



**INSTITUTIONEN FÖR SOCIALT ARBETE**

**Brott eller passion?  
Myndighetsdiskurser om manlig sexhandel  
från 1930- till 2000-tal**

av

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## Abstract

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This thesis concerns discourses on male "prostitution". Through a genealogical examination of how commercialised sex between men was problematised in Sweden 1933–2016, the general aim has been to outline the assumptions and premises that underlies the contemporary predominant understanding of the phenomena. Using male "prostitution" as an example a second objective has been to highlight constructions of social problems in relation to categorisations based on gender, sexuality, and desire but also to gain an in-depth understanding of how these categories are associated with class, ethnicity, nationality, race and age, as well as masculinity and femininity-coded actions in a wider societal understanding. This is examined in relation to discourses on heterosexual commercialised sex. The empirical material comprises official government reports and parliamentary documents published between 1933 and 2016, and group interviews with professionals, social workers and police officers working in special units aimed at prostitution. In addition, so-called advocacy material – printed text, books and articles – addressing male "prostitution" produced during the investigated period have been collected.

The empirical material has been subjected to a genealogical analysis where the focal point is how arguments and claims regarding male "prostitution", as well as commercial sex on a general level, were problematised and accounted for over time. The theoretical frame is based on constructivist perspectives on social problem categorisations, combined with poststructuralist feminist and queer theories. The analytical tools used derives from a genealogical approach to discourse analysis. This is combined with governmentality analysis, where the interests concern how credible knowledge is articulated and produces practical action, along with the premises about language as constituting the studied phenomena at hand.

The analysis shows that discourses on male prostitution are inextricable linked to perceptions of male homosexuality, insofar as they tend to become inseparable. However, key themes in the different problem categories identified, such as male "prostitution" as an expression of a specific sexual culture, can be understood in relation to homosexuality being the primary problem category, where "prostitution" is subordinate. Thus, questions of governance have thus been linked to changes in knowledge regimes in relation to homosexuality, giving rise to cycles of liberal and repressive regulatory means during the investigated period. The results show that emotions or the establishment of an "emotional economy" between different societal groups, are important aspects of liberal governance. Disgust, contempt, tolerance, and acceptance, to name a few, whose shifts have been politically installed during the investigated decades, emerges as prominent tools for regulating the relationship between homo- and heterosexuals. These emotions are aimed at the population as a whole and function as a normative guide to point out a morally correct and acceptable distance, which should be neither exceeded or undercut.

In terms of social problems, the heterosexual "prostitution" constantly seems to represent an urgent and modern contemporary issue, with a political potential to engage and concern far more groups than those involved. Male "prostitution" is structured by other conditions and seems to lack the ability to transform in relation to societal changes, in similar ways that have shaped the perceptions of the heterosexual "prostitution". With a few historical exceptions, these circumstances are underlined in various periods by discourses pointing out male "prostitution" as invisible and silent, which constitutes the most prominent pattern in the material studied.