

## Självständigt arbete, Påbyggnadskurs Krigsvetenskap (15 HP)

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<b>Minority Demographics and the Swedish Armed Forces: Pushing the Agenda Forward</b>	
<b><u>Abstract</u></b>	
<p>No studies have been published on the Swedish Armed Forces' (SAF) diversity regarding minorities with a foreign national background. The purpose of this pilot study is therefore to start the field by looking at how the SAF, or similar organisations, can work with diversity management effectively. This is done through seven interviews with the organisation's employees, as well as interviewing ten persons in Sweden which are part of minority-groups with a foreign national background. Avery &amp; McKay's (2006) theory about attracting diversity was used as basis for the interview questions, especially regarding which recruitment tactics to use when attracting minorities. The results indicate that SAF are employing the correct tactics but that the lack of clear, definable, and measurable goals for the organisation impedes the effort. As well, SAF's focus on diversity has so far mainly included gender equality which has led to a diminishing effort towards other diversity-dimensions. However, there is a great will in the organisation to improve the work towards the other dimensions. Also, even though the SAF is employing the correct tactics, the interviews with the respondents show that some tactics might be more necessary than others. Going forth, top priority should be targeted information through personal meetings in certain areas and locations which contain a higher concentration of minorities.</p>	
<b><u>Key words:</u></b> E&D, Swedish Armed Forces, minorities, racial diversity, recruitment tactics	

## Introduction

Sweden has in recent times experienced a high influx of immigrants which now substantiate a big proportion of society (Statistikmyndigheten, 2022). At the same time, the SAF takes great emphasis in their goals to be demographically reflective of the Swedish society (Försvarsmakten, 2021a; Försvarsmakten, 2021b; Försvarsmakten, 2020). However, one quick look into the demographics of the SAF leads to a conclusion. That the organisation is not close to demographically representing the population when speaking of minorities with a foreign national background. This observation stems from five years of experience in the organisation but no official percentages related to the SAF's demographic composition exist since the organisation does not keep track of that. There is however statistics kept regarding percentages of foreign- and native-born people in different professions in Sweden. Here, the military profession ranks as the absolute lowest amongst ten other professions which partly support the claim that SAF is particularly bad at representing these new citizens (Statistikmyndigheten, 2022). Of course, one part of the reason is that service in the military requires citizenship which some foreign-born persons does not have but still, the statistics confirm the personal observation from being a part of the SAF for five years.

Evidently, having goals and clear reasons towards reflecting the society which they are set to defend is one thing, realising those goals seems to be another. Thus, how can the organisation bridge this gap of being more reflective on society? How can they - through diversifying the organisation - build a stronger defence to protect the nation?

But is a more diversified organisation more successful? This is debated and different meanings exist. Richard et al. (2003) imply that diversity promotes success when the focus is on innovation. At the same time, if innovation is of lesser importance, diversity might decrease results. Gomez & Bernet (2019) support that idea whilst adding that it correlates with improved team communications and risk management, both vital for military organisations. Whilst a stereotypical view of military culture would be conservative and non-innovative; transformation and innovation are highly idealised factors within contemporary warfare (Dombrowski, 2018). It is likewise crucial when looking at Swedish key factors in operational art: *manoeuvre warfare*, *flexibility*, and *mission command* (Försvarsmakten, 2020, p. 28). The organisation (2021, p. 67) itself also states that a diversified organisation has direct causal linkage towards success in warfare. This claim is strengthened by research where police services has attained more credibility and the public's confidence when successfully working with diversity (Stergioulis, 2019). Why this is important is because the Police is also a governmental agency with a monopoly on violence, dedicated to security, albeit within the nation's borders, thus closely resembling SAF. Likewise, credibility and the public's confidence toward SAF is crucial in war, crisis, and conflict.

So how is it then that the SAF draws direct conclusions that reflecting Swedish society is both morally right and brings success, still fails with it? What is not going according to plan in the organisation's attempt to become more dangerous for an intended enemy? Specifically, the research question is: *Why are the Swedish Armed Forces failing in recruiting minorities with foreign national backgrounds?* To approach the question, interviews was

chosen as the main method as these create unique and previously undisclosed material. This included interviewing people from minorities in Sweden with foreign national backgrounds, as well as SAF's employees who could give inside perspectives.

To define *minority with a foreign national background*, several factors are used. Statistikmyndigheten (2022), the Swedish authority for keeping statistics, defines foreign background as either being born in, or having one or two parents born in another country. As well - in this study - it is also based upon which country. Stemming from a European or North American country was regarded as not being part of a minority group. This is due to a social constructivist-perspective of whiteness and racialisation. Whiteness thus becomes continually reproduced based on different conceptions as race and ethnicity, which in turn can lead to racism towards different bodies and appearances (Hübinette & Tigervall, 2009). Some groups are thus racialised by the majority-population which in turn can lead to worsened opportunities in society based on peoples' appearances. In a Swedish context, this racialisation can occur by the white majority-population, especially towards those people that look different than the majority. Whilst not being fault proof, this categorisation to exclude those with a foreign national background in North America or Europe were thus a method to focus the study on groups which have encountered racism due to skin colour in their new country. Henceforth, the described group will be referred to as minorities.

## Previous Research

As the study's research field revolves around diversity, it is appropriate to start with Köllen's (2021) attempt to conclude the field and its fundamental pillars to make it more understandable. First, he names the field as Equality & Diversity (E&D) and states that central concepts are *dimensionality* and *legitimacy*. *Dimensionality* points out the multifaceted dimensions of E&D; such as sex, gender, race, sexual orientation, and so on. This marks out the field's intersectionality and complexity as these dimensions require different solutions which means that research is required to be heavily context-based. *Legitimacy* revolves around the question: "Why should anyone implement diversity management?". His text constitutes a legitimising argumentation to prioritise E&D-research and application on organisations. At the same time, the *dimensionality* explains the context-based question that research needs to be contextually attributed for E&D-measures to be effective.

To approach the Swedish military dimension, Ishaq & Hussain (2014) looks at E&D within western military organisations whereas racial belonging was one of them. They confirm the notion that this dimension is widely context-based. For example: the US and the Netherlands have considerable differences demographically which require different solutions from their Armed Forces. The findings in the study concludes that vast differences exist between western country's militaries and their progression in E&D and more research is needed on the different dimensions and contexts to ascertain how to improve.

One dimension which has been looked at is the Dutch military context by Van den Berg & Richardson (2009). This was done through interviews with high school students, as well as representatives of the Dutch Army. Interestingly, high school students from ethnic

cultural minorities (ECM) demonstrated few variances as to their interest taken employment in the Dutch Army when comparing to the ethnic cultural majority. Also, even though the Dutch Army had sufficient structures and policy-documents to promote diversity, the predominantly white male culture, stereotypes, and inexperience from interacting with ECM contributed negatively and the policies were not followed correctly. However, it is appropriate to mention the study's time frame, 2007, a period where western society looked different politically and militarily. Especially in the Netherlands, immigration has increased by 345% since then which means significant demographic change (Statistics Netherlands, 2023). Also, the security climate in Europe has changed dramatically and the focus of many European militaries is now towards their proximity, especially the SAF (Försvarsmakten, 2022, p. 7).

The problem is that no research exists that focuses on SAF and Swedish minority-groups. Instead, there are articles published on other E&D dimensions in SAF, such as LGBT and gender (Sundevall & Persson, 2016; Strand, Persson, & Sundevall, 2022). However, research on minorities in Swedish civil society and organisations has been published. Osman & Thunborg (2019) explores recruitment practises based on Swedish HR-expert's perspectives to find which practises exist and what dilemmas revolve around these. They explain each practise diligently but for this article, the important part is the paradox found. The paradox is that practises aimed at attracting minorities can be seen as discriminatory and practises aimed at counteracting discrimination can meanwhile counteract diversity.

The research closest to the Swedish military context seems to be Löfstrand & Hansen's (2014) article where they examine discourse within Swedish policing. One discourse, that of *diversity policing*, showed the inherent values of a diversified police force reflecting society. The other discourse, that of *policing diversity*, showed where these inherent values came to play. However, as *diversity policing* legitimised and welcomed a diverse workforce, *policing diversity* showed that minorities were being used in such a way that stereotypes were reinforced. For example, police from minority-groups were being used in "ethnic matching" within "dangerous" areas which in turn promoted stereotypes. Once again, a paradox developed. However, due to E&D's inherent contextuality, this article holds limited relevance for the SAF.

The previous research shows that this research problem is unexplored in the Swedish military context. Thus, as the external relevance was stated in the introduction, the internal relevance takes base in closing this research gap. In this way, the text constitutes a pilot study with the purpose to start the research field regarding minorities in SAF. At the same time, even considering E&D's heavy contextuality, nations with demographic similarities to Sweden can learn from the study. For example, many countries in Europe have recently seen increased immigration, same as Sweden. There will be generalisability towards their respective Armed Forces which makes the study's results useful for more than the SAF.

## Theory

The theoretical underpinning of the study took base in Avery & McKay's (2006) theory about attracting diversity. They conducted a research overview to find empirically supported recruitment tactics towards diversifying an organisation. The theory was picked as it is comprehensible and broken down into well-defined tactics which made it clearer to break down further into operationalisations. Also, as the basic premise of the study is that SAF is not reflective of Swedish society, the focus is drawn towards how it can become reflective. Thus, a theory of attracting minorities fit well towards the study's purpose.

In their study, Avery & McKay (2006) conducted a research overview and found five different successful tactics which was either assertive (offensive) or defensive. Regarding which was most successful, it had to do with the organisation's diversity reputation. If it was positive or neutral, assertive tactics should be used, especially in tandem with each other. However, if the diversity reputation of an organisation was negative, defensive tactics was needed. This means that the first thing an organisation should do - if they want to be more equal and diverse - is to understand their diversity reputation. Afterwards, this can be used to employ the appropriate tactics to attain positive results.

Assertive tactics includes *ingratiation*, *promotion*, *exemplification*, and *supplication*. To *ingratiate*, an organisation should be specific in which media their impression management (i.e. external communication to convey a certain image of the organisation) is seen. At the same time, impression management should show diversity, and present inclusive policy statements. Meanwhile, recruiting events should focus on locations or institutions which has a higher degree of minorities, and recruiting personnel from the organisation should represent diversity. These recruitment opportunities could especially include certain events such as Diversity fairs.

If an organisation has been especially successful with diversity management, *promotion* is a way to capitalise on previous successes. It involves presenting evidence in their impression management that the organisation has been successful in diversity management. For example, advertising can promote actual diversity on the workplace or recruiters from minority-groups can speak of their positive experiences within the organisation.

*Exemplification* is a tactic used to show corporate social responsibility through sponsoring certain organisations or associations which work with E&D. For example, SAF employs *exemplification*-tactics when participating in Swedish Pride-marches. This participation sends external messages towards the public that the organisation values and supports freedom of sexuality and everyone's right to live as they choose.

The last assertive tactic is *supplication* where organisations portray a dependency to diversify themselves. This can be used instead of *ingratiation*'s showing of highly diverse ads. For example, if an organisation lacks diversity, a method might be to convey the message that they want to be more diverse rather than saying that they already are.

If an organisation has a negative diversity reputation, defensive tactics such as *disclaimers*, *apologies*, or *prosocial behaviour* can be employed to improve it. However, these tactics might be negative for organisations with a neutral or positive diversity reputation as they might imply that bigger problems exist within the organisation. Defensive tactics can thus be destructive when recruiting with E&D in mind.

*Disclaimers* might for instance be employed when conveying an image that the organisation is diverse, but it is not in reality. They can then avoid unrealistic expectations through a message. *Apologies* can be used when something negative regarding E&D has recently happened, for example if a police department has historic records of racism but now wants to remove that negative stamp. It can thus be sincere about historic shortcomings, whilst conveying messages that they want to improve. *Prosocial behaviour* revolves around doing voluntary actions to help others. As example in this instance: that the organisation assists certain people, organisations, or associations which conveys a message of them prioritising E&D.

<b>Assertive Tactics</b>	<b>Defensive tactics</b>
<p><b><i>Ingratiation</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ads in targeted media</li> <li>• Highly diverse ads</li> <li>• Inclusiveness policy statements</li> <li>• Recruiting @ female/minority institutions</li> <li>• Minority/female recruiters</li> <li>• Diversity fairs</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Promotion</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising Diversity Management Success</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Exemplification</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicized sponsorship</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Supplication</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messages conveying dependence</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Disclaimers</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Apologies</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Prosocial behaviour</i></b></p>

Figure 1: Assertive and Defensive Tactics (Avery & McKay, 2006)

## Method

The study employs Avery & McKay's (2006) theory to explore the research question. As the intention was based on SAF's ability to reflect society, it appeared most interesting to study the case through existing theory, rather than developing or testing one (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 88-89). As previously stated, E&D is highly contextual and thus, this design focused better on SAF's special distinguishing context.

The research question of the study is: *Why are the Swedish Armed Forces failing in recruiting minorities with foreign national backgrounds?* Thus, it was of great importance that the translation and operationalisation of the theory corresponded and contributed towards the research question. A solid operationalisation is vital for the study's validity and thus, if failing to capture the proper phenomena and factors, the study would fall flat, and the results be rejected. The operationalisation strategy used is called *reasoning validity* where an argumentation occurred, based on the choices made on each operationalisation of the factors. Optimally, if previous similar studies with Avery & McKay's (2006) theory existed, their operationalisations could be used. This would strengthen the study's validity as they would have been reviewed by the research community beforehand. However, no such work exists. Another strategy would be that of *empirical validity* but the limited available time for the study deemed that method inappropriate (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 58-64).

Firstly, the theory is originally created to describe recruitment within the entire E&D-spectrum whilst this study only focuses on the dimension of diversity towards minorities. For this reason, questions regarding the topics of gender, sexual orientation, religion, and so forth were not included. Also, defensive tactics and *supplication* were segments of the theory which were disregarded as it was apparent that SAF were more assertive when conveying impression management. Yes, *supplication* is an assertive tactic according to the theory, but it seems as a more defensive tactic due to its apologetic nature: the conveying of a failure in diversity and implying that the organisation wants to fix the problem. *Promotion*-tactics were also disregarded, as one of the basic premises of the study takes root in SAF's failure in recruiting minorities. It thus becomes hard to promote diversity management successes.

This all meant that *ingratiation*-, and *exemplification*-tactics were looked at to conclude whether SAF employs them. A successful conduction of these should, according to Avery & McKay (2006), lead to a more diversified organisation. Also, as a positive or negative diversity reputation governed whether assertive or defensive tactics should be used, it became interesting to seek an answer to that question. The following factors were looked at, based on diversity reputation and assertive tactics:

- Does SAF target specific media or locations to reach out to minorities?
- Does SAF show diversity aimed at minorities in their impression management?
- Does SAF show clear stances on the inclusiveness policies towards minorities?
- Does SAF's recruitment personnel represent diversity towards minorities?
- Does SAF cooperate with, and sponsor, certain organisations, associations, or diversity fairs who work towards minorities?

- How do minorities regard SAF's diversity reputation?

To seek answers to these questions, it became apparent that there was a need to find both subjective and objective truths. For example, diversity in impression management or diversity reputation is subjective, especially for the intended target group. Speaking objective truths, that can include such things as whether SAF has an intention to target specific media or locations. The problem can arise when seeking these intentions or how SAF works with E&D as source material might be hard to find. It was because of these reasons that interviews were chosen as the study's methodology as they are useful when trying to catch perceptions of subjective realities and when exploring unexplored topics where source material might be unavailable (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 262-263). The interviews were conducted towards a selection of people from minority-groups in Sweden, as well as certain employees within SAF.

## The Interviews

First, it is vital to distinguish the interviews from each other. When the organisation's employees were interviewed, they were informants. When people from minority-groups were interviewed, they were respondents. There are higher demands for source criticism during interviews with informants as they are asked to tell an objective truth. Especially as this study might criticise SAF, diligence was needed when formulating questions and analysing responses. Meanwhile, there is no objective truth when interviewing respondents. The intention was rather to find their subjective truth. However, four source criticism criteria were used in both interview formats: *authenticity*, *time*, *dependency*, and *tendency*. The difference lied in the analysing of the answers regarding whether the interviewee was an informant or a respondent (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 272-273, 291-296).

Differences also existed between the groups when choosing who to interview, i.e. what sample. SAF's informants were chosen through the concept of *centrality* which means the choosing is governed by their centrality in the organisation based on the research question. For example, a navigational officer is less likely to answer the relevant questions compared to someone working with recruitment or communication (Esaiasson et al., 2017, p. 267). To understand which persons were central in SAF, an informant from the organisation was first interviewed. This led to a greater understanding regarding areas of responsibility and further contact was made. As such, seven informants were interviewed which are more diligently described in the analysis-chapter (*Figure 2*).

When choosing respondents, non-random sampling methods were used. Convenience sampling is a method where the sample is chosen based on their convenience in proximity and willingness to participate. This method was used instead of random sampling due to time and fund restraints. Implications are that the generalising ambition is lowered towards the entire population (minorities). At the same time, generalising towards that heterogenous group with a method like interviewing seems impossible. For such generalising ambitions, quantitative methods would need to be used, or the population be narrowed down. This could be accomplished through focusing on a particular minority group or a certain age



span. However, a bottleneck was realised at the project's start-up where the study could have failed if failing in obtaining respondents. Thus, if the sample would be too narrow, it might have been hard to attain enough interviews (Robinson, 2014, p. 32; Esaiasson et al., 2017, p. 171). Thus, it was deemed preferable to approach many, rather than too few respondents. Also, as this is a pilot study, its intention is not necessarily on generalising towards millions of people. Rather, its purpose revolves around opening an undiscovered research field.

The criteria for the convenience sampling were based on three governing principles:

1. Only strangers were interviewed to keep scientific distance between the interviewer and interviewee as interviews with friends or people you know tend to be influenced by your previous relationship (Esaiasson et al., 2017, p. 268).
2. The respondents had to be part of a minority group and have a foreign national background from outside of Europe and North America. This choice was made because their understanding and subjective opinion of diversity is vital for the study's results. If people from the white majority in Sweden were picked, different perceptions of diversity would be captured, especially as white majority groups tend to put lower demands on that in organisations (Avery, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2004, p. 146).
3. Subjective experts were avoided as these might already have fixed opinions regarding SAF's ability or inability before the interview and were thus avoided (Esaiasson et al., 2017, p. 268). It is impossible to know whether a respondent has biased ideas beforehand but for example, respondents working with recruitment or engaged in politics were deemed inappropriate.

Respondents were found with the help of organisations and associations which gather different minority-groups in Sweden. To further seek interviewees, a search was also made in various local Facebook-groups within the Stockholm region. Also, the number of both respondents and informants were kept at as low as possible, partly because of time-related reasons but also because difficulties could arise when analysing numerous interviewees (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 268-269). The final number of respondents resulted in ten persons, interviewed over a two-week period. A strive was also that respondents would comprise of different sex and age, plus that they could be interviewed in person. Even though that was intended, most interviews were conducted through digital means. This was partly due to the respondents' wishes, as digital means requires less time. Another reason was that some lived far from Stockholm and thus, travelling to interview them seemed unnecessary. Though most interviews were conducted digitally, it worked surprisingly well. A feeling of reciprocity was achieved, and the conversations felt fluent. Regarding the strive towards different sex and age, five women and five men were interviewed. The ages spanned from 20-25 towards 60-65 with most being somewhere in their thirties to fifties.

Regarding the method of interviewing, they were constructed as semi-structured. This choice was made to capture a variety of information from the interviewees so that they could complement with unexpected findings outside of the questions based in theory. As such, questions were asked in a broad sense and leeway was created for the interview to take unexpected turns into undiscovered topics. As guidance in creating, conducting, and analysing

interviews, Galleta's (2013) book on semi-structured interviews was used. She describes the interview process as containing three segments. The first is to create reciprocity toward the interviewee and using broad questions. The second segment is where questions gain greater specificity and relates more closely towards the research question. Lastly, the final segment offers possibilities to return toward unexplored topics which revealed themselves through earlier questions. Then, the interview should work towards a sense of wrapping up and give the interviewee chances to add additional thoughts. The book offered concrete advice and examples of semi-structured interviews from a scientific perspective which helped greatly, both in the interviewing stage but also the analysing. Esaiasson et al. (2017) also included various tips which were used but was deemed too undetailed regarding interviews to be the only methodological source.

## **Operationalisations**

It became apparent that the theory had to be broken down into two categories: one towards respondents and one towards informants. The interview questions that the respondents were asked is depicted in *Appendix A* to increase transparency and reliability. They were constructed with the following four operationalisations in mind.

### **Interviews with the Respondents:**

#### **1. How diverse do the respondents view the Swedish Armed Forces' impression management?**

This raised the question about what diversity is. What is considered enough to claim that one portrays diversity towards minorities? Since this is a subjective area as different people will have different demands when they conclude an organisation to be diverse, this was measured through showing SAF's Instagram-account where the organisation depicts militaries in different environments. The selection of pictures was chosen based on different criteria. Firstly, as the study focuses on SAF's recent years, only pictures posted between 29<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were chosen. Secondly, only pictures which portrayed a military, and if that person had recognisable features were included. For example, if a picture included a tank or fighter jet, that picture was disregarded as they do not say anything about diversity shown. As the total number of posts during that timeframe and with that criterion is immense, showing all of them to the respondents would occupy too much interview time. Thus, every fifth picture was chosen randomly. For example, every picture was assigned a random number between 1—5 and only pictures of a certain number were used.

This selection method was used to ascertain that a wide variety of advertising campaigns and posts were shown to reduce randomness. Otherwise, for instance if the time frame was too narrow, the pictures might have randomly focused on certain areas such as diversity, NATO, or specific operations. The randomness was also used to ensure that the author did not become selective in which posts to show which would alter the results. After showing the Instagram-feed, certain questions were asked as to the respondent's perceptions. To increase transparency, the pictures can be found on this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MpwGPmchY1F7Rm9e8GG3-mp580MHizMX?usp=sharing>.

## **2. How do the respondents feel regarding the representation of diversity in the Swedish Armed Forces' recruitment personnel?**

One vital role when talking of recruitment is recruitment personnel (yrkesinformatör or skolinformatör in Swedish). They are mainly the face outwards on job fairs, school fairs, and recruitment activities which means their visibility towards potential future employees are substantial. Every regiment's and weapon branches' Instagram were scoured for pictures of recruitment personnel between 2023—2024, which amounted to 18 pictures containing 34 different recruitment persons. This was then showed to the respondents which gave their subjective opinion whether they deemed recruitment personnel as diverse or not. Once again, to increase transparency, the pictures can be found on this link:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-0mr5fLd\\_kmAXHuuKdm-jOUjMnBtR5Uu?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-0mr5fLd_kmAXHuuKdm-jOUjMnBtR5Uu?usp=sharing).

## **3. How clear is the Swedish Armed Forces' policy towards the respondents that the organisation strives to recruit minorities?**

As much of the organisation's reputation is built through external communication, could their latest social media-posts clearly show a strive towards recruiting minorities? Before respondents were shown Instagram, they were asked about previous perceptions regarding SAF's stance and policy on diversity. They were then afterwards asked how they viewed the posts, especially how they saw it through a diversity perspective. Was the organisation's stance clear on the matter?

## **4. How does the respondents view the Swedish Armed Forces' diversity reputation?**

Perhaps the hardest question of all, what is SAF's diversity reputation? It became a matter of capturing the implicit essence of each interview with the respondents: their subjective opinions. An overall picture was established through several questions such as their previous perceptions of SAF, thoughts after viewing Instagram, and the possibility of them taking employment within the organisation.

### **Interviews with the Informants:**

The remaining three operationalisations were rather asked towards SAF's informants which made them less directed towards capturing subjective opinions. Rather, objective truths were wanted regarding how the responsible persons in the organisation worked towards including minorities. Interview questions were hand crafted based on the respondent's job within the organisation. These questions were thus not attached as appendices as they would comprise

too many words which would take up unnecessary space in the total maximum word count. Some specific questions are however highlighted in cursive to exemplify and increase reliability.

**1. Does the Swedish Armed Forces' impression management focus on minorities as a target group to increase diversity? If so, how?**

Swedish society could be argued to be geographically segregated which indicates that certain areas could be targeted to increase visibility towards minorities (Statistikmyndigheten, 2022). Questions were asked if this aspect is included in the organisation's view of their visibility in Swedish society, especially in areas with more minorities. For example, questions like *“do you focus specifically when communicating as an organisation towards certain areas or locations based on gender, age, ethnicity, and so forth?”*. Especially as this study focuses on social media – or at least the respondent's view on SAF's Instagram – questions towards the social media-department were also asked. For instance, regarding which target groups they have with their posts and if they have internal documents regulating depictions of minorities.

**2. Does the Swedish Armed Forces' recruitment personnel focus strategically on locations where a higher degree of minorities are located? If so, how?**

Regarding their strategy in using recruiting personnel towards specific areas, questions was stated such as: *“Is there any specific central focus when using recruitment personnel? Do you have certain areas or groups that are prioritised?”*.

**3. Does the Swedish Armed Forces' publicly sponsor entities and associations which promote minorities' causes? If so, how?**

Have any strategic initiatives been taken with this in regards? Can similarities between the organisations' endorsement of Pride be found in associations and entities which promote minorities' causes? To conclude whether SAF does this, questions like the following was stated: *“Is there any cooperation with associations or organisations who work with integrations, minorities' right, or similar? For example, something similar to SAF's commitment to Pride-parades”*.

## **Research Ethical-Considerations**

Suffice to say, the study regards sensitive topics which need diligence and thoughtfulness when exploring. The limited statistics regarding minorities is an aggravating factor but a necessary one. We do not want a society where skin colour defines your present, past and future. This study could however be criticised for doing just that, placing people into groups and looking at it from an unpleasantly systematic way. It is however necessary at times. For instance, with implementations and measurements of gender equality-goals, methods, and

policies; equality in between sexes is strengthened (Singh, 2023). Without measuring differences between men and woman, for example their participation in SAF, how are we supposed to implement proper measures to combat gender inequality? The same can be said with minorities. Sometimes, group-belonging will have to be a factor to improve everyone's right to equal opportunities.

Another consideration taken is related to the handling of personal data which are contained in the interviews. The Swedish Defence University has strict rules concerning personal data which needed following. Alongside, a checklist<sup>1</sup> needed to be passed before collecting personal data. The list contained several points, for example clearance from the study's supervisor, proper management of data according to law, and consent from the people whom personal data was collected from. Particularly, the notion of consent had great focus. All interviewees were informed of the handling of personal data and had the right to withdraw their statements if need be. Also, even though this study concerns sensitive topics, no such personal data was collected from the interviewees.

Criticism could be lifted that the study clumps together these heterogenous minority-groups as homogenous, even though vast differences exist. This is however a chosen limitation of the study. The reason is that minority job seekers seem to value any sort of diversity in advertisement, even if not portraying their own specific minority group. It seems that lifting minority diversity as a whole is sufficient to attract several different minority-groups (Avery, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2004). Also, if every separate group in Sweden would need separate studies of their own, the field would become incomprehensible as hundreds of studies would need conducting. It seems appropriate to start the field through this approach, even though the results and opinions of the interviewees does not constitute or speak for the entire minority populace of Sweden.

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<sup>1</sup> The checklist can be found on this site: <https://www.fhs.se/studentportalen/studera/mina-studier/personuppgifter-i-sjalvstandiga-studentarbeten.html>

# Analysis

## Interviews with the Respondents

### **How diverse do the respondents view the Swedish Armed Forces' impression management?**

Important to note is that most respondents possessed little or no previous experience with SAF's impression management. Especially regarding social media, only respondent eight said yes and that was through Facebook. However, an interview with SAF's social media-department showed that their target audience is between the ages of 18—25 which only one of the respondents were. Six respondents had viewed advertising in public places such as in public transport but also, exposure was attained mainly through television or news media. Of the respondents which had previous perceptions of commercials, three (Resp. 3, 4 & 5) regarded them as positive and interesting, and two (Resp. 6 & 9) had no distinguishable perception. Another viewed them as reinforcing a negative picture of the organisation, a negative picture which seemed to originate from a lack of trust towards SAF (Resp. 10). Interestingly, of the five respondents who had a perception beforehand, two (Resp. 6 & 9) pointed out a feeling that the advertising was aimed towards women. Respondent nine even said: "I think SAF has invested more effort, in my opinion, on gender equality rather than diversity. And you could wonder why, have they not thought about it? Is gender more prioritised than other dimensions?". During the rest of the conversation, it was obvious that the respondent did not look at it negatively concerning the focus on the gender issue. The quote revolves more around the fact that the person noticed some sort of prioritisation.

After the respondents viewed Instagram-posts, the focus was often again drawn towards gender diversity rather than other dimensions of E&D. Not to say that this was negatively viewed, it was viewed as beneficial, and opinions were mainly positive regarding the organisation's commitment towards women on social media. However, only respondent four and seven expressed that SAF conveyed diversity regarding minorities. Respondent seven first articulated it as "I saw people from my region" but later conveyed "Honestly, I felt it was more for women than people of immigrant backgrounds". This person was not alone in this idea, although it is impossible to claim that this thought was some sort of consensus between the respondents. Anyhow, the respondents generally implied a lack of diversity regarding minorities but that other dimensions of E&D were shown, especially gender equality.

### **How do the respondents feel regarding the representation of diversity in the Swedish Armed Forces' recruitment personnel?**

After viewing pictures of recruitment personnel, a clear focus on gender equality was brought forth from five respondents (1, 3, 6, 7 & 8), stating things like "there were a lot of women. But it doesn't look like there's a lot of different nationalities and ethnicities" (Resp. 6), "It seems less diverse. More women but less diverse ethnically" (Resp. 7), and "there were women and men, more women, but no one with an immigrant background" (Resp. 8).

However, only two out of ten respondents (3 & 7) implied that the lack of minorities would have a negative effect on them, albeit minimal. Instead, six respondents (1, 2, 4, 6, 8 & 9) expressed feelings of insignificance concerning whether recruitment personnel were diverse or not. More focus was rather on competence and a welcoming aura which seemed to be the case from the pictures. For example, one person said: “look, everyone looks nice in their uniforms. The most important is the uniform and the knowledge they possess” (Resp. 4). Two of these respondents (6 & 9) which felt insignificance regarding portrayal of minorities did however offer certain thoughts as to how younger people might view recruitment personnel. They stated that in their youth experience, young people from minorities might feel a bigger necessity that recruitment personnel are more similar to them. That they, when they were younger and eligible for conscription, would think of it differently than now. Respondent nine even had experience similar to recruitment personnel and stated that they, in that association, reached out better to youths from minorities when there were people talking who was similar to those same youths. Similar in the regard of skin-colour, ethnicity, and area affiliation.

What was mainly expressed was positive feelings and a wish to talk to and see recruitment personnel, both now but also when they were younger and could have considered a military career. In fact, only respondent two recorded seeing and talking to recruitment personnel previously. Many others expressed that talking to people from SAF during school or job fairs and local events could have led them on a military career path, especially those that felt an interest in the organisation as kids or adolescence. Some stated that it also could have been suitable now as adults, to attain a bigger trust and understanding of what the SAF does. One person expressed it as “somehow, during these occasions, when you see people from the Armed Forces, it becomes a status thing. You are playing an important role, representing your country” (Resp. 2).

What might be the biggest explanation as to whether many respondents had not seen recruitment personnel previously in their life seemed to be their age. When many respondents were younger and eligible for conscription, SAF struggled to stay afloat due to budgetary restraints. It was a time of cut downs in the organisation and most likely, the presence of recruitment personnel would have diminished.

### **How clear is the Swedish Armed Forces’ policy towards the respondents that the organisation strives to recruit minorities?**

One of the first questions in the interview was formulated to capture perceptions in the eyes of the respondents as to how SAF presented itself through impression management. As previously stated, the respondents generally lacked previous perceptions of the organisation’s social media and advertising. However, six respondents had previous experience of it and two of these (Resp. 6 & 9) expressed that they had seen a clear strive towards gender equality. Respondent three mentioned noticing a strive towards minorities as: “the feeling I get when viewing the organisation’s commercials are that they are interested in involving minorities to strengthen diversity”. At the same time, no one expressed that they perceived SAF as not striving to recruit minorities.

In hindsight, the interview questions could have been clearer and more concise in asking whether the respondents perceived a clear policy or not. It seems as if the interview questions were better suited towards SAF's diversity reputation, advertising, and recruitment personnel.

### **How does the respondents view the Swedish Armed Forces' diversity reputation?**

A question was asked regarding what the respondents thought SAF values in their personnel: homogeneity or heterogeneity. This included what the organisation seeks in terms of behaviour but also dimensions within E&D. Only respondent ten expressed a negative conception towards SAF when speaking diversity. It was however only implicitly implied when analysing the interview as a whole. That person also described a perception of a stereotypical soldier as "blonde, white, cleanly shaved, and very xenophobic". Two respondents (1 & 3) were inconclusive in their opinions of SAF's diversity reputation which made it hard to analyse if they were positive or negative. However, the remaining seven respondents expressed positivity towards SAF in terms of diversity, especially whilst discussing diversity dimensions such as gender, race, and sexual orientation. Many thought of the organisation as a place where people are treated equally regardless of background. Benefits were laid out as something that SAF most likely would enjoy. One person described it as:

Personally, I'd think that the Swedish Armed Forces appreciates people with different backgrounds and mindsets. Maybe they're from another country with different experiences, especially language-wise. That could be very valuable if we're to war abroad. I think the organisation looks at it positively (Resp. 8).

Although it seemed as SAF held a high diversity reputation in this regard, several (Resp. 1, 2, 3, 9 & 10) expressed that the organisation seeks behavioural homogeneity. Reoccurring values such as disciplined behaviour, pride, strive for results, seriousness, and being laconic are put forth. However, this does not seem to imply that SAF only recruits certain people from certain groups. Rather, everyone could possess these attributes. At the same time, some (Resp. 1, 2 & 10) noted that they saw a discrepancy in demographics within the organisation compared to the rest of society. When they had seen SAF in public places, fewer minorities were viewed in uniform, respondent ten even noted that "I haven't seen anything else than white Swedes as soldiers". Of course, some others viewed it as having seen minorities wearing uniform. It was also pointed out that this was not only a problem for SAF, rather something that many organisations in Swedish society struggles with. "It's just like everybody else. There are prejudices and SAF are not better or worse than the rest" (Resp. 3).

Questions arise when this discrepancy exists as many respondents believe that SAF values heterogeneity – or at least not value homogeneity – whilst not being deemed demographically reflective of society by those same respondents. Whilst no causality is established in this study, it seems that many respondents consider that SAF are focusing on gender issues (Resp. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9). It might thus be a factor that the gender diversity reputation of SAF, which seems to improve rapidly, might spill over towards the other dimensions of their diversity reputation.



There are however difficulties to ascertain whether SAF has a positive or negative diversity reputation based on the interviews. For this to be empirically concluded, comparisons towards other organisations might need to be conducted. It is also possible that the interview questions were poorly formulated to answer this matter. But even if it seems difficult to describe SAF's diversity reputation as good, the respondents generally do not look at it negatively. Although respondent ten described negative feelings towards SAF's stance towards diversity, that person generally had a lack of trust in the organisation. Also, just because one person expressed it does not mean it is true when looking at the respondents as a whole. Based on the interviews, the conclusion is that SAF's diversity reputation seems neutral. Although the organisation seems to take rapid improvements regarding gender issues, the same improvements are not as clearly viewed regarding minorities.

### **Other interesting finds**

The last question of the interviews was formulated as: *What do you think the Swedish Armed Forces can do to recruit more minorities?* Although none of the respondents were experts on E&D and could offer genuine empirical expertise on the topic, their personal experience was deemed highly valuable. Especially interesting was that eight out of ten respondents (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9) pointed towards similar approaches in solving the issue. That the issue might be information related. That many people simply have insufficient knowledge about SAF, especially in certain areas.

The idea was that SAF should focus on educating, discussing, informing, and showing up in areas which has a higher disposition of minorities. This is especially stated during certain ages where people are more susceptible to think about enlisting in the Armed Forces, e.g. 16—19 years old. This could both be done in schools but also by arranging local information meets in those areas. For example, respondent eight stated: "I'd probably set up a station in these areas where, once a month, people could come and talk. Then send someone to schools every other week from SAF with local knowledge and a minority background". This is certainly deemed highly resource consuming and might be unachievable, at least once a month or every other week. However, it points to a solution that many formulates. By approaching both adolescence in schools but also adults through the local stations, a shift in norms might be achieved in those areas. For example, parents' opinions and views are highly important when choosing careers, especially in the military (van den Berg & Richardson, 2009, p. 468). Perhaps it is not enough to just educate and inform the younger generation, the older might need to be on board, which is something respondent six says: "Maybe not just educate youngsters but also their parents. Show that SAF isn't harmful and that enlistment has strong benefits. Both young and old need knowledge".

Whilst discussing norms, one thing that might separate minority-groups from the majority-group is that in many families with a purely Swedish ancestry, relatives has often undergone previous military training or experience. For example, many of those have a father, uncle, or likewise which underwent conscription after high school and can offer experience and knowledge about the military. This might be a crucial variable when considering if

someone wants to enlist in SAF or not, but this study cannot empirically support that claim as it has not been designed towards that purpose. The study can however support that every respondent could have considered a career in SAF when they were young but different aspects got in the way, mainly studies, other job offers, or gender-related issues as the organisations gender reputation at the time was flawed. This topic could be more interesting to further elaborate and explore but with a different interview sample, e.g. men and women between 18—25 years.

## Interviews with the Informants

Informant one	Central Recruitment Coordinator	The area of responsibility revolves around education, coordination, and evaluation of SAF personnel that works towards engaging conscripts towards a continued commitment in the SAF.
Informant two	Anonymous	Works in the Department of Communication and Public Affairs.
Informant three	HR director	Works at authority level with strategic subjects such as agreements with the trade union, terms of employment and benefits, executive recruitment, gender equality and diversity and different kind of surveys linked to workings environment.
Informant four	Head of Staff Management Section	Works broadly in the Department of Communication and Public Affairs with different projects and assignments.
Informant five	Head of Employer Development Section	Works in SAF's headquarters in matters regarding SAF as an employer.
Informant six	Head of Section	Head of a section within SAF's Relations and Communications-department which is a part of Human Resources.
Informant seven	Content Manager and Social Media Creator	Informant seven was actually two persons interviewed at the same time. They were deeply involved in SAF's central social media-accounts.

*Figure 2: SAF's informants.*

### **Does the Swedish Armed Forces' impression management focus on minorities as a target group to increase diversity? If so, how?**

This mindset in impression management seems to partly exist within SAF. Informant six stated that when targeting recruitment in big city areas like Stockholm, Gothenburg, and

Malmö; a diverse audience has been reached. A conclusion that SAF then drew was to specifically target these metropolitan areas, partly because they contain a lot of people but also partly because they contain a greater diversity of minorities. However, she also stated that they have established five different target groups with their recruiting communication, and that minorities are not one of these. Rather, the only target group within E&D was women. The other groups were rather different jobs within SAF, such as IT-personnel, technicians, and officers.

It was not only her that mentioned this certain focus on women regarding E&D, two others were very specific in women being a target group. Informant five said that there is a difference in priority regarding E&D, especially regarding the guidelines from the political level.

There has been a lot of work to include gender equality and integration in governmental authorities. This might be a reason as to why we've worked more intensely towards that question. For example, we have several educations regarding gender equality and integration. Of course, there is other regulations concerning other dimensions of E&D, mainly the Equality Ombudsman (DO)<sup>2</sup> and the Anti-Discrimination Act. But the fact that gender equality and integration is mandatory puts that question and work on the top of the agenda for us.

This claim is strengthened by informant two who says that the guidelines from the government are very clear regarding gender quality and integration. Further, in their General Action Plan concerning 2024—2030, SAF writes that they have four priorities in their future E&D-challenges: “increase the number of women, work systematically on gender equality, include gender equality in military operations and keep working according to our gender equality integration strategy”. The plan also states that there is a goal to increase minorities within the organisation but seemingly, it is not a prioritised area. (Försvarsmakten, 2024, p. 11). Informant three also states:

We've put a lot of focus on gender equality, but this does not imply that we don't want other dimensions of E&D. Of course, we want to be an equal and diverse organisation but gender is the only dimension where we've put out specific and measurable percentage goals.

Generally amongst the informants, there seemed to be an awareness of E&D, even though it mostly focused on gender equality. Everyone stressed the importance of the organisation to be reflective towards all parts of society. Thus, there seemed to be no lack of will to improve in E&D, especially whilst discussing this study's topic. Whilst conducting the interviews, the informants frequently commented on the importance of improving in E&D-matters and being more inclusive as an organisation. This can be exemplified whilst interviewing informants three and five. When asking them about their personal views on how SAF is doing in E&D, informant three concluded that “I've never worked in an authority where the inherent values and ethics are this strong. [...] That we have these commitments towards Pride, the International Women's Day etc. That we show our stance on E&D. I find that amazing”.

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<sup>2</sup> “DO is a government agency that works on behalf of the Swedish parliament and government to promote equal rights and opportunities and to combat discrimination.” (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2023)

Afterwards, informant five said: “I agree. What’s striking for me is that people here are not here because of the salary, rather the mission. We want to be here and contribute. That’s crucial, that we find these matters important”.

This perceived awareness and importance of E&D in SAF is strengthened by their use of something called Inclusive communication (Inf. 6). Inclusive communication is a guiding principle when viewing or depicting persons, especially as organisations. It revolves around having an E&D-perspective when communicating (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2023). This communication-style seems to have been adopted at SAF’s social media-department. Informant seven described educational programs regarding Inclusive communication that they conducted. Further, there was an awareness of E&D when they frequently analysed their own social media-feed. “Of course, we view all publicised pictures. They might be great but it we only depict white men, that’s not how we want to do it [...] We want to contribute and help out with a E&D-perspective”. In fact, they had created measurable targets for E&D. Regarding showing minorities, their intention was to portray 20% of their feed as people from minority-groups. This intention was based on an analysis that around 20% of their intended audience belonged to minority-groups with a foreign national background. However, this goal was hard to attain as obstacles got in their way. “If we only focus on 20%, that can be problematic. We’ve got other goals, for instance to show different Defence Branches (Navy, Army, Air Force). Thus, showing diversity not only includes E&D, it includes showing the entire SAF”. Also, they did not want to portray a blatantly false image of the organisation’s diversity as they were aware of the implications that might have regarding realistic expectations.

All this leads to the impression that SAF has focused on Inclusive communication when conducting impression management. This has partly focused on minorities, even though other dimensions of E&D, especially gender equality, seems to be more highly prioritised. The reasons why might be workload related. Informant two said that:

We are a limited amount of people. We can’t let go of gender equality-issued, that work is not finished. Thus, we must assess what we can manage to do without breaking our backs. What can we bear? What do we put money on? Diversity is super important and we should reflect society, no doubt in that. But if we can’t recruit women, that’s such a big part of the populace?

The social media-department seems to also suffer from a lack of resources. Currently, they were understaffed due to vacancies which might soon be filled. This might be a reason as to why they are not reaching their goals of depicting the full diversity-spectrum (Inf. 7). The will exists, the available resources might not.

### **Does the Swedish Armed Forces’ recruitment personnel focus strategically on locations where a higher degree of minorities are located? If so, how?**

To answer this question, informant one offered central insights. Regarding when SAF educates and trains recruitment personnel, E&D is included as a topic. They invite various experts on topics such as discriminating behaviour and gender issues. Also, cases are

reviewed where the recruitment personnel discuss in seminar-like situations about problems to overcome in E&D. It did however seem like the gender issue was the more discussed dimension during the education. What might be the reason is that the gender issue has defined goals to achieve whilst there are none when speaking inclusion of minorities. This claim is strengthened by informant two, stating that:

The goals and regulations are not as clear whilst speaking other E&D-dimensions than gender. We have great focus on gender equality on all levels. There are goals in our strategic documents regarding the increased representation of women and so forth. We have gathered force from these clear goals in the campaigns that we put out.

However, whilst goals towards minorities have been unclear in the past, they might not be in the future. SAF has compiled official and open data regarding two specific target groups that recruitment personnel will start focusing particularly. These target groups were based on two blind spots that the Human Resource-department had identified, blind spots in the sense that they were big parts of society but were less knowledgeable of the SAF. One group was women, the other group was certain locations and areas containing a higher percentage of minorities (Inf. 1). Thus, going forward, the organisation's recruitment personnel will now focus strategically on locations where a higher degree of minorities are located. It is however unclear whether this strategy will have an impact as the strategic goals regarding E&D still only regulates clear and defined goals on gender, not other E&D-dimensions.

### **Does the Swedish Armed Forces' publicly sponsor entities and associations which promote minorities' causes? If so, how?**

It became apparent early on that SAF does visit and cooperate with such entities. They participate in Järvaveckan which is an event aimed towards bridging the gap between different people, especially minorities (Inf. 2 & 4). The founder of Järvaveckan describes themselves as: "We want to show that diversity and inclusion not only enriches our lives, it's rather the key to success and sustainability for our country and its inhabitants" (Abdirahman, n.d.). Informant four however said that the participation from SAF had been recently analysed, especially as the organisation felt that they did not reach their intended target group. Informant two concluded that the target group for the event were those in the ages of 16 and older. The feeling was that they rather reached out to a younger audience. However, even though SAF identified that the target group were not properly reached, SAF's top echelons seem to prioritise such cooperations. Now, SAF is stepping up their participation by working more closely with Järvaveckan's founder, thinking over their placement on the fair, and that SAF's Supreme Commander himself will stand on the main stage and talk (Inf. 2).

Other than Järvaveckan, no other recollections are made to other such cooperations or participations. One mention hearing something about a cooperation previously but cannot recall the details (Inf. 4.) However, the local branches of SAF, such as different regiments and flotillas, have the mandate to initiate such projects themselves. Interestingly, while interviewing respondents, respondent four stated that he organised a big cultural fair or festival which gathered minorities. He also stated that the Police regularly

participates, and he would love to have SAF there. This does not imply an unwillingness from SAF to participate, rather it implies that there are endless possibilities for the organisation to increase their cooperations and participations in events like these.

Clearly, SAF participates in several other events which focuses on other branches of E&D. Informant three mentions participation in Gothenburg Horse Show and Sweden Horse Show with the goal being to attract women and also, annual participation in Pride-parades are conducted to state that the organisation is defending the right to live as we choose. This all implies that SAF is aware of the effects these events have and have an intention to show themselves there in order to attract equality and diversity.

### **Other interesting finds**

One thing that became clear is that the will exists to become more inclusive towards minorities. SAF's top echelons seem to want this and some goals exist. For instance, one goal in the General Action Plan 2024—2030 (Försvarsmakten, 2024) is that minorities within the organisation should be increased so that the SAF can be more reflective on society. Strikingly though, the road towards this goal has not yet been defined or prioritised. Three informants (2, 3 & 4) witness the same phenomenon: that SAF has not yet analysed how it is to be done. There is no measurability, no operationalised indicators to point out success or not. When that analysis is completed and clear goals are defined, a higher focus might be attained. For example, during a big military exercise, the social media department wanted to receive pictures to post on Instagram. They then ordered the local regiments to send specific pictures based on different criteria, one of them being to portray more minorities. This was deemed as a success and the pictures attained and pictures posted included more diversity on that dimension, according to them (Inf. 7). Goals might have to be more specific and guidelines more direct if SAF want to reach their targets towards minorities.

Further, to be more specific and direct, informants two and four identified the need to analyse minorities not as a whole, rather as separate sub-groups. One stated: "If we are to do anything, we must first analyse the target-group. We can't recruit minority-group X and Y with the same campaign." (Inf. 2). The other stated: "let's make this analysis so that we can start to reach this target-group. Then, Human Resources can start to attract and recruit people from this group" (Inf. 4). This process might need to start before SAF can be more specific. More specific so that the organisation can become more reflective of society.

## Conclusions

According to Avery & McKay (2006), *why are the Swedish Armed Forces failing in recruiting minorities with foreign national backgrounds?* It seems that SAF are using both *ingratiating*- and *exemplifying*-tactics to recruit minorities - which is correct as to SAF's diversity reputation - but the organisation's efforts need to increase. Clearer, measurable, and more defined goals need to be laid out from the upper parts of the organisation. Start the analysis regarding how to reach minorities as one, or several, target groups. An establishment of the *how* and *why* is needed. Yes, there is a high work burden in the organisation which makes it hard to allocate resources for that analysis. An idea would be to make use of the hundreds of bachelors and master's thesis which are being written by cadets or officers each year. Announce scholarships for those that write a thesis on the subject so that the agenda can be pushed forward without the SAF having to write that entire agenda and analysis themselves. Then, spread the analysis throughout the organisation, especially in the local regiments and flotillas. SAF has also improved greatly in gender equality over the years and that is still a project which needs further focus. Draw lessons from how the organisation has worked successfully there and use them to improve recruitment towards minorities.

At the same time, the answers from the respondents show interesting results. Showing diversity in different media and recruitment personnel is seen as positive, however it should not be regarded as an all-encompassing road to success. Rather, the information and visibility of the organisation might be. Of course, showing diversity in impression management is not negative but based on the respondent's answers, a general presence from SAF and knowledge about the organisation from the public seems more important. Especially, send more recruitment personnel to schools, events, or fairs in certain areas. The organisation must improve their visibility toward minorities. However, if other assertive tactics could be better used, show more minorities and be clearer on the E&D policy in impression management. Then, as results are attained and higher concentrations of minorities are recruited, use *promoting* tactics to ride on the wave of success.

## Discussion

Something needs to be said about the generalisability of the respondents' answers. What they said in interviews are not reflective of the entire minority-population in Sweden. To find out the public opinion on SAF more closely, quantitative methods seem more appropriate. In hindsight, the study's results and validity would be strengthened if the sample of respondents would be narrowed down. This could be done by looking at a certain minority-group and age. For instance, on an age span of 18—25 years within one of the biggest minority-group in Sweden. This way, the interviews could have attained greater generalisability towards that specific population. Especially with a younger sample, e.g. 18—25, a greater relevance for the research question could be reached as the question revolved around recruiting people in those ages. However, even with this acknowledgment, the used method and sample is still deemed as good. With the available time for the study, some convenience when choosing sample was needed. To stand without respondents would make this study relatively meaningless.



The study has however tried to start the research field, almost to start the aforementioned analysis-process. With this in mind, the results are deemed successful. Further, for the military profession, the study has showed parts which are also important to take in consideration as an officer. If all focus for the military profession is on the conduction of warfare, that might impede the military organisation's management and effectiveness. In this instance, being trusted amongst all categories of the populace is a prerequisite for the Armed Forces' success in warfare. To include minorities is to take one step further on that path. At the same time, if too much focus is laid by the military, other areas might be less prioritised. The profession's main job is still the conduction of warfare which shows the need to work closely in tandem with civilians in these matters, especially those specialised in diversity.

## **Future Research**

The study's results cannot be described to single-handedly answer the research question. Diversity is multi-faceted and future research is needed. For instance, research could be conducted to show whether SAF's intentions and directions on a central and strategic level are being followed through in the organisation. Especially with every different branch (Navy, Army, Air Force) having different marketing and communication departments.

Other research could include a study to examine the hypothesis whether relatives with previous experience in SAF have a high impact on your own enlistment or not. That might in turn be connected to the fact that people without a minority-background are more likely to enlist in SAF. Thus, if that is the case, recruitment personnel might be even more necessary towards minorities and their presence in certain locations might need to be reviewed.

Further, one part of diversifying the organisation is recruitment, another is retainment. The theory used in this study was specific towards recruiting minorities and cannot describe questions regarding retainment. For that to be the case, other theories could be used, for example Realistic Expectations-theory (Knouse, 2009). However, for this specific research question, Avery & McKay's (2006) theory was deemed successful and brought structure to the analysis.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview guide towards people with immigrant backgrounds**

First segment's guidelines: create trust, broad questions, establish understanding of interviewees rights and consent and introduce the study.

- What do you think of the Swedish Armed Forces?
- As a potential employee, how do you view the Swedish Armed Forces?
- If you were to visualise an officer or a soldier, how does he/she look like?

Second segment: explore previous answers, narrow down towards the research question and return to previous discussions.

- Are you in contact with the Swedish Armed Forces' advertising?
- What do you think about it?
- \*Show Instagram-posts\*
- Regarding inclusion, diversity, and interest in the Swedish Armed Forces, how do you view these posts?
- Do you discuss the Swedish Armed Forces regularly? How goes the discussion? Have you thought about their consideration of diversity/homogeneity? What are your thoughts regarding which of these they value?
- \*Show recruitment personnel\*
- Regarding inclusion, diversity, and interest in the Swedish Armed Forces, how do you view these posts?

Third segment: wrap it up and approach topics which need further exploration.

- What do you think the Swedish Armed Forces can do to recruit more minorities?
- Anything to add?