



**INSTITUTIONEN FÖR SOCIOLOGI  
OCH ARBETSVETENSKAP**

# **Moral i rätten. Utredningar av hedersrelaterat våld i Sverige 1997-2017**

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This doctoral thesis investigates assumptions about honour that emerge in the Swedish justice system's investigations of honour related violence and oppression during the period 1997 – 2017, and with what implications. The aim is to deepen the understanding of how the Swedish justice system manages crimes presumed to be honour related, and shed light on implications of current descriptions of these crimes as new in Swedish society. The thesis is rooted in a Sociology of Law tradition, and studies the confrontation between formal law (the Swedish Code of Justice) and living law (honour as a discursive and social practice assumed to be enacted amongst some immigrant groups and families in Sweden) at different levels of the justice system.

The thesis includes two chronological studies of policy documents and court decisions respectively, and a micro study of speech and action in courtrooms and interrogation transcripts from police records. Critical discourse analysis is combined with the moral sociology of Émile Durkheim, and four discourses are delineated. The discourses are either gender or culture oriented, and depart from either a structural or a relational perspective. Additionally, two more overarching discourses are delineated and used analytically to shed light on talking and writing about honour as a supposedly new phenomenon in Sweden. Honour *practice* is a discourse concerned with routine activities aimed at maintaining social order and predictability in clan-based and gender segregated societies. Honour *problematics* are discourses that problematise the consequences of honour practice in Swedish society, from the perspective of Swedish authorities.

Results from the thesis indicate that although they vary over time, discourses in Swedish policy documents primarily focus on assumptions about gender, whereas discourses in court records focus on assumptions about culture. In court observations and police interrogations, discourses depict families as honour practicing (expressed by court professionals as well as by suspects, victims and witnesses themselves), and position family members in different ways depending on both generation and gender. Furthermore, the cohesion of Swedish society is reflected through the identification of an 'other' group that it is assumed does not share Swedish values about gender equality. Conversely, within that identified group, assumptions that gender equality is a threat to the social order of honour practicing families are frequently present. This implies that proponents of the living law (honour practice) experience a threat towards moral values, while the legislative body calls for changes in the formal law as countermeasures against an experienced threat to Swedish moral values.

Key words: honor, honour, living law, morals, court records, court observations, culture, gender