Psychopaths in the media

Criminals, madmen or hidden among us?

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Abstract

When society is viewed in a social constructive manner, the social worker is as affected as the general population by the media and the images it portrays. A prejudice or bias social worker will not be as effective in his work as his intentions are.

The purpose of this thesis was to discover if there are any visible cultural differences in the usage and description of the concept of psychopathy or a psychopath himself in the media, more specifically, daily newspapers. There are three American newspapers and three Swedish newspapers examined in this study.

The study is based on a quantitative content analysis of articles published between 1st of January 2008 and 1st of July 2012. The collected data is categorized where the articles can fall under one or more of five available categories. Even though no clear results occurred, some interesting indications are visible between American newspapers and Swedish newspapers, but more so between different American newspapers. Psychopaths, people with an Antisocial Personality Disorder, are most frequently mentioned as criminals or Maniacs/Madmen in both countries with a modestly higher percentage for the United States of America.

Keywords: Newspaper, Antisocial Personality Disorder, Content analysis, Social constructionism, Cultural differences

Summary

Psykopater i media – Kriminella, galningar eller dolda bland oss?

När samhället blir sett ur ett socialkonstruktionistiskt perspektiv, blir socialarbetaren lika påverkad som den övriga populationen av den bild som media förmedlar och framställer. En fördomsfull eller partisk socialarbetare kommer inte att uppnå den effektivitet i sin profession som syftet med yrket innebär.

Syftet med denna uppsats är att undersöka eller upptäcka om det finns några synliga kulturella skillnader i bruket och beskrivningen av psykopati som begrepp eller psykopaten som person i media, mer specifikt dagstidningar. I den här studien ingår tre amerikanska dagstidningar och tre svenska dagstidningar.

Studien är baserad på en kvantitativ innehållsanalys av artiklar publicerade mellan 1:a januari 2008 och 1:a juli 2012. Den insamlade data är kategoriserad där varje artikel kan falla under en eller flera av fem förekommande kategorier. Även om det inte går att utläsa några tydliga resultat, föreligger indikationer som kan vara av intresse mellan amerikanska dagstidningar och svenska dagstidningar, men dessa är tydligare mellan de olika amerikanska dagstidningarna. Psykopater, människor som har en antisocial personlighetsstörning, beskrivs mestadels som kriminella eller galningar/dårar i båda ländernas dagstidningar med en viss högre procentuell representation vad gäller USA.

Nyckelord: Tidning, Antisocial personlighetsstörning, Innehållsanalys, Socialkonstruktionism, Kulturella skillnader

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Introduction

"I don't feel guilty for anything. I feel sorry for people who feel guilt" – ***Ted Bundy, psychopath and killer of at least 30 women***

"Psychopaths… people who know the difference between right and wrong, but don't give a shit" – ***Elmore Leonard, writer***

"What a social worker does is controlled by the expectations in society" – ***Malcolm Payne, professor in Social Work***

We believe that there are different ways of mentioning and applying the words "psychopath" or "psychopathy" depending on the cultural context, and since social workers are a part of this they and their work are not immune to influences. Influences might come in the form of claims-makers within the media, and as we will further examine, daily newspapers. The purpose of this paper is therefore to highlight the possible different ways to mention a psychopath, as we believe that this form of handling the subject is what creates our specific cultural context. Newspapers are also, in their position of power, advocates. They create and form different opinions through society, of which social workers often might feel a responsibility to take part of, as it is included in their professional field to keep up to date with existing norms and ethics. We want to make a comparative media analysis between the major daily newspapers in the United States and Sweden about the use of the concept of psychopathy and the image it reflects. The choice of making a comparative study between American and Swedish newspapers, apart from being internationally viable, also originated by our own interest and curiosity regarding different cultural contexts. We wanted to see if we could find similarities between the countries of which the psychopathy term originated in its current form and our own country's perception. To make our research more manageable we have chosen 3 of the major newspapers in United States and 3 of the major newspapers in Sweden. A detailed description of this will follow in the upcoming method section. Do we find it plausible to thoroughly examine the subject in the said amount of time, which is 10 weeks? Most likely, not. But our effort is to find cultural trends and base analysis on these. A more extensive research would take up enough time, monetary funds and academic effort to

result in a master's degree, a level we have yet to reach. We consider this area to be a basis for future research.

Research questions

The following questions will be the basis of our thesis.

- How are the term psychopath and its varieties applied?
- What kinds of descriptions are used in connection to the term above?
- What visible cultural differences are there between Swedish and American newspapers of the above mentioned term?

Since the majority of the research regarding different psychopathic traits has a heritage in the United States, the "American image" of a psychopath can be dominating also in Sweden. Sweden as such, has possibly adapted the American image.

To summarize, this will be our main research question; do we detect a visible cultural difference in the media use of terms surrounding the subject of psychopaths?

Background

We believe that the social worker that works for the communities, states, governments or other similar organizations are not free from influence or pressure from the society and the cultural norms within it. The social worker is in many ways also representative for the society which also is influenced by its population. We believe that there also exist cultural differences in the use or definition of a psychopath or psychopathy as a concept. For this reason it's interesting to make a comparative research in this area. We are not using the client perspective in this thesis. To examine how the psychopath finds himself perceived by the general public isn't our main focus. This is also a point of criticism we have, that one rarely ask the diagnosed psychopath himself/herself about their subjective opinion. It's difficult to have a meaningful exchange with someone that is diagnosed as a narcissist and has a alter state of perceiving himself/herself. We will instead focus on the influence made by the media, which the social worker is exposed to in the quest to maintain a general knowledge of the current set of norms and values valid in society. The social workers perception is critical during the exercise of his or her duties during the practice of social work. To have a

preconceived notion or prejudice is harmful both in the client-professional relationship as well as for the outcome of the actual social work.

The psychopath, media and social work

The first use of the term "psychopath" in the context in which we today apply it came from Vienna based doctor Ernst von Feuchtersleben in 1845, yet it would not gain recognition until 1888 when Julius Ludwig August Koch used it in his writing on "psychopatische Minderwertigkeiten (Lingh, 2011). Older recordings of what was called "moral insanity", "insanity without delusion" and similar definitions can be seen as far back as to the old Greeks where Plato back in 380 B.C. analyzed the nature of a tyrant in his "The Republic, book II" and Aristotles depiction of a group of people displaying a "brutal nature" in his "Nicomachean Etics"(Lingh, 2011), but the first modern theorist to provide a clinical definition of psychopathy was American psychiatrist Hervey M. Cleckley with his book "The mask of sanity", first published in 1941 (Cleckley, 2011). He produces 16 common qualities of a psychopath in the form of a checklist (Cleckley, 2011) and these are the basis for most of the following experts on the subject, like Robert Hare whose "Psychopathy Checklist, Revised" is the most commonly used way of affirming psychopathy today (Hare, 2003).
The term was used early in Sweden, as early as 1849, in Carl Ulrik Sondéns writings on psychopathology and in 1917 it was adopted by the Swedish Psychiatric Association, which started a still ongoing debate on the use, misuse and social impact surrounding the definition (Lingh, 2011).

Even if psychopathy is a widely used term in the psychiatric field it has not been listed in the most common system of mental disorder; Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) produced by the American Psychiatric Association and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) produced by the World Health Organization. The closest thing they have is DSM-IV's *Antisocial Personality Disorder* and ICD-10's *Dissocial Personality Disorder*, which share behavioral similarities with psychopathy but does not fully take into account the lack of empathy that the psychopath criteria holds. Robert D. Hare (2003) writes that the average clinician would not properly asses the complicated personality trait criteria required to diagnose psychopathy, but would rather make assumptions based on the acts perpetrated by the individual, since these are more easily identified in DSM-IV. Yet

in DSM-IV there is mentioning of psychopathy in the text describing *Antisocial Personality Disorder*, which causes some confusion and has made DSM-IV to recommend that the diagnoses *Antisocial Personality Disorder* should be reviewed and be called *Antisocial/Dissocial Personality Disorder* instead, and have *Antisocial/Psychopathic Type* as a subgroup.

The psychopath has a personality that is characterized by their extreme egocentricity and the ability to successfully lie, manipulate and use the people around them for their own purposes (Hare, 2003). Emotionally they are shallow, superficial and show a severe lack of remorse, guilt and empathy, as well as reduced feelings of fear and stress (Hare, 2003 & Cleckley, 2011). Their behavior is very impulsive, irresponsible and with a great need for stimulation and with a parasitic and often criminal lifestyle (Hare, 2003 & Cleckley, 2011). They have weak impulse control and are drawn towards different forms of substance abuse, but not to find feelings of relief or dullness but to experience stimulation (Lingh, 2011). It is hard to fully understand the charm and confidence the psychopath is able to exhibit, sense he does it with a full certainty of his own ability and without any feelings of guilt or remorse (Hare, 2003). He does what he wants and do not care how it affects anyone around him, because to him other people are not living, thinking or feeling individuals (Cleckley, 2011).

The image of the psychopath is hard to conceive without drifting away towards perceptions given to us by movies, books and newspapers. The unconsidered use of the word "psycho" is in itself a term that just enhances this. Is the social worker immune to this? Is the social worker through good education and good intentions above this?

There are few references on how to handle a person with this diagnosis from Socialstyrelsen that are useful. There are recommendations on what indicates psychopathy or antisocial personality disorder (Socialstyrelsen, 2011), and where to send people for further evaluation (SOSFS 1996:14), but as for the actual face to face meeting and the handling of cases involving people with the diagnosis there is no help to be found. So what the social worker has got to use is his or her training and education.

The definition of social work is stated by The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) as:

"The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work."

Social work has a history of categorizing their clients, often with the best of intention, and therefore they are themselves part of creating "outsiders" (Swärd, 2008). Swärd claims that the process of creating norms for clients is a way to assess if they are worth helping or not. If they are not, they will have to make an effort, in what French philosopher Michel Foucault calls a self-discipline technique (1986, 1987). There are studies that have shown that when labelling clients, social workers tend to do so in a negative way (Gingerich, Kleczewski & Kirk, 1982).

As a client you have to adjust and fit the mold. However the clinical psychopath does not fit the mold, and is often not even able to, for more than short periods of time. They will lie, cheat and adjust to get what they need, but are often not able to do so more than momentarily (Hare, 1997). So what the social worker has to go after, and often the first thing the social workers reads in the case file, is the diagnosis: psychopath, a classic outsider and also unable to reform. It is hard not to get affected by this. Malcolm Payne (1999) says that social work should have a moral base and it is the social workers task to make moral judgment on behalf of society. Each individual carries their own moral foundation, and in social work it has to be put into a professional frame to find what is and is not "acceptable". Therefore our morals need to be in tune with the climate we are working in (Payne, 1999). Being part of the society and sharing its values also means exposure to claims-makers who construct what we read about and what we care about; the media. A successful way of getting the media consumer to take in the point that is made is not just to make them *think*, but more importantly to *feel*, and a common procedure in executing this is by manufacture feelings connected with *victims* or *villains* (Loseke, 2008). In Losekes *Thinking about social problems* she argues that the villains are blamed with causing the suffering of the victims, and culturally the feeling of blame and responsibility should be accompanied by the emotions of hatred and condemnation, followed by a will to implement punishment. The media can add fuel to this by causing a "moral panic", a reaction of social concern over a deviation of the established social norm (Cohen, 1972). This further adds to the exclusion of the "outsider" and enhances the labeling

process. Loseke (2008) says that in the use of key phrases, "terrorist", "child-molester" and such, a construction of danger is established. The word "psychopath" could be seen as a key phrase causing a reaction.

In social work a reflexive stand point must be had, and socio-analytic reflection should also be present in every meeting or contact; is there prejudice from the social worker? Is the client being met with respect and an open mind? Is the client's need in focus? The power the social worker owns should not be neglected in this reflection (Johansson, 2006). The professional social worker in this situation needs to be aware of his or her own personal traits and viewpoints. Ulla Holm (2001) claims that a professional standpoint is a constant endeavor to be ruled by what is gainful, in a short-term as well as a long-term perspective, for the client, and not by their own needs, emotions or impulses. There are constant risks involved in work where much of the profession is face-to-face contact and one party hold the power over the other and although the decisions made have structural guide lines much of the content in these decisions are judgment calls made by the individual handler (Skau, 2008). Greta Marie Skau (2008) also writes that if an unprofessional attitude is accepted it runs the risk of becoming an established structural condition that might influence an entire organization, which increases the risk of wide scale abuse.

Earlier research

In the comprehensive book, "Psykopater och sociopater – Ett Spektrum" (2011), we found interesting references, such as Susanne Strand, from whom we were able to find more interesting articles. The book just mentioned, we found in the university library in Jönköping. An interesting, and as we find it, relevant study in the research area of psychopathy and media is a scientific book by Otto F. Wahl which is titled "Media Madness: Public Images of Mental Illness (1997)". In this book the author makes a compilation of the term psychopath used in books, movies and TV-Shows and makes the conclusion that the term "psychotic" and "psychopath" is often confused. The psychopath is also often described as "a morally tainted person" who prays on the innocent. However he finds that they are rarely true psychopaths in the clinical sense. Regarding the clinical sense, the most used and worldwide recognized material of diagnosing psychopathy is Hares "Psychopathy Checklist, Revised" (2003), or if the alternative diagnosis *Antisocial Personality Disorder* as mentioned in "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)" published by "American Psychiatric Association (APA)". The latest revised edition called DSM-IV-TR was published 2000. In

Sweden DSM is used as additional material to the more commonly used ICD-10, published by World Health Organization (WHO). The latest edition was published in the year 2011. In ICD-10 the diagnosis *Dissocial Personality Disorder* is the closest equivalent to psychopathy.

According to Lychik (2012), the media doesn't purposefully intend to make people fearful of psychopaths; however they use the term to convey an image of someone dangerous and without remorse. She also claims that the media doesn't take into account that psychopathy actually is a personality disorder and therefore every psychopath suffers in their own way.

Lawrie (2000) states that negative articles about psychiatric illness lean to criticize the patients. He says that the newspapers themselves cover psychiatric illness in a negative way. In his study, daily newspapers were covered for one month during November 1996 and any articles related to health issues were kept.

Our research area is not a unique field, since psychopathy have been studied in various shapes, although we find a lack of more defined comparative studies focusing on the *use* of the word (psychopath) itself. Therefore we have to look for earlier research in a wider perspective. When we look for Swedish research in our field we find a thesis dealing with the media reports of crime in today's society (Demker & Duus-Otterström, 2011). They write that the description of a human being a psychopath is a way to distance society from the perpetrator. It is "*något som kan klassificeras som utanför det normala eller förväntade*" ("something that can be classified as outside the normal and expected" – our own translation). They also say that the psychopath is seen as a threat to the society and a bit of a mystery. This is a view that is supported by Canadian professor of sociology Riley Olstead in his article where he claims that the labeling is a way for the general public to more easily view the mentally ill as "bad" (Olstead, 2002). Susanne Strand (2007) from Mittuniversitetet in Sweden claims that the media pictures the psychopath as a cold-hearted murderer without a conscious and makes a connection with the character Hannibal Lector from the movie "The Silence of the Lambs". She claims that although this picture can be partly true, it does not necessarily have to be in this way. Despite the fact that psychopathy is a risk factor for antisocial and violent behavior, Strand is referring to Hare's research that the psychopath might very well adapt to the society's norms and regulations and function within those without drawing too much attention. Hare claims that one percent of men in today's society are psychopaths (Strand, 2007) and Strand also states that the media often miss the female psychopath who can demonstrate an equally destructive behavior as her male counterpart. As

we have noticed, the "psychopath" is portrayed in the media as a male figure, cold and without remorse, but on the few occasions a woman is identified as a psychopath she is often hysterical and emotionally unstable. As an example of this we refer to the earlier mentioned movie characters and the movie "Fatal Attraction" were Glenn Close portraits a rabbit-boiling hysterical woman, and opposed to this, as mentioned, Hannibal Lector is the typical male psychopath as he without any facial expressions beats two prison guards to death while listening to classical music.

Swedish psychologist Sigvard Lingh who wrote the extensive book "Psykopater och socipater – Ett spektrum" (2011), writes that researchers at Copenhagen University let eight psychology students evaluate four movie characters regarding possible personality disorders. All of the students successfully diagnosed different movie characters with good accuracy. We understand this as a claim that psychopaths and other personality disorders are more common the world of cinema. The psychopath is often needed for thrill, and a manifestation of evil without a need for further explanation. Psychopaths are simply evil. That sort of evil is beneficial to movie makers and those wanting to convey suspense or thrilling stories, but as a reflection of a condition it's counter-productive due to the fact that it is creating unrealistic expectations and fears that may be non-existing because of the extreme stereotyping the characters exhibit.

Finding quantitative studies in this field is problematic. It might be possible for us to have a quantitative aspect in categorizing the articles with elements of a qualitative nature.

As we find it, the earlier research in this field is based on the professional perspective and not the client perspective. What we find in the above mentioned articles and books is a common use of a form of social constructionism. The media has a role in identifying and presenting social problems or the reason for them, yet also has a motive to entertain or sensationalize in order to sell newspaper issues or attract viewers. In "Thinking about Social Problems" (2008) Loseke claims that the context for a problem is not automatically there, but has to be constructed or produced be those who identify it. Since the mass media is the most common source of information for the public, the labeling of the psychopath as a murderous mad man becomes a more accepted context then that of the psychiatric community who present their view on the matter to a much smaller audience. The impact on the public is far greater from a daily newspaper then from a scientific journal. Once the psychopath has been presented often enough as a threat, he/she has become part of a construction where the mere mentioning of the

word stops being a diagnosed condition and instead becomes a danger to society. Loseke finds that among Americans, whom are her reference group, social concerns are often based on the fear of what these problems might cause for themselves. The terms presented in the media as harmful are therefore put into a context of being a threat to the society, the community, the family, the social workers and also oneself.

Theory and concept

In this thesis our theoretical approach is social constructionism, seeing society as a construction built on the communications and understandings of those who take part in it and by this challenging the way we see things as "natural" (Burr, 2003). The way we perceive our world and the values and categorizations we attribute to it, is based on our social context; the culture, norms and historical events that have formed our way of life so far (Payne, 2010). What is acceptable and justified in one context might not in another. The knowledge we acquire and an understanding of how the world is, comes to us through a social interaction with the people around us; people having the same frame of reference (Payne, 2010). So when making an assessment via an observation, we should understand that the thing we might find unproblematic and natural, is actually just what we are formed to view as such (Burr, 2003). The different ways we view an event or experience a situation is depending on our pre-adjusted way of estimating the world around us. Loseke (2008) gives us the American flag as an example. In itself it is a colorful piece of cloth on a pole, but to most Americans it is a symbol of freedom, patriotism and something to feel proud before, yet in other parts of the world it is a symbol of other things. There are different parties involved in making us perceive our world the way we do, and some have it as their purpose. These are social interest groups, lobbyists, public organizations and a growing and dominant player: the media (Ejrnæs & Kristiansen, 2002). As a claims-maker the media has come to rely on not just the use of information, but also to appeal to an emotional part of the audience, understanding that apart from the demand for information there is also a desire among the audience to be entertained (Loseke, 2008). As an audience we turn to the media to find amusement, guidance, entertainment and information (Berger 2005), but if our information becomes entertainment, or has a larger focus on making us respond emotionally then receive data, then there is a risk that our view of our own world becomes a place filled with false morals and stereotypes (Loseke, 2008). Whether good or bad, stereotypes give an oversimplified version of a person,

be it black, Jewish, doctors or women, and it minimizes the individual differences and affect our values related to this group of people (Berger, 2005). Media analyst Arthur Asa Berger (2005) writes that values are the attribute by which people determine good or bad, and the spectrum within those two, regarding politics, sex, social behavior and other things found within our society. He points out that the stereotypes found in the media affect the audience, but it also suggest something about the values that are valid in society (Berger, 2005). Berger criticizes the concept of just blaming bad morals and negative categorizations of people on the media, and suggests that many of the values portrayed comes from a pre-existing set or norms and values found in the audience (Berger, 2005). So are the media constructing or a construction? Both?

Payne (2010) argues that social problems occur when a social group, most often the media, successfully claims that a social issue is problematic and demands an intervention. The argument is that many issues may not be problematic in a general sense, but are a way for certain groups to create social constructions around specific social experiences (Payne, 2010). Studies show that social problems and norm deviation are created through a social process were a certain group of people are attributed and adapt into the social surroundings stereotypical values and classifications, and those processes also exist in the meetings between citizens and the social services of the welfare states (Ejrnæs & Kristiansen, 2002). Many social institutions, while supposedly work for the wellbeing of the people within a society, actually help enforce the ruling force of power that punishes people who deviate from the norm (Foucault, 1987 & Payne, 2010). Seen from the point of view of the social constructionist the work of the social services might in their categorization and systematic gathering of information help create social problems and add blame to specific groups of people (Ejrnæs & Kristiansen, 2002).

Our thoughts on this thesis is that the individual social worker is a part of different social constructions, society in general as well as their place of work, and that the current set of norms displayed by the media is the perceived reality of right/wrong, normal/deviant, dangerous/safe and so on. A constant exposure to stereotypical images and a discourse in society that claims that a specific group holds a certain set of characteristics is very hard to not be part of, no matter what well-meaning motives the social works have or how extensive their education has been.

The critique towards the social constructive perspective is that there are no certainties towards what is actually real or right, even though nature does have a set of law and that there ethically always is a way to see what is right since human life has a basic value (Ejrnæs & Kristiansen, 2002 & Payne, 2010). We believe firmly in the open and unprejudiced meeting between social worker and client (Johansson, 2006) and that a well-educated social worker might be better or above average when it comes to identify the hazards of categorizing their client (Foucault, 1987), but the concept of social construction raises questions about all of us and our thoughts on our society. Loseke (2008) writes that a strict constructionist makes good theoretical sense, yet it makes any argument or point in history arguable because it holds no view, event or knowledge to be certain but just a part of a form of social structure. There is no actual truth or total point of certainty.

Our choice of social constructionism as our theory was not obvious when we first started our thesis, but came after we reviewed much of the earlier research surrounding psychopathy in the media.

Method

In the following chapter we will present our research method. We will also attempt to justify our choice of method and words used for inclusion, exclusion and our chosen frame of time. In this chapter, we will also explain the criteria that have been used. Central phrases, keywords used during the search and demarcation will also be further explained.

Since our aim is to find similarities and/or differences, and make conclusions based on these, we decided to use content analysis as a method. The basic assumption in content analysis is that people's values and beliefs can be interpreted from analyzing their messages and communication (Berger, 2005). We found that fitting with our choice of theory, as social constructionism is also based on the communication and shared values of groups of people (Payne, 2011). In examining the media Berger (2005) claims that content analysis is a suitable method, since it gives a good overview and transfers qualitative events and views into more manageable quantitative data. Content analysis can be done in five steps: the text is broken down into categories, these are filled with content, a summary is done of how often a term is

used and it is the connection and differences between categories that will provide the overview of the subject that is to be studied (Jacobsen, 2007).

Berger (2005) list five advantages to content analysis of the media:

- Often inexpensive
- Usually easy access to material
- It is unobtrusive (and because of this it does not influence its subjects)
- It contains data that can be quantified
- It can examine either current or past events, or both

What we are doing by entering our data into set categories is working deductively, moving from theory to empiricism (Jacobsen, 2007). By doing so we are setting the criteria for what we find relevant as well as were we will find it, however we must also recognize that by doing so we are also controlling the outcome and result (Jacobsen, 2007). A point that must be highlighted as we present our final analysis. Berger (2005) also makes a point of this, and other things, when he lists the problems associated with content analysis of the media:

- Hard to be certain that the studied data is representative
- A good definition of the studied topic is hard to obtain
- It can be hard to define a measurable unit
- It is not possible to prove that the conclusions made with content analysis are correct

These are items that we must take into account as we reach a conclusion.

Search methods

We have been searching for articles in the Swedish daily newspapers Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet. Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet are the largest, in terms of circulation, published in the morning with the exception of Göteborgsposten which is not nationwide and therefore excluded. Aftonbladet is one of our choices because it is the largest national newspaper published in the evening and also has the largest, in terms of readers, on the internet. Expressen is technically larger than Aftonbladet in circulation, but

Expressen includes Kvällsposten and GT which are two local editions of Expressen and is therefore excluded. In order to search through the articles in each of the above mentioned newspaper, we have used the newspapers own web-based search engine, found on the website for each newspaper. (www.aftonbladet.se, www.dn.se, www.svd.se). We have been using the same search words for all the Swedish newspapers. The numbers for the daily circulation of the above mentioned newspapers are listed below:

1. Dagens Nyheter – 285 700
2. Expressen (Kvällsposten/GT included) – 262 000
3. Göteborgsposten – 216 300
4. Aftonbladet – 211 900
5. Svenska Dagbladet - 185 600

(http://www.ts.se/Mediefakta/Dagspress.aspx)

When it comes to the American newspapers, we have chosen the newspapers The New York Times (the U.S. edition), Los Angeles Times and USA today. Our choices are based on the geographic location, since the United States is a much larger country than Sweden, and our ambition is to cover as much of the country as possible, as well as the fact that those newspapers are the largest ones in terms of circulation. The New York Times has the primary locality in the city of New York, and therefore has a more natural cover of the east coast, where as the Los Angeles Times has the primary locality in the city of Los Angeles, which covers the west coast. Both newspapers do have a national cover, but the geographic position might affect the choices of news covered.

Our third choice was at first USA Today, which is nationwide, and is the absolutely largest one in circulation after The Wall Street Journal, which is a newspaper with a special emphasis on business and economics and therefore is not suitable for our thesis. During our first attempt of searching articles in the USA Today webpage, we discovered that the articles are not available for free. To access the archive of USA Today (1987 and forward) we would have to pay a fee of 3.95 $ for each article, or 24.95 $ for a one month access to 75 articles. Since we do not have any budget to complete this thesis, we have chosen to exclude the use of USA Today and we have replaced it with The Washington Post (the U.S. edition). We chose this newspaper because it is based in the capital of the United States and also because it is the most widely circulated newspaper except for the above mentioned ones. There is one exception, the San Jose Mercury News has a slightly larger circulation than The Washington

Post, but it has the primary locality in San Jose and covers exclusively the Californian area, therefore we have chosen to not use it in this thesis. We have chosen the U.S. editions of the newspapers because of the relevance for the thesis, which is the American perspective. Other editions such as the Asian are therefore irrelevant. The numbers for the daily circulation of the above mentioned newspapers are listed below:

1. The Wall Street Journal – 2 118 315
2. USA Today – 1 817 446
3. The New York Times – 1 586 757
4. Los Angeles Times – 605 243
5. San Jose Mercury News – 575 786
6. The Washington Post – 507 615

(http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp)

Criteria and demarcation

We have decided to narrow our search to articles published between 1st of January year 2008 to 1st of July year 2012. To go further back would be too extensive for our thesis since the amount of data will increase significantly. We also believe that data before the year 2008 would be outdated and our ambition is to have updated articles for our thesis. To make a cut-off at the 1st of July is something we decided partly due to the fact that the movie "Seven Psychopaths" (IMDB, 2012) had its release date the 12th October 2012 and the months before a lot of speculations and interviews about the movie were published. To avoid having to handle the data connected to this movie, 1st of July is an appropriate date. We also feel that we need a period of distance between the articles published and the writing of our thesis.

Articles that are included in our thesis are mostly news-related (published news), editorial pages and columns. We do not make any difference between foreign or domestic news, because for us it is the way the newspapers write, not the content in itself.

Among the search results we decided to exclude all results published in blogs and this because blogs are not journalistically valid and neither are they found in the printed version of the newspapers. The material in a blog can change and disappear dramatically due to the fact that blogs simply can be shut down or be deregistered in a short period of time, and the data would be lost. Newspapers do have an archive, and the shutdown of a newspaper is a more

complicated process and would not resolve in a loss of articles already published. To clarify we would like to point out that our thesis is about the printed established newspapers (media) and therefore blogs are irrelevant, even though we are well aware of the impact, influence and importance that online blogs have achieved today. The exclusion in itself can point to an impact of the society.

Another exclusion criterion we set up was for reviews of books, movies and television shows. This due to the following circumstances; first of all a search in the archives of our selected newspapers gives a lot of hits on the area about reviews. By excluding reviews we are narrowing down our hits to make it more relevant to our research questions. The excluded reviews might be of works that have a great impact on society, or the general opinion on our subject, however it exclusively reflects a shortened version of it and therefore does not let the book, movie or TV-show stand on its own. Because of this, we find that the exclusion will be justified. Reviews offer a subjective opinion regarding specific works of fiction, and/or based on a true story, but it does not in itself highlight the subject that the work treats. The writer of the review might merely be commenting on the execution of the craftsmanship involved.

We have also chosen to disregard supplements to our selected newspapers, such as Aftonbladet Plus, which is a payment service for the online readers. This is in part due to budget reasons, and also because of the content is not as journalistic as Aftonbladet itself. The articles mostly contain celebrity trivia, recipes and lifestyle stories. In addition to this, Aftonbladet Plus-related articles are not published in the printed edition of the newspaper. All forms of payment services and other supplements regarding the rest of the chosen newspapers are excluded. This because of payment will reduce their accessibility, and our main focus is a broad availability to a general public.

Search words

In the Swedish newspapers we are using the following search words; psykopat, psykopati, psykopater and psykopatisk. In the American newspapers we are using the same search words as for the Swedish newspapers, although naturally in English; psychopath, pscychopathy, psychopaths and psychopathic. All the articles that contain one of the above mentioned search words in the Swedish newspapers and the American newspapers will be included. The criteria that more than one of the search words was to be included seemed too demanding and we would risk losing valuable information. Since we already have a clear exclusion policy, one of the above mentioned search words are considered enough. To justify the use of these search

words we go back to the basic questions of our thesis; how is the subject of psychopathy described in media? Therefore, each article that contains one of the above mentioned search words reflect a way to depict the image of a psychopathic person in a certain society. Our search may seem a bit extensive and widely-spread, but this is one of our goals with this thesis, to picture the broad public image. To receive a fair image of the American media description versus the Swedish one we are using the same search words for both searches, the words are exact translations. We have tried different search combinations such as "psychopath + media", "psychopath + society" or "psychopathic influence".

While using the same search words in different databases such as Google Scholar and Social Science Research Network (SSRN) we can find same articles/publications in them both. We can conclude that the content in the databases to a large extent overlap each other.

Criteria and method regarding scientific literature

For this thesis we have been using Google Scholar and Libris to find background material concerning our subject at hand. Our search words have been both in English and in Swedish, since our aim has been to find material printed in both languages. The search words in English have been; psychopath, psychopathic, psychopathy, psychopaths and we have been adding media/influence to those. The search words in Swedish have been; psykopat, psykopatisk, psykopati, psykopater and we have been adding media/påverkan. We have narrowed down our searches to material published 1997 and 2012, because earlier material might outdated and could therefore be irrelevant or misleading to our thesis. A width of 15 years is what we consider to be appropriate.

After piloting and reading through the English data, we discovered a lot of reference to sexual violence and the term "sexual psychopath". A search on Google Scholar with the phrase "sexual psychopath" gives 1270 hits, whereof many of these hits contain the phrase in the headline which means the whole article discusses the subject that is not relevant for us. Our aim with the thesis is not to investigate crimes of a sexual nature such as rape, which many of these scientific articles discuss. The articles found containing "sexual psychopath" are in a large scale dealing with crime, prison and also the understanding of a "human predator" which describes a repeated sexual offender, and therefore excluded. However we are aware of the fact that the use of the word "psychopath" itself can have an impact closely related to the subject of our thesis, yet we find that to include sexual violence would be to voluminous.

Data analysis

The method we have been choosing for our analysis is a content analysis. We made this choice because the basic idea in content analysis is that an examination of messages and communication will provide some insight into the beliefs and values of the people who receive these messages (Berger, 2005). The technique used in content analysis is to categorize the gathered data and then find connections between these categories. Content analysis is also suitable for analyzing qualitative data, and transformed this into more manageable quantitative data. We decided to review 15 articles to become acquainted with the terms used. The two first categories we chose were the "Criminals" and "Maniacs/Madmen", and we based this on the previously published research, where psychopaths are being portrayed in this way. Otto F. Wahl (1997) reports that psychopaths are often described as "bad people" which leads us to think of criminals. Lawrie (2000) states that people with mental conditions are often portrayed in a negative manner which we transformed to the "Maniacs/Madmen"-category. After having reviewed our first 15 articles we decided that our two categories were valid and we also discovered after having read those 15 articles that there were more possible categories to be used. This lead to the by us constructed categories "Hidden among us", "Executives/Bosses" and "Clinical term/Diagnosis". We categorized our newspaper articles into the following categories (psychopaths being described as):

1. *Criminals*

   In this category, we will include the mentioning of criminal acts, trials against specific persons, persons breaking the law and any mentioning of past or future criminal behavior.

2. *Maniacs/Madmen*

   Here we will include the mentioning of erratic behavior, abnormal acts, persons clearly mentally ill and the mentioning of terms relating to psychiatric illness.

3. *Hidden among us*

   Under this category we include articles that describe psychopaths anywhere around us in a manner which is undetected. Psychopaths would be impossible to avoid and could be anyone.

4. *Executives/Bosses*

   These are articles that describe psychopaths as people in positions of power, within business, government or any other field where they are in a position to exercise power and make decisions over other people.

5. *Clinical term/Diagnosis*

    This category will include the mentioning of psychopathy as a diagnosis or an illness and will include articles where the condition is further described and not just randomly used.

After first having approached the articles inductively we now used a deductive way of screening them using our categories. It is possible for one article to fit into more than one category. As an example, the articles concerning Bernie Madoff, he is a convicted criminal who was a top executive and by many regarded as a psychopath. Articles written about him can therefore be part of more than one category depending on the language used. Example of this:

This article concerns Bernie Madoff, high ranking Wall Street power broker who embezzled millions of dollars. He was a high ranking boss, a criminal and the person interviewed in the article mentions psychopathy as something that you are diagnosed with and names a few traits attributed to the condition. Because of this the article falls under *Criminal* and *Executive/Boss*, as well as *Clinical term/Diagnosis.* However Madoff is never described as insane or as a person who keeps a low profile or a person among us all, so the article does not fall under *Maniac/Madman* or *Hidden among us*.

Criminal:

"An easy answer is that Mr. Madoff was a charlatan of epic proportions, a greedy manipulator so hungry to accumulate wealth that he did not care whom he hurt to get what he wanted."

Executive/Boss:

"Although hardly a household name, he secured a longstanding role as an elder statesman on Wall Street, allowing him to land on important boards and commissions where his opinions helped shape securities regulations. Along the way, he snared a coveted spot as the chairman of a major stock exchange, Nasdaq."

Clinical term/Diagnosis:

*"Some of the characteristics you see in **psychopaths** are lying, manipulation, the ability to deceive, feelings of grandiosity and callousness toward their victims," says Gregg O. McCrary, a former special agent with the F.B.I. who spent years constructing criminal behavioral profiles.*

*Mr. McCrary cautions that he has never met Mr. Madoff, so he can't make a diagnosis, but he says Mr. Madoff appears to share many of the destructive traits typically seen in a **psychopath**. That is why, he says, so many who came into contact with Mr. Madoff have been left reeling and in confusion about his motives."*
- New York Times, January 24, 2009

While reading the articles, we would take notes on the different categories an article would belong to. For us to be efficient we divided the articles between us (three newspapers each), yet in order to ensure that we would classify the articles under the same categories and to be uniformed we audited 50 articles together. This was to ensure that we would keep a high level of credibility within our categorization.

Of the American newspapers we have the following numbers of articles after the exclusion:

1. **Los Angeles Times** – 24 articles totally of which 5 belonging to the category *Criminals*, 16 to *Maniacs*, 1 to *Hidden Among us*, 1 to *Executives* and 1 to *Clinical term*. 4 articles belonging to more than one category.

2. **The New York Times** – 31 articles totally of which 12 belonging to the category *Criminals*, 14 to *Maniacs*, 1 to *Hidden among us*, 4 to *Executives* and 13 to *Clinical term*. 11 articles belonging to more than one category.

3. **The Washington Post** – 56 articles totally of which 28 belonging to the category *Criminals*, 38 to *Maniacs*, 2 to *Hidden among us*, 10 to *Executives* and 10 to *Clinical term*. 25 articles belonging to more than one category.

Of the Swedish newspapers we have the following number of articles after the exclusion:

1. **Aftonbladet** – 82 articles totally of which 18 belonging to the category *Criminals*, 32 to *Maniacs*, 8 to *Hidden among us*, 10 to *Executives* and 14 to *Clinical term*. 6 articles belonging to more than one category.

2. **Dagens Nyheter** – 29 articles totally of which 10 belonging to the category *Criminals*, 24 to *Maniacs*, 2 to *Hidden among us*, 2 to *Executives* and 13 to *Clinical term*. 17 articles belonging to more than one category.

3. **Svenska Dagbladet** – 44 articles totally of which 11 belonging to the category *Criminals*, 9 to *Maniacs*, 6 to *Hidden among us*, 4 to *Executives* and 14 to *Clinical term*. 3 articles belonging to more than one category.

Extracts from articles

The following five articles are examples of our method of categorizing. These are shown to illustrate the specific categories in our thesis and how they are included and excluded. Our intention with having these articles displayed is to explain for the reader the content of our categories. They are important because they give substance. We also want to give examples of the data we have been processing.

Article 1

This is an article about Michael Vick, a football star who became infamous in 2007 due to dogfights that he arranged. It caused a debate about animal cruelty in the USA at the time, but in this interview Vick claims that he is a better person now and would like to have a dog again.

The term "psychopath" is used as a description along with the word "crazy", which puts it under the category of *Maniacs/Madmen.* Since the term is not further explained or connected to a form of diagnosis, it does not fall under *Clinical term/Diagnosis.* There is no mentioning of criminal activity along with the term, and the persons in the articles are not depicted as persons of either power or being luring dangers close to us, so the categories *Criminal, Executives/Bosses* or *Hidden among us* are not used.

Maniac/Madmen:

"I don't have a problem. I'm not a psychopath. I'm not crazy. I'm a human being," he told the AP."

- Los Angeles Times, December 16, 2010

Article 2

This article is a coverage of the trial of one of two men accused of invading a home, raping and murdering a woman and her two daughters. The two men now blame each other for setting the house on fire, which was what killed the girls.

Details about the crime are being conveyed in the article as the defense lawyer is being quoted, but there is never any indication to any of the assailants being insane. Because of this the article falls under *Criminal* and not *Maniacs/Madmen*. There is no mentioning of the persons being either an ordinary member of society or any sort of executive, so de categories *Hidden among us* and *Executive/Boss* does not apply. Also there is no mentioning of psychopathy as a diagnosed condition or a disorder, so the category of *Clinical term/Diagnosis* cannot be used.

Criminal:

"Instead, Mr. Ullmann argued, Mr. Komisarjevsky changed the plan first by beating Dr. Petit and then by raping Michaela.
"The psychopath in this case is Joshua Komisarjevsky, not Steven Hayes," Mr. Ullmann said.
"He should pay the price for what he did," Mr. Ullmann argued about his client, "but not for what he did not do."

- New York Times, October 1, 2010

Article 3

This article is an editorial from a columnist who discusses the situation in Libya during the uprising which led to the down fall of Moammar Gaddafi.

Gaddafi is being described as "mad" and giving "delusional speeches", which falls under *Maniac/Madman*, and he is also clearly in a position of power, which falls under the category of *Executive/Boss*. He is clearly not a person among us, the clinical use of the term psychopath is not used or discussed and no crimes are mentioned in this article, ruling out *Hidden among us, Clinical term/Diagnosis* and *Criminal*.

Maniac/Madman:

*"But Gaddafi is a special case, as anyone who has seen his recent appearances can attest. The umbrella? The rambling, delusional speeches about how the protesters are on drugs? The vow to kill or be killed? This man is either a **psychopath** or a sociopath, but not a statesman."*

Also:

"This will not have the slightest impact on Gaddafi, of course. But the message isn't for the Mad Colonel, it's for the military officers - the pilots of his warplanes and commanders of his warships - who must decide whether to follow his orders."

Executive/Boss:

"The world's censure means nothing to Col. Moammar Gaddafi, the dictator who vows to die rather than surrender the power he has held for four decades."

- The Washington Post, February 25, 2011

Article 4

This article is a chronicle concerning participants in reality shows and the consequences it might have on their love life.

The chronicle falls under the category *Hidden among us*, and clearly states that in the headline: "Psykopater finns överallt…". There is nothing written about *Criminals, Maniacs/Madmen* nor displaying the concept of someone in a power position *(Executive/Boss).* No clinical-related issues or words are written, which excludes the *Clinical term*-category.

Hidden among us:

"Alla deltagare i en dejtingsåpa i tv riskerar att få en psykopat på halsen."

- Aftonbladet, September 14, 2011

Article 5

The following article is describing a bank robber prison escape. The robbery was committed in Belgium and the criminals escaped with a hijacked helicopter. By the time the article was written, the escapees were still not captured.

This article falls under the category *Criminals*. The criminals are not described as *Maniacs/Madmen*, they are not *Executives/Bosses*, there are no references or text about something that could be diagnosed or seen as some kind of illness (*Clinical Term)* and they are surely not *Hidden among us*, since convicted bank robbers are very few and clearly seen as people who are dealing with deviance.

Criminals:

"Rymlingarna - däribland 26-årige bankrånaren Ashraf Sekkaki som beskrivits som landets farligaste fånge, "en verklig psykopat" enligt en talesman för justitiedepartementet - rymde från ett fängelse i Brügge i torsdags."

- Svenska Dagbladet, July 24, 2009

It is important for us to present this material because of our ambition to have an open categorization process. Our method is based on our own reasoning and we want to present it so that others viewing and reading this thesis will not just understand our way of thinking, but might also be able to construct their own. Interpretations are open to be done. A category for us might not have the same meaning or conent for another one, but by having these extracts we are at least presenting what we consider being valid.

Ethical considerations

For our thesis, there is no risk for any participant since the participants in our thesis are the articles themselves. We have not caused any medical risks, any pain, any threat to personal integrity or other forms of discomfort. The articles we have been using are the ones already published in the newspapers and therefore already made public. There are no interviews or surveys used, and the identification to specific persons that can be made is the journalists that have been writing the articles and who have already published their names. We have not been using any unsigned article or any articles where the author had a desire to have his/her name hidden. There has not been any request from us to the authors for a permission to use their articles, but since they are published they are available worldwide at any hour for anyone with an internet connection. The articles are not saved by us or further distribution; they have been used solely during the time work with the thesis and have not been used for any other intentions. No journalist is mentioned in the thesis. The journalists have not been in our interest, only the articles themselves. The results of the thesis are open to anyone. It is worth to notice that there have not been any explanations for the journalists or the newspapers for an agreement to let their published articles participate in our thesis, and this again due to the already public available nature and quality of them. The journalists are also not actively participating in our study for this thesis. There have not been any requests for economical funds and no third part has been participating.

It is important to remember that criticism of social work often contain moralizing elements. The social worker should do the "right thing" for the needy. Social workers are also under pressure from the media that critically reviews them. Sometimes they are criticized for having contempt for weakness (Blennberger, 2005). Someone with a diagnosed mental illness can be seen as "weak" from the surrounding society. Media can add extra meaning to someone diagnosed with an antisocial personality disorder as an example. Because of this, it is important for the social worker to be aware of the pictures media is creating.

According to Vetenskapsrådet (Swedish Research Council) (2002), there are four basic requirements that need to be fulfilled when it comes to research; they are the requirement of information, of consent, of confidentiality and of usage (which in Swedish are; Informationskravet, Samtyckeskravet, Konfidentialitetskravet and Nyttjandekravet).These four principles are guidelines for the ethics committee's inspection for research projects in the science field of humanities and social science.

The first requirement regarding the communication and information from the researcher about the purpose and aim of his/her study. People who serve as informants must be informed about a participation on voluntarily basis. We do not have any people that are actively participating in our study.

The second requirement of consent is about the consent of the participators. As stated above, we do not have anyone to obtain consent from. All material used are public and free for everyone to access. This requirement also states that participants must have an undisputed right to effect the length or cancellation of their participation.

The third requirement is about confidentiality, and states that information that is ethically sensitive must be handled with caution. We did not collect any ethically sensitive information from any participant. Information that *could* be seen as ethically sensitive, for example names of criminals, are already published by the newspapers and therefore there is no need for a consideration about to use or not use the name. Also, it is up to each newspaper to decide what to publish. The personal information that some articles might be containing (age, occupation and so on) are not relevant for this study and there is no attention paid to those details. The articles are not being saved for us after the completion of this thesis, and there are no photographs or recorded material of the articles.

The last requirement is about the usage of the material. We ensure that all collected information from the articles have not and will not be used for other purposes than for writing this thesis. There are no commercial or none-scientific usage of all material gathered and screened. This thesis will neither affect any further decision that can affect an individual or cause any harm of physical, psychological or social character.

Results

Totally there are 155 units in the Swedish part of the analysis and 111 units in the American part. In the following pages there are some tables added with an explanation following under each one to better understand the tables and pointing out the results.

Table 1a.

Number of articles in categories:	
Los Angeles Times	24
The New York Times	31
The Washington Post	56
Aftonbladet	82
Dagens Nyheter	29
Svenska Dagbladet	44
Total	**266**

This table illustrates the total number of articles we have been gathering for use in this thesis. The number of articles is not evenly distributed among the newspapers, and there are reasons for this. One can think that due to the fact that the American newspapers are larger in terms of both readers and circulation, they should have more articles used in this thesis. But, for example, Los Angeles Times had a large amount of articles that were excluded by us. Our strict inclusion/exclusion criteria set up made the American newspapers suffer from a larger amount of articles excluded. The large amount of articles excluded in Los Angeles Times can probably and partly be explained by the fact that Los Angeles Times geographical position in the heart of the TV- and movie world has got a lot of articles containing our search words dealing with reviews. As seen, Aftonbladet outnumbers the other Swedish newspapers when it comes to included articles. The explanation for this is probably that Aftonbladet is the largest Swedish newspaper on the internet. (http://www.aftonbladet.se/siffror/). The table also shows that we have included more Swedish articles than American articles in total, and this exclusively due to the use of the exclusion/inclusion criteria. This will be further discussed in the upcoming discussion section.

Table 1b.

Categories	American newspapers	Swedish newspapers	Total in numbers	Total in % of the articles
Criminals	45	39	84	25 %
Maniacs/Madmen	68	65	133	40 %
Hidden among us	4	16	20	6 %
Executives/Bosses	15	16	31	9 %
Clinical term/Diagnosis	24	41	65	20 %
Total	**156**	**177**	**333**	**100 %**

In Table 1b we see the total number of units used. As mentioned, one article can be fitting in multiple categories and on account of this the total numbers of units are exceeding the total number of articles. The American articles could more often be fitted in multiple categories comparing to the Swedish ones. Looking at this table shows that even if we have fewer American Articles, they are exceeding the Swedish when it comes to articles fitting in the categories "Criminals" and "Maniacs/Madmen". It can also be seen that the later one is representing more than one third of our units. Also, "Maniacs/Madmen"-category and "Criminals"-category were the ones that were most common to be multiple fitted. Those two categories represent 65 % of the articles dealing with our subject. There will be more about this in the discussion section. What we also can see from this table is that even though there are more Swedish articles than American, they are less writing in a way that will fit those two categories. There is also a significant difference in the number of articles in the category "Hidden among us". We found that articles in Swedish newspapers tend to describe a psychopath more often as someone that is otherwise functioning normally in the society. It could be ones girlfriend/boyfriend, husband/wife, neighbor or co-worker. This category is in a small scale related to the "Executives/Bosses". A visible difference we noticed here was that the American newspapers more often tend to describe bosses in the financial labor market in contradistinction to Swedish newspapers that described executives in general.

Table 2a.

American newspapers	Criminals	Maniacs	Hidden among us	Executives	Clinical term	Total
Los Angeles Times	5	16	1	1	1	24
The New York Times	12	14	1	4	13	31
The Washington Post	28	38	2	10	10	56
Total **Total in % of 156 units**	**45** **29 %**	**68** **43 %**	**4** **3 %**	**15** **10 %**	**24** **15 %**	**156 (111)** **100 %**

Note that the values are rounded. 156 units of 111 articles, since multiple categories exists.

This table is only about the American part. Interesting is that Los Angeles Times distribution is the smallest and their main focus is clearly the "Maniac/Madman" description of a psychopath whereof The New York Times, which has a fewer units used, more often depicts articles of medical/diagnostic character. The New York Times is also the only newspaper that has more units about this category than the "Criminals" category. Los Angeles as a city is known for having problems with crimes and gang-related violence and due to this fact crimes will be mentioned in a larger scale, since the newspaper's mission is to inform the society of what is going on in the city. Although, The New York Times is the only newspaper that has specific sections for Health and Science and there were in these sections where we found the majority of the articles that later would be fitted under the category "Clinical Term". By having specific sections, it can both be easier for us to find such articles, but also shows that the newspaper is struggling to write articles with a specific theme. It is worth to notice the difference between Los Angeles Times and The New York Times where the first has fewer articles used in total but more articles about than the second that fits in the "Maniacs/Madmen"-category. Other interesting results is that the total percentage for the first two categories makes up 72 % of all used articles, compared to the total average of 65 % of all the articles.

Table 2b.

Swedish newspapers	Criminals	Maniacs	Hidden among us	Executives	Clinical term	Total
Aftonbladet	18	32	8	10	14	82
Dagens Nyheter	10	24	2	2	13	29
Svenska Dagbladet	11	9	6	4	14	44
Total	**39**	**65**	**16**	**16**	**41**	**177 (155)**
Total in % of 177 units	**22 %**	**37 %**	**9 %**	**9 %**	**23 %**	**100 %**

Note that the values are rounded. 177 units of 155 articles, since multiple categories exists.

Table 2b is solely about the Swedish units. Also the Swedish newspapers makes the "Maniacs/Madmen"-category the major one, although to a lesser extent than the American ones. We can also see that "Clinical term" makes up almost a quarter of the Swedish articles (compared to the American 15 %). It is worth to notice that the two first categories together make up 59 % (compared to the American 72 % and the average of 65 %). As a direct result, American newspapers more often write in a way that describe a psychopath as a Criminal or a Maniac than Swedish newspapers. Interesting to notice is also that Dagens Nyheter uniquely has almost half of the articles in the category "Clinical Term". We have not been able to find any explanation for this (not relevant, although interesting). Dagens Nyheter although tend to profile itself as a "serious" newspaper. For instance, entertainment is not given as much space as in Aftonbladet. It is also more common for Swedish newspapers to describe the psychopath that makes the article fit in the "Clinical Terms" rather than "Criminals".

Discussion

Result discussion

Here we would like to return to our previously asked research questions:

- How are the term psychopath and its varieties applied?
- What kinds of descriptions are used in connection to the term above?
- What visible cultural differences are there between Swedish and American newspapers of the above mentioned term?

Earlier research that we found tends to point to media depicting a psychopath as a simplistically "bad" person (Olstead, 2002), in the USA as well as in Sweden (Strand, 2007). It portrays the individual as a person who carries no remorse for ruthless or criminal actions performed, and is often showed more as a symbol of evil then a person with a mental disorder or with any form of background (Wahl, 1997). It was based on this we chose our two first categories. Our choice to categorize our findings of how the term is used is our effort to present how the newspapers apply the psychopath-term and its varieties and the diverse description of these gave us our categories; *Criminal, Maniacs/Madmen, Hidden among us, Executives/Bosses* and *Clinical term/Diagnosis*. In our ambition to keep our method open and valid we included examples of our categorization process so that other might also take part in our reasoning. If we show a consistent use of our category in our examples we make it more valid, yet we cannot rule out that in the future others might find our process incorrect or in need of further editing (Blom & Morén, 2009). What we saw was that the categories Criminals and Maniacs/Madmen were the ones that made up the majority together. This was also our first impression after reviewing the first 15 articles. One might say that our study have confirmed our previous notion about the general view of the psychopath. In our earlier research we found Wahl (1997) claiming that the psychopath was more a depiction of evil, a criminal or madman, more than a person with a clear diagnosis, and we can see that our findings lean towards that, as those categories make up the larger part of or collected data. Lychick (2012) claims that the media is often not aware of how they are part of demonizing a term and create a stereotype, which we also found Berger (2005) agreeing with, as he sees the media as more portraying the existing norm and values that are already present in the population. In our findings we saw a tendency to view the psychopath term as affiliated with

crime and madness, yet we did also see a percentage of the papers mentioning the term in a more clinical way. This gives the media consumer a possible knowledge of the term and not just an addition to an existing stereotype, which earlier research indicates.

A thought could be that we ourselves are a product of the very concept we are aiming to show. If we are to maintain our concept of social constructionism we ourselves are sharing the values and notions of our constructed society. But we feel that the most suitable way of seeing how the term psychopath, and its varieties, is used is to view just how the media attributes a value to the term by transforming it to stereotypical use. We also believe that we can identify this because of the very reason that we are in fact part of the social construction which it is supposed to appeal to. We are a part of it, so one might also assume that we can interpret it. Our perception of when someone is being described as a criminal, or a lurking threat among us, is actually what the norm is in our society, even though variations might occur between Sweden and the USA. The views on what is illegal and when a law is broken might be the same, or at least similar, in Sweden and The USA, although our views on what values or traits attributed to a criminal could very well differ. This could be due to the differences in views on the origin of social problems, where the Scandinavian approach, more so then the American, tend to lean towards making connections between social problems and the emergence of the welfare state (Ejrnæs & Kristiansen, 2002). A somewhat larger percentage of mentioning the psychopaths as criminals or madmen can be seen in the American newspapers, but it is the only significant notable differences that one could say being cultural.

But it is difficult to point out steady cultural differences in the mentioning of such a large concept as a psychopath between USA and Sweden, since USA is such a vast geographic country with a population that by far exceeds the Swedish one. A country of that proportion also holds several varieties of culture contexts. Also the very concept of culture might be open for discussion, since what it contains is in itself a product of each smaller groups own social construction (Payne, 2010). These are not possible to grasp by just examining three newspapers, however we wanted to make this thesis as an initial step and we hoped that our findings would give an indication towards a cultural perspective, and also open up for an approach on defining or understanding the very cultures examined. To make international comparisons in such an area requires a more quantitative result-based thesis as an initial step, possibly followed up by a more indebt qualitative analysis. Our choice to treat this subject with a quantitative approach was with a thought that it would provide a clear overview of the subject, and with that there would also be a possibility for further research with a more

qualitative advance. If there is a wish to deepen the understanding of a certain phenomenon it is a good start to have a quantitative base to start from before treating it qualitatively (Dahlgren, 2009).

There were more noticeable differences between different American newspapers than between Swedish versus American newspapers. However the findings of further categories Hidden among us, Executives/Bosses and Clinical term/Diagnosis made up such a large part of the articles that they clearly deserve attention and position as independent categories. They did not produce a significant enough amount of articles to prove any visible cultural differences, rather than differences among the different newspapers. As an example, Los Angeles Times had just 1 article falling under each of the three last mentioned categories. This says something about the newspaper, rather than the American culture on depicting a psychopath. Contrary to this, The New York Times had 13 articles in the Clinical term-category even though the total amounts of articles were just 7 more than the total amount of articles in Los Angeles Times (24 and 31).

We could not properly take into account trends that might exist since both the amount and the content of the data gathered is not sufficient enough to make a conclusion about existing trends. Also these possibly existing trends might not be possible to identify or even be aware of unless you are a part of a specific cultural context, for example within a specific geographical region.

Culture in itself, and the trends and dynamic it holds, is a concept that is hard to grasp, and since our social constructive approach has set the tone for the thesis we must recognize the culture is a term that, even if it is widely used term, especially when referencing things or events that seem hard to grasp (often in terms of cultural "clashes" or "difference"), is not a defined or static object (Payne, 2010). It is filled with history and dynamics that is specific for a geographical region, and has a frame work of norms that might be foreign to outsiders. Sweden has a history of being molded by a social democratic perspective on their society, and theory regarding social work is often linked to the evolving welfare state, were as the United States has a large corporate culture involved in the shaping of their social structure, with theory more often viewing society as an organism (Ejrnæs & Kristiansen, 2002). These are differences that could be further explored.

Since we do find tendencies within the media to mention psychopaths in a stereotypical manor rather than present the term in a clinical or diagnostic way, it is reasonable to think that

a media consumer can be exposed to negative stereotyping, using "psychopath" as a key phrase manifesting evil (Loseke, 2008). Since social constructionism is based on the concept of communication and shared values, we can from that perspective say that the media images of the psychopath affects the audience and also therefore the social worker. There are tendencies within social work to having an eagerness to enforce the norm, and those who are indentified as "outsiders" and non-compliant will be seen in a negative manor and suffer the risk of mistreatment and maybe even abuse (Foucault, 1986, 1987, Ejrnæs & Kristiansen, 2002, Skau, 2005, Payne 20210). A malevolent media who constructs negative images might fuel that notion.

Method discussion

The approach we have used in the criteria set up in this thesis resulted in more Swedish articles than American articles used in the thesis totally. Our method with the exclusion and inclusion criteria we listed made more American articles to be excluded, which will say, more American articles fell under the exclusion criteria. A large part of this has to do with the amount of articles in the American newspapers dealing with reviews of movies or TV. An approach we could have used in the categorization could have been to form sub-categories to further examine the terms and language being used to describe a psychopath or psychopathy. Also there could be a discussion of how we define a criminal or an insane person in the USA and Sweden. Maybe the more visible and clear cultural differences could be found in that rather than in the use of the word psychopath with a quantitative content analysis. One of the main reasons for not doing this was the lack of time and the size of the bachelor thesis. However, when keeping in the frame of the social constructive way of reasoning, the findings we belive we have, might just as well be a product of our own predetermind state of mind (Burr, 2003).

The advantage of using a quantitative method is the simplicity of reviewing the categories as well as dividing the articles into set groups (Jacobsen, 2007). This method is preferred to use in the examination of the media. Since the material is not as dynamic as a personal interview, or collecting data directly from participants, it results in a rather user friendly approach to gather information from large quantitative data (Berger, 2005). In any way, we must recognize that when we are the ones setting up the categories we are also the ones who are making influence on the final results. Even if it is an unwilling process the data gathered are

controlled by the person or persons collecting it. We are the ones in command of the data and even if the conclusion is not defect it will have traces of our own thinking (Jacobsen, 2007).

Validity and reliability

Validity describes if you examine what you actually aim to examine and reliability is how well you examine it. Before starting the work with this thesis we had to ask ourselves if the study approach we chose was suitable for the purpose and aim of this work. We found significant literature describing quantitative content analysis as a suitable approach towards gathering data from published media. This supports the validity of the thesis. A question that could be raised regarding the validity of our thesis is if the outcome would be a different one if we have chosen other categories (Jacobsen, 2007). These were set by us in an initial state under our perceived notion that they were the most suitable ones and even though we stand by our choices of categories we must recognize that different categories might have produced a different result. The concept of changing categories to examine different outcomes could be tried with many constellations and a risk is that too many of these would just confuse the result altogether. Nevertheless if the same study was to be conducted by a different student we believe that the outcome would be, if not the same, at least similar.

Our aim all through the process of writing this thesis has been to be methodical in depicting our purpose and theoretical approach, as well as our practical work. This is to as much as possible to ensure that errors or bias will be detected by us or by others. We are aware that the way we process and measure our data is not beyond influence by ourselves or potential inadequacies in our use of methods. But we do feel that have had a process that is thorough and is holding a high level of reliability. To raise the level of reliability, we have examined 50 articles together and in 46 of these 50 articles we had made the same categorization individually. Such process, to together examine articles, makes us think in the same way and it is to confirm that one category has the same meaning for one of us as for the other. Also, as we mentioned we chose not to have sub-groups since we believe that the more amount of data gathered the more difficult it becomes to maintain reliability. By keeping the statistics on a basic level, we hope to avoid room for errors (Jacobsen, 2007).

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