

The Re-Imagined Geopolitics of Swedish Military Conscription

By
Emma Sjökvist

Submitted to
Central European University
School of Public Policy

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Public Policy

Supervisor: Dr. Cameran Ashraf

Budapest, Hungary

2017

Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned, Emma Sjökvist, hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

This is a true copy of the thesis, including final revisions.

Date:

.....

Name (printed letters):

.....

Signature:

.....

Abstract

In March 2017, the Swedish Government re-activated a policy of military conscription that had been abandoned only seven years earlier. In its justification for the conscription policy, the Government pointed to a deteriorating geopolitical situation. This thesis examines the geopolitical imaginations embedded in the Swedish conscription debate through a popular geopolitical lens.

After an initial review of the literature regarding the role of conscription in European and Swedish state formation, a discourse analysis is employed to online national newspaper coverage of the Government's policy reversal. This research demonstrates that media reports in the immediate aftermath of the announcement largely reinforced wider geopolitical discourses that justify conscription as a national necessity. More specifically, the media discourse combines a renewed twentieth century geopolitical understanding with an appeal to a new 'cosmopolitan' set of values.

Acknowledgements

More thanks are due than the word limit of this thesis allows. Thank you to my supervisor, Cameran Ashraf, for introducing me to critical geopolitics and for supporting me during this endeavour. I am also grateful to other professors at CEU who have helped me to refine and make sense of this topic at various stages of the process, including Sara Svensson, Paul Roe, Julia Buxton, and Lea Sgier.

To the countless other educators who have inspired me over the years, thank you.

Contents

Introduction.....	1
I. Background: Situating Conscription	5
Conscription – A Brief History	5
Conscription and the Nation-State	6
The Geopolitical Dimensions of Conscription.....	9
II. Conceptual Framework & Methodology: Analysing Popular Geopolitical Discourse.....	12
Geopolitical Imagination as Discourse.....	12
Popular Geopolitics & Mass Media	14
Discourse Analysis of Swedish Newspapers	15
III. Findings: A Geopolitical Re-imagining.....	19
External Geopolitics: Framing the Threat	19
Conscription as a response to “the security situation”.....	19
Conscription to aid a nation under threat	20
Conscription as a solution to defence shortage.....	21
Internal Geopolitics: Constructing and Uniting the Swedish Nation	23
Sweden as a nation with borders	23
Conscription as uniting Sweden	25
Conscription as endorsed by ‘the youth’	27
Conscription as a Site of Geopolitical Debate	28
Old Conscription vs. New Conscription.....	29
Voluntary Conscription vs. Forced Conscription	31
The Absent Alternatives	33
Concluding Remarks	36
Works Cited	37

“The security environment in Europe and in Sweden's vicinity has deteriorated and the all-volunteer recruitment hasn't provided the Armed Forces with enough trained personnel. The re-activating of the conscription is needed for military readiness.” (Government Offices of Sweden 2017)¹
- *Swedish Government's decision to re-introduce conscription, 2 March 2017*

“But it is not Sweden that has chosen to claim a geopolitical ‘sphere of interest’ around our borders or invaded neighbouring countries ... Sweden has had peace for more than 200 years thanks to our neutrality, a strong defence, luck and diplomatic skills.” (Lindberg 2017)
- *Editorial in newspaper Aftonbladet, 3 March 2017*

Introduction

On 2 March 2017, the Swedish Government announced the re-introduction of a policy of military conscription for young Swedes. This fall, all young men and women born in 1999 will receive a letter from the Swedish Defence Recruitment Agency in the post with instructions on how to register for the enrolment procedure, which includes physical and psychological tests (Rekryteringsmyndigheten 2017). Of those who are called in for enrolment, 4,000 people will be selected to complete mandatory military service.

The announcement of the re-activation of conscription did not come as a surprise. Reports had surfaced in the media regarding the Government's intention to re-introduce conscription as early as last year (Gummesson 2016). However, both the policy and its geopolitical justification may indeed seem unexpected. Only seven years earlier, in 2010, a longstanding policy of military conscription for young men had been dismantled, ostensibly due to the prevailing state of peace (MSB 2015). Yet, the government's justifications for reactivating conscription prior to the official announcement included a serious and shifting global security situation that puts pressure on the Swedish Armed Forces (Bengtsson 2016). How could this dramatic reversal in conscription policy occur in this short time span? This is the overarching question that guides this thesis.

¹ This is a statement originally in English on the official Swedish Government's website. All other translations from Swedish to English in this thesis are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

In a comprehensive account of the history and tradition of military conscription, Mjøset and Van Holde (2002, 94) speculate that the “days of the conscripted citizen-soldier may now be coming to an end”. Along with other scholars, they predicted a general abandonment of conscription in Western Europe in favour of professional volunteer armies. This view that the conscription system would be relegated to the history books was echoed in the lead up to the dismantling of Swedish conscription. In 2009, Sten Tolgfors, then Swedish Minister for Defence, stated that the transition from conscription to a professional military structure would usher in a more “flexible and useful” defence that would be one of Europe’s “most modern” (Jonsson 2009).

Prior to its dismantling, conscription had a long history in Sweden. The modern form was instituted in 1901 and underwent a number of variations over the next century. At the peak of the Cold War, around 50,000 young men were conscripted to military service and received a posting in the event of war (Försvarsmakten 2017). In 1980, women could officially complete military service alongside men, albeit on a voluntary basis. While the government mandated a “total defence duty” in 1994 that in principle applies to all Swedish citizens and foreign residents in Sweden, mandatory military service remained in place only for young men (Leander 2004). Following the end of the Cold War, the number of young men and women conscripts steadily decreased as part of an overall process of disassembling of the Swedish defence complex (Åselius 2005). In 2008, two years before the dismantling of conscription, the number of annual conscripted soldiers was down to 6,804, emblematic of a general trend towards disarmament (Försvarsmakten 2017). Within this context, the re-activation of conscription appears at face value to be an extraordinary policy reversal.

In the introductory quote to this thesis, the Swedish Government justifies conscription with reference to an increasingly hostile geopolitical situation. This thesis employs a popular geopolitical lens to investigate the geopolitical imaginations embedded in media coverage of the Government’s

policy announcement. It does so by critically examining the dominant representations of conscription employed in media discourse. The thesis unfolds in three parts. The first part situates conscription within scholarship across various disciplines that discusses its historical and contemporary role in the Swedish and European nation-state, and the geopolitical interpretations of this legacy. The second part sketches my conceptual framework of popular geopolitical inquiry, and the methodological approach of discourse analysis that I apply to Swedish newspaper sources. The third part outlines the findings regarding the dominant geopolitical representations of conscription that are used to justify its re-activation in the Swedish context, and the points of tension that arise in the reconfiguration of internal and external geopolitical imaginations. Finally, I will conclude that media reports in the immediate aftermath of the policy announcement reinforce a wider geopolitical discourse that prescribes conscription as a national necessity.

Previous works have addressed the intersection of contemporary security policy, geopolitics, and media. In a wide-ranging study of geopolitical discourse in US popular culture, Debrix (2008, 15) employs a Foucauldian conceptualization of discursive formation to highlight the ways in which media and other geopolitical agents mobilise imagery and language of fear, danger, and destruction, presenting problems that can only be solved by military violence. Ferrada Stochrel (2013) has examined how Swedish political discourse is manifested in an aesthetic and affective manner through digital apps and youtube videos issued by the Swedish Armed Forces. His work draws attention to the symbiosis between politics, media, and the defence industry, and the ways in which media can appeal to the existence of a Swedish collective identity.

It should be noted that this thesis makes no attempt at normative judgments on either the policy decision to re-activate conscription or the media coverage thereof. Nor does it seek to investigate the

myriad of issues surrounding political authority and obligation associated with conscription.² These are tasks far beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, this thesis aims to critically examine the imaginary and geographies appealed to in media accounts of the policy decision and situate them within a wider geopolitical discourse. In the process, I hope to shed further light on the ways in which the versions of reality that are offered by media, and the geopolitical imaginations embedded therein, can become part of conventional wisdom and thereby legitimate policy decisions.

² A useful summary of this discussion can be found in an exchange regarding Margaret Levi's (2002) writings on the matter in (Mjøset and Van Holde 2002).

I. Background: Situating Conscription

This chapter provides an overview of literature pertaining to the historical origins of military conscription in European and Swedish state formation, its role in the nation-state, and the contemporary geopolitical implications and interpretations of this legacy. Drawing on literature across multiple fields, disciplines, and geographies, I trace a general understanding among scholars that conscription is “on its way out of history” (Joenniemi 2006).

Conscription – A Brief History

Conscription has a long history in Europe, and in Sweden especially. The modern conscription system, defined by Finer (1975) as “the common writing down of eligible names for the purpose of a ballot [with] only the unlucky numbers having to serve”, dates back to the 18th century in Europe (cited in (Mjøset and Van Holde 2002, 9)). Mjøset and Van Holde (2002) trace the dawn of conscription to a radical transformation of European states and armies that concentrated power in the hands of the state. According to Mjøset and Van Holde (2002, 15), the enlargement of states during the 18th century leading to an unprecedented mass socialisation of military forces. An associated effect was that conscripts would resist joining popular uprisings, and instead defend rulers in their aim of consolidating state power (Mjøset and Van Holde 2002, 15). Other scholars, including Charles Tilly (2013) and Anthony Giddens (1985, 105), have pointed to military developments as the central factors that decisively influenced the process of European state formation

In terms of timing, Sweden and other Scandinavian countries were largely an exception to other European states. Henning Sørensen (2000, 313-314) argues that the basic idea of conscription in Scandinavia can be traced back more than a thousand years to the Viking era, when all men were “prescribed to meet at a specified place in the event of an attack on the realm”.³ However, other

³ Sørensen (2000) refers to Scandinavia as encompassing Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

scholars tie the birth of modern Swedish conscription to Sweden's age of empire under King Gustavus Adolphus in the 'Thirty Years' War of the early 17th century, when large numbers of soldiers were required to fill the military ranks for the state's imperial conquests. According to Mjøset and Van Holde (2002, 16), by 1620 Sweden had in place a relatively well-functioning system of conscription that drew soldiers mostly from the peasantry. During Europe's state formation process between 1500-1850, Sweden had a relatively large proportion of troops among its national populations, peaking at 7% in 1700 during imperial conquests (Tilly 2013, 79). Swedish scholar Gunnar Åselius (2005, 25) traces a proud military history in Sweden to this age of empire.

Several scholars also trace the modern European conscription system to the citizen-soldier tradition that developed at the end of the 18th century in Europe. Mjøset and Van Holde (2002, 30) argue that the notion of the citizen-soldier transformed the relations between the state and the conscripted individual from one that was corporatist to one that was political. This reflected a more egalitarian relationship to the state and conceptualised military service as an obligation in return for membership in a territorial political community. Daniel Moran (2003, 2) argues that the introduction of *levée en masse*, a policy of forced mass military conscription enacted in France following the French Revolution, was justified in official and public rhetoric by "a new ideology of revolutionary patriotism and social mobilization, undertaken to defend the nation against invasion". Moran (2003, 3) concludes that the *levée en masse* gave birth to "one of the most powerful organising myths of modern politics – that compulsory mass mobilisations express and give form to wishes or higher values of community and its members".

Conscription and the Nation-State

A number of contemporary scholars investigating the role of conscription in the last century argue that it continues to serve an important function in the construction of the nation – in terms of identity formation, nationalism, and citizenship. Indeed, Pertti Joenniemi (2006, 5) argues that conscription

originally came about for reasons that were not military – instead, it was part of “forging important linkages between the individual and the nation-state” in the context of nationalisation, democratisation, and the advance of modernity. According to Joenniemi (2006, 6), conscription thus “forms a site and an issue-area around which different identities are struggled over and core relations established in a security-related context”. In keeping with this notion, Meyer Kestnbaum (2002, 139) posits conscription as fostering a “political community of citizens understanding themselves to be one nation”, drawing the state into people’s everyday lives and resulting in war becoming, in Clausewitzian terms, “business of the people”. Mjøset and Van Holde (2002, 60), describe a “conscription bargain” between states, armies, and the general population, where citizens offer support or services for the military during war in exchange for welfare, rights, liberties, and social services on behalf of the state in peace time.

Meanwhile, the study of power by Michel Foucault (2015) has dislodged traditional accounts of state power and instead situated them within a particular historically situated discourse of war. This discourse coincided with the state acquiring a monopoly of war and emerged as a popular and aristocratic challenge to royal power in the 16th and 17th centuries, following which it proliferated until modern time (Foucault 2003). In Foucault’s later accounts of governmentality and biopolitics, the discourse of war has been co-opted by the state, turning the focus of the state to dealing with the population as a political problem (Hoffman 2013). Within such a reading, conscription can be associated with the notion of a state’s biopolitical right, or responsibility, to sacrifice its citizen’s lives in the interest of the survival of the population as a whole (Cowen 2006).

Annica Kronsell and Erika Svedberg situate Swedish conscription in a wider, and gendered, context of nationalism and militarism. According to Kronsell and Svedberg (2001), the central pillars of Sweden’s collective identity in the past century have been its neutrality doctrine and the welfare state

(*folkhemmet*). The former necessitates conscription based on Sweden's inability to count on external support in the eventuality of a conflict. The training of all men as soldiers is thus a geopolitical strategy to ensure there would be defenders among the population against potential intruders. Meanwhile, the notion of Sweden as a welfare state has discursively positioned Sweden internally as a common home for all people, regardless of social position. Conscription is thus justified to open up the military to democratic and public control.

Swedish conscription, Kronsell and Svedberg (2001) argue, relies on a particularly gendered construction of collective identity, due to the different ways that men and women have been situated within discourses relating to nation and nationalism. Kronsell and Svedberg (2006, 140) refer to Jean Beathke Elshtain's (1995) gendered constructions of male soldiers as 'just warriors' willing to dedicate their lives to the nations, versus female 'beautiful souls' inspiring soldiers to fight for the just cause, as reinforced in Swedish conscription tradition and discourse. According to Swedish defence scholar Robert Egnell, conscription in Sweden thus traditionally meant "turning boys into men", and had little to do with actually fighting wars (Hawley 2015).

Meanwhile, military scholar Gunnar Åselius (2005, 28) situates conscription as caught between opposing visions for Sweden's national defence. The first vision, referred to as People's Defence (*folkförsvaret*), stresses the importance of conscription and the democratic legitimacy of armed forces resulting from the active participation of citizens in the military. This vision was founded after the Second World War and largely dominated Swedish security policy until the dismantling of the Cold War military structure in 2001. The current alternative, referred to as the High Tech vision, focuses on the importance of military professionalism and the modernisation of military equipment above conscription. According to Åselius, the two competing visions in turn reflect different parts of

Sweden's national identity – democratic and egalitarian ideals on the one hand, versus technical effectiveness and rational management on the other (Åselius 2005, 29).

The Geopolitical Dimensions of Conscription

Generally speaking, geopolitics is defined and treated as “the political implications of geography” (Gray 2012, 302). Indeed, geopolitics appears to have been a decisive element in the contemporary Swedish context, where conscription has widely been seen as guaranteeing the credibility of Sweden's neutrality abroad (Leander 2004). Sørensen (2000, 326) argues that Sweden employed military conscription to signal its “intended or actual military use of conscripts against an aggressor”. At the time, conscripts were used across all services in the Armed Forces to project Sweden's national will to defend itself. Part of this strategy relies on the perception that conscription bolsters the deterrence capacity of armed forces at large (Leander 2004).

The guaranteeing of Sweden's neutrality was seen as an especially important factor during the Cold War, when Sweden significantly strengthened its military capacity accordingly. According to Åselius (2005, 26), the desire to be a moral great power and non-aligned required Sweden to seek military self-reliance. As a result, certain accounts placed Sweden first in line behind the US and Soviet superpowers in terms of its military capabilities (Sweetman 2010), while others characterise Sweden during the time as the “most impressive militia outside of Israel” (Bond 1984) cited in (Mjøset and Van Holde 2002, 82)). Moreover, a classical geopolitical reading of Sweden's geographical position in the Baltic region left it right on the Cold War-border between the East and the West (Kretinin, et al. 2016, 14). Sweden had to guard itself accordingly in a Cold War global system dominated by realist conceptions of power, succinctly summed up by Eliot Cohen (1985, 25): “when the world is bipolar – the World Power will have little choice but to use force at some point or other, for any loss is perceived as the opponents' gain”. Indeed, Swedish conscription could thus be seen as an “imperative of geopolitics” (Cohen 1985).

Moreover, this “in-between position” provided Sweden with a particular national identity and strong positive self-image (Kronsell and Svedberg 2006, 151). According to Åselius (2005, 26), there was a popular narrative that Sweden’s “impartial position between East and West, her manifest solidarity with the Third World and the country’s active stance on human rights deserved respect from the rest of the world”. However, several works have noted that despite Sweden’s official policy of non-alignment, in practice the Soviet Union was presented as the only potential enemy (Kronsell and Svedberg 2001, 163) (Sweetman 2010). This discourse is reflected in a report by the US geopolitical intelligence firm Stratfor (2009), which posits Sweden as historically having been forced to look eastwards, leading to continual conflict with Russia. The report further points to Sweden’s warm relationship with NATO and friendly relations with its Scandinavian neighbours as further evidence to support this claim.

The end of the Cold War was seen to have dramatically altered the geopolitical landscape in Europe and in the Baltic Sea region, leading to both a restructuring of nations and identities as well as a general downscaling of defence capabilities (Kronsell and Svedberg 2001). In Sweden, this led to domestic pressure to reform the Armed Forces from a focus on defending the nation against external invasion to instead protect against “new threats” and assist international interventions (Leander 2004) (Kronsell and Svedberg 2006, 151). Swedish officials declared the end of the neutrality doctrine (Kronsell and Svedberg 2006, 151). The resulting shift in Swedish security discourse, Kronsell and Svedberg (2006, 151) argue, reflected policy-maker’s changing perceptions of geopolitical situation in which Sweden found itself, in terms of possible threats and the changing nature of war.

In this new scenario, threats and perpetrators were less clearly defined and not easily contained by conventional military methods. Sweden thus began a process of dismantling its vast Cold War defence complex (Åselius 2005, 25). According to Mjøset and Van Holde (2002, 90), military strategists began

to question the efficiency of conscription due to the rise of technology-intensive forces. An increased focus on human rights and domestic dissatisfaction with imperialism has since led to conscription being seen as an “outdated practice” (Mjøset and Van Holde 2002). The perceived lack of a military threat, professionalisation of the military, and the recognition of a “new type” of warfare led Denmark, Norway, and Sweden to greatly reduce the number of conscripts (Sørensen 2000).

Moreover, the new post-Cold War geostrategic scenario, in which territorial defence no longer justifies mass armed forces, has led Rafael Ajangiz (2002, 308) to declare a “crisis of conscription”. Ajangiz points to a crisis of the nation-state and increasing moves to a ‘multi-centric’ world as a result of globalisation, along with social forces involving postmodern changes in values and priorities that arose even prior to the end of the Cold War. Meanwhile, military sociologist Charles Moskos (cited in (Leander 2004)) has claimed that this new postmodern military will be defined by the full integration of women, acceptance of homosexuals, and the removal of the role of spouses. The predictive power of these account appeared impressive, when Sweden in 2010 declared that its policy of mandatory conscription, in place since 1901, was to be dismantled.

Almost three decades after the end of the Cold War, Sweden has nonetheless re-instated its policy of military conscription. The literature reviewed in this chapter is largely unable to explain this phenomenon beyond a context of state formation or geopolitical strategy during war. Perhaps there is merit to Joenniemi’s (2006, 9) point that conscription could turn into a “‘site of last battle’, one seen as decisive for the endurance of the traditional nation-state relationship”.

II. Conceptual Framework & Methodology: Analysing Popular Geopolitical Discourse

This thesis approaches the renewed policy of military conscription by employing a popular geopolitical lens to critically examine the geopolitical imagination represented in media discourse. In this chapter, I situate popular geopolitics within the broader tradition of critical geopolitical inquiry, and argue that this approach uncovers the ways in which the everyday language encountered in media contributes to the construction and reinforcing of geopolitical imaginations that help to contextualise the renewed conscription policy. Thereafter, I outline my methodological approach of discourse analysis and explain the decision to narrow the scope to certain newspaper sources.

Geopolitical Imagination as Discourse

Geopolitics, according to John Agnew (2006, 5), has traditionally referred to “the study of geographical representations, rhetoric, and practices that underpin world politics”. To classical geopolitical scholars, geopolitics is simply the political implications of geography, a “stage set by power beyond our control” (Gray 2012, 299). Against this position, critical geopolitical scholarship à la Agnew challenges the presentation of geopolitics as a neutral and objective practice, and aims instead to problematize and reveal the politics behind the production of geopolitical knowledge.

The concept of discourse has been at the heart of critical geopolitics since its very beginning (Müller 2008, 323). While the term ‘discourse’ can be used to refer to all forms of text, this thesis relies on the following elegant explanation of discourse provided by Norman Fairclough (2003, 124) that warrants quoting at length:

... ways of representing aspects of the world – the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the ‘mental’ world of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and so forth, and the social world ... Different discourses are different perspectives of the world, and they are associated with the different relations that people have to the world... Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing

possible worlds which are different to the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions.

Critical geopolitical scholars argue that the geopolitical reasoning on which the global order rests continues to construct, administer, and organise space through language (Müller 2008, 323). As such, geopolitics is an “attractive discourse” about world politics which purports to explain a great deal in simple terms of power, danger, and threats (O’Tuathail 2006). On the global political stage, this is manifested through a state-centric discourse that emphasises the struggle for power in terms of “national interest” and views a global “balance of power” as a stabilising factor. To study geopolitics critically, then, is to study a discourse that is culturally embedded and reflects the influence of a particular power structure. It is an intellectual move beyond the political realism that dominates world politics to examine the discursive language and practices by which a view of the world is constituted and influences decision-making processes (O’Tuathail 2006, 7).

One of the central ways in which geopolitical discourses are embedded in cultural awareness is through the construction of geopolitical imaginations. These are characterised by O’Tuathail (2006, 8) as “the boundaries and dichotomies that various groups within a state draw between and among others” – themselves/others, insiders/outside, us/them – as well as the global communities and identities to which they imagine themselves part of and in opposition to, and the accompanying national identity which shapes the state’s relationship to the international community. John Agnew (2006, 6) broadly characterises the modern geopolitical imagination as a “*system* of visualizing the world with deep historic roots in the European encounter with the world as a whole”, that has consequently evolved into a well-nurtured “common sense” about world politics. When mapping the tendencies over the course of Western political thought to divide the world into two opposing zones, Agnew (2006, 32) finds that the West-East divide has been the most persistent. Meanwhile, others argue that this modern geopolitical imagination is being challenged by globalisation, informationalisation, and

technoscientific progress, culminating in what O'Tuathail terms the “postmodern geopolitical condition” (cited in (Ek 2000)).

Popular Geopolitics & Mass Media

Critical geopolitics broadens the understanding of geopolitics beyond the preoccupations and activities of political elites by drawing attention to the many practices and ideas in everyday culture that shape geopolitical imaginations. O'Tuathail (2006, 9) distinguishes between three types of geopolitical discourses: *formal* (theories practiced by intellectuals of statecraft); *practical* (narratives by politicians and policy makers); and *popular* (narratives expressed in the popular culture[s] of a state). The study of the latter, while traditionally downplayed and overlooked in social sciences, has in recent decades evolved into a distinct sub-field of critical geopolitics. A popular geopolitical framework highlights the ways in which non-state actors, often influenced and informed by formal and practical narratives, represent and reinforce the global political map for mass audiences. Grayson, Davies, and Philpott (2009, 156) describe pop culture as an “important site where power, ideology, and identity are constituted, produced, and/or materialized” and thus indivisible from politics. Such sites of power include films, television, novels, video games and mass media outlets, where geopolitical understandings and imaginations are constructed, reinforced, and contested.

Media shapes geopolitical imaginations by contributing to how political possibilities are constructed and perceived among the general public. In a seminal work within popular geopolitics, Joanne Sharp (2000) examines the ways in which the popular magazine *Reader's Digest* shaped public opinion in the United States of America (USA) during the Cold War. She found that the geopolitical imagination represented in the magazine helped to construct the Soviet Union as the “communist enemy” character, linking the individual reader to the destiny of the USA (in (Debrix 2008)).

Furthermore, newspapers in particular have been known to promote a particular geopolitical discourse to serve political agendas (O'Tuathail 2006). In another popular geopolitical study, McFarlane and Hay (2003) demonstrated how coverage of World Trade Organisation (WTO) protests in Seattle by the national newspaper *the Australian* entrenched the dominant discourse of free trade and corporate globalization supported by the WTO. The authors conclude that media helps to constitute geopolitical orders, and its power can be expressed and wielded through superficially harmless new reports about places and people.

Discourse Analysis of Swedish Newspapers

This thesis employs a discourse analysis to newspaper coverage of the Swedish Government's announcement to re-introduce military conscription in order to examine the geopolitical representations embedded therein. Generally speaking, discourse analysis takes a critical stance towards 'taken for granted' knowledge, viewing knowledge as socially constructed (Gill 2000, 173). As a methodology, discourse analysis is a radical epistemological shift from positivist approaches. It involves asking difficult questions about a text while spurring the analyst to interrogate her own assumptions and habits of making sense of things (Gill 2000, 177-8) and is thus steeped in the interpretative tradition within qualitative methodology. Discourse analysis joins critical and popular geopolitics in rejecting realist understandings of language as a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world (Gill 2000, 172). According to this perspective, discourses are involved in producing "common sense" of societies, thus limiting potential resistance among the public to a given course of action (Milliken 1999, 237).

The corpus of data analysed in this study includes 27 news pieces published on the online platforms of the four main Swedish national newspapers (*Dagens Nyheter*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Aftonbladet*, and *Expressen*) on the 2nd and 3rd of March 2017. The 27 pieces include articles, editorials, and opinion

pieces that discuss the Swedish Government's decision to re-activate military conscription, published online on the day of and the day after the announcement. I have removed videos from the original sample and solely focused on text.

The newspaper sources are two broadsheet newspapers (*Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*) and two tabloid newspapers (*Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*). The term broadsheet in this case does not refer to publishing format or size, since both *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* have transitioned to a smaller 'tabloid' format, but rather to style. While broadsheet papers have historically been associated with serious, responsible, quality journalism, their tabloid counterparts are characterised as more "populist and entertainment oriented, but still mainly focused on news" (Örnebring 2008). These newspapers vary in their target audience and ideological outlook. The following table provides a brief, and by necessity generalised, summary of the four sources.

Summary of Newspaper Sources

	<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Details</u>
Broadsheet	Dagens Nyheter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaning: 'independent liberal' (DN 2008) • Readership: 1.3 million per day, including online and in paper (DN 2008) • Ownership: Bonnier Group (DN 2017c)
	Svenska Dagbladet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaning: 'independent moderate' (SvD 2017) • Readership: 900,000 per day across channels (SvD 2017) • Ownership: 99.4% Schibsted Media Group (SvD 2017)
Tabloid	Aftonbladet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaning: 'independent social democrat' (Aftonbladet 2000) • Readership: 3.3 million per day, of which majority online/mobile (Aftonbladet 2016) • Ownership: 91% Schibsted Media Group; 9% LO (Swedish union) (IT 2009)

	Expressen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaning: liberal (Expressen 2017) • Readership: 2.6 million per day, of which majority online/mobile (Mattsson 2017) • Ownership: Bonnier Group (Expressen 2017)
--	------------------	---

My analysis has been generated by reading the 27 articles closely several times, each time examining the representations embedded in the text – in others words, how events, situations, relationships, people, and so forth, are represented. According to the approach to media discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough (1995, 106), such an analysis “comes down to an account of what choices are made – what is included and what is excluded, what is made explicit or left implicit, what is foregrounded and what is backgrounded”.⁴ As a start, I created a table following these sub-questions which guided my analysis of each media text:

- a) How is conscription represented?
- b) How is the world represented, and Sweden’s place in it?
- c) What presuppositions/assumptions are embedded?
- d) What, if any, are the historical appeals made in the text?

Once each article was analysed accordingly, I then conducted an overarching analysis of the whole corpus of articles to examine the commonalities and differences regarding representations present across the sources. According to the popular geopolitical framework, the discourse(s) represented in these newspapers will have certain geopolitical imaginaries embedded therein – these are of interest to this thesis.

⁴ Those familiar with Fairclough’s (1995) approach to media discourse analysis may notice that I have neglected to address identities and relations in the texts. In addition to the limitations of this thesis, I find that a sole focus on representations fits well within this popular geopolitical inquiry.

The justification for this source selection is based on an assumption that together these newspapers capture the majority of Sweden's daily national newspaper readership. This focus on 'traditional' media presents one potential limitation to this study. The analysis does not take into account 'new' media outlets and platforms such as online news platforms, blogs, discussion platforms, and social media, which are of significant and increasing importance as news sources for online users. In addition to the limitations set on this thesis in terms of time and space which render such an inclusion impossible, I also rely on other scholars' suggestions that new media often establishes credibility by linking to traditional media reports, in the process enhances traditional media accounts (Hough 2015). Furthermore, this thesis does not analyse visual media such as images and videos. Each of the newspaper outlets selected in this study also provided news pieces in video format, which is increasingly popular for mobile phone users. The inclusion of a visual media analysis could add further insight into the discourse presented in these outlets.

III. Findings: A Geopolitical Re-imagining

In this chapter I present the dominant ways in which conscription is represented in media discourse and situate them within external and internal geopolitical imaginations. My findings suggest that the reactivation of conscription demonstrates at once a return to a familiar Cold War-like external gaze and an internal affirmation of progressive values. Together with an absent interrogation of alternative policies or narratives, this suggests that newspaper reports thereby reinforce a wider geopolitical justification for conscription.

External Geopolitics: Framing the Threat

The renewed policy of conscription is justified in the media examined by referencing an external security landscape. This section outlines the three dominant representations pertaining to the external geopolitical threat justifying conscription: a worsening security situation; a vulnerable Swedish nation; and an acute shortage of defence to meet this threat.

Conscription as a response to “the security situation”

One of the overarching justifications for the reactivation of conscription outlined in the media reports analysed is a reference, in varying forms, to ‘the security situation’. In the majority of media pieces across the four newspaper sources, no further explanation or specific details are provided as to what such a state entails. This is demonstrated in a statement in *Svenska Dagbladet* attributed to the Minister of Defence, Peter Hultqvist, in which he justifies the reactivation of conscription because “the security situation has changed” (IT 2017j). The ambiguity is repeated by defence expert Mikael Holmström (2017) in a piece in *Dagens Nyheter*, in which he refers to a “significantly worsened” international situation as the reason for the conscription policy. In another interview piece in *Dagens Nyheter*, an opposition politician justifies conscription with a “worsened security situation” that demands action (IT 2017f). The absence of a clearly defined security landscape in the media discourse

contributes to a vague and abstract geopolitical threat which could be interpreted in different ways by different readers.

In the few cases where security threats are explicitly outlined, the media texts include references to threats from multiple angles. One interview piece in which a male soldier says that there is a lot of talk about the “situation in the surrounding world”, and that “one thinks about [US President] Trump and his relationship to Russia” is indicative of this discourse (IT 2017a). Along these lines, an op-ed by the leadership of the largest opposition party *Moderaterna* contextualises the “new security reality” with reference to: developments inside and outside of Russia; strains placed on “EU cooperation” and “the transatlantic link”; brutal and drawn out conflicts in EU’s surrounding area; and the continuing threat posed by violent extremism and terrorism (Kinberg Batra and Wallmark 2017). Meanwhile, Russia is the focus of an editorial in *Aftonbladet* which refers to Russia as having “gone in with troop in Georgia and crushed all illusions about Vladimir Putin’s intentions” and “upgraded [*militarily*] and attacked Ukraine” (Lindberg 2017). This narrative fits into a wider geopolitical discourse which considers Russian foreign policy as a zero-sum game based on cold logic (Biersack and O’Lear 2014). While it is unclear what a military solution to this multidimensional security situation would entail or specifically add, the resulting geopolitical discourse is one in which Sweden requires a strong defence to address being surrounded by ambiguous security threats.

Conscription to aid a nation under threat

The absence of a strong Swedish defence to meet the security threats is another aspect of this discourse. In one interview piece, a young Swede is quoted as expressing unease about “what is happening in Russia and that we in Sweden stand without a front” (Nordström 2017). The Swedish Minister for Defence, Peter Hultqvist, is quoted in several articles as stating that “[i]f we shall have full and trained war units, the voluntary system must be complemented by conscription” (Nilsson 2017). The lack of a contradiction to follow the conditional clause implies that there is indeed a need

for such readiness that Swedish defence cannot currently meet, further contributing to a sense of threat and looming danger that only conscription can address.

A discursive representation of Swedish defence as incomplete is further demonstrated in an interview with Stefan Ring, military security expert at the Swedish Defence University, that was issued by a national news agency and published in both *Aftonbladet* and *Svenska Dagbladet*. Stefan Ring explains that, in the long term, Sweden needs to “double the number of soldiers and sailors to be able to defend the country”, and that this is “realistic and necessary” (IT 2017c). Explicit grounds for this necessity are absent. In the article, Ring points to six geographical locations in Sweden that are important and would therefore need to be defended by a brigade (IT 2017c). The combination of discursively locating the nation, fixing it in both space and time, while avoiding an explanation of concrete threats adds to a vague yet all-encompassing threat. The geopolitical discourse invoked significantly contrasts to literature on the changing nature of war, where threats to the nation-state, as a political space with clear cut borders, is seen as a thing of the past (Joenniemi 2006, 3).

In addition to the spatial representation, there is a temporal representation underlying the acute nature of Sweden’s defence limitations. Two articles in *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* point to the Government as having the prerogative to re-activate conscription if military readiness demands it (IT 2017j) (IT 2017h). The underlying implication is that this clause is indeed currently satisfied, allowing the Government to circumvent an ordinary democratic procedure of receiving approval from parliament (despite simultaneous references to widespread and cross-party parliamentary support for the initiative). This representation in the media adds a sense of urgency to the Government’s decision to reactivate conscription, further reinforcing the significance of the external geopolitical threat.

Conscription as a solution to defence shortage

Sweden’s incomplete defence is characterised foremost as a result of a shortage of recruits. Specifically, this shortage is presented as stemming from a failure on behalf of the Armed Forces to

recruit enough voluntary soldiers to join the ranks since the dismantling of the previous policy of conscription in 2010. In many of the media articles, this failure is characterised in numbers. Readers are told that of the 4,000 soldiers that need to be trained each year, the Armed Forces have only been able to voluntarily recruit approximately half of this number (DN 2017b). Importantly to this discourse, the shortage has had serious implications for defence reserves.

In addition, there are multiple references to statements by the Government that the number of conscripted soldiers may need to increase, “depending on the security situation” (IT 2017h). This sentiment is reaffirmed in interviews with politicians from other parties. In *Expressen*, Stig Henriksson of *Vänsterpartiet* refers to 4,000 as “just the beginning” (IT 2017f), while in *Dagens Nyheter* Mikael Oscarsson of *Kristdemokraterna* expresses the hope that this number will increase “as soon as possible” (Malmgren 2017b). In the interview that was published in both *Aftonbladet* and *Svenska Dagbladet*, the military expert Stefan Ring is cited as stating that there is an “actual need” that surpasses the Armed Forces’ current capacity (IT 2017c) (IT 2017b). In another interview piece in *Dagens Nyheter*, Ring states that 4,000 conscripts are “too few to be able to defend areas of strategic importance in Sweden” (DN 2017a). In the context of a vulnerable Swedish nation surrounded by geopolitical insecurities, such statements serve to represent conscription as the only feasible solution to a shortage of soldiers. Combined with references to numbers, these discursive practices displace attention to other potential reasons why voluntary recruitment has been low.

There is generally a notable absence of discussion on alternative problems and solutions, with a few notable exceptions. In an opinion piece in *Aftonbladet*, a defence employee represents conscription as the wrong solution to the problem of recruitment, and presents “forced and uninterested conscripts” as potentially posing a threat to the quality of military personnel (Ulfvarson 2017). The problem of recruitment is instead characterised as a result of recruits leaving the Armed Forces early

because “conditions for professional soldiers are very poor” (Ulfvarson 2017). Accordingly, the solution presented is not to reinstate conscription but to strengthen conditions and salaries for defence employees. An opinion piece in *Expressen* by Simon Palme (2017), leader of *Centerstudenter* (student branch of *Centerpartiet*), as well as another piece in *Expressen* outlining positions ‘for’ and ‘against’ conscription (Malmgren 2017b), an alternative solution to the recruitment issue presented is similarly to increase the salaries of soldiers. Where alternatives are presented, they are done so in pieces that are explicitly shown to be based on opinions, and thus contrasted to ‘standard’ media reporting. Furthermore, while a few pieces present opinions that differ from the overall discourse, all are in agreement on the premise that there is indeed a need for a stronger Swedish defence, conforming to a geopolitical imagination that justifies conscription.

Internal Geopolitics: Constructing and Uniting the Swedish Nation

According to a critical geopolitical framework, geopolitical imaginations involve drawing up boundaries and discursively constructing a collective national identity which shapes a state’s relationship to the international community (O’Tuathail 2006). In this section, I outline the dominant internal geopolitical representations of conscription found in the media discourse: that of Sweden as a nation with borders; conscription as a uniting force; and a conscription as endorsed by young people whom it would impact the most. These representations of conscription serve to reinforce the continuing value of conscription in the context of an evolving Swedish national identity.

Sweden as a nation with borders

The discourse uncovered in the media represents conscription as necessary in order to defend Sweden, characterised as a nation with strategic territories and geographic borders. In an editorial piece in *Aftonbladet*, the post-Cold War order, in which an attack on “Swedish territory” was “unthinkable”, is relegated to the past (Lindberg 2017). Instead, Sweden is discursively represented as needing to be ready for war. The invocation of geography is explicit in the interview published in *Aftonbladet* and

Svenska Dagbladet, in which military expert Stefan Ring is quoted as saying “[w]hen we switch to a defence of Sweden there are completely different demands placed on the amount. Sweden is still a large country with several areas that have strategic importance” (IT 2017c) (IT 2017b). Explicit in this statement is a change in defence strategy to an inward focused defence, as opposed to the current professional defence structure, which is characterised by the expert as more appropriate for international operations (IT 2017c) (IT 2017b). Meanwhile, an editorial in *Svenska Dagbladet* cites Sweden as having “experienced repeated violations of airspace”, adding a vertical and volumetric dimension to Sweden’s national territory under threat (Seemann 2017). The resulting discourse treats physical territories as an ontological given, invoking the spatial categories of the Cold War (Dalby 2009). This representation of conscription thus contrasts starkly to literature framing Swedish defence as increasingly outward looking, and instead harbours connotations to its Cold War self-centred national self (Leander 2004).

Furthermore, scholar Benedict Anderson (2006, 6) reminds us that a nation is an imagined political community – imagined “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”. Accordingly, embedded in this discourse are both implicit and explicit understandings of Sweden as a nation. An editorial in *Aftonbladet* explicitly describes Sweden as “one of the world’s freest and richest countries” and further states that “our open society, our way of life, ‘the *lagom* country’ is worth defending” (Lindberg 2017).⁵ Conscription is thus represented as a means through which the Swedish nation has an identity and defends that identity against external threats.

An interesting aspect of the discourse surrounding Sweden’s national identity is highlighted in an article in *Dagens Nyheter* which summarises global news coverage of the Swedish Government’s

⁵ *Lagom* roughly translates to English as “not too much or too little” or “just right”.

conscription announcement (Svensson 2017). What is interesting to this thesis is not necessarily the aspects that are covered by international media, but rather the points that Swedish media found worth repeating to a Swedish audience. The conscription policy decision is described as having made a “great impression” on the surrounding world, explicitly marking out a unique position for Sweden. The idea that Sweden is “neutral”, while previously questionable in Swedish political discourse, is highlighted in this article, suggesting a potential return to a Cold War rhetoric and self-understanding. Furthermore, the article highlights the depiction in US media of Sweden’s military participating in the Pride parade. These images of Sweden contribute to the construction of a Swedish national identity, the defence of which justifies the reactivation of conscription.

Conscription as uniting Sweden

Another aspect of the internal geopolitical discourse is a focus on the uniting capacity of conscription. This is expressed most explicitly in an opinion piece published in *Expressen*, in which the author Duraid Al-Khamisi (2017) reflects on conscription’s potential as “an institution that unites people. A sector that pulls privileged out of their comfort zones”. An editorial headline in *Aftonbladet* similarly proclaims that “[t]he defence is all Swedes’ responsibility” (Lindberg 2017). Another article in *Aftonbladet* issues a call for readers to send in their “best military enrolment story”, implicitly assuming that enrolment for conscription is a life event that has directly or indirectly impacted a large portion of its readership (Adolfsson 2017b). Implicit in these representations is the existence of a nation as a united collective, harkening back to a myth of conscription identified by Leander (2004) - the notion that conscription contributes to social cohesion and mobility by bringing different social groups into contact with one another. Where this representation is countered, it occurs in opinion pieces, such as an op-ed in *Expressen* by student politician Simon Palme (2017), who references a study demonstrating that conscription instead increases existing socio-economic inequalities.

The representations of conscription as a uniting force call into question Leander's (2004) assertion that this myth is challenged by a decreased relevance of national boundaries in the context of an increased emphasis on diversity, identity politics, and multiculturalism. On the contrary, the representation of conscription as a uniting force is reinforced by the new conditions of conscription as bringing together *all* Swedes - men and women - to defend Sweden. In an interview published in *Expressen*, a former defence employee states that conscription is good from an equality perspective, to "increase diversity within the Armed Forces, especially with women" (Malmgren 2017a). Another article published in both *Aftonbladet* and *Svenska Dagbladet* cites flotilla leader Carl-Johan Edström as hoping that gender-neutral conscription "will mean more women in the ranks" (IT 2017a) (IT 2017g). The same articles cite a young woman stating that "women should apply just like men, it increases equality in society" (IT 2017a) (IT 2017g). The discursive link between conscription and the wider political project of gender equality in Swedish society further contributes to a uniting effect.

The question of why there should be diversity or gender equality within the Armed Forces, or how such developments would further equality in the rest of society is left unproblematised. Furthermore, there are visible discursive remains of the historical association of conscription with men and masculinity previously identified by Kronsell and Svedberg (2001), among others. In the interview published in *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Aftonbladet*, a male soldier emphasises the bonds of friendship and "brotherhood" that develop among recruits (IT 2017a) (IT 2017g). The gendered terminology employed points to the traditional role of conscription in Swedish male identity formation. In addition, gender juxtapositions can be found less explicitly in an article in *Aftonbladet* describing how a male interviewee "sees a future" in the Armed Forces, whereas a female interviewee "dreams about" one (Nordström 2017).

The representation of conscription as uniting Swedes is further underscored by depictions of the policy enjoying widespread political support among politicians across political divides. There are multiple references to the approval of the largest opposition party *Moderaterna*, under whose leadership the previous policy was dismantled in 2010. In an interview cited in *Aftonbladet*, the party's defence spokesperson Hans Wallmark expressed the hope that reactivating conscription "contributes to a further strengthened defence capability", echoing the discourse employed by government officials (Nilsson 2017). Kronsell and Svedberg (2006, 139) argue that historically, Swedish political parties have demonstrated a long-standing consensus on the issue of conscription, and that its fate was rarely up for debate. In this respect, the conscription policy appears to embody a return to a previous security discourse.

Conscription as endorsed by 'the youth'

It is undeniable that conscription has a disproportionate impact on young Swedes, as it is they who will be directly called upon to complete military service. The media discourse establishes a relatively monolithic presentation of young Swedes' relation to conscription. Young people are repeatedly referred to as passive participants in the conscription process, i.e. young people "will be summoned to enrol" (IT 2017h), and are "the first batch to be called" (IT 2017i). As such, they are not characterised as what Fairclough (Fairclough 1995, 112) would term Actors, or people who are doing something, but rather as Patients, people who are affected by the actions of others.

Where the voices of young Swedes are portrayed, they serve to legitimise the government's policy of conscription. A headline in *Aftonbladet* asks "Conscription reactivated – but do young want to do military service?" (Nordström 2017). While the article presents a relatively complex view of Swedish youth, with opinions expressed both in favour and against conscription, the former are represented to a greater extent. In addition to the references to the external security situation discussed above, a young man and a young woman are quoted as approving of conscription on the grounds that it would

“fill the gap and cause discipline”, and “structure and discipline Swedish youth”, respectively (Nordström 2017). Implicit in these characterisations is an association between ‘Swedish youth’ as a group as requiring structure and conscription as able to fill this need.

For the most part, the opinions of young people regarding conscription are characterised as positive. An article in *Svenska Dagbladet* quotes a high school student as stating “it sounds cool” and another as claiming that “[i]t is an exciting and sound initiative” (IT 2017i). Where opposition against the “forced” aspect of conscription is expressed by a student, it is immediately followed by an expression of appreciation for the equality embodied in the policy, “[i]t sounds good that it should be an equal defence... [g]irls can be as good soldiers as boys” (IT 2017i). This overall representation of young Swedes as a monolithic group that is positively inclined to conscription translates into the headlines “Youth positive about conscription: ‘Exciting initiative’” (IT 2017i) and “High school students: A sound initiative” (IT 2017e) in *Svenska Dagbladet*. These representations of conscription as endorsed by the group in society who would be most directly affected serves to legitimise the overall discourses employed to justify conscription, while reinforcing the representation of conscription as an issue which unites all Swedes around a common collective identity and geopolitical imaginary.

Conscription as a Site of Geopolitical Debate

Between the representations of conscription uncovered in this analysis rise points of tension in which conscription becomes the site of a geopolitical debate about how the Swedish nation envisions itself in evolving external and internal geopolitical contexts. In this section I outline two of these debates, that of an old versus a new conscription, and that of a forced versus voluntary conscription. Thereafter, I discuss the absences that these debates and other discursive practices in the media texts mask, and the impact that this has on the geopolitical imaginary employed to justify conscription.

Old Conscription vs. New Conscription

The analysis of the media discourse finds that conscription is immersed in a debate regarding the evolution of Swedish national values. This is made evident in contrasts between the ‘new’ and ‘old’ conscriptions discursively employed both explicitly and implicitly across the newspaper sources. The reactivation of conscription is presented as ushering in a conscription system which is explicitly characterised as ‘new’, above all, because of its gender-neutrality. This aspect is advanced in seemingly matter-of-fact statements, such as “[t]he new conscription covers both women and men” (Nilsson 2017) and “the new conscription also covers women” (IT 2017h). Not only do such representations serve to differentiate the reactivated conscription from the ‘old’ conscription, which applied only to young men, but they also figure into a wider normative debate about gender equality in society. As discussed above, progress towards gender equality in the military is characterised as simultaneously mirroring and contributing to efforts towards gender equality in society.

Accordingly, this ‘new’ conscription is represented as compatible with the contemporary values of Swedish youth, which are in turn differentiated from the values of older generations of Swedes. In an article in *Dagens Nyheter* dedicated to the topic, titled “Researchers on conscription: ‘Youth are more interested in freedom of choice than duty’”, a professor from Örebro University, Thomas Denk, argues that young Swedes have “different value patterns than earlier generations that had more of a collectivist thinking” (Letmark 2017). He further states that “[o]nly a few generations ago there was a whole other feeling of national belonging ... we have gone from a geographic, to a more cosmopolitan identity, where the geographic belonging does not have the same dominant roll” (Letmark 2017). In order for young people to be interested in military service, they must therefore be offered “something they can have use of later on” (Letmark 2017). Another researcher, Pontus Strimling, similarly argues in the article that military service could be attractive if shaped in a way that fits “today’s individualistic youth” (Letmark 2017). This can be linked to the notion of the ‘postmodern’ military identified by

Kronsell and Svedberg (2006, 138) as one that is qualitatively different than earlier, and driven by cosmopolitan values.

These media comments and scholarly literature help to contextualise the design and framing of the ‘new’ conscription system. As a result of this adaptation to young people’s ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘individualistic’ values, the ‘new’ conscription is presented in terms of education and training as opposed to duty. This is mirrored in media reporting, such as the statement in *Expressen* that “[a]t least 4000 people will be *educated* starting 2018” (Jakobson 2017)[emphasis added]. In an interview high school students published in *Aftonbladet*, the question posed to readers is “do the young want to do the military *education*?” (Nordström 2017)[emphasis added]. In another piece published by *Dagens Nyheter*, a politician states “I have a feeling that we will be *educating* more and more soldiers” (IT 2017f)[emphasis added]. This representation of conscription relates to a myth of conscription identified by Leander (2004), that of conscription forming loyal and virtuous citizens and providing a ‘school of the nation’. This myth appears alive and kicking in the characterisation of military service in *Dagens Nyheter* as providing a “stimulating challenge for some who come from a school where one has emphasised values such as individualism and liberation. Now perhaps one thinks this is an opportunity to learn how to collaborate and solve tasks in a group” (Letmark 2017).

At the same time, the collectivism and sense of duty embodied in the ‘old’ system is discursively invoked to justify its reactivation. According to Thomas Denk in *Dagens Nyheter*, conscripts in the ‘old’ system “developed as citizens, because they became more ready to take a larger responsibility than before” (Letmark 2017). This idea indicated in an interview with *Expressen*, in which a politician from the *Vänsterpartiet*, Stig Henriksson, justifies the new policy on the grounds that “[w]e have rights but also duties” and describes Swedish defence as a “national interest ... one needs to share it” (Malmgren 2017b). Conscription here appears simultaneously symbolic of a wider search for Swedish values and

a site where the values of the earlier and current generations of young Swedes meet and unite into one collective identity.

Voluntary Conscription vs. Forced Conscription

Nevertheless, this marriage of values is not entirely unproblematic. An additional and closely related point of tension that emerges in the representations of conscription is the idea of conscription as voluntary, versus the idea of conscription as forced. By most definitions, conscription is not voluntary. On a basic level, conscription conflicts with the freedom to decide how to live one's life (Leander 2006). However, as Cynthia Enloe (2000, 245) reminds us, for conscription to become politically palatable, the meaning assigned to it must be "the opposite of slavery. A soldier in the state's military must not be perceived as an emasculated, downtrodden serf, but as a free, manly citizen of a nation performing a manly citizen's duty". Nevertheless, this aspect of duty, while emphasised in the 'old' conscription impacting earlier generations, does not fit comfortably within the 'new', gender-neutral conscription designed to appeal to a young generation of 'cosmopolitan' Swedes.

At face value, this tension appears reconciled by authorities through the repeated representation of conscription as 'voluntary'. In *Svenska Dagbladet*, the Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist states that "[i]nterest, motivation, and will are a foundation of the recruitment" (IT 2017j). Meanwhile, the official investigator of the 'new' conscription system, Annika Nordgren Christensen, tells *Dagens Nyheter* that there is a "low risk" of having to complete conscription against one's will (IT 2017h). An article in *Svenska Dagbladet* (IT 2017d) and *Dagens Nyheter* (Sjöholm 2017) quotes Klas Eksell, personnel director at the Armed Forces, as stating that "willingness, in other words the motivation factor, will be very important". Defence expert Mikael Holmström (2017) similarly writes in *Dagens Nyheter* that this conscription is different as "[i]t is in the first instance those who *want to* and those the defence needs who will be called in" [emphasis added]. The contradiction embedded in this

representation is particularly evident in the context of a simultaneous representation of conscription as justified due to a shortage of voluntary recruits.

Other discursive strategies employed to address this tension and downplay the ‘force’ involve in conscription include the representation of conscription in terms of ‘work’, in addition to ‘education’ previously discussed. In an article in *Expressen*, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Micael Bydén, is quoted as saying of conscription “[i]t helps us. We are in great need of *motivated* young boys and girls who will come and *work* as soldiers and sailors” (Jakobson 2017)[emphasis added]. Furthermore, the equal treatment of voluntary soldiers and conscripts is emphasised by representatives of the Armed Forces. In an interview in *Aftonbladet* (IT 2017a) and *Svenska Dagbladet* (IT 2017g), flotilla leader Carl-Johan Edström says that voluntary and conscript soldiers will share “the same education, the same conditions and the same requirements for continued employment” Another article in *Svenska Dagbladet* (IT 2017d) and *Dagens Nyheter* (Sjöholm 2017) states that “conscripts and volunteers will be educated side by side and have the same tasks and benefits” Nordgren Christensen, the investigator of the ‘new’ conscription system, tells *Dagens Nyheter* that “[e]xtremely much is very changed ... The whole [point] is that conscripts should want to remain. Then one treats them... as [in]coming co-workers” (IT 2017h).

A few opinion pieces that explicitly argue against conscription focus on the force it entails. An op-ed in *Expressen* by Simon Palme (2017), student political representative, likens conscription to “forced labour” and argues that it is “immoral” and “unnecessary”. Other media reports address this tension in more neutral language. An article in *Aftonbladet* plainly states that “[t]he Government says that willingness will weigh heavily – but women and men can through the [law] be taken for conscription against their will” (Nilsson 2017). In another article, a high school student tells *Aftonbladet* that “[i]f I would be forced [I] would do it, but not voluntarily.” The compromise appears to land, as

outlined in an editorial in *Svenska Dagbladet*, with the Armed Forces “striv[ing] for the level of willingness to be maximised” within a framework of enforced conscription (Seemann 2017).

Here, an analysis of the media discourse brings to mind Leander’s (2004) challenge to the idea of conscription as a ‘rights’ exchange as incompatible with contemporary ideas of citizenship. Through emphasising the motivation of the conscript and the voluntary nature of the conscription system, representations of the ‘new’ conscription shift the focus from ‘duty’ to individual rights and opportunities (in this case education and work). This embodies a reconfiguration of how national values are framed to suit evolving geopolitical dynamics. While the return to an internal, nation-focused defence in media discourse appears to question the development of a post-modern military identified by Kronsell and Svedberg (2006, 138) as qualitatively different and driven by cosmopolitan values, this analysis shows that a ‘new’ discourse of conscription is underway that appears to reconcile these contradictions.

The Absent Alternatives

Conscription emerges through this analysis as a site where the internal and external geopolitical debates meet. However, an analysis of the geopolitical discourse must also address the absences, in other words the alternatives that are not seen in the texts, and the consequences of these absent alternatives (Ferrada Stoeckel 2013). In terms of the internal geopolitical representations, this analysis has identified an overall absence of a comprehensive debate on alternatives to conscription to address the identified problem - a shortage of soldiers and recruits. While there are a number of alternative proposals included in the corpus of articles reviewed, such as improving the salaries and conditions of soldiers (Ulfvarson 2017) (Malmgren 2017b), these are included in pieces explicitly categorised as “opinions” and therefore stand outside of the mainstream ‘objective’ media discourse. The endorsement of conscription as the sole viable solution by defence experts, politicians, and other “privileged storytellers” (Pickering 2017, 96) make it appear as though the discussion is settled. These

discursive strategies dislodge attention from a broader discussion on whether conscription is necessary and whether other alternatives are appropriate and feasible, not to mention a critical examination of the geopolitical assumptions underpinning the deference to a military solution.

Moreover, despite an appeal to the possibility of conflict as justification for the reactivation of conscription, there is a notable absence of a discussion about the material conditions of war. The exception to this is a piece in *Expressen* by author Duraïd Al-Khamisi (2017), in which he describes an encounter with a man who told him “all soldier-bodies start to smell when they are maimed by a rocket and left to rot in the sun”. This graphic portrayal is a shocking reminder of the stakes involved in war. The piece is an exception to the remainder of the media discourse that does not tackle its horrors and instead leave the potential for conflict as an abstract notion.

At face value, a discursive absence of war within a presentation of an external geopolitical landscape where war is potentially on the horizon could present a contradiction. An editorial in *Aftonbladet* in which the argument against ‘forced’ conscription is associated with arguments against paying taxes and attending school discursively situates conscription within what could, in the current Swedish context, be considered ordinary responsibilities of community membership (Lindberg 2017). This appears emblematic of Leander’s (2004, 579) point that in contemporary understandings of citizenship, “[w]ar is lived and thought of as distant and unlikely. We have experienced a demilitarization in our understanding of politics; death and violence have been banished from public life”.

As critical geopolitical scholar Simon Dalby (2009) reminds us, how violence plays out is a “matter of popular imagination and the discourse of danger invoked in popular culture and political discourse”. Indeed, the absence of a critical examination of the material implications of military conscription and potential alternative policies uncovered in this analysis highlights how geopolitical discourses can be

reinforced by media representations. Conscription is justified in “simple” geopolitical terms of oppositional zones and spatial abstractions, linking back to a Cold-War era geopolitical reasoning (O'Tuathail 2006). The realist modern geopolitical imagination identified by Agnew (2006), which has its roots in the European nation-state tradition, is unquestioned in media coverage of the conscription policy despite a simultaneous appeal to an ‘individualistic’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ value system.

This finding appears to confirm the continuing relevance of Leander’s (2006) assertion that Swedish conscription has been easy to justify because of a vagueness of the reasons employed and a lack of critical scrutiny. In addition, Joenniemi’s (2006) suggestion that conscription could be maintained as part of the ‘modern’ project by turning to a more individualist and market-oriented approach is relevant. This analysis suggests that there may be a reconfiguration underway of the Swedish geopolitical imagination in representations of conscription, where progressive ideas of equality and diversity in the military as well as educational and career advancements for conscripted soldiers, are coupled with a return to a conventional twentieth century geopolitical understanding.

Concluding Remarks

The re-activation of a policy of military conscription in Sweden challenges scholarly predictions of a general abandonment of conscription in Western Europe in favour of professional volunteer armies. This thesis set out to investigate the geopolitical imagination embedded in media representations of this policy reversal. A popular geopolitical analysis of national newspaper coverage of the Swedish Government's decision to reactivate conscription finds that media reports reinforce a wider geopolitical discourse that prescribes conscription as a national necessity.

The media analysed paints a hostile picture of an external geopolitical context that can only be addressed through a stronger national defence. The sources of hostility presented are not 'new', diffuse transnational threats that require a small number of professional soldiers for operations abroad, as predicted. Rather, Sweden is discursively positioned as geographically surrounded by potential territorial threats that demand a return to a military bolstered by conscripted soldiers. At the same time, a 'new' conscription is discursively designed to make military service conform to the values of a new generation of young Swedes. Appeals to duty and the traditional 'conscription bargain' are largely replaced with references to educational and work opportunities, and the inclusion of the military as part of progressive efforts towards gender equality in society.

It is too early to draw any conclusions concerning potential effects of this media discourse. The scope of this research has been limited to only review media coverage in the immediate aftermath of the policy announcement. Further research could examine media discourses over a longer period of time and broaden sources to include other media and popular geopolitical sources. For now, however, this thesis points to the media's ability to project geopolitical imaginations that support relatively sudden reversals in security policy that may have unforeseen consequences for a new generation of Swedes as they enter adulthood.

Works Cited

- Adolfsson, Viktor. 2017a. "9 frågor och svar om nya värnplikten." *Aftonbladet*, 2 March. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/Vn4qp/9-fragor-och-svar-om-nya-varnplikten>.
- . 2017b. "Skicka in din bästa mönstringshistoria." *Aftonbladet*, 2 March. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/1aqqW/skicka-in-din-basta-monstringshistoria>.
- Aftonbladet. 2016. "Aftonbladet i Siffror September 2016." *Aftonbladet*, September. Accessed May 2017. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/siffror/>.
- . 2000. "Från Lars Johan Hierta till våra dagar." *Aftonbladet*. Accessed May 2017. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/amc/stefan/hist.html>.
- Agnew, John. 2006. *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics*. 2nd. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ajangiz, Rafael. 2002. "The European Farewell to Conscription?" In *The Comparative Study of Conscription in the Armed Forces*, edited by Lars Mjøset and Stephen Van Holde, 307-336. Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- Al-Khamisi, Duraid. 2017. "Den som sett krig tar värnplikt på allvar." *Expressen*, 3 March. <http://www.expressen.se/kultur/den-som-sett-krig-tar-varnplikt-pa-allvar/>.
- Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities*. 2nd. London: Verso.
- Åselius, Gunnar. 2005. "Swedish Strategic Culture after 1945." *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 40 (1): 25-44.
- Bengtsson, Karin. 2016. "Hon vill återinföra värnplikten." *Sveriges Radio*, 24 November. Accessed May 2017. <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=101&artikel=6571873>.
- Biersack, John, and Shannon O'Lear. 2014. "The geopolitics of Russia's annexation of Crimea: narratives, identity, silences, and energy." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 55 (3): 247-269.
- Bond, Brian. 1984. *War and Society in Europe 1870-1970*. London: Fontana.
- Cohen, Eliot A. 1985. *Citizens and Soldiers: The Dilemmas of Military Service*. London: Cornell University Press.
- Cowen, Deborah E. 2006. "'Fighting for Freedom': The End of Conscription in the United States and the Neoliberal Project of Citizenship." *Citizenship Studies* 10 (2): 167-183.
- Dalby, Simon. 2009. "The Geopolitics of the International System and Globalization." *Multidisciplinarity in International Studies*. International Studies Association Annual Conference.
- Debrix, François. 2008. *Tabloid Terror: War, culture, and geopolitics*. Oxon: Routledge.
- DN. 2017a. "4 000 ungdomar ska göra värnplikt nästa år." *Dagens Nyheter*, 3 March. Accessed March 2017. <http://www.dn.se/arkiv/nyheter/4-000-ungdomar-ska-gora-varnplikt-nasta-ar/>.
- . 2017b. "Ledare: Plikten kallar på pengar." *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 March. <http://www.dn.se/arkiv/ledare/plikten-kallar-pa-pengar/>.

- . 2008. "Om Dagens Nyheter." *Dagens Nyheter*, 28 02. Accessed May 2017. <https://www.dn.se/nyheter/om-dagens-nyheter/>.
- . 2017c. *Om Dagens Nyheter*. Accessed May 2017. <http://info.dn.se/info/om-oss/korta-fakta/>.
- Ek, Richard. 2000. "A revolution in military geopolitics?" *Political Geography* 19: 841-874.
- Elshtain, Jean Beathke. 1995. *Women and War*. New York: Basic Books.
- Enloe, Cynthia. 2000. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Expressen. 2017. "Om Expressen." *Expressen*. Accessed May 2017. <http://www.expressen.se/om-expressen/om-expressen/>.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2003. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. Oxon: Routledge.
- . 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- . 1995. *Media Discourse*. London: Hodder Headline Group.
- Ferrada Stoeckel, Rodrigo. 2013. "Politics, pleasure, violence: Swedish defence propaganda in social media ." *MedieKultur* (55): 21-42.
- Finer, Samuel E. 1975. "State and Nation-Building in Europe: The Role of the Military." In *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, edited by Charles Tilly, 81-163. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 2015. "10 January 1973." In *The Punitive Society: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1972-1973*, 21-42. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, Michel. 2003. "21 January 1976." In *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, 43-64. London: Allen Lane.
- Foucault, Michel. 2000. *Governmentality*. Vol. 3, in *Michel Foucault: Power, Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, edited by J.D. Faubion, 87-104. New York: The New Press.
- Försvarsmakten. 2017. *Värnplikten genom åren*. Accessed May 2017. <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/information-och-fakta/var-historia/artiklar/varnplikt-under-109-ar/>.
- Geva, Dorit. 2013. *Conscription, Family, and the Modern State*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1985. *The Nation-State and Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gill, Rosalind. 2000. "Discourse Analysis." In *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image, and Sound: A Practical Guide*, edited by M Bauer and G Gaskell, 172-190. London: Sage.
- Government Offices of Sweden. 2017. *Sweden re-activates conscription*. 2 March. Accessed March 2017. <http://www.government.se/articles/2017/03/re-activation-of-enrolment-and-the-conscription/>.
- Gray, Colin S. 2012. "Geopolitics and Deterrence." *Comparative Strategy* 31 (4): 295-321.

- Grayson, Kyle, Matt Davies, and Simon Philpott. 2009. "Pop Goes IR? Researching the Popular Culture-World Politics Continuum." *Politics* (Political Studies Association) 29 (3): 155-163.
- Gummesson, Jonas. 2017. "Har Hultqvist fel kan 1.500 om året tvångsrekryteras." *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 March. <https://www.svd.se/1500-kan-tvingas-in-i-det-militara-mot-sin-vilja-varje-ar>.
- . 2016. "Utredning: Värnplikt återinförs i Sverige 2019." *Svenska Dagbladet*, 31 August. Accessed May 2017. <https://www.svd.se/utredning-varnplikten-tillbaka-2019--for-bade-kvinnor-och-man>.
- Hawley, Marisa. 2015. "Gender and Military Effectiveness: Five Minutes with Dr. Robert Egnell." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 30 March.
- Hoffman, Marcelo. 2013. "Beyond the Bellicose Model of Power?" In *Foucault and Power: The Influence of Political Engagement on Theories of Power*, 47-91. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Holmström, Mikael. 2017. "Mikael Holmström: Det försämrade omvärldsläget anledningen till värnpliktsbeslutet." *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 March. <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/mikael-holmstrom-det-forsamrade-omvarldslaget-anledningen-till-varnpliktsbeslutet/>.
- Hough, Brian J. 2015. "A Comparative Discourse Analysis of Media Texts Pertaining to Fracking in North Dakota's Bakken Region." *Dissertation, Doctor of Philosophy, Scripps College of Communication of Ohio University*. Accessed May 2017.
- Jakobson, Hanna. 2017. "Överbefälhavaren: "Det hjälper oss"." *Expressen*, 2 March. <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/overbefalhavaren-det-hjalper-oss/>.
- Joenniemi, Pertti. 2006. "Introduction: Unpacking Conscription." In *The Changing Face of European Conscription*, edited by Pertti Joenniemi, 1-12. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Jonsson, Gunnar. 2009. "Allmän värnplikt avskaffas." *Dagens Nyheter*, 19 March. Accessed May 2017. <https://www.dn.se/nyheter/politik/allman-varnplikt-avskaffas/>.
- Kestnbaum, Meyer. 2002. "Citizen-soldiers, National Service and the Mass-Army: The Birth of Conscription in Revolutionary Europe and North America." In *The Comparative Study of Conscription in the Armed Forces*, edited by Lars Mjøset and Stephen Van Holde, 117-144. Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- Kinberg Batra, Anna, and Hans Wallmark. 2017. "M: Verkligheten måste styra Sveriges försvar." *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 March. <https://www.svd.se/m-verkligheten-maste-styra-sveriges-forsvar>.
- Kretinin, Gennady V., Alexander P. Katrovskiy, Tatyana I. Pototskaya, and Gennady M. Fedorov. 2016. "Geopolitical and geo-economic changes in the Baltic Sea region at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries." *Baltic Region* 8 (4): 13-25.
- Kronsell, Annica, and Erika Svedberg. 2001. "The Duty to Protect: Gender in the Swedish Practice of Conscription." *Cooperation and Conflict* 36 (2): 153-176.
- Kronsell, Annica, and Erika Svedberg. 2006. "The Swedish Military Manpower Policies and their Gender Implications." In *The Changing Face of European Conscription*, edited by Pertti Joenniemi, 137-160. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Leander, Anna. 2004. "Drafting Community: Understanding the Fate of Conscription." *Armed Forces & Society* 30: 571-599.

- Leander, Anna. 2006. "Enduring Conscription: Vagueness and Värnplikt in Sweden." In *The Changing Face of European Conscription*, edited by Pertti Joenniemi, 119-136. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Letmark, Peter. 2017. "Forskare om värnplikten: "Unga är mer intresserade av valfrihet än av plikt"." *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 March. <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/forskare-om-varnplikten-unga-ar-mer-intresserade-av-valfrihet-an-av-plikt/>.
- Levi, Margaret. 2002. "Consent, Dissent, and Patriotism: A Summary." In *The Comparative Study of Conscription in the Armed Forces*, edited by Lars Mjøset and Stephen Van Holde, 337-346. Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- Lindberg, Anders. 2017. "Försvaret är alla svensks ansvar." *Aftonbladet*, 3 March. Accessed May 2017. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/ledare/a/Vn4b6/forsvaret-ar-alla-svensks-ansvar>.
- Malmgren, Kim. 2017a. "Anthonia, 24: "Det behövs mer folk"." *Expressen*, 2 March. <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/anthonia-24-det-behovs-mer-folk/>.
- . 2017b. "För och mot: Värnplikt i Sverige – en bra idé?" *Expressen*, 3 March. <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/for-och-mot-varnplikt-i-sverige--en-bra-ide/>.
- Mattsson, Thomas. 2017. *2,6 miljoner läsare och tittare per dag – nytt rekord för Expressen*. Bloggen om Expressen. 28 April. Accessed May 2017. <http://bloggar.expressen.se/thomasmattsson/2017/04/26-miljoner-lasare-och-tittare-per-dag-nytt-rekord-for-expressen/>.
- McFarlane, Thomas, and Iain Hay. 2003. "The battle for Seattle: protest and popular geopolitics in the Australian newspaper." *Political Geography* 22: 211-232.
- Milliken, Jennifer. 1999. "Discourse in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations* 5: 225-254.
- Mjøset, Lars, and Stephen Van Holde. 2002. "Killing for the State, Dying for the Nation: An introductory essay on the life cycle of conscription into Europe's Armed Forces." In *The Comparative Study of Conscription in the Armed Forces*, edited by Lars Mjøset and Stephen Van Holde, 3-94. Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- Moran, Daniel. 2003. "Introduction: The Legend of the Levée en masse." In *The People in Arms: Military Myth and National Mobilization since the French Revolution*, edited by Daniel Moran and Arthur Waldron, 1-7. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MSB. 2015. *Historia: Värnplikten, Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap*. 30 January. Accessed May 2017. <http://www.sakerhetspolitik.se/Forsvar/totalforsvarsplikt/Historia-Varnplikten/>.
- Müller, Martin. 2008. "Reconsidering the concept of discourse for the field of critical geopolitics: Towards discourse as language and practice." *Political Geography* 27: 322-338.
- Nilsson, Christoffer. 2017. "Värnplikten har återinförts i Sverige." *Aftonbladet*, 2 March. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/3aq80/varnplikten-har-aterinfors-i-sverige>.
- Nordström, Isabelle. 2017. "Värnplikten återinförs - men vill unga göra militärtjänst?" *Aftonbladet*, 2 March. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/samhalle/a/3a5Mv/varnplikten-aterinfors--men-vill-unga-gora-militartjanst>.

- O'Tuathail, Gearoid. 2006. "General Introduction: Thinking Critically About Geopolitics." In *The Geopolitics Reader*, edited by Gearoid O'Tuathail, Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge, 1-14. Oxon: Routledge.
- Örnebring, Henrik. 2008. "The Consumer as Producer - of What?" *Journalism Studies* 9 (5): 771-785.
- Palme, Simon. 2017. "Debatt: Värnplikten är inte nödvändig överhuvudtaget." *Expressen*, 2 March. <http://www.expressen.se/debatt/varnplikten-ar-inte-nodvandig-over-huvud-taget/>.
- Pickering, Steve. 2017. "Popular Geopolitics." In *Understanding Geography and War*, by Steve Pickering, 87-112. Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Rekryteringsmyndigheten. 2017. *Värnplikten 2017*. 12 April. Accessed May 2017. <http://www.rekryteringsmyndigheten.se/18ar/varnplikten2017/>.
- Seemann, Victoria. 2017. "Låt militära behov styra." *Svenska Dagbladet*, 3 March. <https://www.svd.se/lat-militara-behov-styra>.
- Sharp, Joanne P. 2000. *Condensing the Cold War*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Sjöholm, Gustav. 2017. "Försvarsmakten: Alla ska behandlas lika." *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 March. <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/forsvarsmakten-alla-ska-behandlas-lik/>.
- Sørensen, Henning. 2000. "Conscription in Scandinavia During the Last Quarter Century: Developments and Arguments." *Armed Forces & Society* 26 (2): 313-334.
- Stratfor. 2009. *The Geopolitics of Sweden: A Baltic Power Reborn*. 1 July. Accessed March 2017. <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/geopolitics-sweden-baltic-power-reborn>.
- SvD. 2017. "Fakta om SvD." *Svenska Dagbladet*. Accessed May 2017. <https://kundservice.svd.se/omsvd/>.
- Svensson, Adam. 2017. "Svensk värnplikt blev internationell stornyhet." *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 March. <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/varlden/svensk-varnplikt-blev-internationell-stornyhet/>.
- Sweetman, Bill. 2010. "Thank you for the Mil-Tech." *Defense Technology International* 47 (66).
- Tilly, Charles. 2013. *Coercion, Capital, and European States*. 2nd. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- TT. 2017a. "Chef hoppas på fler kvinnor till Luleå." *Aftonbladet*, 2 March. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/senastenytt/ttnyheter/inrikes/article24493344.ab>.
- . 2017c. "Försvarsexpert: Finns ett större behov." *Aftonbladet*, 2 March. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/senastenytt/ttnyheter/inrikes/article24491718.ab>.
- . 2009. "LO säljer aktier i Aftonbladet." *Aftonbladet*, 15 June. Accessed May 2017. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article11875448.ab>.
- . 2017f. "L: Ett välkommet besked om värnplikten." *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 March. <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/l-ett-valkommet-besked-om-varnplikten/>.
- . 2017h. "Regeringen återinför värnplikten." *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 March. <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/regeringen-aterinfor-varnplikten/>.

- . 2017b. “Försvarexpert: Finns ett större behov.” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 March.
<https://www.svd.se/forsvarsexpert-finns-ett-storre-behov>.
 - . 2017d. “Försvarmakten: Alla ska behandlas lika.” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 March.
<https://www.svd.se/forsvarsmakten-alla-ska-behandlas-lik>.
 - . 2017e. “Gymnasieelever: Ett vettigt initiativ.” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 March.
<https://www.svd.se/gymnasieelever-ett-vettigt-initiativ>.
 - . 2017g. “Överste hoppas på fler kvinnor till Luleå.” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 March.
<https://www.svd.se/chef-hoppas-pa-fler-kvinnor-till-lulea>.
 - . 2017i. “Ungdomar positiva till värnplikten: "Spännande initiativ".” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 March.
<https://www.svd.se/ungdomar-positiva-till-varnplikten-spannande-initiativ>.
 - . 2017j. “Värnplikten återinförs - tusentals kallas till mönstring.” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 March.
<https://www.svd.se/uppgifter-varnplikten-aterinfors>.
- Ulfvarson, Henrik. 2017. “Åsikt: Försvaret blir sämre med allmän värnplikt.” *Aftonbladet*, 2 March.
<http://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/a/3a54d/forsvaret-blir-samre-med-allman-varnplikt>.