

# **Detectives in the Literary Market: Statistical Perspectives on the Boom in Swedish Crime Fiction**

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## **Abstract**

Crime novels from Scandinavia are commercial successes all over the world. In Sweden, the dominance of the crime genre on the book market is even more significant. According to Swedish book trade magazine *Svensk Bokhandel*, twelve of the top twenty books in the bestseller charts of fiction in 2010, were domestic crime novels. This has started intensive debates, where crime novels are blamed for out-competing other genres.

Domestic crime fiction has had a commanding position of the commercial side of Swedish publishing business in the 2000s, but this has not always been the case. When did this literary genre-takeover take place? How did it take place? How can it be explained? Even though some research concerning Scandinavian crime fiction has been carried out over the last couple of years, no one has mapped the book market phenomenon as such. This article aims to fill this gap by offering a neutral and extensive description on the role and position of crime fiction in Swedish publishing between 1977 and 2010.

## **Key words**

Swedish crime fiction, statistics, sociology of literature, biometrics

## Introduction

Nowadays, crime fiction from Scandinavia in general and Sweden in particular is commercially successful all over the world. In Sweden, the dominance of the genre on the book market is even more significant. This has led to intense debates, where crime fiction has been blamed for edging out other forms of fiction (cf. Berglund 2010: 30–36; Kärholm 2011: 141).

Even though a significant amount of research concerning Scandinavian crime fiction has been carried out over the last few years, no one has yet really mapped its role as a book-market phenomenon. Descriptions of the ‘crime boom’ are instead loosely grounded in references that can most often be traced back to websites belonging to authors or publishing houses. Naturally, these sources of information should be used with caution. As book historians and sociologists of literature have pointed out, publishers frequently employ data on powerful sales and translations as a marketing tool in itself (cf. Miller 2000: 286–289; Squires 2007: 30–31).

This article aims to fill this information gap by offering an extensive description of the role and position of crime fiction in the Swedish publishing business during the period 1977–2010. Taking a quantitative approach, *all* Swedish crime novels published in the last 34 years (just over 1,700 titles) are used to identify patterns over time. Variables of main interest are growth in number of titles published, publishing houses and different types of publishers involved, gender balance among the authors, library lending frequency and book sales figures.

The purpose of such a study, however, is twofold. Studying the boom of Swedish crime fiction gives insights into the interplay between authors, publishers, and the reading public, and can help us understand how genre, from the point of view of a book historian, operates on the literary market. The dominance of crime fiction in Sweden is of course dependent on changes on the book market, but the book market is also affected by the dominance of crime fiction. This interesting mutual relationship will be examined in more detail.

## Methods and Material

This article is based on some of the results in my book *Deckarboomen under lupp* (2012). Thus, questions concerning methods and material are here discussed only briefly.<sup>1</sup>

*Jury*, a Swedish magazine published in print 1974–2008 and devoted entirely to crime fiction, has since 1977 (although from 2009 and onwards only digitally) published an annual bibliography – ‘Deckarkatalogen’ – with the ambition to cover all crime fiction issued in Sweden each year. These lists form the foundation of this study, as I have compiled all Swedish crime fiction registered in the catalogues into a ‘crime fiction database’. This database holds a total of 1,708 titles, written by 623 authors, and issued by 259 different publishers. The publishers have been divided into five groups: Major publishers, mid-sized publishers, small publishers, specialised crime fiction publishers and self-publishers.<sup>2</sup>

The definition of crime fiction, accordingly, is a novel listed as such by the magazine *Jury* and included in its bibliography. This is, of course, not to be seen as a final or definite formulation of what should be seen as belonging to the genre. Instead, the *Jury* lists are merely used as an operationalized definition of the genre.<sup>3</sup> Following Claire Squires, genre in the marketplace is understood as being established by authors and publishers in interplay with reviewers and readers; it is an important strategy by which the literary community and its participants communicate (Squires 2007: 70–104). Therefore, crime fiction as a genre is not regarded as something permanent – it is, on the contrary, continuously being reconstructed and renegotiated.

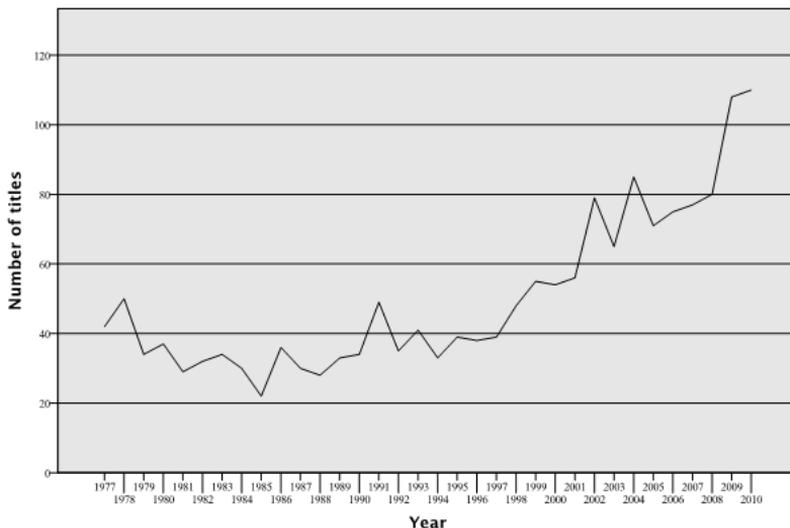
Moreover, five criteria have been taken into account to determine which authors are to be regarded as the most successful: the number of received literary prizes and awards (canonization); the number of crime fiction publications (quantity); library lending frequency (popularity); translations (international impact); and the number of film adaptations (impact in other media).<sup>4</sup> Following these criteria, the top stratum of Swedish crime fiction can be said to consist of 48 authors, who have written a total of 540 crime novels. Further on in this article, the term *most successful authors* refers to this group.

Unfortunately, reliable figures concerning book sales are not available for the entire period and have not, consequently, been utilized when sifting out the group of most successful authors. For the first decade of the 2000s, there are however two reliable sources with which to compile and compare information about bestsellers: The 'Paperback Prize' (Pocketpriset), a prize awarded by the Swedish Publishers' Association (Svenska Förläggareföreningen) between 1999 and 2009 to every book which managed to sell more than 30,000 copies in paperback; and the bestseller charts of the book industry magazine *Svensk Bokhandel* (a Swedish equivalent to *The Bookseller*), which cover the period 2004–2010. These sources are thus used to discern the share of crime fiction among the bestsellers in Sweden in the 2000s.

### **The Growth of First Editions and Different Types of Publishers**

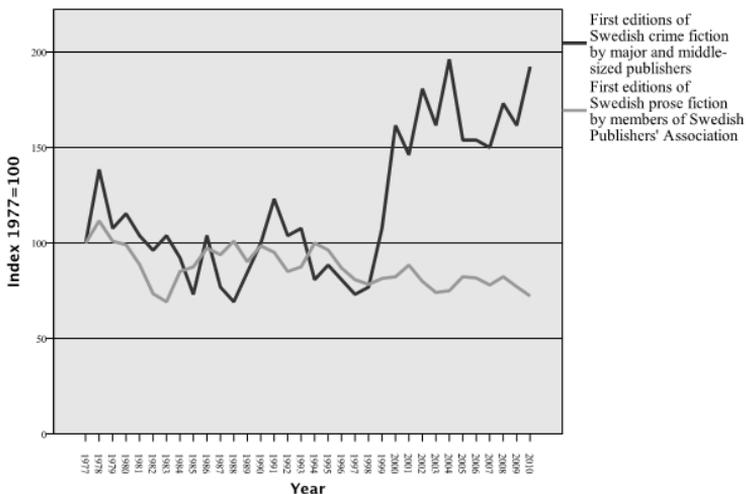
The amount of crime fiction issued has increased remarkably during the period studied (see figure 1). If all Swedish crime fiction published is taken into account, nearly 2.5 times as many first editions were issued in the first decade of the 2000s as in the 1980s. The years following the turn of the millennium particularly have seen a vast increase in the number of crime novels published. All kinds of publishers have contributed to this expansion, but two types stand out: major publishers and self-publishers.

During just a few years (mainly 1998–2001), the major publishers doubled their number of titles of crime fiction, and they have maintained this higher rate ever since, increasing it even more in the final years of the period studied. During the same period, the number of first editions of fiction emanating from publishers who are members of The Swedish Publishers' Association – an organization including all important Swedish publishers, and whose members are more or less equivalent to the major and mid-sized publishers in Sweden – shrank. Hence, the crime fiction share of all fiction published by the most important Swedish publishers during the 2000s has increased to almost twice the size of that in the 1980s and 1990s (see figure 2).



Jury's deckarkataloger 1977-2010.

**Figure 1:** First editions of Swedish crime fiction 1977-2010: number of titles per year



Svenska Förläggareföreningens branschstatistik, 1977/1978-2010: Jury's deckarkataloger, 1977-2010.

**Figure 2:** Index over first editions of prose fiction by members of Svenska Förläggareföreningen (Swedish Publishers' Association) and first edition of crime fiction by big and middle-sized publishers 1977-2010: change per year from index 1977 = 100

Despite this striking increase among major publishers, the expansion in self-publishing has been even greater. During the 1980s and 1990s, self-publishers were something of an obscurity in the genre. Usually one or two – if any – self-published crime novels were issued each year. In the first decade of the 2000s self-publishing has mushroomed, now constituting around a quarter of the entire genre. In the last year covered by this study, 2010, self-publishers even surpassed major publishers and became the quantitatively largest type of publisher.

An increase in self-publishing and very small presses is not unique to crime fiction, however, but a phenomenon that permeates the entire world of books. This is mainly due to improved digital printing and the internet, both of which have made it easier and cheaper to edit, print, promote, sell, and distribute books (cf. Svedjedal 2000: 141–149; Anderson 2006: 15–26; Steiner 2009: 96–97; Thompson 2010: 151–159). Nevertheless, it is crucial to keep in mind that this type of publishing is also an important part of the very popular crime genre. Detective stories are often regarded as piles of bestsellers in bookshops and racks of paperbacks in grocery stores or gas stations, but of all first editions of crime novels the bestsellers are in a minority. During the most successful years for Swedish crime fiction examined here (1998–2010), the share of self-published crime novels (23.7 percent) outnumbers the share of bestsellers (13.5 percent).

The boom of crime fiction is then twofold. Firstly, there has been a quantitative expansion of first editions, where major publishers and self-publishers have been key actors. Secondly, there has been an increase in bestselling crime fiction (described below).

Another interesting aspect is the relationship between Swedish crime fiction and crime fiction translated into Swedish. During the period 1977–2010, no particular tendency can be discerned regarding the amount of translated crime novels – the numbers have stayed more or less the same (albeit with slight annual variations). The boom of crime fiction in Sweden is thus constituted entirely of domestic authors.

## Gender Balance and Literary Status

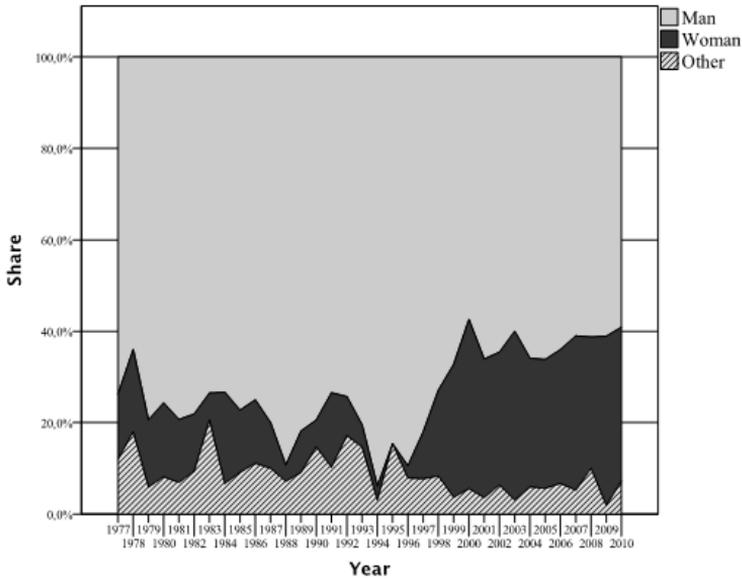
In Swedish crime fiction, the number of female authors increased significantly in roughly the same period of time as the publishing boom. Of all crime novels, women wrote almost a fifth in the 1980s, just over a tenth in the 1990s, and around a third in the first decade of the 2000s (see figure 3).

Furthermore, the gender balance among the bestsellers of crime fiction in the 2000s is nearly even. Among the top bestsellers in paperback, female writers are in a small majority. The bigger the commercial success, it seems, the bigger the share of female writers. Even so, the breakthrough of female writers of crime fiction in the 2000s is evident at nearly all levels in the literary community. Only in two areas of the genre are women absent: among publishers committed entirely to crime fiction, where the part of female writers is strikingly small; and among the group of crime writers who have published more than fifteen novels in the genre, where all are men.

Crime fiction written by women increased at the same time as the annual output of titles in the genre grew. Female crime writing is of course an important part of the boom, but it would be a mistake to state that it was responsible for the boom. In fact, the increase of crime novels written by men was bigger in absolute numbers (although the proportional increase was, of course, far greater for crime novels written by women).

Neither is there any plausibility to the claims sometimes made that women are dominating the Swedish crime genre (cf. Bergman & Kärrholm 2011: 46): at almost all levels, men are still in the majority. Nevertheless, the rapid shift in gender balance around the turn of the millennium is conspicuous. In a period of not much more than five years, Swedish crime fiction changed from a markedly male-dominated genre to a genre where women write around a third of the titles, and where the top band of sales is approaching an even gender balance.

The sudden impact of successful female crime writers has generated a lot of media coverage – and critique. Liza Marklund and Camilla Läckberg have often been pilloried for overt commercialism and poor writing. Interestingly, some male crime writers have taken part in



**Figure 3:** First editions of Swedish crime fiction 1977–2010 sorted by gender: number of titles per year.

Note: The category 'other' includes all titles by unknown pseudonyms (e.g. Bo Balderson), gender-heterogeneous author-couples (e.g. Lars Kepler, the pseudonym for Alexander Ahndoril & Alexandra Coelho Ahndoril), and multiple author-constellations (e.g. Bo Lagevi, a pseudonym including six Swedish authors of crime fiction).

this, accusing their female colleagues of lowering the standard in the genre (cf. Kärrholm 2011: 141). This exposes a hierarchy among crime writers in Sweden, where men in general are associated with higher status than women. A gendered imbalance is also clearly evident when it comes to prizes awarded to crime novels: Men have been awarded around 75 percent of these prizes, even in more recent years.

This picture, however, is only true for Swedish crime writers in Sweden, and it is worth noting that the reception is usually very different abroad. For instance, Camilla Läckberg has received favourable reviews in leading newspapers in both the UK and the US (e.g. Corrigan 2012; Forshaw 2010). In France, she not only hit number one on the sales

chart, but she was also awarded their most prestigious crime fiction award in 2008 – Le Grand prix de littérature policière. This difference between Swedish and international reception has given rise to the suspicion that translators are improving the crime novels – something not only concerning Läckberg but the entire community of Swedish crime writers who have been successful abroad (cf. Forshaw 2012: 6–7). In conclusion, the status for Swedish crime writers is far lower at home than abroad – especially when it comes to female authors.

### **Different Generations on a Changing Book Market**

The large number of crime fiction bestsellers in Sweden in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century verges on the improbable (a point to which I will return), but bestsellers also display large gaps between different generations of bestselling authors. If the most successful Swedish authors of crime fiction are divided into three generations according to the years of their debuts in the genre, a number of enlightening disparities emerge.

The first one concerns gender. The authors of the first generation of successful Swedish crime writers (genre debuts in 1949–1976) are mostly male, but there are also a number of renowned women, especially Maria Lang (pseudonym for Dagmar Lange). The second generation (genre debuts in 1977–1997) is nearly all male, whilst the gender balance of the third generation (genre debuts in 1998–2009, the years of the boom) is even.

A second difference concerns publishing channels. Authors in the first generation have had books published by several types of publishers, large as well as small. Authors of the third generation are however almost exclusively published by major publishers, while the publishing patterns of the second generation are more diverse.

A third difference concerns the time between genre debut and commercial success. The authors of the first generation have generally built up their career over time, gaining readers gradually. The third generation represent the opposite: for these authors, the genre debut most often meant a massive breakthrough with large sales, and resulted in immediate translations and adaptations for film or TV.

These significant differences reflect how the Swedish publishing business has changed during this period: the pace has accelerated, the industry has been internationalized, and it now co-operates with other media to a much higher extent than before. An important factor behind these changes is the establishment of literary agents. Unlike the British and American publishing businesses – where literary agents emerged already in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and where they have for a long time had an operative position as gatekeepers on the book market (cf. Hepburn 1968: 45–104; Gillies 2007: 12–26; de Bellaigue 2008; Thompson 2010: 58–99) – Sweden has had no tradition of independent authors' agents detached from the publishing houses. During the 1990s, however, such agencies were established, and in the 2000s they have become an increasingly important part of Swedish publishing (Göthberg 2001: 42–55; Høier 2012: 10 ff.; Sundin 2012: 301).

Consequently, almost all authors of crime fiction in the third generation are connected to independent agencies. The same is true for only a few authors of the second generation, and for one single author of the first generation. Literary agents are speeding up the selling of translation rights, which has of course been important for Swedish crime fiction internationally (Høier 2012: 10). At the same time, the success of crime fiction has itself been a key factor in the rapid growth of literary agencies in Sweden. It is hard to separate cause from effect here – the relationship has rather been a mutual one. In any case, the role of literary agencies in the boom of Swedish (and Scandinavian) crime fiction should not be underestimated.

During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, authors from the third generation have dominated the bestseller lists in Sweden when it comes to crime fiction. They have written more than 90 percent of the crime novels that have sold over 100,000 copies in paperback. The same goes for three quarters of the crime novels on *Svensk Bokhandel's* annual bestseller charts in 2004–2010. The remaining quarter consists of authors from the second generation, as the first generation is not represented at all among the top bestsellers.

Popular fiction (just like crime fiction) generally has a relatively short lifespan, where the latest editions are expected to sell the most.

Nevertheless, the predominance of newer authors is noteworthy. If only book sales are taken into account, then the vast majority of the boom in crime fiction is due to authors who made their debut in the genre in 1998 or later. Authors of earlier generations are therefore – with a few exceptions such as Åke Edwardson, Henning Mankell, Håkan Nesser and Leif G.W. Persson – not really a part of the boom.

The increased pace within the Swedish publishing business can also be seen in library lending, though in another way. For public libraries, the impact of the most recent stars of crime fiction is less pronounced. Liza Marklund and Camilla Läckberg – the authors in the third generation with the largest number of library loans – are, according to top charts, way behind former greats like Maria Lang, Henning Mankell and Håkan Nesser. The library lending of the books of Stieg Larsson – which have broken several sales records – are in comparison very modest. An author like Jens Lapidus, a big bestseller in Sweden, does not even reach the top lists of Swedish public libraries. In addition, the lending numbers are dipping faster for authors of the third generation.

Hence, crime fiction during the boom is bought to a higher extent than before. For some of the top bestselling authors the mere quantity of paperbacks sold back in Sweden have likely had an attenuating effect on their lending frequency: there is quite simply a limited number of readers within the country.

In Sweden, the lending of fiction from public libraries has slowly decreased since the middle of the 1980s (*Folkbiblioteken 2007*: 21-22). At the same time, book sales have increased (*Branschstatistik 2010*: 9). There are many reasons behind these trends, but that books have never been as cheap and widely available as today have a great significance. The price of books is especially crucial for popular fiction, where topicality is more important than literary longevity. The very cheap paperbacks in Sweden (partly due to a reduction in VAT on books in 2002) have lowered the threshold to buy a bestseller. The trends for bestselling crime fiction thus reflect a major change in how people consume books in Sweden: more are bought, fewer are lent.

## Bestsellers and Publishing Houses

A vast majority of the crime fiction bestsellers in Sweden during the 2000s have been issued by two publishing groups and one independent publishing house. These are Bonnierförlagen (Bonnier Publishing Group, including Albert Bonniers, Forum and Wahlström & Widstrand), Norstedts förlagsgrupp (Norstedts Publishing Group, including Norstedts and Prisma), and Piratförlaget. In hardcover, the Bonnier Publishing Group published 50 percent of the bestsellers in the crime genre, Piratförlaget 31 percent and the Norstedts Publishing Group 5 percent. In paperback, the corresponding numbers are 51 percent for the Bonnier Publishing Group, 18 percent for the Norstedts Publishing Group, and 15 percent for Piratförlaget. These three publishing groups issued nearly nine out of ten of the Swedish bestselling crime novels in hardcover, and more than eight out of ten in paperback.

The picture is much the same concerning the Paperback prizes awarded in 1999–2009. Major publishers have issued a vast majority of the awarded titles, and in the top category – the platinum prize for paperbacks selling more than 100,000 copies in Sweden – all novels awarded but one have been published by either the Bonnier Publishing Group, the Norstedts Publishing Group or Piratförlaget.

Considering bestselling crime fiction in Sweden during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the dominance of these three publishing groups is almost overwhelming. Furthermore, their market shares are extended the closer one comes to the top of the bestseller charts.

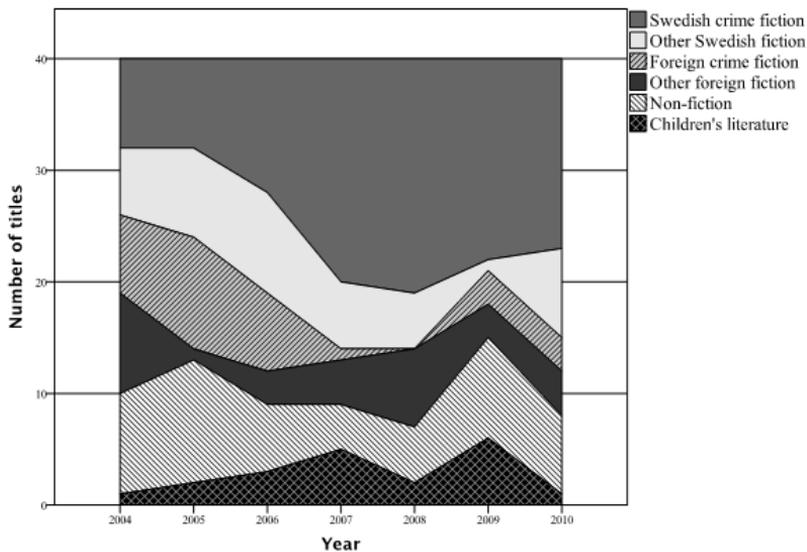
In Sweden as in the rest of the western countries, major publishing houses have grown larger in the 1990s and 2000s. Nowadays, such media conglomerates often owns multiple or even all parts in the chain of producing and selling books – from printing via distribution to book stores (cf. Hemmungs Wirtén 2007: 395–399; Thompson 2010: 100–112; Sundin 2012: 290–300). The establishment of literary agents in Sweden has driven up remunerations for the bestselling authors to levels, which small and mid-sized publishers most often cannot afford. The book business is heading towards a polarization, where big publishing groups get even bigger at the same time as the number of self-publishers and very small publishers is growing. What

suffers, then, is everything in between (Thompson 2010: 173-175). The evolution of Swedish crime fiction during the last 30 years reflects these trends in a pronounced manner.

### Crime Fiction vs. Other Fiction

Many of the trends regarding crime fiction are part of the general tendencies in the Swedish book market. A changing publishing business, however, does not explain why crime fiction as a genre has seen such an expansion in the book market.

During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the share of crime fiction of the bestsellers has been exceptionally big in Sweden. Of the bestselling fiction in hardcover in 2004-2010, 60 percent was Swedish crime fiction. This can be compared to all other Swedish fiction, whose share was 24 percent. On the ‘top 40’ bestseller charts in *Svensk Bokhandel* in the same years, 37 percent of the titles consisted of Swedish crime fiction. This is extraordinary, bearing in mind that these charts include



**Figure 4:** All titles at the annual ‘top 40’ bestseller charts in Svensk Bokhandel 2004-2010 sorted per genre: number of titles per year.

The annual bestseller charts in Svensk Bokhandel 2004-2010.

*all* types of books (that is, including non-fiction and books for children and adolescents as well as Swedish and foreign fiction) (see figure 4). Of all Paperback prizes in 1999–2009, 46 percent were awarded for Swedish crime fiction, and 39 percent for other Swedish fiction. Of the Paperback prizes in the platinum category (the top bestsellers), 54 percent were awarded for Swedish crime fiction, and 35 percent for other Swedish fiction.

These are striking numbers. Regardless of which measure is used, there have been more Swedish bestsellers in the crime genre than other Swedish bestsellers in fiction altogether. In some respects, the share of Swedish crime fiction is nearly twice the size of all other Swedish fiction.

In comparison to earlier epochs, the results stand out as well. Only around a sixth of the bestsellers in the 1950s and around a fourth in the 1960s were domestic crime novels. During the – seen from the point of view of Swedish crime fiction – weaker decade of the 1970s, only between 4 and 10 percent of the bestsellers were Swedish crime novels, and even fewer foreign crime fiction.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the boom of crime fiction in Sweden during the early 2000s has no precedent in Swedish book market history.

## **Crime Fiction as Normal Literature?**

In this article I have mapped the boom of crime fiction in Sweden in the early 2000s from a statistical perspective. As shown, the number of detective stories and thrillers issued each year has more than doubled in the period studied, and domestic crime fiction has been tremendously successful according to the bestseller charts. But how is it that this particular genre has experienced such a sudden boom?

This question has been asked many times, and the answers given are manifold. A large number of commentators have pointed out the genre's social criticism as a key factor behind its success, especially depictions of the decline of the Swedish welfare state or feminist and/or gender issues (with Stieg Larsson as the most obvious example) (cf. Wendelius 1999; Saarinen 2003; Nestingen 2008; Westerståhl Stenport & Ovesdotter Alm 2009; Tapper 2011; King & Lee Smith (ed.) 2012).

Furthermore, the dark and gloomy features of the genre are frequently highlighted, as well as the fact that Swedish and Scandinavian crime fiction has found a voice of its own, different (but not too much so) from the British and American traditions (cf. Arvas & Nestingen 2011: 2-6; Forshaw 2012: 8). In addition, the genre has become more open-ended in recent years, incorporating to a higher extent features like everyday realism, social commentary and psychological analysis.

These national characteristics are all important. Three authors in particular should also be singled out: Henning Mankell, who updated the Swedish police procedural and the legacy of Maj Sjöwall & Per Wahlöö in the 1990s, and started the string of successes abroad; Liza Marklund, who expanded the genre and made way for women in Swedish crime fiction – as authors, hero(in)es, and, not to be forgotten, readers; and Stieg Larsson, the author of the globally blockbusting Millennium trilogy.

However, one of the foundations of this study is that the book market itself is significant to the boom of Swedish crime fiction. As Claire Squires points out, genre is an essential and necessary taxonomy on the book market. Several co-operating mechanisms constitutes a genre – book covers, advertising, author-trademarks, imprints, shelf divisions and sorting in book shops and libraries, literary prizes, and so on. Genre should then not be seen as an inherent literary trait, but as an agency on the book market (Squires 2007: 71-74).

During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, crime fiction has been a very dominant agency on the Swedish book market. This might sound like a truism, but that more crime fiction is published and that it constitutes a majority of the bestsellers are rather *effects* of this strong position. Publishers and bookshops, along with authors and presumptive authors, take note of good sales and media attention for specific genres. When a genre is successful, this will lead to more books being published, in turn leading to more successes, which then strengthen the genre further. It works as a genre-internal positive spiral, where success breeds more success.

In Sweden, this course of events has gone very far indeed. A number of groundbreaking and successful authors in the crime genre have attracted plenty of successful followers. This evolution might be

understood as a dilution of the genre, but seen from the perspective of a book historian, it is rather an enhancement of crime fiction as an agency on the book market.

Furthermore, concurrent changes on the book market have exaggerated and accelerated these trends. The establishment of literary agents is one explanation. Another is to be found in the book industry culture John B. Thompson calls *extreme publishing*: All major publishing houses are looking for the next blockbuster, and therefore evaluate certain debutants very highly (Thompson 2010: 223–237). In a time when crime fiction is almost equivalent to bestselling fiction, publishing houses and agents naturally keep their eye out for new works in this genre. Consequently, several major and very fast breakthroughs in the crime genre have followed.

In Franco Moretti's statistical mapping of the development of the novel in the UK in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he shows that genres flourish in waves and then withdraw. Moretti also coins the term *normal literature*, which he understands as a genre that, during a specific time in history, is the dominating or hegemonic one, and which is then replaced by a new genre, the new normal literature. Moretti's point is that literary history – including genres – is cyclical by nature (Moretti 2005: 18–24).

If normal literature is interpreted less strictly, and with emphasis on book market aspects rather than literary form, the term has a great potential in describing the Swedish boom of crime fiction. In the beginning of the 2000s, crime fiction in Sweden has been transformed from a niche segment of the book market, to an ordinary part of the output of all major publishing houses. Today, crime fiction is the normal literature on the Swedish book market when it comes to bestselling fiction. The genre has such a wide audience and is of such economic importance that most publishing houses simply cannot afford to ignore it. As the findings in this article demonstrate, crime fiction and bestselling fiction have more or less converged in Sweden during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In fact, crime fiction in Sweden today is so dominant that it almost transcends what, on the book market, is usually conceived of as genre.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This study is a part of my dissertation project: 'A Market of Murder' (working title). The methods that are used in this article spring from a long tradition of bibliometrical research conducted at the Centre for Sociology of Literature at Uppsala University (summarized in Warnqvist 2007: 42–48).

<sup>2</sup> The publishers have been divided mainly due to their amount of published crime fiction in 1977–2010, but also due to their size and position on the book market, and their number of most successful authors of crime fiction. Asa Warnqvist uses a similar method (Warnqvist 2007: 65–69).

<sup>3</sup> This is a term often used in quantitative studies to describe the step from hypotheses to concrete collecting of data (cf. Eggeby & Söderberg 1999: 41–42). This does not, however, mean that the genre borders are set at random – on the contrary, a great effort is put in by *Jury* to make the bibliographies as accurate as possible.

<sup>4</sup> The criteria regarding canonization, quantity and impact in media have simply been counted, but translations and popularity need a short explanation. The database Suecana extranea is used to map translations and editions outside Sweden. It is a bibliography, produced by the National Library of Sweden (Kungl. biblioteket), which lists Swedish literature and literature about Sweden published abroad. The database gives a good overview of the worldwide spreading of Swedish literature over time. Though neither exact nor complete, the issues listed in Suecana extranea can be understood as, at the very least, minimum levels (cf. Tellgren 1982: 98; Svedjedal 2012: 241–245). To assess popularity, statistics from the Swedish Authors' Fund (Sveriges författarfond) regarding Swedish public libraries has been the primary source. The fund has produced reliable statistics covering the entire period 1977–2010.

<sup>5</sup> The figures from the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s are based on a list of Swedish bestsellers in 1924–1974 compiled by Adam Helms (Helms 1975: 127–144); the numbers from the late 1970s are based on Ann Steiners compilation of bestsellers 1976–1979 (Steiner 2006: 293–301, 305–306).

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