

Presentation title:

The Freedom of (hate) speech - Practical approaches to harm reduction and prevention within an extremist context

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The events surrounding right-wing extremist Rasmus Paludan and his manifestations against the religion of Islam, especially the desecration of the Quran, have caused strong reactions in Sweden as well as internationally. These reactions have caused violent riots in Sweden. The purpose of this study was to examine whether Paludan's manifestations have led to decreased trust in the police among Swedish citizens. More specifically, this study aims to examine how the actions of the police during these manifestations have affected the trust in the police, but also how the police should act to prevent future violent riots. Structured interviews with Malmö residents (n=116) were conducted to examine their knowledge of Paludan's manifestations and how these manifestations have affected them. Respondents were also asked how the police's actions during these events have affected their trust in the police. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with social actors (n=9) about their experiences with the police during these events, as well as their perception of how the events surrounding Paludan's manifestations have affected the public's trust in the police. The results show that for the majority of respondents, trust in the police has not been affected by the events associated with Paludan's manifestation. Nearly half of the respondents deem that the police should use more repressive methods during demonstrations. Social actors consider lack of communication between the police, other social actors and residents to be the major cause of misunderstandings. Furthermore, the results implicate that the Police Liaison Team and social actors have a calming effect on citizens during demonstrations, more so than uniformed police. Lastly, all of the social actors emphasize the importance of creating long term relations with the population. The above result in four action proposals: community police officers, collaboration, information and a joint collaboration platform.