Framing the War: an analysis on the Swedish Armed Forces framing of Russian military actions in Ukraine.

ABSTRACT:
This thesis studies the development of framing used by the Swedish Armed Forces to portray Russian military actions in Ukraine. Framing implies that the way information is framed, or presented, can influence how people perceive and interpret information. The research problem identifies the lack of empirical understanding of how the Swedish Armed Forces frames actors in wars, as a part of military strategy. Through open-end questions, a framing analysis is conducted on two cases of Russian military actions in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This will be done by analyzing statements from the Swedish Armed Forces as well as the Swedish Government. The analysis shows that the Swedish Armed Forces framing has changed from a purely diagnostic frame that identifies the actions but with little additional understanding of its meaning for international security and Sweden directly, to a combination of diagnostic and prognostic frame to achieve consensus mobilization with regards to Sweden’s new political direction, as well as its own capacities and the need of further international cooperation and alliance. As this thesis answers the question of how frame changed, future research might study why it changed and what effects it might have.

Key words: Framing, Framing Theory, Security, Swedish Armed Forces, Russia
Table of Contents

1. Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 4
   1.1. Aim ........................................................................................................................... 5
   1.2. Research Problem .................................................................................................... 5
   1.3. Research Question .................................................................................................... 6
   1.4. Previous Research .................................................................................................... 6
       1.4.1. Framing .............................................................................................................. 6
       1.4.2. Framing in a military context ........................................................................... 7
       1.4.3. Military Strategic Communication .................................................................... 8
   1.5. Research Gap ............................................................................................................ 9
   1.6. Defining Key Concepts ............................................................................................ 9
   1.7. Scope Conditions ...................................................................................................... 10

2. Theory ............................................................................................................................. 10
   2.1. Framing Theory ....................................................................................................... 11

3. Method ............................................................................................................................. 12
   3.1. Research Design ..................................................................................................... 12
   3.2. Framing Analysis ..................................................................................................... 13
   3.3. Operationalization .................................................................................................. 14
   3.4. Discussion of Material ......................................................................................... 14
   3.5. Discussion of Method ............................................................................................. 15
       3.5.1. Research Ethics ............................................................................................... 16
       3.5.2. Source Criticism ............................................................................................. 16
       3.5.3. Reliability ........................................................................................................ 17
       3.5.4. Validity ........................................................................................................... 17
       3.5.5. Generalization ............................................................................................... 17

4. Analysis ............................................................................................................................ 18
   4.1. 2014 - The annexation of Crimea ............................................................................ 18
       4.1.1. How is the issue framed – what sort of issue is this portrayed as, and for whom is this portrayed as a problem for? ........................................................................................................... 18
       4.1.2. Which actors (subjects) are included in the frame? With which characteristics, motives and capacities for action are they framed? ........................................................................................................... 19
       4.1.3. How is the cause of the issue/problem framed? Who or what represents the cause of the issue/problem? ......................................................................................................................... 19
       4.1.4. How is the solution to the problem framed? What courses of action are considered, given the nature of the problem? ........................................................................................................... 20
   4.2. 2022 - The invasion of Ukraine ................................................................................. 20
4.2.1. How is the issue framed – what sort of issue is this portrayed as, and for whom is this portrayed as a problem for? ............................................................................................................. 20
4.2.2. Which actors (subjects) are included in the frame? With which characteristics, motives and capacities for action are they framed? ............................................................................................................. 21
4.2.3. How is the cause of the issue/problem framed? Who or what represents the cause of the issue/problem? ................................................................................................................................. 24
4.2.4. How is the solution to the problem framed? What courses of action are considered, given the nature of the problem? ............................................................................................................. 25

5. Conclusion .................................................................................................................................................................................. 27
5.1. Discussion of the Analysis .......................................................................................................................................................... 27
5.2. Future Research ......................................................................................................................................................................... 29
5.3. Relevance for Professional Practice ...................................................................................................................................... 29

Literature ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 30
1. Introduction

“The major premise of framing is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations.” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 104)

“Everything a nation and its Armed Forces does or does not do, says, or does not say, sends a message to its surroundings... We in the Swedish Armed Forces will strive to take and maintain the initiative in the information environment through actively direct our messages to the world.” (Försvarsmakten, 2023, p. 5).

By framing an issue, such as war, one can shape it to fit its own understanding of it, as well as project it as one wants the audience to see it. Framing is a concept, as well as a theory, which refers to the process by which people develop a specific understanding of an issue or redefine previous understanding of it (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 104). The latter half of the 20th century brought about major changes in how scholars conceptualized media’s role in shaping public opinion. With the progress of development and expansion of the internet during the 90’s and early 00’s up until today, the quantity in which mass media can produce and convey messages has increased exponentially. While media messages are limited in their direct effect on attitudes and beliefs, the idea that mass media influence public opinion by shaping the context within which people perceived the political world, has cemented itself in framing literature (Carnahan, et al., 2019, p. 2).

The role of media therefore becomes vital in the process of framing, tasked with presenting information effectively and efficiently to the public. In doing so, media must make crucial decisions about how to organize and provide meaning to the events covered, to convey the essence of the issues (Carnahan, et al., 2019, p. 2). From that perspective, one could argue that the military has an equal responsibility when communicating information regarding military activity and operations with the public. In doing so, the military conducts an operational analysis and decides what information to convey, how to convey it, and how it will affect the public.

The Swedish Armed Forces is a public authority entrusted with a mission by the government, and is therefore limited in what they do, and how it expresses itself. The focus of the Swedish Armed Forces’ strategic military communications relates to the strategic objectives set by the government. This ensures the Swedish Armed Forces communicate with
the public in a way that shows unity and coordination with the government (Försvarsmakten, 2023, pp. 18-19).

1.1. Aim

The aim of this thesis is to examine the developments of different frames used by the Swedish Armed Forces to convey public information with regards to Russian military actions in Ukraine. By doing so, this thesis will create a foundation on which further studies could research the effects of these frames on different matters, such as public opinion and political decisions. Simultaneously it contributes to the already limited understanding of how framing is and can be used in military contexts.

With the 2020 strategic alignment decision made by the Swedish government, Sweden is no longer a country driven by neutral security policy, but rather by solidarity security policy (Regeringen, 2020). It means that Sweden and its different institutions can express and comment on issues according to the values shared by others in an entirely new and more prominent way. For the Swedish Armed Forces, it can be argued that the first proper practical context in which this is manifested was during the first press briefing regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine 2022, and thus has an important analytical value for understanding how the Swedish Armed Forces have changed the ways in which they frame Russian military actions, such as the illegal annexation of Ukraine 2014. As the current war in Ukraine has consequently made the public more aware about the current security situation as well as to how media influences war and vice versa (Newman, et al., 2022, p. 35), this thesis stresses the importance of better understanding framing used specifically by military institutions.

1.2. Research Problem

The Commander in chief of the Swedish Armed Forces states that the Swedish Armed Forces will strive to take and maintain the initiative in the information environment through actively direct messages to the world (Försvarsmakten, 2023, p. 5). In the director of communications’ annual orientation rapport, a clear intent of proactivity and information control is reaffirmed (Försvarsmakten, 2022). With the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, the frames of Russian military actions in Ukraine becomes particularly interesting with regards to how Swedish neutrality politics have shifted since the annexation of Crimea 2014. Today, the Swedish Armed Forces finds itself in an unprecedented situation where it states an outspoken adversary towards the national and international security of Sweden.
1.3. Research Question

*How has the Swedish Armed Forces change the frame of Russian military actions in Ukraine between 2014 and 2022?*

1.4. Previous Research

There is a vast amount of literateur on framing, its implementations and effect in different areas of research, but most often it is rooted in media and communications research. Regarding on how military institutions use frames and how they develop as results to a changing environment, it has been hard to find substantial previous research. This literature overview will therefore initially discuss the general political aspect of framing effects which will be later used in the discussion. Thereafter more specific framing literature which is relevant for the analysis and research gap will be discussed. Finally, the literature that guides the Swedish Armed Forces in media communications is briefly touched upon to give an empirical understanding to how the Swedish Armed Forces uses media-interaction in a strategic manner.

1.4.1. Framing

Already during the 1940’s, Bernays argued for the importance of a state’s ability to “sell” their national interests, aims and policies. The attitudes of and actions of states’ own people, of allies and of enemies, depended to a great amount how effectively the state “sold itself” (Bernays, 1942, p. 236). Bernays exemplifies how propaganda, as a method of framing through different features, could change or affect public and enemy attitudes (ibid.).

In 2012, Lecheler & de Vreese presented a mediation analysis testing mediators for the process of framing through *belief importance* which refers to the importance of certain frames, and *belief content* which portrays frames as additional to the information already existing frames, meaning that a frame is created to give additional information and influence to an opinion or understanding of an issue that already exists in the general public (2012, p. 185). Mediators refer to the specification of intermediary causal mechanisms in which an independent variable can influence the dependent variable (Lecheler & Vreese, 2012, p. 186). They argue that an increased political knowledge can play a critical role in the mediation process of framing effects. Individuals with higher levels of political knowledge are likely to be more susceptible to framing effects via belief importance than people with lower levels of
political knowledge. People with lower levels of political knowledge are more likely to be unfamiliar with a political issue and thus more receptive to belief content (Lecheler & Vreese, 2012, p. 189). The article expands the earlier discussion of if framing has an effect and contributes to show how the public uses the media to understand politics, and how the effect can be shown through framing (p. 197).

The relationship between media framing and social movement mobilization is studied in Coopers article “Media framing and social movement mobilization” (2002). Through a cross-case analysis, Cooper demonstrates a strong relationship between media framing and social movements capacity to mobilize. Where framing in media and framing effects on a social issue were coherent, the effect media had on the mobilization of opinion on the issue was also high. Likewise, in the case where compatibility between media framing and movement framing was low, so was the level of mobilization (Cooper, 2002, p. 73). The results show the power media framing has for social movements capacity to mobilize, more specifically how it can be used instrumental for movements and opinions on policy issue primarily (2002, p. 74).

1.4.2. Framing in a military context
The literature surrounding the subject of framing in a military context often examines how militaries strategizes framing to achieve specific goals. The goals can vary from operational effectiveness to swaying public opinion.

Haaken & Palmer examine the findings of discursive strategies deployed by the US Department of Defense and Veterans Administration programs in preventing and treating military sexual trauma (2012, p. 325). During the first decade of the 2000’s the US military implemented a new set of tough policies regarding sexual assault, because of female veterans showing similar levels of PTSD to male veterans although encountering less combat, thus rocketing the problem of sexual assault center stage as a leading cause of disabilities (ibid.).

The narrative of incest is a story which has had certain effect with the US Department of defense strategy as it has parallels which facilitate the understanding of the experiences of sexual assault within the US military, forced to continue to interact with the perpetrator on a daily basis and “keeping the family secret” to name a few examples (Haaken & Palmer, 2012, p. 331). Haaken & Palmer concludes that military sexual trauma framed as an incest narrative may readily eclipse other experiences of female service members and emerge as the single authorized war story of women (2012, p. 332). This could correlate with the moral
prohibitions against sexual assault that is framed as a violation of a military code invoked to protect unit/family (ibid.). However, the strength of the correlation remains unclear.

Khan & Pratt studies the Pakistan military’s strategic use of social media in gaining public support for the ongoing war against terrorism (2022, p. 450). The findings show that Pakistan military engaged with several different frames to follow the quickly developing national security situation. Out of the four dominant frames identified, motivational frames were the most persistent frames used to generate dialogue between the military and the public regarding the war on terrorism and increasing public engagement in the matter (Khan & Pratt, 2022, p. 464). The study also demonstrated the critical impact the strategies of different framings had in ensuring public support for the government’s approach to resolving a deep ideological conflict (2022, p. 475).

In Graaf et al.’s book “Strategic narratives, public opinion and war: winning domestic support for the Afghan War”, various governments efforts to build and maintain public support for the war in Afghanistan is studied. It examines how they employ and develop strategic narratives to gain public support, how they are framed through various media outlets, how they are received and ultimately how they interplay with the actual events in Afghanistan (2015). This book encompasses all the categories of which framing usually is studied, in its conceptual formation, in its strategical implementation, and its effect.

Although the literature touch upon very different subjects they represent the common theme of examining how military uses framing and strategies when relaying a message towards the public, finding the most effective frame or frames, and implementing them.

1.4.3. Military Strategic Communication

“Everything a nation and its Armed Forces does or does not do, says, or does not say, sends a message to its surroundings… We in the Swedish Armed Forces will strive to take and maintain the initiative in the information environment through actively direct our messages to the world.” (Försvarsmakten, 2023, p. 5).

The Swedish Armed Forces focuses on being proactive in shaping its own image and message so that it correlates with the Swedish security strategy, set by the Swedish Government (2023, p. 10). A central part of military strategic communication is its narrative, which is based on the military’s strategic goals. It tells a long-term narrative about how and why a state or organization acts the way it does. The narrative frames the views of an issue or events, and changes when the security situation changes (2023, p. 20). There are a number of guiding
principles for strategic communication that are present when planning and conducting operations, all to ensure that the narrative and messages are compliant with other communication operations, as well as the military strategic goals (2023, pp. 22-25). How the Swedish Armed Forces applies military strategic communication depends on the scenario in which it operates. Spanning from “normal” to “armed attack”, as well as in international contexts, Military strategic communication (MilStratCom) adjusts different parameters in its communication tactics, such as enemy assessment, security risk, inclusion of other actors, as well as area of focus (2023, p. 38). The strategic direction is annually updated by the director of communications and is in the 2022 updated document largely focused on a heightened insecurity and political focus towards military defense-issues and a general increased interest for the armed forces from media and public alike (Försvarsmakten, 2022).

1.5. Research Gap

Much of the literature of framing within the area of conflict and security often study the political perspective or framing through conventional independent media outlets. Framing from a military perspective is naturally to be considered an extension of political strategies, however often when political framing is discussed or studied, a military dimension is seldom prioritized. There is limited literature regarding framing of Swedish governmental policies, even more so regarding military framing which naturally sparks an interest of military framing from the Swedish Armed Forces. There is a particular interest in the case of Swedish framing, both as a non-NATO country as well as a country long known for its former neutral political orientation.

1.6. Defining Key Concepts

Framing as a concept will be extensively explained and discussed in the theory section of this thesis. However, giving it a clear definition will facilitate the concept when discussed overall in the study. With that said, framing is understood as the process which people reorientate or develop their conceptualization of an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 104). Frames, then, can be explained as the acts of communication that contextualize certain ways of understanding the world that can change the ways in which people can understand, evaluate, and define it.
1.7. Scope Conditions

A delimitation made in this thesis pertains to the Swedish Armed Forces. As this thesis aims to study framing in a military context, it isolates the armed forces as a political elite in the thesis’ actor-centric focus (Esaiasson, et al., 2017, p. 224). The Swedish Armed Forces are considered an actor in this study due to the nature of the different people that represent the Swedish Armed Forces in the material, as well as the framing of the Swedish Armed Forces position on the Russian military actions in Ukraine cannot be pinned down as the work of a single person. Therefore, the collective efforts are summed as the actor itself, the Swedish Armed Forces.

To properly analyze how the Swedish Armed Forces frames the war, it is vital also that the material is created by the Swedish Armed Forces. In other media outlets it would be hard to control the questions they have to answer, how the questions are asked, and if it is in self-interest of the media outlet or for some other purpose than what the military intend. Seeing as the ambition is to capture frames made by the Swedish Armed Forces, the material that will be used in the analysis must therefore stem directly from the Swedish Armed Forces, or the Swedish Government as its superior authority. As mentioned earlier, as the Armed Forces is an extension of the authority of the government, the government itself should be seen as viable source for material. Thus, the material that will be used will only be that officially stated by the Swedish Government, or the Swedish Armed Forces. The sources used will be that of the websites of the authorities. Going forward, when discussing the material used for analysis, the Swedish Armed Forces includes sources of the Swedish Government as well.

A final delimitation to the thesis regards the time periods for which will be analyzed in this thesis. In order to narrow the material and analysis, the two major events as a result of Russian military actions are chosen for analysis. This is also events that have created more urgency for media coverage from both independent media and statements by government, thus securing sufficient data for analysis for the different specific time-periods that are being analyzed. The events analyzed will be the annexation of Crimea February 2014 and the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine February 2022.

2. Theory

Framing is both a theory and a method of analysis as will be evident in chapters 2. Theory and 3. Method. Ensuring the separation of the two, the theoretical idea of framing will be
presented below, followed by the methodological approach and how it will be operationalized and used in this thesis.

2.1. Framing Theory

Framing theory suggests that the way(s) information is framed, or presented, can influence how people perceive and interpret that information. Military leaders may use framing to influence public opinion, motivate troops, and gain support for military operations.

Although first presented during the 70’s by Ervin Goffman, framing theory has since been constantly developing and reframed. Robert M. Entman offers a substantial framework for analysis of framing in his work *Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm*. Although a prominent definition was lacking during that time, Entman aimed to create a framework for which modern framing could be studied (1993).

“The major premise of framing theory is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be constructed as having implication for multiple values or considerations.” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 104).

Framing, as such, refers to the process which people reorientate or develop their conceptualization on an issue. Framing can be constructed to be used both in positive and negative ways. It can be used as a strategy to manipulate and deceive individuals or populations. It can also be used to teach people of common beliefs more neutrally, as in the coordination of people around a social norm (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 120). Often, in the field of public opinion, framing takes a negative connotations seeing as framing effects suggest that distribution of public preferences is random, and that political officials can manipulate popular preferences to serve their own interests. However, public opinion formation involves the selective acceptance and rejection of conceptual frames containing information about the issues at hand. In other fields of study, framing is viewed as rather neutral, as opposed to propaganda or agenda setting. Simply put, frames are acts of communication that display certain understanding of the world that can change the ways people can understand, evaluate, and define it (Entman, 1993, p. 52). In addition, Benford & Snow (2000) discusses the core framing tasks, being diagnostic framing (focus on identifying the problem), prognostic framing (focus on solving the problem) and motivational framing (engaging rationale for action). These three methods of framing result in one of two outcome,
one being *consensus mobilization* which entails the effort to create frames upon the general public will agree on, and the other being *action mobilization* where the end goal is to change public opinion through different framing (2000, pp. 615-616). These different types of means to an end are particularly interesting and fitting for the concluding discussions of this thesis, depending of course on the finding in the material.

Empirically, there are several studies to show the effects of framing (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 109), which is only possible through the already existing understanding of an issue (military alliances for example). This issue does not only have to be available; it also must be personally historically understood issue. Generally, people draw their opinions from the set of available beliefs, which only become accessible at a given moment. Out of the accessible beliefs, only some are strong enough to be judged relevant or applicable at subject in hand. This is where framing is its most effective, allowing influence to potentially take part on different levels, by making new beliefs about the issue, making certain beliefs accessible, or making beliefs applicable or even strong in peoples evaluations (2007, p. 111). It is vital to identify moderators (variables that condition framing effects) and mediators (subjects to framing effects) to conduct research using framing theory. In a military context, framing theory refers to the way in which information is presented to shape people’s perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to military operations, policies, and objectives.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

As previously mentioned, this thesis aims to examine changes in frames made by the Swedish Armed Forces regarding Russian military actions in Ukraine in 2014 and 2022. Framing in communication is a concept used to promote certain definitions and interpretations of political issues. Over the past decade, the method of framing to identify trends in issue definitions, compare coverage across media, and study variations across different types of media, has become standard practice (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 106) (Entman, 1993, pp. 52-53).

The research design is based on the specific cases and through framing theory, analyzes the Swedish Armed Forces’ framing process of Russian military actions in Ukraine. By conducting a theory-consuming case study on official government sources, through pre-set questions operationalized through the theory, changes of frames of which the Swedish Armed Forces use to communicate Russian military actions in Ukraine can be highlighted. The
analysis is focused to the statements made by the Swedish Armed Forces as well as Swedish Government. This enables an analysis to examine certain parts of the material based on the idea that some parts are more vital than others to understand the entirety of the text (Esaiasson, et al., 2017, p. 211).

3.2. Framing Analysis

Framing as a method of analysis is a concept that lies close to text analysis (Esaiasson, et al., 2017, p. 218). The starting point of framing as a method is that a social phenomenon is not of any given meaning, but rather they can be interpreted, presented, *framed* in different ways. Studies that have used framing as method of analysis often want to access the frame of which an actor consciously and strategically uses (ibid.). It is important to note that it is the content of the framing – not the motive or incentive of the actor – that is central in framing analysis.

The questions asked to answer how the content of the text is framed concerns the issue’s nature, reason, and solution and how they are framed. Entman discusses these questions as *functions in communications process* where frames 1) *define problems* – determining what causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits usually measured through common cultural values, 2) *diagnose causes* – identifies forces that create the problem, 3) *make moral judgements* – evaluate the causal agents and their effects, and 4) *suggest remedies* – offers and justifies treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Esaiasson et al. rephrase these functions slightly and present them as questions, as a part of operationalizing the method, enabling it to be systematically measured. Questions that could be articulated as Esaiasson et. al does:

- How is the issue framed – *what* sort of issue is this portrayed as, and for *whom* is this portrayed as a problem for?
- Which *actors* (subjects) are included in the frame? With which characteristics, motives and capacities for action are they framed?
- How is the *cause* of the issue/problem framed? Who or what represents the cause of the issue/problem?
- How is the *solution* to the problem framed? What courses of action are considered, given the nature of the problem? 
  (Esaiasson, et al., 2017, pp. 218-219)
In addition, Entman expresses that “A single sentence may perform more than one of these four framing functions, although many sentences in a text may perform none of them. And a frame in any text may not necessarily include all four functions” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

3.3. Operationalization

As the questions of Esaiasson et. al (presented in the previous section) are themselves operationalized questions of the framework presented by Entman; these questions will be used as guiding questions or the analysis. Guiding questions for analysis can have one of two different categories of answers, closed- or open-end questions. Closed-end questions use pre-identified answers to specific questions where relevant answers can be included in the analysis. This thesis will use open-end questions where the answers to the questions depend on what is found in the material (Esaiasson, et al., 2017, p. 223). Additionally, in the discussion of the analysis, in order to summarize the answered questions, if possible the frames will be defined according to the different methods and means diagnostic framing (focus on identifying the problem), prognostic framing (focus on solving the problem) which serve to create consensus mobilization which persuades the general public to agree on something more, and motivational framing (engaging rationale for action) which serve to achieve action mobilizations and lets the public take collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000, pp. 615-617).

3.4. Discussion of Material

When looking for what material to choose for the analysis, the first question asked is if the material should be covered wide or narrow. Although there are never any blueprint answers to what material a study should undertake, there are strength and weaknesses of the material that is chosen (a few parameters which help narrow the choice of material down). In this case, a narrower material selection is required for a couple of reasons. One, the material that the Swedish Armed Forces directly publish when commenting on issues are scares. On the one hand, there is plenty of information and comments from military in media when different subjects are discussed or debated that affects or influences the military. However, due to the intent of the study, that material is not relevant. One might argue it not possible to reach the aim of the study by using other independent media sources or outlets, as they control the questioning and have possible bias towards how the issue is framed in their own interests.
Two, the case of this study is how the military frames Russia military actions in Ukraine, where the earliest and most comprehensive statements from the military in the matter have been considered.

When analyzing the case of the illegal annexation of Crimea 2014 there are scares material that stems directly from The Swedish Armed Forces and as such is supplemented with sources from the Swedish Government. This allows for a richer analysis and the discussion will be deepened not only by understanding the information dynamics between the Swedish Government and the Swedish Armed Forces at the time, but also the absence of information which reveals an interesting point of discussion as to the development of the frame as will be evident when compared to the frame of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine 2022. In the case of 2022, sufficient material can be found already in several press briefings that are held during the spring of 2022 that are specifically held with regards to the ongoing war in Ukraine. In this material the high command of the Swedish Armed Forces comments, discusses and frames the war in Ukraine in a sufficient manner for the purpose of the analysis. For sake of structure in the analysis of the material, the six different press briefings that are held during the spring of 2022 are marked PB (Press Briefing) 1-7 in chronological order of their release date. The specific press briefings and their content can be accessed in the bibliography.

3.5. Discussion of Method

This section aims to discuss the different choices made in this chapter and to motivate those choices, especially with regards to research ethics, reliability, validity, and generalization. As with any method, there is a question of efficiency and limitations to the method of analysis. The goal of any study should decide the choice of method. With the previously stated aim of this study, combined with the research question of this thesis, a qualitative approach is the most appropriate method. A qualitative framing analysis allows for a deeper understanding of how the frames of the different time-periods reflect the current political situation of the Swedish Armed Forces, and by understanding the frames and the developments they may have made, one could further discuss how they correlate with their effects on social movement (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 615). As the previous research shows, most military related framing studies often study quantitatively the effects or developments of frames. The qualitative aspects therefore also add the empirical contribution of framing analysis both in a
qualitative manner as well as qualitatively in the area of framing specifically in a military context.

If the objective of the study would be to understand how the military is framed, the discussion of the material necessary for analysis would be quite different. In that case, other media outlets and sources would be of interest to get at diversified and more conclusive frame of the Swedish Armed Forces. However, as in this case where the military perspective is studied, the material and sources of analysis must come from the armed forces itself.

3.5.1. Research Ethics
As earlier discussed in the chapter 2.2. Framing theory framing has a subjective nature. As the theory entails, information is presented in a certain way to affect public and people in a certain way. However, unlike other theories of communication such as propaganda and agenda-setting, which often is regarded as having manipulative and negative tendencies, framing is often regarded as a more neutral understanding that presenting information in a certain way can have certain effects.

Confirmation bias is more relevant, the more the results of the study is subject to interpretation of the material. There is always a risk that results can become subject to confirmation bias, this depends on the author, how the variables are operationalized, and what is at stake. A strength with the research design of this study with regards to confirmation bias, is that it aims to understand how something is framed. Its foundation is that there is no right or wrong answer to this question, which gives incentive to answer the research question as comprehensively as possible, rather than “being right”. In studies where correlation or causalities are tested, confirmation bias is perhaps a bigger concern, as the author often is hoping to be correct in their assessments and that their hypothesis are confirmed, hence confirmation bias.

3.5.2. Source Criticism
Regarding source criticism, it can be said that the material used is first-hand sources of the Swedish Armed Forces that can be found on their homepage. Therefore, there is little to be said of the authenticity of the information being used. As for source bias, the material used and the intentions of the information and message being portrayed by the Swedish Armed Forces is precisely what is beringed studied, which for sake of rarity means that source bias in this study is something sought-after.
3.5.3. Reliability
A qualitative study is often dependent of the context it is studied which requires the content of the material to be interpreted to some degree. Reliability is increased in this thesis by progressively analyzing the material from when it is being first overview, on to its eventual selection. Thereafter, the material is more thoroughly examined in its proper context where a deeper meaning for the materials is highlighted (Boréus & Bergström, 2018, p. 228).

The questions asked in the analysis are open-end which means it is the authors interpretation of the question and material that define the results. This means the results will naturally be subjective to an extent. However, discussion and transparency of this issue, together with research ethics discussion allows the analysis of the results to be transparent and without confirmation or information bias. This is further strengthened by how the questions are formulated, so that there is an incentive and guidance towards conducting the study in a correct manner.

3.5.4. Validity
Validity as the absence in unsystematic faults (Esaiasson, et al., 2017, p. 64), is partially managed through presenting the results of the material in an objective manner. The questions that will guide the analysis are developed from the theory, based on the research question and previous research, which create the theoretical framework that will guide the analysis (2017, p. 38).

The analysis of the materials, however, will limit the level of validity, due to the authors interpretation of the results. However, this is natural when analyzing open-end questions. Nonetheless, this opens an interesting possibility of another author doing the exact same thesis and comparing the results and analysis, testing the validity of this thesis.

3.5.5. Generalization
The generalization is also limited, however understandably so because this is a study that is extremely hard to replicate in another setting or by covering another case. In addition, it does not affect the thesis because qualitative studies generally do not focus on achieving a high level of generalization (Esaiasson, et al., 2017, p. 90). Qualitative studies often highlight something specific, and as previously mentioned dependent on the context of which it is studied. This is a unique thesis in that sense and should be treated as such. Although the results and the analysis of the study could prove limited in its generalizability, the method of
which the results are studied could prove useful in other settings where the purpose is to study framing from a military perspective. Depending on the results, this method could prove effective for studying military framing, if there is substantial material to analyze.

4. Analysis

The analysis of the material will be presented in the way that they are relevant to the research questions. As mentioned earlier “a single sentence may perform more than one of these four framing functions, although many sentences in a text may perform none of them. And a frame in any text may not necessarily include all four functions” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

4.1. 2014 – The annexation of Crimea

4.1.1. How is the issue framed – what sort of issue is this portrayed as, and for whom is this portrayed as a problem for?

On The Swedish Armed Forces homepage, there are few articles relating to the annexation in Crimea 2014. In two articles, the wording of the annexation of Crimea is phrased as a “situation development”. In a news article from 4 March 2014, the Swedish Armed Forces writes “The Swedish Armed Forces are currently following the developments in Ukraine the surrounding regions of Sweden very closely.” (Försvarsmakten, 2014). The cause of the redeployment of incident preparedness to Gotland and therefore the increase ability for air monitoring is expressed as due to the Russian contingency exercise in the surrounding area (ibid.). Moreover, in an article post from 29 August 2014, The Swedish Armed Forces again expresses that “serious developments in Ukraine” cause for an increased staff preparedness in HQ and enhanced intelligence gathering (Försvarsmakten, 2014). It is the first time in the Swedish Armed Forces annual report that the commander in chief, Sverker Göransson, frames the issue in a more direct way.

“2014 was a particularly eventful year in which the Russian illegal annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Ukraine were to examples of how unstable and unpredictable developments have become in our world.” (Försvarsmakten, 2015).

The issue of the frame is portrayed much as an issue that a regional conflict, although not directly affects the Swedish Armed Forces, sparked an increased surveillance and
preparedness of parts of the Swedish Armed Forces. As the developments of the annexation of Crimea becomes evidently clear, the issue is more clearly framed. It could be interpreted as a certain carefulness of the Swedish Armed Forces to frame the issue in a way that would not spike tensions or show misleading towards the Russian state.

4.1.2. Which actors (subjects) are included in the frame? With which characteristics, motives and capacities for action are they framed?

The three primary actors involved in the frame are Ukraine, Russia as well as Sweden. As the frame concerns the developments in Ukraine, as a result of Russian military actions, and although not initially being framed as such, it entails the undertone of the effect it has on Sweden which could interoperate as “no need for alarm”. In this sense, Sweden as a subject itself frame the issue of Russian military actions in Ukraine as a “they” problem rather than a “we” problem. However, since the annual report of 2014, the frame has clarified with regards to Russian illegal annexation of Crimea, framing Russia as an aggressor and Crimea and by extent Ukraine its subject. This is demonstrated in the Swedish Armed Forces annual report of 2015 where former commander in chief of the Swedish Armed Forces writes.

“The heightened military-strategic security situation in our direct surroundings have persisted. Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Ukraine continued to cause concern.” (Försvarsmakten, 2016).

4.1.3. How is the cause of the issue/problem framed? Who or what represents the cause of the issue/problem?

Russia is eventually framed the aggressor in its military actions and annexation of Crimea and is furthermore framed as the root cause of the issue, however, the incentive and motives are never mentioned by the Swedish Armed Forces explicitly in news articles, annual report or their website for that matter. The focus instead lies with current events, and how the situation develops. This further enforces the frames indication that the issue is still not directly affecting Sweden. If anything, The Swedish Armed forces seemingly frames the issue through an already implicit understanding of the causes of this issue. Much of which may come through other media outlets simultaneously describing the issue and situational development in Ukraine.
4.1.4. How is the solution to the problem framed? What courses of action are considered, given the nature of the problem?

The Swedish armed forces do not purpose any concrete solutions to the problem. On the one hand, measures are taken from the Swedish Armed Forces which are framed as measure for “own safety and preparedness” as is mentioned in a post on their homepage.

“As a result of the serious developments in Ukraine, the Swedish Armed Forces are acting by, among other things, increasing staff readiness in the Headquarters and strengthening intelligence gathering. The staff work aims to review the need to adapt preparedness, upcoming exercises, and other activities.” (Försvarsmakten, 2014).

The Swedish Government on the other hand implements concrete repercussions through sanctions against Russia because of their military actions in Ukraine. These sanctions include import- and export prohibitions, investment prohibition as well as tourism- and aid prohibitions (Regeringskansliet, 2017). Moreover, The Swedish Government quickly after the annexation of Crimea offered a loan for Ukraine to help the country’s struggle for independence.

“Sweden has decided to offer Ukraine a bilateral loan of USD 100 million. This loan together with our political support for the country's choice of independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, contributes to strengthening Ukraine. Ukraine is in a very vulnerable situation. Russian aggression in the east of the country and the fighting that has been going on for a year have added to an already severe economic crisis. However, the new Ukrainian government has signaled a clear commitment to reform and has launched a major restructuring of the economy.” (Regeringskansliet, 2015)

In the acts of the Swedish Governments actions to aid in solving the issue, it understates the issue, although with financial aid from Sweden, remains an issue that Ukraine themselves must solve.

4.2. 2022 - The invasion of Ukraine

4.2.1. How is the issue framed – what sort of issue is this portrayed as, and for whom is this portrayed as a problem for?

“Earlier today, the Commander-in-Chief visited the Defense Committee to present the Armed Forces' view of the serious security situation. It is precisely this picture that I want to share with you here today. To
begin with, I would like to give a brief overview of the situation on the ground in Ukraine and in our neighborhood. After that, I will talk about the measures the Armed Forces have taken and are still taking. Against the background of the war in Ukraine and the deteriorating security situation in the region.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022a, p. 1).

In PB4 the military intelligence and security service strengthens the initial conclusion that the security situation, including not only Sweden but also Sweden’s surrounding area, as well as Europe as a whole, has worsened (Försvarsmakten, 2022d, p. 3). As such the issue is framed not only as the invasion of Ukraine, but also as a worsening of the security situation directly effecting the surrounding area and Sweden.

Although it might not be particularly easy to define a problem when analyzing a frame, in this case the question of what the problem is quite clearly defined and repeated during several press briefings. Although the heightened risk towards the security of Sweden is discussed, as well as the ongoing war in Ukraine and its effects on both Russian, but especially Ukrainian troops and civilians, the larger issue of a worsened security situation is what the Swedish Armed Forces uses as the main problem of the frame. As the analysis will show, this is a defined problem as it is discussed from the factors that cause the problem, as well as how the problem eventually can be solved. The frame emphasizes not the ongoing conflict at hand, but the risk of overspill of the conflict into neighboring countries and furthermore into Sweden.

4.2.2. Which actors (subjects) are included in the frame? With which characteristics, motives and capacities for action are they framed?

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, much of what factors how the issue is developing and worsening is due to Russia’s military actions. In PB2 such actions pose a threat towards nations that support Ukraine in the war, as well as the pressures states to limit the sovereign decision-making, thereby reducing the freedom of action (Försvarsmakten, 2022b, p. 2). The motives of Russian invasion in Ukraine are described as taking place due to a long-term objective to replace the existing European security order with one that recognizes Russia's right to a sphere of interest that includes several of its neighbors. It will inevitably also prevent more countries from applying for NATO membership (Försvarsmakten, 2022c).

Some motives of Russia’s actions are briefly mentioned in PB3. Deputy chief of the military intelligence- and security service, Daniel Olsson, makes speaks from the perspective of intelligence and security services.
“We have long seen a trend towards a hardening of Russian power politics at the expense of rules-based regimes, arms control, multilateral cooperation, international law, and democracy. Russia has sought to overturn the existing European security order built on the basis of the experience of World War II and the Cold War and instead gain recognition for a privileged sphere of interest and a buffer zone in its neighborhood that would limit the sovereignty and self-determination of Russia's neighbors.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022d, p. 2).

The actor responsible for the defined problem is clearly understood as the Russian state, as it is the actor who launched the invasion of Ukraine, which is described as the root cause of the problem. In addition, it is noted from the Swedish Armed Forces that the actor has deep rooted and self-justified motives for why they have realized their actions of invasion which also is much describing in their incentives and motives for their actions. It is also described as strategic measure to pressure the western countries and alliances, simultaneously as it expands its own position. This this question is framed as Russia being an actor with political objectives, and Sweden and the security situation as the subjective to its aggressions. Having a new political orientation, as Sweden currently does, could also further explain the way they discuss the Russian actor. With an outspoken adversary, one could argue that portraying a clear message is significantly easier than having to meticulously draft statements to not provoke unwanted reactions. Russia is described as an actor who is not afraid to use violence and terror.

“The threat of violence and the use of military means for political purposes form the core and foundation of Russian security policy. Fear is part of the Russian arsenal and is used to discourage us from supporting Ukraine. The heaviest weapon in the arsenal is the nuclear threat and President Putin has also used it. The Russian nuclear arsenal is not new. Nor is it the first time Putin has alluded to this capability. The threat is designed to make us hesitate, blend in, cower and back off. It will not succeed.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022a, pp. 5-6).

Russia is further described as an actor that directly threatens the democratic values and principles of Sweden and its peoples. Russia is described as an aggressor. In PB5 information is shared about acts of war crime, committed by Russian forces, especially concerning civilians.
“New information suggests that terrible war crimes have been committed in Ukraine. This is in no way acceptable, but unfortunately it is also not surprising. In several conflicts with Russia, we have seen behavior that shows little regard for the civilian population and the laws of war, including in Syria. The crimes that have now occurred in Ukraine must be investigated and those responsible must be held accountable.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022e, p. 6).

What is particularly noteworthy is how Russia is described as an aggressor, not only as an actor that has conducted an invasion towards a sovereign state, but also through the means which it is being conducted. Furthermore, it entails a threat towards the democratic values which Sweden upholds. This testifies for how Sweden views its main recognized enemy, which also solidifies its position toward other western allied states. Moreover, the increased information spread of the motives and political ambitions of the Russian invasion as a show of the Swedish Armed Forces’ comprehensive understandings of the adversary, strengthening the legitimacy and competence of the Swedish Armed Forces and their handle on the situation with regards to the security of Sweden.

The worsened security situation is described in PB1 as something that directly affects Sweden as well as the regional and global security situation. The actions of Russia have come to affect the behavior of the Swedish Armed Forces, not only now but for the foreseeable future (Försvarsmakten, 2022a, p. 3).

“An armed attack on Sweden cannot be ruled out. Nor can the use of military force or the threat of such force be used against Sweden. The 2020 Defense Decision also notes that Russia may use military force in other locations and on a larger scale than has been the case so far. In recent months, however, significant factors have emerged that affect our analysis today and in the future.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022a, p. 3).

Furthermore, a message that is repeated in PB5 concerns at what risk the problem directly affects Sweden.

“The risk that Sweden will be subjected to pressure aimed at influencing our sovereign decision-making and reducing our freedom of action has therefore increased since before. The risk of an armed attack against Sweden here and now is low, but as we have said before it cannot be ruled out either.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022e, p. 4).
In PB6 the same message is presented as in PB5, however with a caution of future military business being conducted in the surrounding area, and how small misunderstandings, as of the worsened security situation, can have serious consequences.

“We see continued military activities in our neighborhood both from the Russian side and from other nations. The level is relatively normal for this time of year, and we do not currently see anything that constitutes a direct threat or changes our assessment: The risk of an armed attack is currently low, although such an attack cannot be ruled out. However, with many actors in our neighborhood, we see continued risks of incidents or misunderstandings that, in this security situation, could lead to a negative development of events. Together with our partners, we are following the situation very closely.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022f).

4.2.3. How is the cause of the issue/problem framed? Who or what represents the cause of the issue/problem?

The actions of Russia towards the security situation in Europe is framed as the root cause of the issue. In PB6, Deputy Head of Operations, Major General Jonas Wikman describes the causes of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to expand Russian sphere of power by forcing Ukraine into submission (Försvarsmakten, 2022f, p. 1).

The invasion on 24 February is in PB4 also described as anything but a surprise (Försvarsmakten, 2022d, p. 2). In PB5 the problem is discussed from a more focused perspective of cyber security, and stresses the risks of the cyber domain, especially towards the everyday usage of internet, as well as misinformation and propaganda (Försvarsmakten, 2022e, pp. 3-4).

“We can still note that the intelligence threat from foreign powers is at a high level, four on a five-point scale, which we take very seriously. The cyber threat also remains high, but no significant cyber incidents have been reported in Sweden for two weeks. We continue to encourage what we call good cyber hygiene for authorities, companies, and individuals.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022e, p. 3).

Chief of joint operations, Lieutenant-General Michael Claesson begins PB1 by pointing out that 15 days following the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, their initial plan is failing.

“…it is obvious that the Russian invasion is not going according to plan. The main objectives that the Russian side had reasonably set for the invasion quickly bringing the state leadership to its knees or replacing it with a puppet government, have not been achieved. Russian weaknesses and Ukrainian
resistance offer hope. But at the same time, Russian capabilities, and numbers in and around Ukraine
remain significant.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022a, p. 2).

4.2.4. How is the solution to the problem framed? What courses of action are considered,
given the nature of the problem?
Simply put, the solution to the issue is peace. However, it is framed to come at a certain cost
and must be achieved in a certain way. From the perspective of the two directly involved
actors, peace for the surrounding area, Europe and for Sweden can only come with a
Ukrainian victory. Therefore, from the perspective of Sweden, the solution is bipartite. One,
the political, economic, and material support to Ukraine which already framed in the case of
2014, is only amplified since. Two, the more prominent framed part of the solution is the
“calm effectiveness” as Lieutenant-General Claesson frames it. The continued efforts and
operations that the Swedish Armed Forces conducts nationally and internationally. The
Swedish Armed Forces will further increase their capabilities, its size, and its strength, to
continue ensuring keeping Sweden safe. One of the concrete measures is the government’s
announcement to increase defense spending to 2% of the Swedish GDP (Försvarsmakten,
2022a, p. 9).

In PB2, Lieutenant General Michael Claesson discusses around the topic of solutions
for the problem both in an international and national way. The solution to the problem is part
an increased cooperation with western militaries, and in part the continued strengthening of
Sweden’s own capacities, should the problem one day directly affect Sweden.

“Together with other authorities, we are constantly working to reduce the threat from foreign powers
regarding security threats to the Armed Forces. This is done, among other things, by limiting the
opportunity while working to identify and reduce vulnerabilities in our own systems…We are an active
defense force, we make the necessary preparedness adjustments and conduct planned exercises, and we are
prepared to act individually and together with others. Our cooperation with our international partners
remains important and we continue to exercise together, both in previously planned exercises and those that
have arisen at shorter notice. Joint exercises make us stronger and therefore more dangerous for a potential
adversary. Right now, we have an increased military presence from other Western countries in the region,
not least because the NATO-led exercise Cold Response began in Norway earlier this week…We have a
very good situational picture of activity and capacity in our immediate area and we continue to follow
events very closely.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022b, pp. 3-6).
Cooperation with each other and other nations are in PB3 lifted as means to solving to problem. In PB4 efforts to solve the problem of insecurity are presented in two categories. One, the rearmament of several European countries to make long-term changes to their security- and defense policies, Germany being a prime example by quickly deciding on an increased annual defense spending budget to the equivalent of 70 billion euro. Two, the insecurity is believed to leave tensions that will be lasting. The Swedish military intelligence- and security services makes the assessment that some form of “containment” of Russia is the most likely course of action, hindering economic, territorial, military, and political expansion (Försvarsmakten, 2022d, p. 5). In PB6 the will to defend is particularly emphasized as a factor of success for the Ukrainians, as well as for the Swedish Armed Forces and the peoples of Sweden.

“If the current war has taught us anything, it is the importance of the will to defend. Russia has underestimated the willingness of the Ukrainian people to defend their country and freedom and the result is clear to most people. The Swedish people have the same will to defend themselves and we see a strong interest and commitment to the defense of Sweden. But this is not something we can take for granted. We must continue to emphasize the importance of a strong total defense where civilian and military, public and private, organizations and individuals cooperate and work together towards the same goal of peace and security and the right to live our lives as we choose. Sweden contributes to several military and civilian training programs. We do this to support nations in their endeavors to strengthen their and thus our common security.” (Försvarsmakten, 2022f, pp. 4-5)

In PB7 the consideration of a NATO membership is clearly connected to achieving long term security, although it imposes short term risk by provoking Russian reactions such as sending signals through sea and air movement in the near area of Sweden, using their cyber capabilities, as well as using provocative rhetoric and verbal threats which has already been noted, and is assessed that it will continue (Försvarsmakten, 2022g, p. 10). In addition, a NATO membership is also judged to decrease the risk of an armed assault towards Sweden (Försvarsmakten, 2022g, p. 5).

The solutions presented to the problem leaves the frame incomplete. Most of them are connected to ongoing cooperation efforts, as well as reaffirming already approved policies. Cooperation, nationally as well as internationally, is described as vital towards solving the problem. Cooperation on a national level discusses the necessities of cooperation within the
Armed Forces, but also between government agencies to further increase the capabilities and effectiveness of a national defense. Moreover, in an international setting, cooperation refers to the continued efforts with partnering states, as well as looking towards military alliances. As the solution to the problem being international long-term security, it is natural that the solutions are framed as such and that a membership in NATO would be included in that frame. The issue with the incomplete frame is that the Swedish Armed Forces describes an end-goal to the solution, however, lacks in clearly explaining how Sweden will achieve it. Although the Swedish Armed Forces is the actualizing authority, the decision to join NATO is made by the Swedish government. This explains also why then the discussion of joining NATO only is topical during the last PB, and before that is phrased as “international cooperation”.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Discussion of the Analysis

The theoretical framework presented enables the operationalized questions that ultimately answers the research question How does the Swedish Armed Forces change the frame of Russian military actions in Ukraine between 2014 and 2022? The analysis shows a significant change in frames used in 2014 and 2022. Firstly, the frames of the annexation of Crimea 2014 are presented in a way that suggests a passive stance from the Swedish Armed Forces. With limited information and careful wording, the Russian military actions in Ukraine in 2014 are framed as smaller regional problem that causes minor increased efforts by the Swedish Armed Forces to be able to follow the developments of the situation and, if anything were to happen, be more prepared. However, it simultaneously sends a message to the public that there is no need for alarm and it is treated as one might encounter news of other conflicts in regular media. As mentioned, the frame builds on a preunderstanding of the Russian state and their political ambitions and military capabilities. In this sense the Swedish Armed Forces uses diagnostic frames for consensus mobilization, meaning that the Swedish Armed Forces describes the public about the developments of the situation with the information an in the way that ensures the Swedish Armed Forces continued competence as well as the publics continued and common understanding of the conflict and its direct effects on Sweden. The
consensus mobilization results in a shared understanding that the Russian military actions are severe, however not threatening to the Swedish public and can therefore be contained.

Secondly, shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the Swedish Armed Forces releases a number of press briefings during the spring of 2022 where the Russian military actions in Ukraine are framed in an entirely new way. The Swedish Armed Forces uses international security as basis for framing and although uses a variety of discussion topics, themes, and statements, it all surrounds international security which enforces the entirety of the frame. By repetitively turning to the centrality of the frame, it allows the Swedish Armed Forces to talk broadly as well as in a narrow sense about the war, while simultaneously presenting its implication in an international context, as well as in a national one. By describing the cause of the problem, the Swedish Armed Forces can discuss the Russian state, and its forces and how they affect Sweden, the international community, while depicting them as an adversary and aggressor towards Ukraine. The rhetoric in the press briefing is harder, depicting Russian actions as acts of war crime, as of political ambition but also exposing their capabilities. During the press briefing of spring 2022, the Swedish Armed Forces reaffirms their own capabilities as strong and rapidly increasing, as well as stressing the need for increased efforts for international alliances such as NATO. All the while reassuring the Swedish population although the war directly effects Sweden and the surrounding areas in many ways, the risk of withstanding an armed attack from Russia is small. As such, the Swedish Armed Forces uses a combination of diagnostic and prognostic frames to maintain consensus mobilization. The frames furthermore empower Sweden’s strengthened position with western allied countries against the Russian state.

Relating to the research problem stated in the beginning of this thesis, the results have helped highlight a potential point of departure for future frames from the Swedish Armed Forces. As a country that has only recently officially changed its international policy from neutrality to solidarity properly framing issues related to the operations and objectives of the Swedish Armed Forces is vital in facilitating the “new” political direction. By understanding what frames and how frames best could be used by the armed forces, it could help facilitate the development towards a more long-term media strategy, one which includes a more nuanced and effective communication approach with the public.
5.2. Future Research
This thesis asks the question how the frames of Russian military actions in Ukraine have changed. It does not comment on the equally important question of why the frames have changed, and with what purpose. As made clear in this thesis, it conducts a framing analysis to highlight changes in framing by the Swedish Armed Forces. However, it would be naive to think that the Swedish Armed Forces alone influences public opinion on the top of international security, conflict, and war. As such, there are several opportunities to further study the effects of how the Swedish Armed Forces frames certain issues has on public opinion. One especially interesting topic of future study is the effects of the cases analyzed in this thesis and its effects on public opinion towards Sweden joining NATO. In a study by the SOM-institute in Gothenburg, Swedish public was asked if they think joining NATO was a good idea. Opinion polls showing most of the Swedish public thinking it not a good idea, except for on two occasions. One, between 2014-2016 were a very marginal majority though it a good idea. Two, since 2022 since which it has exponentially grown (Göteborgs Universitet, 2023). Not only do the dates correlate with the events of the cases studied in this thesis, one could argue that the level of engagement and efforts from the Swedish Armed Forces in framing and informing the public correlates with the statistical variations. It could prove an interesting and relevant study to verify these correlations and, to take it one step further, test the causality of the variations as a result of Swedish Armed Forces’ public media engagement.

Moreover, studies on the effects of the framing of Swedish Armed Forces would prove interesting due to the new political identity of Sweden. As a country that for long has regarded itself and been regarded as neutral, the effects of framing from a country newly politicized in a new direction could be a useful collection of studies do better understand and create future frames of different issues.

5.3. Relevance for Professional Practice
The ongoing war in Ukraine poses complex challenges towards international security in eastern Europe, as well as globally. This thesis could showcase how framing analysis may occur and develop regarding how military institutions could frame actors of modern wars. Although wars are fought by armed forces, wars are framed for most part by media and politicians. With the analysis of this thesis, the Swedish Armed Forces could better position themselves in the public eye and communicate their objectives and operations in a way that
aligns with the countries reformed policy direction. It could be argued in any military’s interest that strives to be proactive with the information and the message it sends to the public, to strive towards a better understanding of the relevance and effects of framing. Especially so in a modern context, where information and disinformation are more accessible and distributed than ever.

**Literature**

**Articles**


**Books**


**Documents**


**Online Sources**


**Primary Sources**

Ian Fernström
1OK026

stabsberedskapen/
[Accessed 14 August 2023].


