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Presentation title: Current trends in the Swedish criminal law and policy discourse

The current Swedish criminal law and policy discourse can be described as “post-political”, i.e. a consensus among the parties in the Parliament that law-and-order is a prioritised policy area. But what general trends are visible in relation to enacted and proposed legislation concerning criminal law matters? And what trends are visible in the political rhetoric which legitimise legislation concerning criminal law matters? When looking into enacted and proposed legislation, two clear trends emerge: 1) An increased criminalisation of conspiracy, preparation to commit a crime and attempt. 2) A remarkable expansion of the possibilities for the police to use secret coercive measures. Although these trends are not new, they have accelerated during the 2020s. Politicians now argue that Swedish authorities should be given the possibility to a larger extent be able to use “preventive” coercive measures, i.e. that there needs not be a suspicion of crime nor that a pre-trial investigation has been started. While Swedish politicians traditionally have based their arguments on rationality and reason when legitimising criminal law legislation, a shift in the political rhetoric can be noticed. Two trends and major themes can clearly be observed here: (1) populism and (2) integration. Consequently, all of the above-mentioned trends indicate that the Swedish law and policy discourse is transforming, where the political rhetoric legitimising proposed legislation presumably leads to a greater polarisation rather than, for instance, affecting crime rates.