanding the differences between the two cases
- Challenge the idea of intelligence-based police work

# Buzz-words

- Watch out for buzz-words
- What is intelligence-led/based/initiated/... police work really about?
- Is intelligence-led something something new?
- Other well-discussed buzz-words: (serious) organized crime; proactive policing

# The Umeå case, preparing a robbery



- Intelligence operations against suspected criminals made the police take a threat of an armed robbery seriously late 2008.
- Intensified surveillance in April and May 2009
- Pictures from surveillance operation May 2009 (National Bureau of Investigation)

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# The Umeå case, robbery of cash depot



- 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 Special Task Unit [NI].
- (Pictures from the robbers blowing up a door at the cash depot; and a robber with an assault rifle. National Bureau of Investigation (2010))

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# The Umeå case, shootout



- The police moves in and a fire fight begins (Västerbottens-Kuriren, 2009)

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# The Umeå case, aftermath

- Fire fight between robbers and the Swedish Special Task Unit [NI], during which the police fired ~80 rounds and the robbers ~35 rounds, left one robber critically wounded and a police dog dead
- This makes the event one of the most violent encounters between the police and criminals in Sweden (see Knutsson 2005)
- Four men sentenced for attempt to armed robbery to imprisonment in 5 years, 4 months to 6 years and 9 months

# Västberga helicopter robbery 2009

- Warnings given to the Swedish police by the Serbian police from August 25:
  - A serious crime was planned
  - 20 persons involved (some from former Yugoslavia; some in Sweden)
  - Explosives will be used
  - The criminals will use a helicopter (type specified)
  - Three persons are planning to land on the roof of a four story building, going after €10M
  - Afterwards, the helicopter will drop off the robbers in a wooded area, where they will leave in cars. The robbery will be carried out early in the morning
  - The criminals plan to destroy helicopters that might be used to track the robbers' helicopter afterwards (i.e., police helicopters)
  - The robbery will be carried out no later than September 15-16



# The Swedish Police's reaction

- Information was taken seriously
- The Swedish National Bureau of Investigation [RKP] organized the work; kept information mostly to themselves, did not share with the regional level
- The Special Task Unit [NI] guarded a specific cash depot (Panaxia, Bromma) the nights of September 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup>
- No robbery was attempted, the operation was cancelled

- (Swedish National Police Board 2011)

# Västberga helicopter robbery 2009



- September 23d, 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 Investigation 2010)

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# Analysis

- Intelligence initiated police work: should the intelligence be taken seriously?
  - There is a lot of information, intelligence or rumors concerning people that are planning "to do something" (i.e. rob a cash depot), but most of the rumors prove to be false. If the police initiates an operation against organized criminals, it will take a lot of resources.
  - The helicopter robbery: initially, a lot of specific intelligence; later reactive police work
  - Umeå: the police reacted to the intelligence, and the robbers *did* show up

# Analysis, continued

- When should the police intervene?
  - Intelligence work vs. judicial questions – it has to work in court; (from the police's/prosecutor's view): the longer sentences, the better. An early intervention might not result in evidence strong enough (i.e., four guys with tools and camping gear, but no weapons), while intervention at a later stage might be more dangerous.
  - Sentences influence strongly the police's work: longer sentences/more serious crimes = higher priority and vice versa
  - The watchers were watched – the robbers suspected that they were being followed

# Analysis, continued

- The helicopter robbery:
  - Competition and distrust within the police, between the national level and the regional level in Stockholm (/major city); (later confirmed) risk of information leaks to the mass media
  - Intelligence initiated, first intelligence led – but ultimately reactive police work
- Umeå:
  - Not the same level of competition between the regional Umeå police and the national police
  - Intelligence initiated, intelligence led police work