

ORGANIZED CRIME AND COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

A case study of Skåne, Sweden.

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ABSTRACT

Since 9/11, the threat of hostile non-state actors using counterintelligence has become a growing subject of research. This opens up a new way of thinking about domestic organized actors' countermeasures. In Sweden, organized crime is a serious concern for the police. The new revelation of organized crime using Encrochats encryption service begs the question of what countermeasures organized crime is adopting to counteract the police collection of information. The focus of this study will be on organized crime countermeasures in the region of Skåne, Sweden. The study presents a hypothetico-deductive examination of the different types of counterintelligence to assess their overlap with countermeasures used by organized crime, based on Hank Prunckun's theory of counterintelligence. It will rely on how countermeasures are described in police reports and investigations, judicial hearings, publicly sponsored television and radio, and newspapers. Because it is impossible to falsify the hypotheses, the study concludes that it is possible to understand organized crime countermeasures as counterintelligence. Organized crime appears to be employing a vertical hierarchical paradigm to conduct counterintelligence, using youth to perform minor chores, without any indication of technological competence, based on the patterns and relationships found in the presented data.

Key words: Organized Crime, Skåne, Counterintelligence, Hank Prunckun.

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Content

1. Introduction	3
2. Theoretical Framework.....	5
2.1. <i>Counterintelligence by non-state actors</i>	<i>5</i>
2.1.1. <i>Hank Prunckun's Theory of Counterintelligence</i>	<i>7</i>
2.2. <i>Current situation of Organized Crime in Sweden.....</i>	<i>8</i>
2.3. <i>Operationalization.....</i>	<i>9</i>
3. METHOD & Research design	12
3.1. <i>Case-Selection.....</i>	<i>12</i>
3.2. <i>Descriptive Case study.....</i>	<i>13</i>
3.3. <i>Hypothetico-deductive method.....</i>	<i>14</i>
3.3.1. <i>Hermeneutics</i>	<i>15</i>
3.4. <i>Material.....</i>	<i>15</i>
3.5. <i>Methodological discussion.....</i>	<i>17</i>
3.5.1. <i>Limitations of the study.....</i>	<i>17</i>
4. Analysis.....	18
4.1. <i>Hypothesis 1 – Deterrence.....</i>	<i>18</i>
4.1.1. <i>Encryption.....</i>	<i>18</i>
4.1.2. <i>Informal rules of Information Management</i>	<i>19</i>
4.1.3. <i>Summarizing Hypothesis.....</i>	<i>19</i>
4.2. <i>Hypothesis 2 – Detection</i>	<i>20</i>
4.2.1. <i>Surveillance and Data Collection.....</i>	<i>20</i>
4.2.2. <i>Summarizing Hypothesis.....</i>	<i>21</i>
4.3. <i>Hypothesis 3 – Deception</i>	<i>22</i>
4.3.1. <i>Businesses as fronts</i>	<i>22</i>
4.3.2. <i>Decoys.....</i>	<i>23</i>
4.3.3. <i>Summarizing Hypothesis.....</i>	<i>24</i>
4.4. <i>Hypothesis 4 - Neutralization</i>	<i>25</i>
4.4.1. <i>Disruption</i>	<i>25</i>
4.4.2. <i>Sabotage.....</i>	<i>26</i>
4.4.3. <i>Summarizing Hypothesis.....</i>	<i>26</i>
5. Results & Findings.....	27
6. Concluding Comments.....	29
7. References.....	30

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding and estimating the ability of organized crime to counteract police work is important for any research that aims to improve policing. Recent innovations in policing, such as Intelligence Led-Policing (ILP), has initiated a shift from reactive to preventive efforts.¹ Intelligence incorporated, policing now strives to integrate many of the methods employed by intelligence services to improve capability. However, recognizing criminals as capable of using similar methods appears to be overlooked. Simultaneously, reports of the cracked encryption services *Encrochat* and *SKY ECC* reveals widespread usage between criminals. It suggests a gap between how the police perceive the sophistication of countermeasures and actual usage. More competent and complex than previously conceived, technology and international connections have introduced new methods and actors to an already complex environment.²

Intelligence by criminal actors has received little attention in academic research. Counterintelligence more so, as its existence on the fringes of Intelligence research has left it lacking any real following up. Yet, Mobley and Rey state that “limited studies to date demonstrate that effective counterintelligence is critical to the operational agility and lifespan of violent non-state groups”.³ Developing the proactive aspect of policing depends on improving the understanding of the mechanisms of the criminal environment. Effective operational efforts are better managed if strategies of the adversary are discovered. The study touches on a paradoxical issue, as those employed to fight against organized crime: law enforcement and government officials possess large amounts of information and material. This material is, however, inaccessible for outsiders. Nevertheless, this study aims to research criminal use of counterintelligence, which academically is a new subject.

Today, the most comprehensive initiative ever against locally organized criminal gangs (LOCG) in Sweden is underway.⁴ However, measures also result in countermeasures. Less aggressive measures adopted by organized crime result in criminals becoming increasingly guarded and concealed. For instance, through advancing risk awareness, security is improved by avoiding unnecessary interaction with the police. In other cases, a more aggressive measure is to retaliate using coercion to influence police work. Combating organized crime is today prevented from effective operation in various ways, including through diversionary maneuvers

¹ Ratcliffe, Jerry, *Intelligence-led policing*, Second edition, Routledge, London, 2016, p. 13.

² Nationella operativa avdelningen, *Polisens rapport om allvarlig och organiserad brottslighet*, 2017, p. 6.

³ Blake W. Mobley & Timothy Ray (2019) The Cali Cartel and Counterintelligence, *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 32:1, 30-53, p. 31.

⁴ <https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/ett-tryggare-sverige/>

and various acts of violence in connection with interventions.⁵ Overall, the goal is for police work to become less interfering.⁶

This study aims to use Hank Prunckun's theory of Counterintelligence to formulate categories of countermeasures that may be used by LOCG against the police collection of information. If different types are located, it, in turn, provides an outline of capacity. The objective is to describe and categorize the countermeasures, thus highlighting potential operational ability among criminals against effective police work. This research will contribute to a growing field of understanding the enactment of counterintelligence by non-state actors in the analysis of currently employed methods. The thesis is that LOCG in Sweden are using countermeasures applicable to what constitutes counterintelligence. To research this, the study will research if such is the case in one region of Sweden, Skåne. Depending on if correct or false, it provides evidence for or against the thesis.

With this approach, the question that the research aims to understand is:

In Skåne, are LOCG using methods applicable to what constitutes counterintelligence against the police?

The research begins by reviewing the theoretical and conceptual framework within which the study takes place. Because organized crime is a complex phenomenon, the study begins with presenting how contemporary organized crime in Sweden is to be understood by merging different reports from the Police and Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ).⁷ Next, the paper determines how to think about counterintelligence and the use of counterintelligence by non-state-actors. Used to determine what constitutes counterintelligence, Hank Prunckun's theory will be explained. Following an operationalization on how the research will analyze the material and the construction of hypotheses is outlined. Then, the methodological framework is presented concerning the benefits and delimitations that have to be accounted for. Conclusively, the analysis will highlight whether countermeasures used by LOCG can be classified as counterintelligence.

⁵ Nationella operativa avdelningen, *Utsatta områden- Social ordning, kriminell struktur och utmaningar för polisen*, 2017, p. 19

⁶ Brottsförebyggande Rådet, *Police Encounters with Organised Crime: a research project about unlawful influence: A summary of report*, 2009:7, p. 5

⁷ The authors translation of Brottsförebyggande Rådet.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. COUNTERINTELLIGENCE BY NON-STATE ACTORS

Prevalent understanding of counterintelligence as intelligence on intelligence has resulted in a lack of knowledge, both in terms of how it is carried out and who it affects. Citing Justin R. Harber, “Counterintelligence has been largely characterized as a “neglected element” of the intelligence discipline.”⁸

Traditionally, counterintelligence has been regarded as a practice of intelligence services to counteract or neutralize the efforts of foreign states intelligence within one's borders.⁹ An assumption from the Cold War held on the premise that only states occupy the organizational preferences to carry out the difficult task of identifying and combating the secretive nature of intelligence work.¹⁰ Yet, as highlighted by recent studies, non-state actors, both domestic and foreign, also have the capacity to implement effective counterintelligence. This offers a new perspective to the research of antagonistic groups, who may employ it to obstruct the intelligence collection efforts of an adversary.¹¹

Organized crime is one such actor. Organizations that are too brash, not concealing communications, business and plots from the police will risk their existence to be short-lived. The survival of criminal enterprises depends instead depends on their ability to develop flexibility and sophisticated methods to remain elusive. In many ways, this strategy is synonymous with ‘counterintelligence’.¹²

Borrowing from Mobley and Ray, counterintelligence is the “constellation of activities, analysis and decision-making by a clandestine organization [...] to deny adversaries accurate information about its activities, personnel, and plans”.¹³ By this definition, counterintelligence is likewise the attempt by organized crime to negate police collection of information about undertakings and members.

⁸ Justin R. Harber (2009) *Unconventional Spies: The Counterintelligence Threat from Non-State Actors*, *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 22:2, 221-236, p. 222.

⁹ Ehrman, John, “What are we talking about when we talk about counterintelligence”, *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 53, No 2, June 2009 , p. 6.

¹⁰ Justin R. Harber, 2009, p. 222.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 226.

¹² Mobley, Blake W., *Terrorism and counterintelligence: how terrorist groups elude detection*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2012, p. 1

¹³ Blake W. Mobley & Timothy Ray, 2019, p. 32

For example, compare these two cases: 1) Spotting patrolling police through strategic placements of lookouts and alerting sellers of narcotics 2) Detecting a possible spy in close proximity to a military establishment and making intervening measures.

This *au courant* interpretation of counterintelligence provides an inclusive frame of analysis. It is less dependent on *who* exercises it but more defined by *why* and *how* it is used. Indeed, an understanding of counterintelligence as the ‘thinkers’ countermeasure – implementation or consideration of implementation by any type of actor should naturally follow as a logical consequence of risk-awareness. That is, of course, if the risk is assessed as a product of intelligence. Stretching between various fields where intelligence emerges: business,¹⁴ government agencies¹⁵ and criminality¹⁶, the interest of research on the subject becomes a question of what counterintelligence measures are deployed, and if they signal any measure of capacity.

In Mobley and Ray’s article ‘The Cali Cartel’, counterintelligence sophistication is layered in 3 levels. Conforming within these layers are typical countermeasures. Ranging from less- to most sophisticated, layers are defined as *Basic Denial*, *Adaptive Denial* and *Covert Manipulation*.¹⁷ Basic Denial demarcates defensive measures to limit information leakage, without any understanding of the adversary’s methods. Adaptive Denial introduces understanding and counteracting distinguishable methods of intelligence collection. Covert manipulation, in turn, represents methods that counteract the distinguishable intelligence collection using its inherent liabilities against it for greater efficiency of counteracting. Perceptibly, the layers characteristic level of sophistication appears to coincide with how defensive, respectively, offensive the approaches are. Defensive as preventing information leaks; offensive by exploiting the methods of the adversary.

In Mobley’s book, ‘Terrorism and Counterintelligence’, the spectrum of sophistication is again recited. Affirming how basic and active denial function to generate necessary information for sophistication to be possible,¹⁸ any spectrum of counterintelligence should suggestively be analyzed by a principle of sophistication, as it would reveal what methods are employed. It proposes a positivist view, that with enough material, could be profitable.

¹⁴ Kristen Michal (1994) Business counterintelligence and the role of the U.S. intelligence community, *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 7:4, 413-427.

¹⁵ Frederick L. Wetering (2000) Counterintelligence: The Broken Triad, *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 13:3, 265-300.

¹⁶ Blake W. Mobley & Timothy Ray, 2019.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 32-33.

¹⁸ Mobley, Blake W., 2012, p. 10.

2.1.1. HANK PRUNCKUN'S THEORY OF COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

On the other hand, studied by Hank Prunckun in *Counterintelligence Theory and Practice*, both offensive and defensive counterintelligence can be sophisticated, as it is the enactment of methods that deem their effectiveness, not the method itself.¹⁹ Although Prunckun renames these *Counterintelligence* (defensive) and *Counterespionage* (offensive). There still exists a succession between the employment of defensive methods and their role in shaping offensive methods, reasonably proposing an inherently higher level of complexity.²⁰ But, a highly refined defensive method can also be complex. Indeed, this permits the sophistication of counterintelligence methods to be understood as potential sophistication. It downgrades sophistication as an explanatory variable and allows an analysis that views methods as isolated units, not sequential.

Counterintelligence is the systematic use of protective measures. The counterintelligence approach utilizes mostly protective methods that refrain from interacting with the opposition. It centers on the assignment to prevent the collection of information by inadvertent leakage and securing infrastructure from espionage.²¹ However, interaction sometimes becomes necessary as a way of generating information to adapt its methods.

Counterintelligence is comprised of *deterrence* and *detection* of an adversary's intelligence activities.²² *Deterrence* is the principal task of preventing an adversary from gaining access to information, either by discouraging penetration or deny collection while an operation is underway. It is underscored by cost-evaluation, as it aims to increase the costs of collection to a level that is not perceived as acceptable.²³ It relies on the premise that uninterrupted activity by the opposition has the capacity to cause unacceptable damage. *Detection* is the identification of an opposition's intelligence efforts, supposing an analytical aspect of who, where, why, when and how. Recognizing these 'events of concern' requires systems in place that will bring these events to attention.²⁴ Argued by Prunckun, detection is an essential component to counterespionage, as the analytical premise is necessary to effectively exploit the conduct of the adversary. As such, the precision of counterespionage relies on working detection.²⁵

¹⁹ Prunckun, Henry W., *Counterintelligence theory and practice*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, Md., 2012, p. 40.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 23-24

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 23.

²² *Ibid.* p. 23.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 42.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 43.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p.40.

Counterespionage, on the other hand, is an opportunistic technique that takes advantage of the opponent's techniques of gathering information to negate them. As mentioned, counterespionage relies on some type of knowledge of the opponents' methods. It may also involve putting personnel in contact with the opposition to feed disinformation or disrupt the oppositions collection of information.²⁶

Counterespionage entails *deception* and *neutralization*.²⁷ Methods of *deception* include misleading an adversary's decision-makers on perpetrators capacity, motive or concealing who is the perpetrator of an operation. The final result is to generate a false perception of the organization, restricting the effectiveness of collecting operations or pushing the antagonist down a wasteful route.²⁸ "Dummy-agents" are a classic example of this, as they are used to spread disinformation or project misleading images of what is happening.

Neutralization is the task of incapacitating or crippling the opponent's ability to collect data. It can either be caused by a loss of interest, or enthusiasm, in continuing the operation, or by causing a loss of confidence in the operation in turn making it less viable to continue in its current form.²⁹ Although neutralization by paralysis is not as dramatic as destruction it can be equally effective. Unlike the operation's destruction, or demolition, paralysis is concerned with causing a temporary halt to any acts that could otherwise lead to it gaining access to more sensitive information.³⁰

2.2. CURRENT SITUATION OF ORGANIZED CRIME IN SWEDEN

Today, organized crime is used in Sweden as an umbrella term applied to many different forms of criminal activity.³¹ Set between outlaw motorcycle gangs, loosely connected individuals abiding by some sort of common feature or street gang, the spectrum of organized crime is solely delimited by 2 participants committing aggravated crime over a time period.³² Proposed by Amir Rostami, this 'modest' definition is derived from how what represents the most pressing type of organized crime has shifted in the last 20 years.³³ What causes this shift is not of interest to the study. Presumably, a different organization with different characteristics of

²⁶ Ibid. 24

²⁷ Ibid. 44-46.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 44.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 45-46.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 45.

³¹ *Polisens rapport om allvarlig och organiserad brottslighet*, 2017, p. 6.

³² Polismyndigheten, *Myndigheter i Samverkan mot den Organiserade Brottsligheten*, 2020, p. 15.n

³³ Rostami, Amir, *Criminal Organizing Studies in the sociology of organized crime*, Criminal organizing – New Series 62, Stockholm Studies in Sociology, 2016, p. 51-55.

size and togetherness employ different methods. However, the study aims to frame it to the current type of pressing organized crime.

As stated in publications of the National Operations Department (NOA)³⁴ LOCG in 'vulnerable areas' have been a major challenge for the police in recent years.³⁵ Vulnerable areas are defined as a geographically delimited area that is characterized by low socioeconomic status and where criminals have a significant impact on the local population.³⁶ These places are primarily made up of enclosed high-rises and surrounded courtyards. As obstructive zones, they provide a natural sort of physical protection by prohibiting visibility into movements and dealings. Criminal activity in these areas is described to be conducted by individuals who grew up together or part of the same kinship. As a result of their shared experiences and hardships, there is an inherent aspect of loyalty amongst these individuals. According to Amir Rostami, the 'social order' between actors facilitates information diffusion between LOCG, enhancing the knowledge of police activities within these areas.³⁷

As such, the focus of this study will be on LOCG, defined specifically by their ability to exercise authority in particular segregated areas. Open drug sales, robberies, and homicides are just a few of the sorts of crime that occur in these places. In addition, inhabitants in these areas have a low willingness to report criminality. It creates a situation in which the ability of the police to collect their data becomes vital to removing criminals from the streets. Similarly, the police have particular difficulties operating in these areas, and the work requires regular adaptation of both working methods and equipment.³⁸

2.3. OPERATIONALIZATION

If it is hypothesized that LOCG in Sweden are utilizing counterintelligence against the police, evidence of this should be found by researching LOCG countermeasures in accordance with Prunckun's theoretical presumptions of specific principles defining different sorts of counterintelligence.

In *Counterintelligence Theory and Practice*, Prunckun does not introduce any definite framework on how to analyze cases of counterintelligence in different contexts. However, the outlined theoretical variables of Detection, Deterrence, Deception and Neutralization

³⁴ The authors translation of Nationella Operativa Avdelningen.

³⁵ *Polisens rapport om allvarlig och organiserad brottslighet*, 2017, p. 4–5.

³⁶ Nationella operativa avdelningen, *Utsatta områden -sociala risker, kollektiv förmåga och oönskade händelser*, 2015, p. 13.

³⁷ Rostami, Amir, 2016, p. 56.

³⁸ Riksrevisionen, *Rätt insats på rätt plats– polisens arbete i utsatta områden*, 2020:20, p. 18

highlights defined areas that can be used to formulate operational definitions. Whereas Mobley and Rey correlate sophistication with different methods, Prunckun instead expands on what general principles of offensive and defensive counterintelligence takes place. This evenness *au contraire* to a positive correlation allows the study to assume a nominal scale, rather than an ordinal scale.

The variables outlined by Prunckun's represent a relatively comprehensive spectrum of what can be considered inclusive. Yet, an all too inclusive approach may render most countermeasures applicable, thus undermining the fundamental assumption of counterintelligence as sophistication of methods. Understanding this, the operationalization of variables has to be exclusive to reject uncertainties. Although this does limit the analysis, result and potential findings, the precision of research aligns with the purpose of understanding countermeasures.

To determine counterintelligence and counterespionage. Counterintelligence is the protection of an organization from information leaks, the securement of the organization from sabotage and the transfer of technologies. Its defining factor is its *systematic implementation* because of its anticipatory nature. Counterespionage is the exploitation of the adversary's techniques and the sabotage of its operational capability. Different from Counterintelligence, Counterespionage is defined by *opportunism*, by exploiting the methods of an opponent for the own advantage.³⁹ As such, it connects to Prunckun's assumption that counterespionage measures are established based on information collected through counterintelligence while simultaneously emphasizing their distinctive differentiation. For example, determining if a tactic is Deterrence or Neutralization is dependent on whether it is aimed at neutralizing specific persons or operational capabilities or deterring general structures of the opponent's operation.

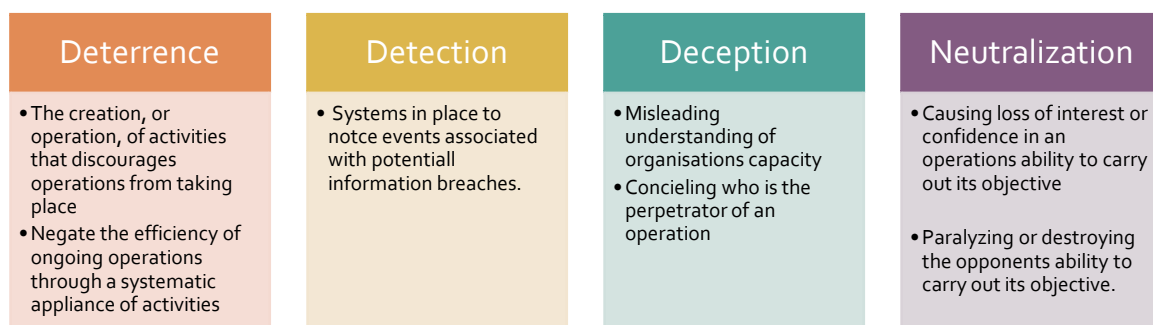
Due to the inability of disassociating different LOCG from each other and the inability of locating connections between LOCG, LOCG will be treated as a unitary unit. There have been reports that LOCG have varying levels of strategic ability. Described as ranging between loosely connected networks with deep roots in the youth environment, which are thought to impede low strategic ability, and larger networks in metropolitan areas with higher strategic capability.⁴⁰

³⁹ Prunckun, Henry W., 2012, p. 23–24.

⁴⁰ *Utsatta områden -sociala risker, kollektiv förmåga och oönskade händelser*, 2015, p. 15.

The material must, for proper measurement of an event, indicate their relationship explicitly to depict the deployment of countermeasures by LOCG against the police collecting information. Either by the material describing the measure as making it more difficult or by the incident being described as directed at the police's operating capability. Direct mentions of LOCG, as well as identifying actors as members of LOCG, are also required. Indeed, the *who*, *why* and *how* are essential to any categorization. Conversely, although the geographical aspect of LOCG is distinctive, the *where* is less important. Seeing that defensive *counterintelligence*, such as encryption of communication, can be employed using mobile devices, limiting the study to certain areas in principle may counteract the detection of certain methods. This situates the material to be collected by a standard further outlined in the material section.

The categorization of countermeasures will be interpreted according to the outlined framework below.



Using this categorical interpretation framework, the research is framed to comprise the deduction of four hypotheses.

- *Hypothesis 1: Countermeasures employed by LOCG in Skåne are identifiable as Deterrence*
- *Hypothesis 2: Countermeasures employed by LOCG in Skåne are identifiable as Detection*
- *Hypothesis 4: Countermeasures employed by LOCG in Skåne are identifiable as Deception*
- *Hypothesis 3: Countermeasures employed by LOCG in Skåne are identifiable as Neutralization*

3. METHOD & RESEARCH DESIGN

There has been an increase in research on non-state actors use of intelligence. Following the apparent sophistication of the preparation of the 9/11 attacks, counterintelligence use by non-state actors has also been recommended in security studies.⁴¹

The study aims to research if it is possible to understand the criminal use of countermeasures in Region Skåne as use of counterintelligence. As a result, the methodologies used in this study are based on the assumptions of a qualitative approach, as the goal is to conduct in-depth research, illuminating the components of each event.

Researching an unexplored subject, the first step of any such research is to describe the phenomenon. The research uses a hypothetico-deductive approach to analyze the material, determining whether it conforms to predetermined counterintelligence parameters. This translates the study into a descriptive case study with an interpretative approach.

3.1. CASE-SELECTION

According to Gerring and Cojocaru, descriptive cases should be chosen based on whether the study's goal is to represent a general distribution trend or to describe a subject's diversity.⁴² To investigate if various countermeasures emerge, it is critical that the case's inherent limitations do not limit variety. On the contrary, a case that represents a high propensity of LOCG will be preferred. In Sweden, most LOCG are assumed to be located within or in close proximity to major cities.⁴³ This limits the search to three cities, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Asserting that LOCG mostly exists in or in close proximity to major cities; the county of a major city provides a practical research variable. Indeed, it also allows for adopting already established spatial boundaries.

On these preferences, the Region of Skåne was selected on the premise that it, additionally to containing a major city, also is where Öresundsbron connects the road network on the Scandinavian peninsula with Central- and Western Europe. Consequently, Öresundsbron is the primary smuggling route into Sweden and has, according to the police, introduced new ways

⁴¹ Justin R. Harber (2009), p. 221.

⁴² John Gerring and Lee Cojocaru, "Selecting Cases for Intensive Analysis: A Diversity of Goals and Methods", *Sociological Methods & Research* 2016, Vol. 45(3) 392-423, p. 396.

⁴³ Nationella operativa avdelningen, *Kriminell påverkan i lokalsamhället - En lägesbild för utvecklingen i utsatta områden*, 2019, p. 6.

and technologies to the criminal environment.⁴⁴ Region Skåne also has two main cities, Malmö and Helsingborg, which indicates a good chance to discover material to research.

3.2. DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY

Allison Stewart presents case studies as exploratory forms of inquiry used to intensively research one or several units in-depth.⁴⁵ *Per se*, a case study is a common denomination of a range of approaches that take interest in the qualities and characteristics of a smaller number of comprehensive observations. Generally, employing case studies as tools of scientific research thus provides more information to assertively answer analytical questions of *how* and *why*. This will improve the likelihood of finding indicators in the material.

On the flip-side, the qualitative methodological aspect of case studies as complex cases requiring interpretation does limit their ability to legitimize generalizations as a result of their subjective predispositions. To countermand, if general reliability is to be legitimized in research of case studies, it requires a systematic approach to the analysis of the material. Such an approach promotes regularity in interpretation. As to enlarge the cumulative effort of science, effective use of qualitative research requires some form of logical framework to justify conclusions.⁴⁶

Of interest to the study are the properties and qualities of countermeasures applied by criminals against the police ability to collect information. Because understanding the constituents of each event is required for a correct interpretation, connotation to the theoretical framework is dependent on interpreting if an event realizes the operationalized variables. As no previous research has been made in Sweden on this subject, the research by principle has to embrace a descriptive approach.

Using a descriptive case study, the aim is to reveal patterns and relations between events by interpreting the information thoroughly by the operationalization of theoretical variables. A descriptive approach in social science needs to be guided by a theoretical statement. This statement identifies which aspects of a phenomenon are relevant, and which can be disregarded in the analysis.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Nationella operativa avdelningen, *Lärdomar av Encrochat-Analysprojekt Robinson*, 2021, p. 18, Brottsförebyggande rådet, *Brottslighet och trygghet i Malmö, Stockholm och Göteborg - En kartläggning*, 2012, p. 116.

⁴⁵ Stewart, Allison 'Case Study', in Mills, Jane & Birks, Melanie, *Qualitative methodology: a practical guide*, Sage, c 2014, Los Angeles, 2014, p. 2 of 17.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 11–17.

⁴⁷ Teorell, Jan & Svensson, Torsten, *Att fråga och att svara: samhällsvetenskaplig metod*, 1. uppl., Liber, Stockholm, 2007, p. 99–101.

If theoretical applicability is confirmed, it also assists to advance the range of theoretical application to new areas of research.⁴⁸ Descriptive conclusions are a necessary step towards causality. As building blocks for future explanatory approaches - the rigor of an explanation always depends on the precision of the description.⁴⁹ Yet, every description is not a good description. Pure abstracts - processed material without systematic focus tend to become recitation, rather than research. Processing and delimitation are necessary. Using a descriptive approach thus presuppose that interpretation takes place based on some type of classification scheme. In this research represented by Prunckun's theoretical variables.

3.3. HYPOTHETICO-DEDUCTIVE METHOD

Relating the study to Hank Prunckun's existing theory of counterespionage requires an assumed connection between theory and observation. For this assumption to be tested, the method has to accommodate for a hypothetical proposal that can be tried against empirical material. This defines the study as a hypothetico-deductive, entailing the formulation of one or several hypotheses which are attempted to be falsified through a deductive method.

Teorell and Svensson point out the hypothetico-deductive method as advantageous when attempting to extend knowledge into new regions.⁵⁰ The hypothetico-deductive method entails the testing of unproven statements, hypotheses, against empirics to deduce what should be observed if the hypothesis is true. Divided into segments, the process entails:

- 1) Formulating a proposal of scientific interest, i.e., a hypothesis
- 2) Deducing of one or more empirical consequences that apply if the hypothesis is true
- 3) An empirical test of whether these consequences are consistent
- 4) Determine whether the hypothesis is supported or not.⁵¹

The hypothetical-deductive method does not mean invoking a 'definitive' interpretation of unconditional truth. Solely the statement that one interpretation is better than another (based on how it corresponds with the textual evidence that answers the research question) has to be considered against the fact that interpretations are subjective constructions. What may be

⁴⁸ Tobin, R. (2010). Descriptive case study. In A. J. Mills G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research*, p. 2 of 4.

⁴⁹ Teorell, Jan & Svensson, Torsten, 2007, p. 24.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 50.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 100–101.

determined, however, is whether an interpretation is an 'over-interpretation,' that is, whether it is less precise than a more exact understanding.⁵² To avoid over-interpretation, Prunckun's theoretical variables have been consciously operationalized to avoid uncertainty.

For a hypothesis to be falsified, the material has to indicate that

1. The material does not reveal any sign that the countermeasure intends to counteract the police ability to collect information.
2. The material does not reveal that the interacting parties are members of LOCG and the police.
3. The material does not conform to any of the theoretical variables, and their respective defining principles.

3.3.1. HERMENEUTICS

It is imperative to comment on how the deductive method is applied based on inherent subjective preferences, as well as how this affects the analysis. Because the question stems from my subjective curiosity about the issue, intra-subjectivity must be emphasized. There is some pessimism among hermeneutics theorists in this regard. Indeed, Hans-Georg Gadamer asserts presuppositions inadvertently influence how any text is perceived. The argument is that approaching a text based on certain prejudices risks unconscious expectations disrupting the work of interpretation by marginalizing or subtracting certain possible interpretations in favor of others. Logically, it results in reliability impediments of the research.

However, Teorell and Svensson believe that this means a minor problem if one means that the interpretation means approaching the empirical material with a certain question, and then using the hypothetical-deductive method to answer it.⁵³

3.4. MATERIAL

Material is collected in three types of sources; Newspapers (Svenskadagbladet, Dagensnyheter, Sydsvenskan) Pre-Investigations and Agency-reports. These are located within a timeframe of May 1st 2016 to May 1st 2021. The selection of material starts from 5 years back and stretches up until the start of this study. Consciously, this is to confine the results to the contemporary criminal environment of LOCG. Additionally, a beneficial side-effect is how it relegates

⁵² Ibid. p. 101.

⁵³ Teorell, Jan & Svensson, Torsten, 2007, p. 101.

potential differences in technological development, situating criminals as using similar technological equipment today as 5 years ago.

The selection of 4 types of sources stems from the assumption that not much is reported on how LOCG counteracts the police, solely discussed in first- or secondhand sources by those involved in or exposed by countermeasures. The police and LOCG represent the pronounced exponents on the subject. Any collection of material depends on locating appropriate forums where verbalized information could be found. Moreover, the material has to abide by a standard of reliability, as unadulterated mentions on arbitrary outlets are too uncertain. As such, the material collection consists of these sources:

- 1) Government Reports between May 1st 2016 – May 1st 2021.
- 2) Police investigations and Court-Hearings.
- 3) Swedish national public television broadcaster (SVT) and Swedish national publicly funded radio broadcaster (SR)
- 4) Major morning newspapers (SvenskaDabladet, DagensNyheter & TT), Evening newspapers (Aftonbladet, Expressen) & Major newspaper in region Skåne (Sydsvenskan)

An obvious indication of deliberately using a large quantity of material is the inability to pinpoint all events of interest. Framing the search of indicators in the material using general keywords, such as “counteract” or “covering” in relation to LOCG, will potentially result in material evident of countermeasures being excluded. Steps have been taken to circumvent this by interviewing journalists and BRÅ about their understandings of the concept. Lastly, Skåne County is a part of the ‘South Police Region’,⁵⁴ including Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg. As such, sources from Police and Media are expected to use South Police Region when talking about crime in the region. In these cases, explicit mentions of Skåne or cities within Skåne are necessary to make the material applicable.

⁵⁴ Authors Interpretation of ‘Polisregion Syd’.

3.5. METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

Importantly for the validity of the study's result, the interpretation of material assisted by the operationalized variables has to consider: Firstly, that it is aimed at the operational ability of the police ability to collect intelligence on the criminal group. Secondly, that the material is interpreted on a preference of exclusion, rather than inclusion in adherence to the operationalized definitions. If an interaction between the police and LOCG is not verified by either part to fill the purpose of denying the adversaries accurate information about its activities, personnel, and plans, it will not be supposed as such.

3.5.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

The purpose of this study is to improve the understanding of countermeasures used by LOCG in a region with a major city. The study will be limited to the region of Skåne, Sweden between May 1st 2016 and May 1st 2021. As countermeasures by LOCG is a new subject, any in-depth focus may be compromised by lack of information as material only relatable to Skåne is allowed.

The research rests on the assumption that finding statements of declared motivation either by police or LOCG members, also qualifies the event as with a purpose to deny adversaries accurate information about its activities, personnel, and plans. Ironically, lying is a tool of counterintelligence. However, this study does not have the tools to investigate this further.

The aim of this study is not to criticize the police nor exposing LOCG in itself. It is presumed that the police are well aware of what obstacles they have to deal with in their work, and any intelligence section will have taken notice.

Nevertheless, intelligence and counterintelligence by criminal actors are a field of research that perceptibly will gain attention in the coming years as crime is becoming more complex. The aim is therefore to introduce the field of research in a Swedish context, with the hopes of inspiring further research. Although, this research will not debate whether current methods are effective or not, only their employment. Also, it will not view measures as developing and changing, but static. Finally, by taking a descriptive approach, the aim is not to explain the contextualities of events, but to establish how these events can be interpreted, potentially allowing for new approaches to understanding the situation.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. HYPOTHESIS 1 – *DETERRENCE*

Types of countermeasures that portrayed activities correlating to what is operationalized as Deterrence were identified during the examination of material: Encryption & Code-names, and Informal rules of information management. Both methods systematically aimed to eliminate police operations' ability to collect information.

4.1.1. ENCRYPTION

The first type of countermeasure to emerge was the use of encrypted messages in cell phones when planning or managing crime. As reported by Sydsvenskan, encrypted cell phones were discovered on members of LOCG residing in vulnerable areas around Skåne, indicating their use in multiple LOCG and locations.⁵⁵ Many of the encrypted messages were stated to contain information on the planning of serious crime.⁵⁶ No effort was made by its users to further encrypt the communication. On the contrary, as stated by a police officer, users were very outspoken in the chats. It was not comparable to the ordinary eavesdropping material where codewords are used.⁵⁷ For several years, the communication tool has been used extensively by criminal networks to plan serious crimes without having to worry about anyone eavesdropping on them.⁵⁸

Found in the material, two companies were pointed out as providing the service, Encrochat and SKY ECC. During the research period, however, there was no direct mention of SKY ECC as a suspect in any arrests. The cell phones were bought from Encrochat for 10.000 SEK each, with a subscription costing 30.000 SEK per year.⁵⁹ The product in itself is a cell phone with a high-tech form of encryption that relies on specific hard- and software programming, using a central server belonging to the company.⁶⁰ Significantly, no evidence was been found that speaks for the development of own encryption services. Instead, all products that are used are

⁵⁵ <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2020-09-21/knackta-gangstertelefoner-raddade-minst-fem-fran-att-mordas>

⁵⁶ <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2021-02-13/de-krypterade-chattarna-avslojar-knarknatverkets-mangmiljonaffarer>

⁵⁷ <https://www.expressen.se/nyheter/expressen-fordjupning/slog-till-mot-gangstervarlden-sa-knackte-polisen-koderna/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2021-02-13/de-krypterade-chattarna-avslojar-knarknatverkets-mangmiljonaffarer>

⁵⁹ <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2020-07-02/europol-knackte-krypterat-natverk-avlyssnade-tungt>

⁶⁰ <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2020-12-03/polis-om-encrochat-nagot-man-dromt-om>

bought from external parties. The mobiles were used to communicate all types of crime and were systematically utilized to encrypt communication.⁶¹

4.1.2. INFORMAL RULES OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Information leaks are prevented in LOCG by an informal rule, both within and between LOCG, declaring how under no circumstance is information to be shared with the authorities.⁶² This part of the countermeasure assures that those engaging in criminal activity do not accidentally reveal secrets, purposefully leak classified information, or use that information to harm the criminal environment. As a result of the culture of silence that exists in criminal environments, gathering information is a difficult task that negates operational capacity.⁶³ Even in situations involving a large number of people. It might be instigators, people who provide the equipment, people who drive getaway cars, or people who assist the criminal in some way, and the authorities will never be able to explain or prove who they are.

As a result, the police ability to collect information on criminality is severely nullified by a shared principle within and between LOCG of how certain information should be managed, which often prevents understanding of patterns in crime and relations between actors and plans.⁶⁴

According to the police, the capacity of criminals to uphold and maintain a culture of secrecy is related to the ability of territorial control.⁶⁵ This allows for the prospect of punishment if one does not follow the rules established by criminal organizations operating in these regions.

4.1.3. SUMMARIZING HYPOTHESIS

By finding two types of countermeasures, used by LOCG against the police's ability to collect information about criminal activity, the hypothesis can not be falsified. Outlined by the material, accessing an encryption service was an easy process. By ordering pre-made legal products from companies, LOCG could instantly use encryption. Indeed, by not having to rely on own arrangements to sustain the countermeasure, it emerged as a practical method to

⁶¹ <https://www.expressen.se/nyheter/expressen-fordjupning/slog-till-mot-gangstervarlden-sa-knackte-polisen-koderna/>

⁶² <https://polisen.se/kontakt/press/debattartiklar-och-kommentarer/flera-mordarenden-uppklarade-i-malmo/>, Brottsförebyggande Rådet, *Kriminella nätverk och grupperingar – Polisens bild av maktstrukturer och marknader*, 2016, p. 10.

⁶³ <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2018-10-31/tystnadskultur-hjalper-misstankta-brottslingar--nu-agerar-regeringen>

⁶⁴ <https://polisen.se/kontakt/press/debattartiklar-och-kommentarer/flera-mordarenden-uppklarade-i-malmo/>

⁶⁵ *Utsatta områden- Social ordning, kriminell struktur och utmaningar för polisen*, 2017, p. 24.

circumvent the police information collection. However, the service of *Encrochat* was discovered in 2020, leading to many arrests in Sweden and Skåne.⁶⁶ The discovery reveals a vulnerability intertwined with the technological deficiency of LOCG: Any technological measure of encryption is developed by external parties. This reliability on external parties to remain faithful is, in a world of crime, ironic.

The informal information management norm (code of secrecy), on the other hand, is noteworthy in its simplicity. Exhibiting resemblance to the “prisoner’s dilemma”, the method appears more reliant on the logical presumption of the legal systems incapability to prosecute innocents. It is predicated on LOCG perception of the legal system as being indecisive when it comes to criminal cases. This, however, requires that everyone involved act in accordance with the principle of secrecy. If not, again similar to the prisoner’s dilemma, it will not be assumed practical to partake in.

Encryption by pre-made product is high-cost, high-reward, according to Prunckun’s assertion of a fundamental cost-benefit concept. Informal information management standards, on the other hand, are low-cost and high-reward. Only in the case of encryption is there any real economic investment in advanced techniques to avoid data capture. This could signal that the actors who believe they have more to lose are also those who invest more resources in deterring measures.

4.2. HYPOTHESIS 2 – *DETECTION*

One type of method applicable to detection was found in the material, surveillance. The method included reconnaissance of police entering or exiting the vulnerable area and registering their information.

4.2.1. SURVEILLANCE AND DATA COLLECTION

Members of the LOCG are recruiting youngsters to serve as mobile watch posts, examining the area for police presence and developing a warning system to halt criminal activities until further notice. These adolescents range in age from 12 to 13 years old when they become involved in criminal behavior in the neighborhood, according to the article.⁶⁷ However,

⁶⁶ <https://www.dn.se/sverige/har-ar-de-gripna-i-stad-for-stad/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/wEQQAo/sa-luras-unga-in-i-kriminaliteten>

indications from Operation Rimfrost imply that this number could be as low as 8 years old.⁶⁸ The article states that youngsters are not just restricted to monitoring but are also responsible for delivering items and messages between actors.⁶⁹ As a result, it is suggested that teenage recruiting be used not just for surveillance but also to aid in less challenging general activities. The functional preferences of this system are not discussed in any detail in any medium that discusses Skåne. As a result, it's unclear whether it's utilized everywhere or only in some locations. Furthermore, it appears that this system serves as a potential LOCG recruiting ground. As such, based on their performance, youths are selected for continued criminal activity.

Furthermore, it entails data collection and storage. This registration is done with the help of photos and notes taken on cell phones.⁷⁰ Personal information, location, and license plates showing information on police regularly patrolling the region were described as being stored in 1 of 10 sized cell phones by a police officer in Northern Skåne. According to the authorities, it is also used to dissuade and possibly neutralize police activities.⁷¹ By confirming that this data can be found in a significant number of cell phones, it portrays the technique of tracking possible breaches as being widely employed in criminal environments, highlighting a norm of systematization.

4.2.2. SUMMARIZING HYPOTHESIS

By identifying a countermeasure that adheres to the theoretical variable of Detection, the hypothesis cannot be falsified. Surveillance emerges as a way to collect information to use in the inclusive exercise of crime. Its purpose is to provide a basic level of security from police efforts to collect information in vulnerable areas. The material, however, has not been able to establish if there is a range between lower and higher sophistication.

Surveillance appears to be basically an organizational preference because of how it functions as a recruiting tactic. It is a realistic approach to obtain low-cost labor by promising rewards for performance while weeding out potential recruits. It also serves as a proving ground for youths who are looking for work in a low-employment area. The data saved on cell phones is concerning. If there is some reality to the unity of LOCG against the police, sharing data risks serious implications if retaliation against police personnel becomes more violent. Cell phones

⁶⁸ <https://www.svd.se/thornberg-brottsligheten-har-natt-en-ny-rah-et>

⁶⁹ <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/wEQQAo/sa-luras-unga-in-i-kriminaliteten>

⁷⁰ <https://www.svd.se/thornberg-brottsligheten-har-natt-en-ny-rah-et>

⁷¹ Ibid.

are useful tools for generating and relaying information because their current technological capabilities vary from pictures to text and voice communication. No distinction can be established as to which cell phones are more often used, only that they appear to be available to all LOCG.

4.3. HYPOTHESIS 3 – *DECEPTION*

Two countermeasures deduced as deception were found in the material. The countermeasures include employing legitimate businesses as fronts for illegal businesses and deploying decoys to put distance between the offender and the crime.

4.3.1. BUSINESSES AS FRONTS

According to reports, LOCG has eluded police surveillance on criminal activity by forcefully hijacking established stores and use them as fronts for illicit activities. These stores appeared to run like any other in the commercial marketplace, but behind the management structure was a criminal purpose, meant to act as a decoy for the illegal operation.⁷²

Primary, hijacking stores are pointed to assist in the management of narcotics.⁷³ Indeed, after the owner has either been forced out or subjugated, stores are altered into sale outlets, where narcotics are sold and stored.⁷⁴ It functions to disassociate the seller from the product so that the criminals have nothing on them when the police search them.

This is not an unusual phenomenon according to the police.⁷⁵ Only in recent years, there have been multiple examples of shops being targeted by LOCG in Malmö alone.⁷⁶ The practice also appears in other areas of Skåne.⁷⁷ The practice appears to coincide with spatial factors, as most stores hijacked are either located within or in close proximity to vulnerable areas. In the context of using deception, a front business provides camouflage for LOCG members, allowing them to operate in the open without persecution. However, described in the material, in no case has this countermeasure been sustainable for a longer period of time. Rather than taking the

⁷² <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/JoXK9R/malmobutiker-kapas-av-kriminella--gommer-knark>

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ <https://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/butiker-kapas-i-gangkriminellas-droghandel/>

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/skane/butiker-i-malmo-kapas-av-kriminella>

⁷⁷ <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/val2018/flera-skanska-smaforetagare-kanner-otrygghet-i-de-sarskilt-utsatta-omradena>

opportunity of the camouflage, the take-over has been poorly executed, with LOCG members openly committing crimes.⁷⁸

4.3.2. DECOYS

The nationwide problem of frontmen,⁷⁹ is frequent in Skåne. These are individuals who accept responsibility for a crime or offence that someone else has committed, or acts as owners of property used during a crime to keep criminals from being linked to it. Usually, the identities of impoverished people from Sweden or another EU country are used.⁸⁰ One common type of approach is ownership of cars. Seven out of ten frontmen owning cars in Sweden are living or registered as living Skåne region.⁸¹ The frontmen are used to stimulate organized crime and acts as decoys in their apparent ownership of cars used in criminal activity.⁸²

According to the police, the use of young individuals to perpetrate crimes has increased in recent years.⁸³ The majority of these are associated with the transportation and sale of narcotics. Youths are engaged to transfer items, packages without knowledge of contents, ranging from drugs, weapons or messages.⁸⁴ Lower-ranking LOCG members have also been apprehended with many guns, with the intention of retaining them until they are utilized by other criminals.⁸⁵

Thousands of young people are being used to launder money for LOCG, according to an investigation by SVT in Skåne. Between 2017 to 2019, there was a significant increase in cases. About 5,000 individuals are currently suspected of money laundering in criminal cases.⁸⁶ Economic decoys provide a huge offensive advantage because they not only present an alternative target for police operations to focus on, therefore serving as a signal of when things get heated but also misleads and conceals who is behind the operation.

Individuals serving as frontmen in economic fraud are usually at the end of some type of identity theft. After the criminal has gained access to a person's bank account the funds are

⁷⁸ <https://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/butiker-kapas-i-gangkriminellas-droghandel/>

⁷⁹ The Authors interpretation of Målvakter.

⁸⁰ *Polisens rapport om allvarlig och organiserad brottslighet 2017*, p. 8

⁸¹ <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/skane/regeringen-vill-ha-hardare-tag-mot-bilmalvakter>

⁸² <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2018-01-18/polis-och-kronofogde-far-vassare-vapen-for-att-stoppa-bilmalvakterna>, <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2019-01-28/atta-bilar-om-dagen-registreras-pa-malvakter-men-skulderna>

⁸³ <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7622207>

⁸⁴ <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7622207>

⁸⁵ Malmö Hovrätt, Målnummer HR B 254–17

⁸⁶ <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/skane/tusentals-ungdomar-anvands-for-att-tvatta-pengar-at-kriminella>

transferred to another account owned by the frontman. These funds are then further distributed to a number of different frontmen, who subsequently withdraw cash and send it over to the scammers or their middlemen.⁸⁷

4.3.3. SUMMARIZING HYPOTHESIS

The third hypothesis, that the material describes countermeasures of deception, is not possible to falsify. The two countermeasures indicate a distinction between exposure and long-term viability. Hijacking stores is described as without collaboration. Ownership is obliged to comply with LOCG requests, resulting in an unfavorable exchange that encourages crime reporting. Long-term hijacking isn't mentioned in the text, implying that these are purely opportunistic efforts that will be uncovered fast. Associated with the storage and distribution of narcotics, they become stationary locations to an otherwise mobile practice, acting as a temporary base of operations within a new area offering camouflage to those involved. Functioning as facades to an otherwise illegal business, their function to limit the effectiveness of collection methods is sophisticated, but inept in execution.

Decoys come in a variety of forms, but they all represent a contract between LOCG and individuals who agree to have their identities used in criminal activity in exchange for a payoff. If possible, it gives an easy way to promote a distorted perspective of a LOCG operations. However, a pattern emerges of a vertical hierarchy of who is employing it and what tools they are using. As decoys, exploitation of the police methods is done by exploiting the hierarchy within LOCG. It reveals an exercise of power that is woven into a system that promises the lower-ranked members of LOCG future rewards on the cost of initial losses. Interestingly, decoys seem to be a crafty countermeasure to the inability of Swedish jurisdiction to deal with a person using another identity. It presents a clear example of exploiting the police systems of generating information, and should as such be considered sophisticated.

⁸⁷ <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/skane/tusentals-ungdomar-anvands-for-att-tvatta-pengar-at-kriminella>

4.4. HYPOTHESIS 4 - *NEUTRALIZATION*

Neutralization presents the most hostile form of countermeasures, also represented in what types of countermeasures was interpreted as belonging to this theoretical variable. The two forms of neutralization are disruption and sabotage, both being direct hostile efforts aimed at using violence against police or police infrastructure to disrupt or reduce the enthusiasm of police operations.

4.4.1. DISRUPTION

According to SVT, LOCG members are discouraging police officers from working within the vulnerable area. In turn, these locations widely regarded as challenging to patrol or work in by the police. As a result, police officers are frequently distracted and hampered in their work, which causes apprehension about working in the area.⁸⁸ Unauthorized influence over police officers is common. Threats can be both serious and subtle. In vulnerable areas, planned attacks on police are carried out in order to prevent interventions.⁸⁹ This symbolic 'barrier' depicts a perceived boundary between locations where one is allowed to be and areas where access is limited. Operating in vulnerable areas, it creates a hostile atmosphere through both explicit and implicit coercion in an attempt to negate presence and operational efficiency. According to SVT, this threat is perceived to follow them both on and off duty as police officers, and may also extend to their family or relations. Instances of this include offenders disclosing personal information suggesting knowledge of a police officer's residence or ties outside of work.⁹⁰ It is worth noting that the majority of Skånes operational officers believe the use of threats to limit police action is getting increasingly sophisticated. Furthermore, internal surveys show that Skåne police officers feel more endangered than the national average, with a 72 % significance level.⁹¹

⁸⁸ *Nationella Operativa Avdelningen, Utsatta områden - Social ordning, kriminell struktur och utmaningar för polisen, 2017, p. 29*

⁸⁹ Polisens rapport om allvarlig och organiserad brottslighet, 2017, p. 11.

⁹⁰ <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/helsingborg/mer-an-var-tionde-polis-i-syd-upplever-hot-mot-familjen>

⁹¹ <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/qLxb1o/poliserna-i-syd-kanner-sig-mer-hotade-an-rikssnittet>

4.4.2. SABOTAGE

During the time frame of research, LOCG has been outspokenly suspected of conducting acts of sabotage against the police with aim of neutralizing or reducing police capacity.⁹² Two cases of sabotage that overlapped with the indicators have been found in the material.

The entrance to the police house in Helsingborg was destroyed on the night of October 18, 2017, after a big explosion. Police suspected that recent police work against LOCG was the reason for the attack.⁹³ The incident occurs as a result of one or more perpetrators individually putting the bomb at the police station's entrance to avoid being captured during a period of inactivity. It suggests some type of planning precluded the event, indicating knowledge of the right moment, but also knowledge of exposed places. Similarly, on the night of January 17, 2018, a powerful explosion struck the police station in Rosengrd, Malmö. The building and several police cars were damaged in the bombing, which was described as directly aimed at the police. The motive was presumed to be the extensive destruction of property to impede the police's operability.⁹⁴ According to police chief Stefan Sinteus the attack happened as the police are increasing pressure against LOCG in the area. Subsequently, during a press conference, he continued by stating that the police expect similar attacks to occur as a reaction to the police work against LOCG.⁹⁵ Again, the bombing occurred during times when there were fewer police on the scene. The fact that the bomb was armed and tossed into the enclosed space one and a half minutes before the explosion implies that the assailant was aware that no one would be present to capture him or detect the explosives.

4.4.3. SUMMARIZING HYPOTHESIS

It is not possible to falsify the hypothesis by discovering two forms of interaction between the police and LOCG that affirm the principles of what is known as neutralization. According to this data, the practice of disrupting appears to be more advanced than sabotage. This conclusion is based on how disruption arises from the police's lack of understanding of the organizational structure within LOCG, as each threat appears to carry its weight.

⁹² Se: Debate on 'Blåljussabotage'.

⁹³ <https://www.svd.se/lang-rad-attacker-mot-polisen--handgranater-och-bomber>

⁹⁴ <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/RxyEAJ/tva-anhallna-efter-sprangattentat-mot-polishus-i-malmo>

⁹⁵ <https://www.aftonbladet.se/senastenytt/tnyheter/inrikes/a/RxlXm2/sprangdadet-en-motreaktion-fran-kriminella>

Alternatively, it is considered that everyone engaging in LOCG has a high potential for violence. In either scenario, the efficient use of disruption proposes that LOCG have some grasp of the knowledge that the police have and utilize it as a tool to improve their countermeasures. Furthermore, based on the proven functionality and detection in the statistics supplied in the police internal surveys, it appears to be fairly systematized and effective.

Sabotage, on the other hand, was defined as targeting strategic infrastructure during periods of low activity to intimidate or reduce the capacity of the police to operate. While its planning cannot be determined, it still follows that its end goal is to paralyze the police's ability to carry out its objective, seeing how it follows as a reaction, in both cases, on increased pressure. Despite the fact that neither effort resulted in casualties, the property damage was significant. In Helsingborg, an entirely new entrance had to be built, while the explosion in Rosengård damaged several cars. Observing how growing expenses necessitate a re-evaluation of approach, its overlap with Neutralization can not be rejected.

Surprisingly, people carrying out the countermeasure are most likely not the primary perpetrator, but rather operate as the final stage in a process. Interpreting these persons as 'waste-potential' brings countermeasures in the form of a fairly structured decision-making process with distinct degrees of hierarchy and duties.

5. RESULTS & FINDINGS

In this study, of focus was the question: *Are LOCG using methods applicable to what constitutes counterintelligence against the police?* This study looked at reports of LOCG opposing the police throughout a five-year period. By affirming a hypothetico-deductive approach, the study formulated 4 variables in accordance with Prunckun's theory of what constitutes counterintelligence. These variables were Deterrence, Detection, Deception and Neutralization.⁹⁶

In locating systemized methods of protecting from information collection and opportunistic methods to impede information collection used by LOCG, the hypothesizes was not falsifiable. This proposes that the use of countermeasures by LOCG are deliberate and involves some type of planning according to an understanding of what methods of information collection the police are using and what directions they have to follow. According to this conclusion, measures to

⁹⁶ See page 9-11 for *Operationalisation*

collect information on LOCG has to keep in mind. Further, it provides evidence that LOCG in Sweden are using practices synonymous with counterintelligence against the police.

No evidence of LOCG in Skåne showing technological sophistication was discovered in the material. A number of LOCG members purchased pre-made encryption equipment and used it effectively, but no evidence of constructing such services themselves was detected. Laundering money from different types of frauds appears to propose some level of technological knowledge, but again, these services are available in bought software.

In the analysis, cell phones were highlighted as the primary technological tool. As tools of communication, while being highly customizable, the cell phone offers a practical tool overall for LOCG. To prevent information leaks, LOCG in Skåne relied on a shared aversion to the police. The practice was discovered to be upheld by the ability of LOCG to enforce authority within the vulnerable areas. The ability to enforce rules and norms in these areas made it also possible to promote an informal non-disclosure-agreement of mutual benefit which existed within and between LOCG.

Countermeasures appeared to heavily coincide with the sale and storage of narcotics. Narcotics are perceived to be the main source of income for many LOCG,⁹⁷ why protecting this type of criminality as a means of guaranteeing income seems logical. Countermeasures to prevent authorities from gathering information on potential markets seems to work best within or near vulnerable areas. While Öresundsbrons easier way of accessing smuggled narcotics does provide an explanatory variable for the influence of narcotics, it would be interesting to see how this impact manifests itself in other parts of Sweden.

Youths were crucial in the less complex sorts of countermeasures. Youths with no criminal background are advantageous since they arouse less suspicion. In turn, they are used by older members as decoys in criminal frauds or to monitor and photograph police activity in vulnerable areas. The evidence of LOCG registering police officer information supports the rationale for a more complex strategy to countermeasures. While practical repercussions were only discovered to manifest themselves in the form of disrupting treats, the notion of altering countermeasures at least presents the opportunity for further sophistication, according to how Prunckun advocates countermeasures to be designed.

Using youngsters for simple countermeasures also serves as a recruitment tactic, as those who perform well are rewarded with permission to conduct additional crime in the region. This

⁹⁷ <https://www.can.se/publikationer/narkotikaprisutvecklingen-i-sverige-1988-2019/>

exposes a possible risk to the system, as youths lack the expertise and knowledge of police gathering methods that senior members possess.

As less sophisticated approaches are executed by inexperienced persons, it provides a possible insight into how LOCG think about countermeasures:

The most important thing is to keep the people at the top from being imprisoned so they can continue their illegal operations, and devotion to these people is the foundation for perpetuating the system that provides benefits to those who are loyal to it.

As a result, it becomes a system that is dependent on the security of fewer individuals who, by defending the system, reward those who follow it. Similar to an authoritarian state model. Finally, sabotage reveals a planning ladder, since these events indicate greater levels of preparation and involvement in the decision-making system, culminating in the execution by a single individual who assumes the responsibility on the belief of potential rewards for such extreme conduct. Overall, the separation of youths and older members, as well as their respective duties, corresponds to NOA's description of LOCG as two layers: youthful disposable members and senior experienced decision-makers.

6. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The fact that LOCG is being researched as a united group despite operating in different regions of a larger region with no evidence of interlinkages suggests that the findings of this study should not be extrapolated to specific gangs.

Furthermore, because the relevant material was primarily comprised of newspapers, comparing this information with that of the police may reveal significant discrepancies in the description. Recognizing that all four hypotheses were unfalsifiable poses the question of whether the definition of counterintelligence is overly wide, or whether applying Prunckun's theory of counterintelligence to new domains exposes previously undiscovered phenomena.

The frequency of material (assuming that each newspaper publishes 365 issues each year, each with multiple articles) suggests that LOCG countermeasures are either unidentified or infrequent. While certain countermeasures are more systematized than others, the lack of categories is an interesting find for an organization that is aware of being constantly monitored. An interesting approach would be to do comparable studies in other areas of large cities to uncover similarities and differences; such a strategy would arguably provide a better knowledge of how LOCG counteracts the police and in what ways.

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