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SECURITISATION OF #SWEDISH MILITARY #CONSCRIPTION ON TWITTER

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ABSTRACT

On March 02 2017, the Swedish government announced that it is bringing mandatory military services back into practice due to the shortage of military personnel and to meet country' security needs. The practice had been abandoned in 2010 after being in place for well over a century. The announcement was a hot topic locally and internationally in the context of changing security situation in the Baltics. Political actors took to social media to deliberate with general public and to control the public discourse. This paper looks at securitisation discourse being deliberated through social media. Using a mix methods approach, I examined how social media, Twitter, facilitated securitisation discourse regarding Swedish military conscription. Twitter's advanced search option is utilised to collect *Top* tweets posted during the first week of March 2017 that included keywords *Sweden conscription* or *Swedish conscription*. I apply van Dijk's *sociocognitive* critical discourse analysis and Hansen's intertextual research model in examining 21 tweets, along with the platform facilitated intertextuality and multimodality.

The analysis reveals that political actors framed and centred securitisation discourse through tweets and associated multimodal elements, in particular images and hyperlinks, while the discussion concerning human resource needs of the military was largely ignored. Tweets and comments exposed ideology–based themes and topics, including *refugees as threat* and *Racism–Xenophobia*, being exploited as discourse strands within securitisation discourse. Spatial references to *Russia* and its proximity to the Baltics are invoked by the actors as existential threats against which Swedish sovereignty needs protection. It is evident that the textual and linguistic elements of tweets along with their non–lexical components afforded by the medium are exploited by the actors in framing the discourse. Audience interaction is gauged by the likes, shares, and comments on each tweet; however, comment section more clearly shows discursive production of securitisation. It is imperative that a future comprehensive analysis take into consideration platform specific elements, such as interaction across platforms and Social Network Analysis (SNA) of actors, as this would allow us to understand how various discourse layers treat the same discursive event and how securitisation is being accepted, rejected, or repurposed based on networked communities.

Keywords: *conscription, discourse, intertextuality, multimodality, securitisation, social media, sociocognitive critical discourse analysis, Social Network Analysis*, *Sweden, Twitter*

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

API	Application programing interface
BSR	Baltic Sea Region
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
EU	European Union
FB	Facebook
FT	Financial Times
IR	International Relations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
POTUS	President of the United States
SM	Social Media
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SAF	Swedish Armed Forces
SR	Sveriges Radio
URL	Uniform Resource Locators
US	The United States of America
WW2	Second World War

1. INTRODCUTION

In March 2017, Sweden announced that it is bringing the practice of mandatory military service back. The Swedish government linked the decision to the changing geopolitical situation – deteriorating security – in the Baltic Sea region (BSR) as well as the lack of personnel to man all military security units. The Swedish Ministry of Defence conducted an internal study in 2015 on the issue and published its report the following year. The report formed the basis for subsequent parliamentary discussions and the decision to reinstate conscription, the policy was earlier abandoned by Sweden in 2010. The summary of the report, available on the Swedish Ministry of Defence website, does not name any country or specific incident(s) causing deterioration in security situation.[1] However, it details human resources needs of the military, which the voluntary recruitment has not been able to sustain, as the rationale for its recommendation to bring mandatory service back into practice. In 2016, "the armed forces were missing about the 800 full serving squad leaders, soldiers and sailors and about 6.600 of the partly serving squad leaders, soldiers and sailors" and is now planning to train 4000 gender neutral recruits annually, as per military's modern recruitment policy, starting January 2018 (Ministry of Defence, 2016).

The 2015 commission inquiry strongly argued in favour of bringing compulsory military service back as a solution to the recruiting troubles faced by the Swedish Armed Forces (SAF) over the past few years. It highlighted the number of new recruits needed to adequately run and manage defence units and outposts. In its report, however, the commission inquiry noted the deteriorating security situation in the Baltics as the primary concern to be addressed through proper manning of military posts. The reactivation of military conscription policy came into force on 01 January 2018, a year after it was announced. The country also decided

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[1]   The original report consisting of 263 pages, published in Swedish, does offer brief explanation of security threats, such as wars in Iraq and Syria, and Russian aggression in Ukraine. The report, titled *En robust personalförsörjning av det militära försvaret*, is accessible online at https://data.riksdagen.se/fil/CF71963C-835A-45EA-8FBA-216040ECAADC.

to increase its defence spending to enhance its defence capabilities and upgrade the military apparatuses. The Swedish government approved the defence budget to increase, for the first time in over 20 years, at an increment of 2.2% per year for five consecutive years, between 2016–20 (Swedish Defence Bill 2015). As much as this bill aims to augment the Swedish offensive and defensive capabilities, it had been drafted "in the context and in light of the developments in Russia and specifically the Russian aggression towards Ukraine" (2015).

The bill did not generate much discussion online but the subsequent policy shift, the reintroduction of military conscription, did produce intense discussions on social media (SM). The said policy took many Swedes, and non–Swedes, by surprise and caused intense political deliberations to take place on SM. Just after the announcement, SM platforms[2], such as Twitter and Facebook (FB), were filled the tweets and status updates with Swedish conscription news. It provided an opportunity for political actors to take charge of the discourse through SM. It is this use of SM platforms in constructing discourse that will be further explored in this paper. The key concept that will be studied is of securitisation of Swedish conscription policy deliberated through the SM. Securitisation is understood as "a dynamic process of political moves towards a supposedly more secure society, which for its success needs public understanding and support" (Rasmussen 2015, 197). Theory of securitisation is elaborated in the following chapter, here it is prudent to state that it is employed as a speech act, talk and text, by the political actors in constructing a security issue. While this study aims to look at the use of SM, as the title suggests, in shaping political discourse, it is imperative that a through attention is given to the build-up to the changing nature of geopolitics, both physical and online, in the Baltics.

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[2]   Social media platforms here refer to social networking sites, micro–blogging site, video and picture sharing site, and the likes, such as YouTube, Google+, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

1.1 BACKGROUND – CHANGING SWEDISH SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Russia has been reinventing and repositioning itself as a military might ready to take on any nation in the periphery threatening its sovereignty and security interests, real or perceived. Consequently, Russia has put many of its neighbours at great unease, and rightly so. Since the rise of Russian President Vladimir Putin, the country has been on the course of strengthening and modernising its military apparatus. At the same time, it has vocalised its expansionist agenda, as exemplified by the Russian backed insurgency in Eastern Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea, and its decisive role in the Syrian conflict.

Recent wave of Russian activities in the Baltics coincide with its efforts to revamp Russia as a superior military power as well as to achieve its expansionist goals in Eastern Europe. The Russian attitude in the Baltics is inspired by the Cold–War era tactics of intimidation, intelligence gathering, and examining strike and defence capabilities of other nations. On October 28, 2013 the "Russian bombers practiced bombing runs to Sweden, Baltics states and Poland" (Cenciotti 2013). This news comes after an earlier incident in the year where two Russian heavy bombers capable of conducting nuclear strikes, supported by four Sukhoi fighter aircrafts, performed a simulated night attack on Swedish Gotland island (2013). These activities are similar to the Cold–War drills, tasking Soviet jets to skirt air space of adversaries to run reconnaissance and intelligence gathering missions, and, in the process, testing their response readiness and strike capabilities. These activities have only increased since the annexation of Crimea. 2014 saw two major violations of Swedish territorial integrity by Russia. In September 2014, "two Russian fighter jets flew through Swedish airspace", followed by "a flurry of sightings of an unidentified vessel", thought to be Russian submarines, off the Swedish coast (Soviet submarine, 2014). Sweden is not the only state in the Baltics ruffled by the Russian intimidatory behaviour. "Russian warships have threatened a Finnish research vessel in the Baltic Sea on two occasions" in 2014 alone (Anderholm 2014). North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Baltic Air Policing mission had

intercepted Russian jets close to 300 times during October 2016 and November 2018 for airspace violations against the Baltic and Nordic states (Frivärld n.d).

These activities have put NATO and its allies in the Baltics on high alert and have caught Sweden, along with other Baltic states, unprepared and incapable of deterring Russian aggression. Sweden and Finland are the only two Western European nations not part of the NATO alliance, and happen to be Russian neighbours in the Baltics. Both countries are member for the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO), where remaining three Nordic countries are also NATO members. Similarly, Sweden and Finland are party to the European Union's (EU) newly formed Permanent Structured Cooperation on Security and Defence (PESCO). Changing security environment in the Baltics have prompted NATO and non–NATO European countries to improve their defence preparedness. Since 2016, Finnish and SAF forces have taken part in war simulations along with their NATO and US counterparts. NATO has held two massive military war exercises in the Baltics (*ANAKONDA 2016* and *TRIDENT 2018*) which saw 33,000 and 50,000 troops take part, respectively, from NATO members as well as Sweden and Finland (Standish 2017). Finland is set to host a joint international war exercise with Sweden and the United States (US) in 2021 (Yle 2018). This comes after Sweden conducted a large–scale national war exercise in 2017, code named Aurora 17. It drew "19,000 troops from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, and the United States", incidentally running parallel to one of "the largest war games since the end of the Cold War" in recent times, known as ZAPAD, conducted jointly by Russia and Belarus (Standish 2017).

While Russian naval and air incursions, and respective counter measures by the adversaries, in the Baltics is gaining momentum, both sides are also locked in information warfare taking shape on SM platforms. Information is shared more rapidly and widely through SM sites and platforms, which are being exploited to disseminate information, reach targeted audience, and, increasingly, spread misinformation. Political actors often rely on SM to control the narrative in their favour. The power struggle by the political actors to influence audience(s) and govern discourse is now widely conducted through Twitter, as a preferred channel of communication (Karkin et al. 2015, 20). It has emerged as the leading SM platform used by

political actors to broadcast events as they happen. Political actors, therefore, see it as another frontier that needs to be won to control the narrative and flow of information. Twitter, therefore, along with traditional media, is a fertile ground for Russian propaganda in the Baltics. The Russian trolls and pro–Russian activist community in the Baltics "disseminate Russian propaganda themes and messages" against the Baltic States and NATO (Helmus et al. 2018, 68).

Sweden's apprehension about Russia and closer cooperation with NATO are being countered by the adversary through misinformation campaign. The campaign, initiated in 2016, by the Russian trolls is aimed at sowing fears and confusion amongst the Swedish public regarding closer alliance with NATO. The propaganda campaign, originally initiated on SM and later spread to traditional media, included false claims such as: "If Sweden, a non-NATO member, signed the deal, the alliance would stockpile secret nuclear weapons on Swedish soil; NATO could attack Russia from Sweden without government approval; NATO soldiers, immune from prosecution, could rape Swedish women without fear of criminal charges" (MacFarquhar 2016).

Social media disinformation campaign "is not some project devised by a Kremlin policy expert but is an integral part of Russian military doctrine" since traditional military build–up alone is not sufficient to counter NATO dominance in the Baltics (MacFarquhar 2016). The campaign employs tactics to securitise the discourse by imagining perceived threats, other than Russia, to sow fear.

Sweden and its Western counterparts are engaged in an online information drive aimed at countering the propaganda campaign. For example, NATO's Centre of Excellence (COEs) in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland not only actively promote pro–Western and Pro–NATO stories but also document and publish Russian incursion and aggressions in the region on Twitter, usually shared and further promoted through twitter accounts with similar goals. NATO and its allies regularly push real–time tweets and updates, including videos and images, involving Russian aggressive tactics in the Baltics, often before putting out an

official communication or press release. Official and unofficial Twitter accounts belonging to either sides capture every opportunity to counter the discourse with their own.

It is fair to state that while security situation in the Baltics remains intense, it is through the events deliberated on SM that political actors propagate and control discourse(s) as more and more people use Twitter to seek information and engage in political discussions. As the scrimmage to control narrative shifts online, any significant security event or policy initiative is therefore exploited and securitised by the political actors. Given the backdrop of Russian intimidation in the Baltics and the announcement of reinstatement of Swedish draft, I aim to explore the role SM plays in facilitating securitisation discourse.

1.2 RELEVANCE

The Swedish policy change of military recruitment has caused a great deal of discussion inside and outside the country. The international news media has mostly focused on, and have related the conscription to, the growing security concerns vis–à–vis the Russian military aggressions in the BSR. On social media, though, the discourse formation is quite nuanced as political actors operationalise SM platforms in securitising the debate. The power afforded by the medium and the algorithms that support it have consequences on how discourse fragments are weaved within securitisation discourse. Securitisation has been well studied by the scholars of Security Studies and International Relations (IR). However, inquiries in IR "and new media studies are for the most part isolated from each other. This lack of integration is a serious research gap and leaves us unable to comprehend how new media affects the conditions for global politics" (Jackson n.d.). Therefore, the announcement of Swedish conscription presents a case for studying and analysing securitisation discourse through the lens of SM which facilitates its deliberations.

1.3 **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The main research question addresses how securitisation of Swedish military conscription policy is being facilitated through SM. It requires the evaluation of talk and text of the securitisation actor(s) as well as its audience, which I aim to investigate through the *sociocognitive* approach preferred by van Dijk (van Dijk 2000; 2008; 2011; 2016; 2018). Security agents often operationalise securitisation along territorial, temporal, and ethical dimensions (Hansen 2006). Therefore, examining these dimensions concerning security event is imperative as it allows for contextualising the said event. Furthermore, it is natural to expect and assume that ensuing debate on SM will have discourse strands other than securitisation, which begs the question: what are the key themes that emerge on SM around Swedish military conscription debate?

Yet another methodological objective is to explore how we can understand securitisation on social media by analysing discourse in the shape of talk and text. I would, therefore, like to address these fundamental questions in understanding this seemingly traditional IR concept, i.e., securitisation, transposed on to a new medium. It should be noted that the proposed thesis will address these questions in the context of area studies, in this case the BSR.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 **FROM MILITARISATION TO SECURITISATION**

The concept of militarisation rests on the general idea that links societal values and norms, such as cultural values, customs, and prestige are to military build-up and to continuously preparing for war (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009b, 399-400). This is to say that war and military thinking supersedes other ideologies in broader societal narratives. Michael Sherry (1995, ix) defines militarization as a "process by which war and national security became consuming anxieties and provided the memories, models, and metaphors that shaped broad areas of national life" (as quoted in Ferguson and Naylor 2016, 519). In this sense, military buildup, procurement, and war exercises are normal state of affairs in a society.

However, Bernazzoli and Flint highlight few issues with militarisation, in particular that "the language of militarization problematically implies separate civilian and military spheres" (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009a, 449). They argue that such distinction leads to many "false binaries: inside/outside; foreign/domestic; war/peace; violence/nonviolence; state/society; military/society; as well as military/civilian", which make the ontology of militarisation untenable since society and military do not exist separate from each other (449). The split between society and military thus limits studying political issues which are being played out at the intersection of the two with increased participation from the civilian actors. The theory of securitisation, on the other hand, while assuming certain relationship to militarisation, "allows for a broader range of actors and arenas, as it does not limit the scholar to exclusive consideration of the formal military institution" (450). Extending the theory to include non-military actors and issues therefore creates the opportunity for cross sectoral analyses on any given medium, including SM.

Securitisation has traditionally been associated with IR and security studies. It, nonetheless, is useful and applicable in studying narratives developed on SM. Securitisation is an extreme form of politicization and any public issue can be found on the spectrum consisting of non-political, politicized, and securitized (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 25). Medium where securitisation occurs is not exclusively defined by the scholars, it is rather embedded within the securitisation framework or as an extension of its elements. The authors further state that securitisation is a speech act where securitising agent could label an issue necessitating extraordinary measures to resolve it. "Thus, by labeling it as security, an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means" (26). The speech act, thus, is the act of utterance made by the securitising agent. The speech act also needs an issue to be framed as an existential threat requiring urgent attention to restrain or eliminate it. "For security this means that it no longer has any given (preexisting) meaning but that it can be anything a securitizing actor says it is. Security is a social and intersubjective construction. That is the meaning of security" (Taureck 2006, 55). Statements made by securitising agents, therefore, do not confirm or deny security as such, rather they construct it "through discursive politics" (Wilmott 2017, 68).

Therefore, for Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde "[t]he way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations" (1998, 25). The importance of text, talk, and political actors is of significance. It is through the construction of security as an existential threat that the actor takes the issues out of traditional political framework. "If by means of an argument about the priority and urgency of an existential threat the securitizing actor has managed to break free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by, we are witnessing a case of securitization" (25). The success of securitisation does not only rest on the actor's framing of the issue but also of the audience's acceptance of it, where actor's perceived threat is legitimised and recognised as such. "A successful securitization thus has three components (or steps): existential threats, emergency action, and effects on interunit relations by breaking free of rules" (25). The process of securitisation thus takes the audience acceptance, generally public, as the final outcome where securitisation actor has acted above normal politics. In modern societies, new media with its wide and unprecedented reach is central to the process of securitisation as actors and audience deliberate through it.

The Swedish military conscription could be positioned within militarisation but that would be a restrictive approach since the intention is to explore narratives which straddle beyond the scope of such theory. Moreover, SM content and narratives are not constrained by the false binaries perpetuated by the language of militarisation. Theory of securitisation, on the other hand, is flexible enough to address a salient political question, primarily through new media, involving multitudes of actors. Therefore, the it is better suited to investigate the narratives and themes constructed on the subject of Swedish military conscription through SM.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: FROM TEXTS TO CONTEXTS

3.1.1 Texts and language

As this research is concerned with the role texts play on SM, it is imperative to employ a mode of analysis which centres on language. As Fairclough asserts, "language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language" (2003, 2). Language is used in intentional and unintentional ways by its users based on the social norms within which the user is situated. It is not only dependent on the user but also on the intended audience, intended meaning, the power relation at play, and everything else in between. The language used, and associated social norms, are thus situational and could have varied meanings. For any political discourses then, language becomes an agent for constructing meaning and power relations.

Looking at language from Hansen's poststructuralist ontology, it becomes "social and political, an inherently unstable system of signs that generate meaning through a simultaneous construction of identity and difference" (2006, 15). As hinted above, what characterises language as social is the fact that it plays out in the public sphere where identity is constructed, challenged, or assumed against others. This connects identity and subjectivity to language's political character which allows "for the production and reproduction of particular subjectivities and identities while others are simultaneously excluded" (16). When speaking of Europe, for example, the discourse on European Union has produced and constantly reproduces those identities which belong and the ones which are to be excluded. Similarly, the language use in securitisation discourse does this by forming internal and

external identities (those requiring protection and those posing threat, respectively) in relation to the referent object.

Traditionally, text has been central to discourse analysis in articulating key concepts, such as identity and meaning making. It is logical to state that in discourse analysis the subjectivities and identities formation are tied to meaning construction. Therefore, when we talk about text, "we are not only concerned with texts as such, but also with interactive processes of meaning-making" (Fairclough 2003, 10). Fairclough advises that a meaning-making process yields three "analytically separable elements" which are central to such a process in a dialogue (10). The interchange between the three elements, namely "the production of the text, the text itself, and the reception of the text," produces a meaning (10). It would be reasonable to formulate that invoking securitisation using text and language by the securitisation actor and its reception by the audience follow Fairclough's reasoning quite literally. It should be noted that, however, a published text or a dialogue should not be taken without its social and political characteristics. A published text is different since elements of verbal dialogue and its reception by the audience are not explicitly present. It, therefore, can be said to have implicit and explicit meanings attached to it, and as such, assumptions, interpretations, and reflexivity have a greater role to play.

Fairclough's three elements of text are in certain alignment with Juha Vuori's *illocutionary logic*, which takes into consideration securitisation actor's illocutionary act along with its perlocutionary effect for it to be successful (2008, 74). It is those aforementioned implicit and explicit meanings as construed by the audience that bring perlocutionary effect into consideration. Vuori summarises this when stating that "securitization is a social and a political act, which is facilitated by certain conditions, including some in 'brute reality'. However, neither the linguistic nor the social felicity conditions of securitization are entirely determining: no one can be guaranteed the success of securitization, as this is up to the audience" (75). Without venturing too far into Vuori's theoretical foundation, it is worth noting that securitisation is as complex as the linguistic analysis of text which feature various elements closely tied to its inquiry, such as social, political, linguistic, historical and contextual.

3.1.2   Modality

It is well established by now that "text analysis is an essential part of discourse analysis, but discourse analysis is not merely the linguistic analysis of texts" (Fairclough 2003, 3). Discourse analysis attempts to explore nuances of texts inasmuch as theoretically feasible. A comprehensive and critical discourse analysis must take into consideration semiotics beyond text. As Hafner also elucidates:

> When linguists talk about discourse, they are usually concerned with, among other things, texts and interactions in context. Here, texts and interactions naturally include the linguistic aspects of speech and writing, but they also include elements of other semiotic systems that make up the multimodal ensemble: gesture, sound, graphics, images, layout and other forms of visual communication for example. (2017, 816)

I find it compelling to look beyond texts in the analysis of SM data to include non-linguistic forms of communications, such as images, insofar as it makes practical sense and does not pose logistical and technical challenges. Social media platforms by nature provide a specific kind of deliberative space, one which is dynamic and allow users to engage in a dialogue by way of linking to other texts, such as external sources, use of images, sounds, and so on. Hafner, in talking about education learners, puts his case for use of discourse studies forward in light of technological advancements related to information and communication. He argues that "contemporary learners are exposed to a much wider range of texts from a large variety of sources. These texts increasingly use new forms of representation that combine writing with other affordances of digital media, such as multimodality and hypertext" (Hafner 2017, 813).

In talking about multimodality, he also elucidates to the design aspect of the environment which impacts learner's ability in various ways on their meaning making process. Although, Hafner's multimodality is rooted in the theory of social semiotics, borrowed from Kress (2010; 2011), Hodge and Kress (1998), and Kress and van Leeuwen (2001; 2006), which as a theory, takes "meaning making as sign making, where signs include language and other

semiotic resources" (2017, 822) it remains relevant to other theories engaged in discourse analysis. It is worth mentioning that just as SM users' affordance of multimodality is based on its built-in design so are the constraints imposed on them. Therefore, design aspect of SM must also be addressed as part of the context or environment.

3.1.3 Intertextuality

As a design feature of social media platforms, texts are situated in relation to other texts, such as retweets and links to previous texts. Referring to foreign policy discourse, Hansen goes further by stating that "all texts make references, explicitly or implicitly, to previous ones, and in doing so they both establish their own reading and become mediations on the meaning and status of others. The meaning of a text is thus never fully given by the text itself but is always a product of other readings and interpretations" (2006, 49). She borrows the concept of *intertextuality* from Kristeva (1980) by highlighting that it is "theoretically and methodologically significant" since texts can never fully convey a discourse on their own, they are always situated in relation to other texts (49).

For academic debate on the theory of securitization then, as an example, intertextuality would require the analysis of the discourse of securitisation along with its critique, subsequent (re)formation and so on by the academics on either side of the debate. In other words, the epistemology of intertextuality thus informs that the analyses of texts should be contextualized. In the case of SM sphere, this would imply that any discourse being analysed should look beyond the posts (FB posts or tweets) to include comments and retweets as well as non-linguistic forms of encounters, such as semiotics. Therefore, a special consideration would be made to examine intertextual elements of the posts to contextualise the discourse.

Consideration of all aspects of multimodality and semiotics are outside the purview of this research due to the constraints related to space, goals and aims of the research, time, and financial resource. Barring such limitations, an ideal future research project on new media should take into consideration the social semiotics theory of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001;

2006) as a "framework for considering the communicative potential of visual devices in the media" (Wodak 2013, 1:xxxii). As briefly mentioned earlier, social semiotics theory engages with multimodal devices reflecting the evolution of space in which texts exist. Wodak notes that social semiotics helps to shed light on "the multisemiotic and potentially ideological character of most texts in contemporary society and explores ways of analysing the intersection of language, images, design, colour, spatial arrangement and so forth" (2013).

Yet, a more appropriate, extensive, and encompassing method would be to follow the advice offered by Lemke (2001) in analyzing multimedia semiotics by considering the role of multiple timescales and hypertexts. "Lemke proposes that postmodern lifestyles are increasingly liberated from particular institutional roles, and that we tend to move, on multiple timescales, from involvement in one institution to another, creating new kinds of meaning, less bound to fixed genres and registers, as we 'surf' across channels, websites and lived experiences" (Wodak 2013, 1:xxxiii). The central idea being proposed would envision analysing multimodality as it interacts and intersects across platforms and institutions in exploring meaning which are more fluid and flow between genres.

3.1.4   Context

For van Dijk, text is inherently constitutive of its context. He only refers to text to lay the epistemological framework where context takes the centre stage. I find my own research framework analytically aligned to such worldview; therefore, this section will address context as a critical element to the study of discourse analysis.

One can argue that Hansen's *intertextuality* and Kress' *social semiotic* entail some aspects of textual context. However, context is not merely the environment texts and semiotics are habituated in. "We see that producing and understanding text and talk crucially involves what is traditionally and informally called the 'context' of this speech, involving such categories as participant identities and roles, place, time, institution, political actions and political knowledge, among other components" (van Dijk 2008, 3). It is therefore understood, from

van Dijk, that language is not without its context, which is the amalgamation of various pertinent and applicable components. He states that "we use the notion of 'context' whenever we want to indicate that some phenomenon, event, action or discourse needs to be seen or studied in relationship to its environment, that is, its 'surrounding' conditions and consequences" (4). The contextual knowledge is thus crucial, as it helps the researcher discern not only texts' spatial, temporal, political, societal, and institutional circumstances but also its non-literal meaning by identifying metaphors and analogies, among other categories. "We may conclude from this informal characterization of the notion of 'context' that we do not properly understand complex phenomena without understanding their context" (5). Take, for example, the official announcement of the reintroduction of Swedish conscription practice. It refers to the geopolitical factors without detailing them all and it does the same with regards to the gender-neutral aspect of the recruitment policy, without any reference to specific debate(s) surrounding it. The context is not implicit, it only reveals itself in relation to related events and surrounding conditions, for example the repeated breach of the Swedish territorial integrity by Russia, the evaluation of Swedish military preparedness by a governmental commission, and so on.

3.1.5   Discursive Context

Siegfried Jäger (2011), on the other hand, speaks of discursive events and discursive context in relation to discourse strands to which a text can make a reference(s) to. All events have discursive context and only the events which are "especially emphasized politically" (Jäger 2001, 48) are to be labelled discursive events. The politicisation of discursive event is most notably mediated by the media, amongst other avenues. In above example, the adoption of gender-neutral policy of military recruitment could be a discursive event only if it is "made into a media-discursive mega event" (48). The role of media, including the knowledge it projects/produces and the power it holds is an interesting wider debate in its own right, and as such, is beyond the scope of this research.

Therefore, without delving into the specificity of media's role in forming discursive events, it can be understood from Jäger that discursive events and related discourse strands are rooted in shared discursive context. Discourse strand of securitisation discourse, as is being addressed in this study, then is interested in investigating a major event at a specific moment in time, i.e., securitisation of Swedish military conscription debate on SM. In order to do so, one must trace its "discursive constellations whose materializations they represent" (Jäger 2001, 48).

Yet another related concept associated to context is discourse layer which binds it all together. In simpler terms, it refers to different spheres of society, such as universities, media, private households, workplaces, and so on that one could investigate for any given discourse strand. Florian Schneider lays it bare and argues why it matters:

> A 'layer' is just the academic way of saying that discourses take place in different context or in different kind of places. For instance, news discourse would be one such layer: it is governed by particular scripts, specific power relations, habits and conventions, jargon, etc. In news, certain things are 'acceptable' discourse, and other things are not. Now compare that to the discourse in a pub. That discourse is also governed by specific conventions, but they differ from those that apply in news discourse. Each of these settings is a discourse 'layer'. The 'layer' is a metaphor to say that the institutional setting matters, that the different settings are connected (for example when people in a pub discuss the news), and that all the different settings in a society together form the discourse in its entirety. (2013)

It is widely understood and well recognised by discourse analysts, as have been argued here, that texts are to be understood within its surroundings, environment, and platform design. Texts must be contextualised, incorporated with non-linguistic modes of meaning making, and by relating to its intertextual connections. Therefore, "discourse analysis and conversation analysis need to make explicit what contexts are and how exactly the relations between contexts and text or talk are to be analyzed in ways that explain how language users do this" (van Dijk 2008, 3). For SM platforms, twitter in particular, this will mean tweets should be analysed in relation to, inter alia, retweets, likes, replies, hypertexts, images, design feature of the platform, its affordances and limitations, spatial and temporal character, and political nature of text and participants.

We have come full circle in making a case for context in textual analysis. My ontological position and epistemological standing has been made clear, which will subsequently inform data collection and analyses.

3.2 **SOCIOCOGNITIVE APPROACH (VAN DIJK)**

Critical discourse analysts are concerned with the use of language in relation to power, structures, social relations, and how participants are presented and understood in discourses, and as such, a particular attention is paid to discourses' contexts. Contexts are intersubjective constructs which are continuously restructured as a result of participant interaction (van Dijk 2008, 16–19). Such interactions and resultant knowledge are culturally and socially based, however, van Dijk stresses that they are also mediated by mental models of participants which rely on cognitive notions, such as beliefs, ideologies, and knowledge (2018, 28). He further links the mental models to talk and text: "Social or political structures can only affect text and talk through the minds of language users. This is possible because social members represent both social structures as well as discourse structures in their minds, and thus are able to relate these mentally before expressing them in actual text and talk" (28).

Therefore, for van Dijk, traditional critical discourse analysis (CDA), as well as Systemic Functional Linguistics, has a missing cognitive element, which he terms *sociocognitive* (van Dijk 2000; 2008; 2011; 2016; 2018). It relates to "the ongoing communicative Common Ground and the shared social knowledge as well as the attitudes and ideologies of language users as current participants of the communicative situation and as members of social groups and communities" (van Dijk 2018, 28). The central argument here is that the talk and text produced by the language users is based on the cognitive structures. Therefore CDA, based on *sociocognitive* approach, is aware of the role cognition plays and is naturally interested in exploring it within the discourse by tracing linguistic and semantic constructs. Due to the space and scope constraints, it is not possible to delve deeper into the *sociocognitive* model and its structural breakdown between *personal cognition* vs *social cognition*, especially when

dealing specifically with ideology. In exploring tweets on Swedish military conscription debate, I am interested in the inherent meanings – ideologies and identities constructed, imposed, and relayed – of talk and text during the intersubjective encounters of participants. How are language users expressing and employing cognitive biases, through talk and text based on their mental models, while accepting, challenging, or rejecting the speech act of securitization actor? Social media domain often perpetuates the communicative situation akin to communities. A trending hashtag or the success of an influencer on the platform rely on users' behaviour as a member of society or a group. Thus, how participants use their cognitive prejudices and predispositions through tweets should be subject to scrutiny.

Guided by van Dijk's framework of *sociocognitive* discourse analysis, I aim to analyse tweets through the categories most suited to SM talk and text: *meaning* (*topics; level of description, degree of detail; implications and presuppositions; coherence; synonymy; contrast;* and *disclaimers*), *propositional structures* (*actors*; *vagueness*; *evidentiality*; *modality*; and *topoi*), *sentence syntax* and *discourse formation* (*foregrounding* and *backgrounding*), *rhetoric*, *argumentation*, and *actions* and *interactions* (van Dijk 2000; 2008; 2011; 2016; 2018).

3.3 LENSES OF ANALYSES: SPATIALITY, TEMPORALITY, AND ETHICALITY

Hansen suggest that as a starting point to a discourse analysis is the construction of "basic discourses", which offer "analytical perspective that facilitates a structured analysis of how discourses are formed and engage each other within a foreign policy debate" (2006, 84). It is a way of compartmentalising debates into categories which could be studied and analysed on temporal, spatial, and ethical lines. Basic discourses are formed or analytically constructed by reading a large number of texts, including official reports, academic work, media coverage, literary work, and so on (Hansen 2006, 84). As a starting point for this research, the media coverage around Swedish military conscription gave way to the readings of official reports, often quoted Swedish government press release on the subject, and the background study and commission report summary. Through these readings, the securitisation discourse formed, often situating overtly in relevant texts. It constructed the spatial and temporal

character of Swedish sovereignty under threat or in need of protection. It highlighted the changing geopolitics of the regions as a vulnerability requiring urgent change in the Swedish defence policy to ensure state sovereignty.

Securitisation actors construct referent object in relation to a threat and ultimately present it to the audience in a timely manner. Language plays a key role for securitising actors, who employ metaphors, historical references, urgency of action, and call to action, among other tools, in shaping the identity of the said threat. Based on the context and presumed audience the actor will use relevant and appropriate language to frame the threat, for example, by referring to refugees as backwards, others, a burden on the state, incompatible, or a threat to the society. The threat identity can be situated at any coordinate along the spatial axis. *Spatiality* provides an important framework in discourse analysis as it encompasses a broad territorial spectrum of identity construction. "These territorially bounded identities are all imbued with political content, but spatial identity might also be articulated as abstract political space, boundaries, and subjectivities" (Hansen 2006, 42). Over the years, various discursive events related to securitisation discourse have demonstrated construction of identity in relation to sovereignty and integrity of the state against a territorial threat, on the one hand, to more abstract political ones, such as western norms and values, on the other. Hansen, when claiming that identities are "constructed as a mixture of the territorially bounded and the abstract political" (2006, 43), implies that they are relational to other identities and are discursively formed as a response to or in relation to specific identities (43). For Hansen, foreign policy discourse develops on more than one front. It spatially takes places geographically or politically, but it also evolves through time. And, consequential identity formation can be distinguished against the *Self* or the *Other*.

In extrapolating the *temporal* dimension, she argues that "the construction of the *Other* as temporally progressing toward the (Western) *Self* is for instance a central component of development discourse as well as discourses on democratization and human rights" (Hansen 2006, 43). However, she suggests, taking a cue from Ole Wæver, that one could also distinguish identity construction against a temporal *Self* (44). Just as spatial dimension provides territorial depth (physical and abstract) in framing identity construction within a

discursive frame, temporality does so through "temporal themes such as development, transformation, continuity, change, repetition, or stasis" (43). If I were to conduct a discourse analysis of Swedish official texts, including background papers, intelligence reports, commission finding, and so forth, I would be able to locate temporal construction of Sweden (*Self*) as transforming instead of stasis, for example.

The third lens with which Hansen investigates identity is *ethicality*. She argues that "foreign policy discourses always involve a construction of responsibility, even if only implicitly as applicable toward a national citizenry" (Hansen 2006, 45). Part and parcel of any securitisation act is the ultimate pronouncement, by securitisation actor, of a responsible action to counter the threat. In the case of Swedish government's announcement to reinstate military conscription, the decision is thus situated and articulated through responsibility of national security and duty to maintain Swedish sovereignty. "The focus of discourse analysis on articulations of ethical identity implies, therefore, a concern with the discursive construction of ethics, morality, and responsibility" (45). Therefore, *ethicality* could also be understood as responsibility or obligation assumed through morality and ethics.

For Hansen, "spatiality, temporality, and ethicality have equal theoretical and ontological status; there is not one dimension which is more fundamental than the others or which can be said to determine the other two" (Hansen 2006, 42). In analysing a securitisation event, It is thus imperative and logical to first contextualise its processes and ultimately examine it along spatial, temporal, and ethical dimensions. I aim to explore these dimensions in my analysis of SM texts, and as such, will implement a coding scheme which pays specific attention to these dimensions.

On a related yet different realm, from that of Hansen, my methodological paradigm places discursive event within its discursive context, which is to say that I, as a discourse analyst, have to be aware of texts' intended audience, its particular references, and the design and the context in which it appears. This is to say that the epistemological foundation for my discursive context is inclusive of a framework which takes a wholistic approach to discourse analysis.

3.4 FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSES

3.4.1 Intertextual Model

"All texts, including foreign policy texts, are situated within a wider web of writing" (Hansen 2006, 50). This is to say that no text is written without reference to or in relation to other texts, and while it refers to, in fragments or in totality, previous texts it simultaneously reframes them (50). Hansen argues that intertextual references can be *explicit* or *implicit*, such as through direct or conceptual references, but irrespective of the mode of reference, when "a text makes references to older texts it constructs legitimacy for its own reading" (51). Any reference has to be taken in relation to its context and be read accordingly. Therefore, when a text relies on other texts for meaning construction it validates its own position by framing itself into the discursive context. Hansen's intertextuality, therefore, is not a distant concept from Jäger's discursive context, both of which have referential characteristic at their core. Taken together, they provide levels on analysis encompassing singularity of tweet to the broader security discourse within which it resides. On Twitter, for example, intertextuality relies on multimodality offered by the platform, Whether it is text only (re)tweets, image or video references, textual reference, or hyperlinks, it has to be analysed and interpreted at discourse level as well as along (re)tweet's immediate environment, including semantics of the text.

Situating intertextual links of a given discursive event informs discourse's depth and identifies its actors. Specifically, "intertextual models provide a structured view of different locations for political debate, different types of actors, and different forms of genre" (Hansen 2006, 66). Table 3.1 summarises my conceptualisation of intertextuality based on Hansen's intertextual research models. It differs from Hansen's models as it has been transformed to reflect analytical focus on SM texts originally not present in her four intertextual research models.

Table 3.1. Intertextual Research Model (adopted from Lene Hansen's intertextual models)

ANALYTICAL FOCUS	Wider foreign policy debate (re-introduction of mandatory military training) beyond the official discourse as observed on sm. It considers discourse framing by key actors
OBJECTS OF ANALYSIS	Direct/primary texts (tweets), secondary intertextual links (mentions, hyperlinks, etc.), and multimodal elements
GOAL OF ANALYSIS	Contestation of securitisation discourse; acceptance and/or rejection by audience

Hansen argues that, although, intertextual model provides the analytical overview for the choice of research questions to ask, it does not establish a concrete research design on its own, which is formed by combining intertextual models with three added dimensions of inquiry, namely number of Self/Selves, moment as suspended in time or stretched through it, and number of events (2006, 66). The following section briefly discusses aforementioned dimension in relation to discourse analysis, followed by a modified research design for analysing securitisation discourse of Swedish military conscription on SM.

3.4.2   Self and Other

"The comparative study of Selves addressing the same foreign policy issue or event constitutes one 'multiple Self option.' It is particularly useful but complex approach, for example when studying Self, such as a state or region, in relation to an event or foreign policy issue over time. There are number of ways a comparative study would have multiple Self characteristics. Hansen elaborates that a discourse analysis of various rounds of EU expansion for potential member states could be one such illustration (2006, 69). Another possibility is a discursive encounter; rather than comparing Selves, the study contrasts the discourse of the Self with the Other's 'counter-construction' of Self and Other" (68). *Self* and *Other* could be best understood as primary subjects of inquiry within a research design.

If the goal of this research design had been to study the State (Sweden) as a *Self* in relation to *Others*, who might be citizens, political allies, opposition, media, etc., a single *Self*-study would have sufficed. Conversely, if the goals is to study the discursive encounter between the State and the media, for example, a study would examine the discourse produced as a result of discursive encounter between the *Self* and *Other*. Given that, it is the latter category which permits analysing discursive encounter between securitising actors and their audience. Therefore, my approach here follows this category of *Self* and *Other* typology, offered by Hansen.

Hansen, though, cautions that not all research design can necessarily study discursive encounters due to linguistic barriers presented in the research design. She point out that "one usually needs to know the language of the Self as well as the encountered Other and questions of access to material documenting the discourse of the Other" (Hansen 2006, 69). There is not much written and theorized when such encounters take place on SM where the platform is built to facilitate cross linguistic encounters, such as by way of deploying algorithms capable of detecting and translating foreign texts for increased engagements between platform's users. Automated translations are not without challenges, especially regarding the validity of texts and their literal and figurative meanings across languages. Therefore, in order to mitigate such concern, I have only rely on texts which were originally written in English.

3.4.3   Moment

Once the subject of inquiry has been established in relation to the research question and overall design, the former must be located on a temporal scale. Whether to study the subject at a specific, yet significant, moment in time or to study its journey through time is also dependant on the research question. Nonetheless, "the moment chosen will often have a striking character and be the subject of intense political concern" (Hansen 2006, 69). A moment can also be studied even if it does not appear to be an outstanding or remarkable event but is, nevertheless, significant enough for the political discourse being investigated.

"The selection of moments should therefore also be analytically driven by changes in important political structures or institutions" (70). One can also choose to study more than one moment or compare moments in a given policy discourse, as long as it rationalizes the research needs. The moment chosen for this study is concerned with Swedish military conscription debate as it unfolded on SM during the first week of March 2017.

3.4.4 Event

Temporal dimension of a research design primarily dictates which moment, or how many moments, to study, it could also suggest the number of events to take into consideration. By default, though, "if one event is chosen, it is logically set within a temporal one-moment study" (Hansen 2006, 71). Following this logic, I have identified the event of Swedish military conscription debate on SM as a single event. My research questions and research design, thus, do not incorporate discourse analysis of multiple events, whether separated in time or through discourses. In agreement with Hansen, who states that "it is through the combination of choices along all dimensions that a concrete study is produced" (71), that I develop my research design for discourse analysis (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Research Design for Analysing Securitisation Discourse on Social Media

NUMBER OF SELVES	INTERTEXTUAL MODEL
• Self: Actors • Other: Audience	• Wider political debate (Swedish draft reinstatement) occurring on SM
SECURITISATION OF SWEDISH CONSCRIPTION DEBATE ON SOCIAL MEDIA	
TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVE	NUMBER OF EVENTS
• A single moment, transpired on SM, starting March 02, 2017, as a result of official policy announcement	• One event: Sweden's re-introduction of conscription announcement

I overlay *sociocognitive* approach and lenses of analyses upon this research model to complete the theoretical foundation for my framework of analysis.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN: DATA COLLECTION

4.1 CASE SELECTION

This thesis sets out to explore the role social media plays in facilitating the securitisation of certain political discourse. The goal is to observe how a conversation is framed by SM actors to influence their audience. From a securitisation theory point of view, the focus will be on the talk and speech act – framing a referent object in need of protection and labelling an existential threat as a security matter – of political actors and their audience's (un)acceptance. The return of military conscription in Sweden is a topical case with potential to be exploited by the political and media elites based on political interest and media logic, respectively. Given the geographical location of Sweden in the BSR and its importance as a geopolitical player (especially in a Nordic military sense and as a long-standing neutral player in world conflicts), a radical change in military drafting policy presents a noteworthy case for regional and international audiences alike. Therefore, the case of Swedish military conscription is a prime candidate for analysis via SM in light of securitisation.

4.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

Multiple definitions exist of what constitute social media. It could be defined as internet–based platforms, applications, etc., "that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content."[3] (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, 61). The advent of internet, technological advancements, and citizens' accessibility to digital tools and platforms have fundamentally

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[3]   For a comprehensive and systemic understanding of Web 2.0 and user generated content (UGC), Web 2.0, and social media, refer to: Kaplan, Andreas M, and Michael Haenlein. "Users of the World, Unite!"

transformed the public sphere. In a digitized public sphere, one which is facilitated by social media, citizens' engagement with politics has changed and, as a result, they now have greater access to political information (Bossetta, Segesten, and Trenz 2017, 54). In particular, the past decade has witnessed an increased role of SM, and new media by extension, in people's daily lives and has now become the *de facto* platform for political deliberations and information dissemination. "The mass media are competing to address a diminishing and ever-fragmenting audience . . . who can access political information from a variety of sources and no longer regard conventional political narratives as being worthy of dutiful attention" (Coleman and Freelan 2015, 4). Whether it is the spread of (mis)information or the amplification of political discourse, the role of new media is central to reaching and influencing citizens' behaviour. "Given the tremendous growth of social media, in particular Twitter and Facebook, social media are increasingly used in political context recently–both by citizens and political institutions (e.g., politicians, political parties, political foundations, think tanks etc.)" (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan 2013, 1278). Thus, citizens are now able to challenge traditional media discourse, present alternate views, and produce and collaborate on their own stories by becoming active in political spaces of their choice (Loader and Mercea 2011, 758-59). An important aspect of this activity comes from interactions on social networking sites. As suggested earlier, and as argued by Bossetta, Segesten, and Trenz, these sites allow citizens to directly engage with political actors (politicians, media actors, other concerned citizens, networks, etc.) (54). Not only do SM platforms facilitate citizens' engagement, and thereby addressing democratic deficit in general, they also act as instruments of influence and political deliberations.

4.2.1   Selecting Platform

There is a plethora of SM platforms to which modern-day citizens have access to. The design and architecture of these platforms drive the behaviour of their users. Some applications are designed to facilitate private messaging while others enable sharing of photos or daily snippets of news. Facebook and Twitter are by far the two most used platforms for accessing and disseminating political discourse. An estimated 2.2 billion users access FB every month,

while Twitter has around 330 million active monthly user accounts–and both platforms are experiencing steady growth (Statista 2018). Twitter is often a preferred platform as it "is best used for sharing condensed news updates, opinions and links to drive traffic to news articles, blogs and webpages that provide a richer story" (Rasmussen 2015, 201). "Twitter is an ideal platform for users to spread not only information in general but also political opinions publicly through their networks" (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan 2013, 1278). As for political actors, it is an easier platform to create a following based on ideological and political viewpoint.

Jungherr concludes from earlier studies that "Twitter is a medium used by political activists and the public to inform, to mobilize, and to create media attention" to topics that interests them (2014, 242). Facebook on the other hand, while extremely valuable tool for user engagement, is much different from Twitter as it is primarily used for social networking and maintaining friendship (Sloan 2016).

User or account data on both platforms is available for public profiles only, however, and it should be mentioned that there are technical limitations to accessing full or partial data, not least of which is the technical knowledge necessary to carry out such research. Despite the obvious difficulty, numerous articles and blogs, and a growing number of scholarly publications, make it possible for researcher in humanities and social sciences to scrape[4] relevant data for their research. "Twitter might be the closest researchers unaffiliated with cooperations [*sic*] can get to analyzing and understanding characteristics, measurement logic, and discovery potential" (Jürgens and Jungherr 2016, 8). On the other hand, data scraped from Facebook is limited in characteristics. For conducting research and being able to access data, it is much easier to access data from Twitter than Facebook. Data curated on Twitter "is open, has an open API, and the data is public", whereas "Facebook data needs to be paid for. It's hidden behind a firewall as well, and it's quite hard to get what you want" (2016).

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[4]   Data scraping is a term commonly used to imply mining or harvesting web data (from websites or social media) into a structured format, usually in a database, using programming interface. For scraping Twitter and Facebook data, programming interface commonly known as API is used, which permits access and retrieval of data in a structured format.

Furthermore, it would be cumbersome to undertake research involving multiple platforms, as it would not only require data handling issues, such as scraping, cleaning, coding, etc., but would also cause concerns regarding comparative analysis for data generated across platforms. Moreover, such a comparison would have to take into considerations many design features, platform biases, and similarities and dissimilarities of individual SM platforms against other platforms selected for the research. Thus, for the purpose of this research, the choice is made in favour of electing a singular SM platform, i.e., Twitter.

4.2.2 Choosing Dataset: Method and Approach

Most social media and web platforms profile and track user activities for commercial purposes, and twitter is no different. Twitter, though, allows developers free, but limited, or full, but paid, access to this curated data. Mining or extracting data of this kind, generally known as web scraping or data scraping, requires the use of programmes or tools which are able to query web applications. One can still scrape web data without programming knowledge, however such a process is time consuming as it requires manual extraction and curation of data, relevant values, nodes, variable, and other characteristics, known as metadata. Application programing interface (API) is usually employed to search and collect user generated SM content. The most frequently used API for Twitter are 'Search API' and 'Streaming API' (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan 2013, 1283). Streaming API is used to gather tweets in real time, whereas Search API allows for historical search of tweets but limited to past seven days. Additionally, both methods only allow a sample of tweets to be retrieved with specific restrictions applied by Twitter. Therefore, both of these methods are ineffective in supporting data gathering requirements for this research which is interested in historical tweets published in March 2017.

Similarly, paid subscription of Twitter Firehose only allows for full access of real time tweets. This method is extremely costly as it is designed for the enterprise level use. Lastly, Twitter has recently launched Premium and Enterprise Search API solutions to complement the aforementioned methods for developers. This gives developers greater access to querying

and retrieving historical tweets with complex queries, higher rate limit, more tweet results per query, and expanded metadata (Tornes 2017). These can be used to get twitter data for either the last 30 days or the full archival history, with different rate limits and pricing plans. Here, access and monthly subscription costs remain the biggest obstacle. One has to formally request Twitter to get developer access, which is approved on case by case basis, and choose an appropriate subscription model. The subscriptions costs for premium APIs range between $149 to $2499 per month (Hammer 2019).

Given such obstacles, I have opted for Twitter's advanced search option in accessing and retrieving twitter data. It is important to note that search results generated through this method are tailored to individual users, based on location, interests, and so on, and are subject to Twitter's rate limit. Still, researchers note that the data samples gathered through Twitter search are statistically reliable. This is possible because "[t]he monolithic, centralized architectures of digital services create a well-defined population, in theory, enabling statistically sound samples" (Jürgens, & Jungherr 2016, p. 12). The sample of historical tweets could be further refined by advanced search functions, such as date range, language filters, and keyword and account search using Boolean operators. Additionally, twitter has a built–in design feature that displays *Top* tweets, based on number of engagements. Therefore, while making use of Twitter's advanced search option, and results filtered by *Top* tweets, I will apply manual scraping technique by reading each tweet and collecting the most relevant metadata for further analysis.

Along with scraping method, the scraping approach for SM data is crucial and needs to follow the research intentions. The approach is also contingent on platform's architecture (see Figure 4.1 for a preliminary schema informing current research design).

Figure 4.1. Mental Model of Preliminary Research Plan[5]
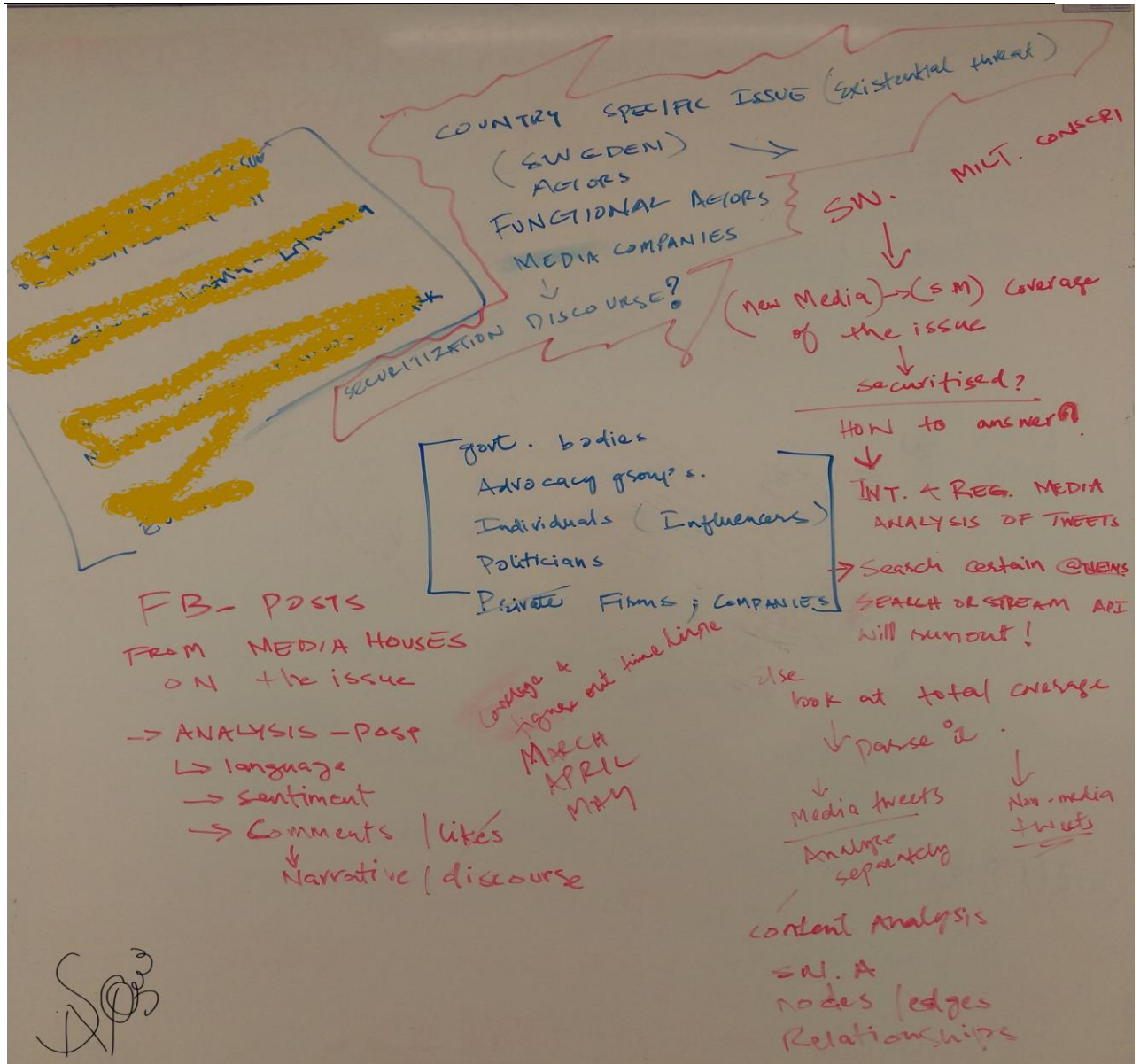
"Regarding Twitter, the data to be tracked and monitored are in the form of public 'tweets' to which access can be easily obtained" (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan 2013, 1278). Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan classify five different approaches of data scraping and call it "tracking

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[5] A mental map illustrating research design (data collection and analysis) of studying securitisation of social media discourse. The schema briefly highlights securitising actors, platforms to collect data from, case selection, timeframe to be investigated, and possible content analyses methods to be applied.

approaches", two of which satisfy the research needs of this paper, namely *keyword/topic–based approach* and *actor–based approach* (2013, 1283). As the names suggest, the two approaches stem from different normative vantage points. One could consider scraping through any valid approach, or a combination of them, as long as it serves and fits with the research design. The first approach is employed "where tweets as well as Facebook and blog postings that involve keywords related to topics of interest can be tracked" (2013, 1283). Keywords act as important markers signifying the relevance of the data to the research scope. However, Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan highlight that in order "to attain a high level of data completeness, relevant keywords representing the topic of interest have to be carefully and systematically chosen in advance. The broader the topic to be analyzed, the more keywords should be taken into account" (2013, 1283). It should also be noted that merely choosing more keywords would not guarantee data completeness, therefore, emphasis should be given to systemic selection of most relevant keywords.

The latter approach is useful when researchers are interested in influential users given their sway over other users' in the network. The influential users "are said to have the power to influence (online) opinion making processes . . . in terms of their generated content" (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan 2013 2013, 1283). These could be political actors, governmental or non-governmental organisations, media actors, citizens, citizen groups, and so on. These actors, with influence-wielding authority on SM platforms, are key elements to the study of securitisation. "For that, an actor-based tracking approach might be employed to track tweets, Wall postings, and . . . corresponding comments specifically contributed by those influential users who should also be identified in advance" (2013, 1283). I would be combining the two approaches in a way where initial scraping for tweets is performed through the keyword–based approach, which is then analysed to identify influential actors based on their engagement levels.

4.2.3   Keyword Qualification

The online media coverage of Swedish re–activation of conscription was prompted by the Swedish Ministry of Defence announcement, dated March 02, 2017, made available on *Government Offices of Sweden* website,[6] which used variations or exact usage of the words *Sweden* and *conscription.* The headline for the press briefing reads, "Sweden re-activates conscription: The Swedish government has decided to re-activate conscription from January 1 2018" (Sweden re-activates conscription 2017). *Sweden* and *Swedish* were used interchangeably in the press briefing. *Conscription* was used to denote military recruitment, however references to recruitment or enrollment were not exclusive to *conscription*. A manual review of online coverage in English language electronic media suggested that the same was true, with the exception of *draft,* which was more frequently used than *conscription*. Once identified, these keywords were additionally analysed through Google Trends[7]. It does not validate whether the same keywords were used by online sources, including SM, websites, and blogs, however it does give a strong indication of the most popular search terms on the subject. The preliminary analysis of web searches on Google show *Sweden draft* to be the most searched term, on average over one year, especially before conscription coming into force in January 2018, see figure 4.2. In comparison, the *Sweden conscription* was more popular during at the onset of SM debate and during the first week of march. *Sweden draft* was also searched 96% relative to *Sweden conscription* during the first week of March 2017.

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[6]   The text of the announcement is available at http://www.government.se/articles/2017/03/re-activation-of-enrolment-and-the-conscription/, along with a link to the summary of the commission report which paved the way for Swedish parliamentary discussion on the said matter.

[7]   See appendix A for Google Trends visualisation for search terms *Sweden conscription* and *Sweden draft* for the period February 25, 2017 – March 1, 2018, as searched by the users on google search (worldwide).

Figure 4.2. Search terms *Sweden conscription* versus *Sweden draft* for the period February 26, 2017 – March 1, 2018 (worldwide)
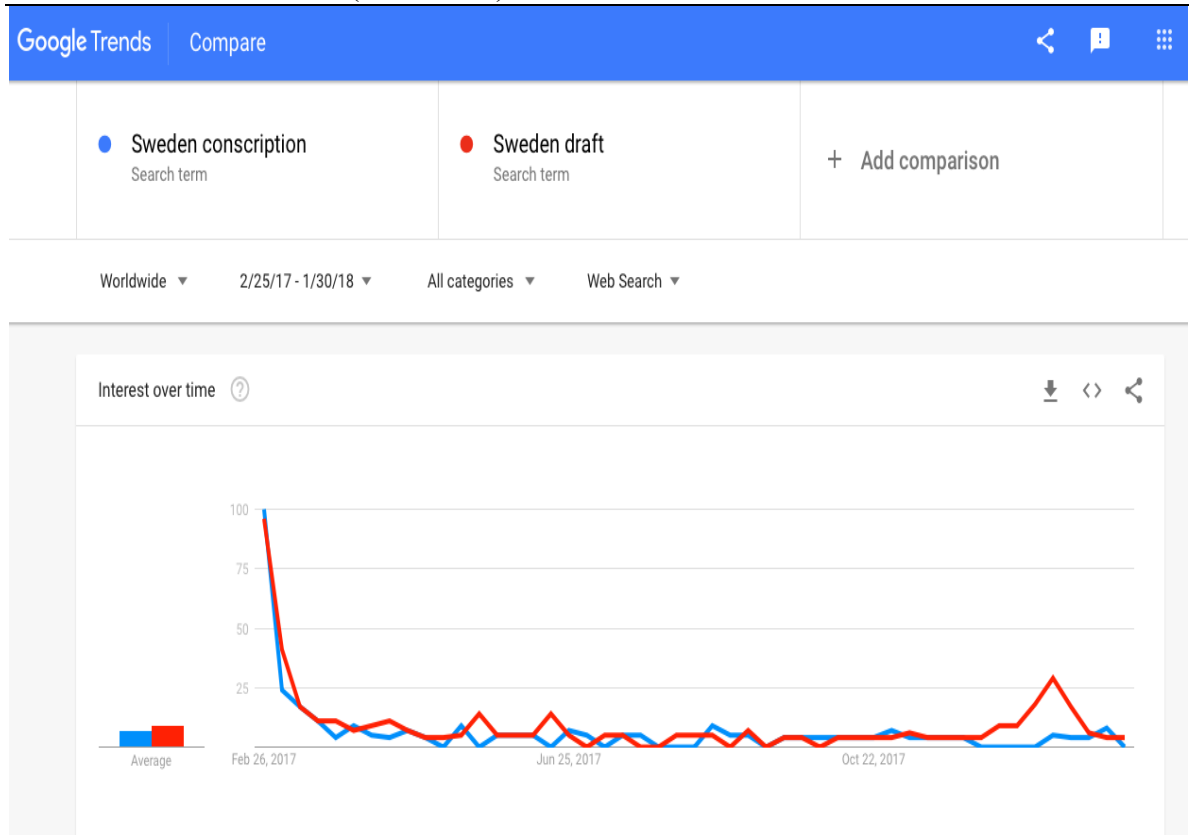
Note: Numbers between 0–100 are relative search interest for the given period and region, where 100 is highest popularity, 50 is half, 25 is ¼, and so on. 0 represents not enough data.

The scope of this research is confined to analysing sources originating in English, albeit there being localised coverage of the announcement in various languages, including Swedish. Although, the press briefing and online coverage clearly indicated two keywords pertinent to the research, these alone did not constitute sufficient qualification criteria. Given that Twitter, as medium of investigation, cater to greater user generated content – with wider depth and breadth – the keyword selection is, thus, platform specific. In other words, keyword selection – originally informed by the press briefing – had to be tested on the platform. This was done by running variations of keyword searches using Twitter's advance search options, filtering

for language and date range. The process identified additional keywords related to the subject, producing a list of possible keywords (e.g., *Sweden/Swedish conscription*, *Sweden/Swedish draft*, [*Sweden/Swedish mandatory* OR *military* OR *training*]). Using all possible variations of keywords for actual data collection will lead to potential noise and duplication of results. Twitter's *Advanced Search* option revealed drastically better results using *Sweden/Swedish conscription*, showing tweets with higher engagements than any other combination. Based on earlier analysis using *Google Trends* and search results through Twitter's advanced search, I, therefore, have elected to use *Sweden conscription* and *Swedish conscription* as two search terms.

4.2.4 Choosing Accounts/Actors

For Twitter, the research would employ keywords instead of hashtags since hashtags were not prominently used regarding Swedish conscription and all hashtags mentioning either Sweden or conscription are also captured using keywords. Twitter's *Advanced Search* and manual scraping will collect sample of tweets and retweets of all actors during the defined period. All qualifying actors will have used relevant keyword(s) during the historical period of one–week[8], i.e. March 1 2017 – March 07 2017. The overall tweet engagement, including likes, retweets, and replies, will reveal the most active users, whose tweets will be further analysed for discourse analysis to answer the central questions of this thesis.

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[8]   The one–week period is selected since the accounts/actors with highest engagements are those that have tweeted timely and early relative to the conscription announcement by the Swedish government. Furthermore, an advanced search result with historical period greater than one–week did not generate significantly different *Top* tweet results than the ones shown by one–week period starting March 01 2017. March 01 2017 is chosen instead of March 02 2017 as the stating period even though the announcement was made on March 02 2017 as Twitter results are displayed in local times based on account's time zone and settings, which at the time of twitter data retrieval was set to Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), 6 hours behind Central European Summer Time (CEST). Due to the time difference, some tweets that are posted on March 02 2020 from users in CEST would still show a timestamp of March 01 2020 for users in EDT.

5. ANALYSIS

5.1 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

A typical tweet consists of primary text with the addition of multimodality, images, hypertexts, and semiotics, such as signs and gestures. The tweets gathered for this research are analysed for their discursive events centred around their discursive context and platform norms. I used NVivo for textual analysis of tweets, top comments, its intertextual and multimodal elements, with a goal to perform critical discourse analysis based on the intertextual model. Van Dijk's *sociocognitive* approach was applied in coding the text to generate and extrapolate key topics and themes. It helped to identify audience contestation of securitisation discourse, as the goal of analysis. The coded topics were further explored to highlight additional discourses, whether discussed concurrently or debated separately from securitisation discourse.

Figure 5.1 is an example of tweet and its various elements under consideration for analysis. Each element is coded for content analysis and further contextualised and analysed to perform discourse analyses. Intertextuality and multimodality are generally present in most tweets, however not always. Intertextuality is taken into consideration on the basis of what appears inside the platform. Any references made to other texts and texts being referred to are contextualised so long as they reside on the platform. Therefore, intertextual links are not studied in their entirety as they appear elsewhere on the web. Similarly, multimodal devices are taken into consideration if appearing within the tweet and residing within the platform, without requiring any cross–platform transition. Due to space and time restrictions, intersubjective encounters, in this case replies to a tweet, being analysed are limited to top few, in some cases only one, randomised and prioritised by the platform algorithm.

Figure 5.1. Tweet's Formal Structure under Analysis

5.2 SECURITISATION DELIBERATED THROUGH TWITTER

What goes viral and which account, or tweet, serves to act as the public space for citizen engagement is not easy to conclude given the many elements central to the platform, including keywords used in a specific tweet, its timing, placement in twitter feed by the algorithm, the effect of twitter *Trends*, and so on. For instance, twitter *Trends* are popular topics at any given time, determined and catered to the user by factors such as their location, who they follow and like, and their interests (Twitter n.d.). That being said, it is generally the case that accounts with large following are more successful in generating user engagements. Similarly, tweets on topical subjects can also serve as catalyst for engagements amongst twitter users. It is, therefore, expected that top actors in Swedish conscription debate will invariably include those with significant following on Twitter. To avoid actors and twitter users whose tweets did not generate significant engagements, I have chosen to limit the results to tweets with at least 100 engagements. The search results, based on the query, filtered for date range (March 01 2017 to March 07 2017), language (English), and results type (Top), contained 21 tweets each of which had combined *likes*, *shares*, and *replies* in excess of 100. Chart 5.1 shows the domination of Swedish conscription debate by media outlets[9], from Europe and the Unites States, and active political twitter users with considerable following.

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[9]   Media actors here refer to twitter handles being operated under institutional guidance of their respective NEWS organisations, some of whom operate multiple twitter handles. Wikileaks is categorised as Media actor primarily because it qualifies itself as a media organisation, see What is WikiLeaks: https://wikileaks.org/What-is-WikiLeaks.html. Furthermore, @WikiLeaks is operated in institutional capacity instead of being used as a personal handle by its founder or WikiLeaks Advocates.

Chart 5.1. Tweets by users with most engagements (Retweets, Comments and Likes) in Swedish Military Conscription debate
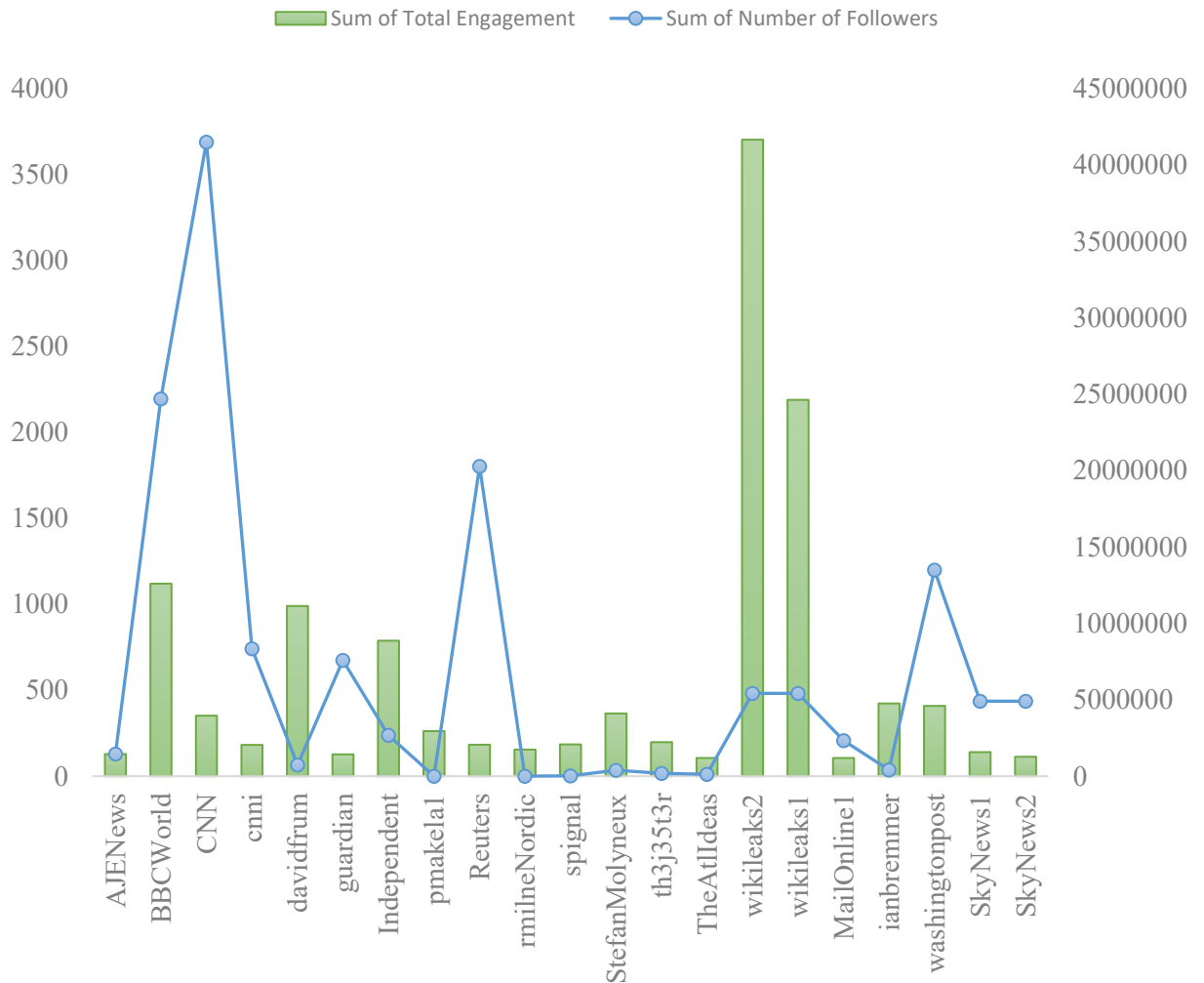
Breaking down the key actors into media and non–media category reveals more clearly the relation between the number of followers against the number of engagements, likes, comments, and retweets. There does not seem to be a direct relationship between the number of followers and number of engagements, when it comes to actors in the former category, as demonstrated in Chart 5.2. Furthermore, with the exception of WikiLeaks' two tweets which generated over 6000 engagements, BBC World was the only media actor whose tweet generated engagements above 1000. The actor with the largest twitter following, namely the CNN, could only muster 352 engagements. It is not clear what factors contributed to its relatively poorer engagements. This could be attributed to its audience location and interest in the domestic US politics.

Chart 5.2. Tweets by Media Actors on Swedish conscription debate: tweet engagements vs number of twitter followers
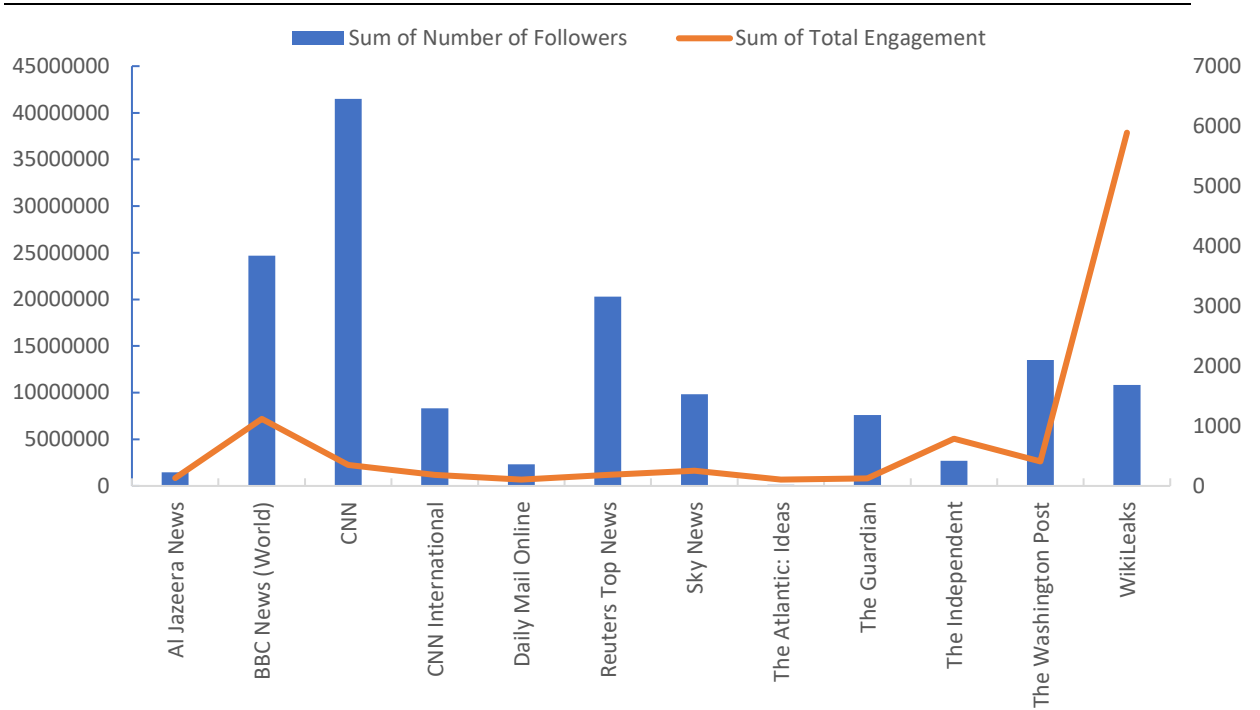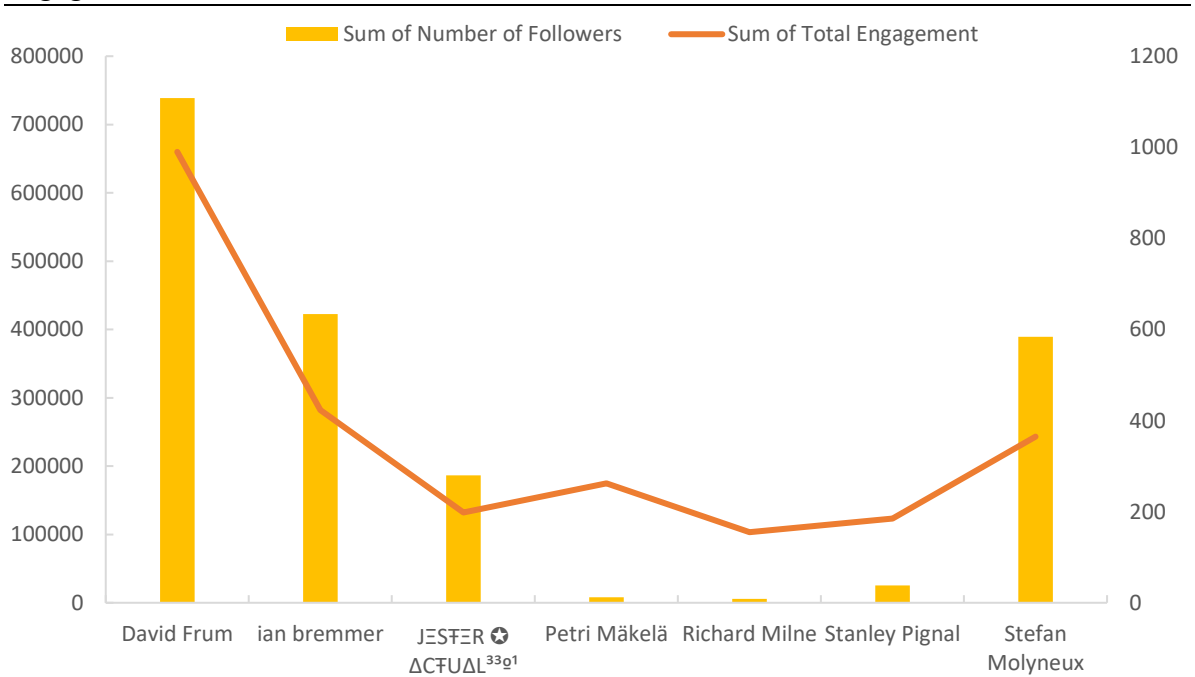

Chart 5.3. Tweets by non–Media Actors on Swedish conscription debate: tweet engagements vs number of twitter followers

Conversely, the relationship between the number of followers and number of engagements for tweets by non–media actors is more pronounced. There seems to be a strong correlation between the two, illustrated in Chart 5.3.

Likes, shares, and comments on a tweet tell a partial story of how far reaching a tweet is. The actual reach is unclear as twitter engagements from users are not fully captured through these matrices alone. A vast number of twitter users do not comment, retweet, or like a particular tweet, yet are consumers of its content. Chart 5.4 shows the full extent of each tweet's reach based on available and countable variables.

Chart 5.4. Engagements breakdown for each tweet by Actor in Swedish conscription debate
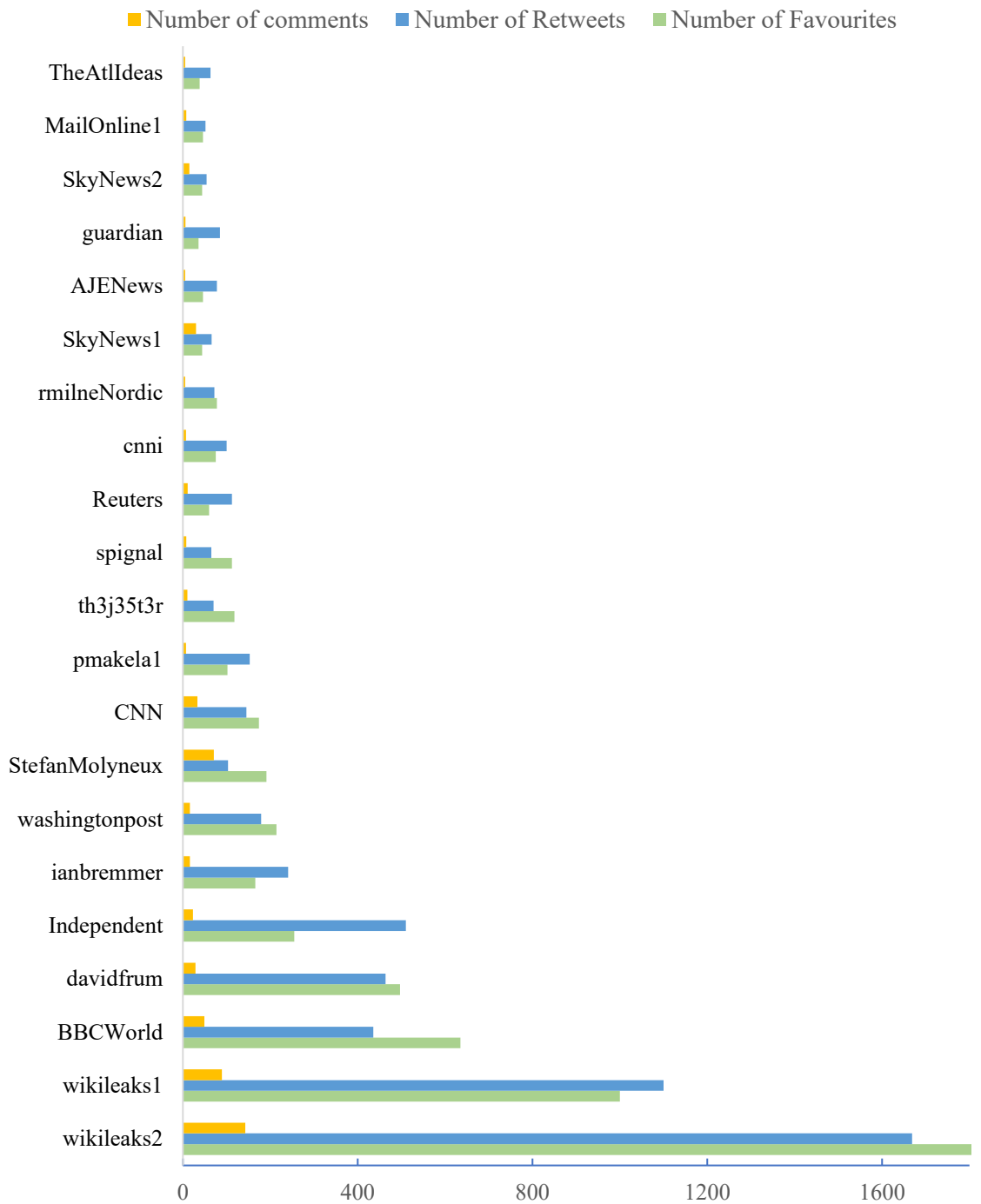

Comments or replies, however, reshape the content and further the discourse being presented. It is where it becomes more apparent whether the discourse is being accepted, rejected, or reimagined. A descriptive statistical analysis shows that for tweets on Swedish conscription

debate, the average ratio of tweet's comments, as part of its engagements, is 6.4 percent. This ratio is slightly higher, at 6.7 percent, in tweets by media actors than by non–media actors, where it drops to 5.9 percent. Not surprisingly, WikiLeaks' tweets, which generated the highest overall engagements, is where bulk of the audience deliberation took place even if that ratio stayed just below 4 percent. It is also noteworthy that, 71 comments and replies were posted to the tweet published by Stefan Molyneux's, a non–media actor. These comments and replies accounted for roughly 20 percent of tweet's engagement, making it a strong outlier[10]. It could be construed as an indication of strong group identity on part of actor's twitter followers, who are more engaged and vocal. As is discussed in the following section, the comments posted on Stefan Molyneux's tweet included extreme views and used rhetorical devices in derogating the outgroup, common for ideological and racism discourse.

Beyond the engagement, all formal elements of the tweets are coded in relation to their *meaning, propositional structures*, *sentence syntax* and *discourse formation*, *rhetoric*, *argumentation*, and *actions* and *interactions* (van Dijk 2000; 2008; 2011; 2016; 2018). I am aware of *Sociocognitive* approach's emphasis on the meaning construction of text, which takes the centre stage in my coding and subsequent analysis, however, I am also cognisant of platform design and have further taken into consideration the intertextual model for a wholistic examination, refer to the detailed coded reference (Chart 5.5), presented below.

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[10]   Strong outlier value is determined using the 3rd quartile and interquartile range for ratio of comments on each tweet's total engagement. Upper limit for the strong outlier is 15.67 percent, calculated by adding 3.0*IQR (interquartile range) to the 3rd quartile.

Chart 5.5. Key Themes and Topics: Coding of formal structure of tweets on Swedish conscription debate
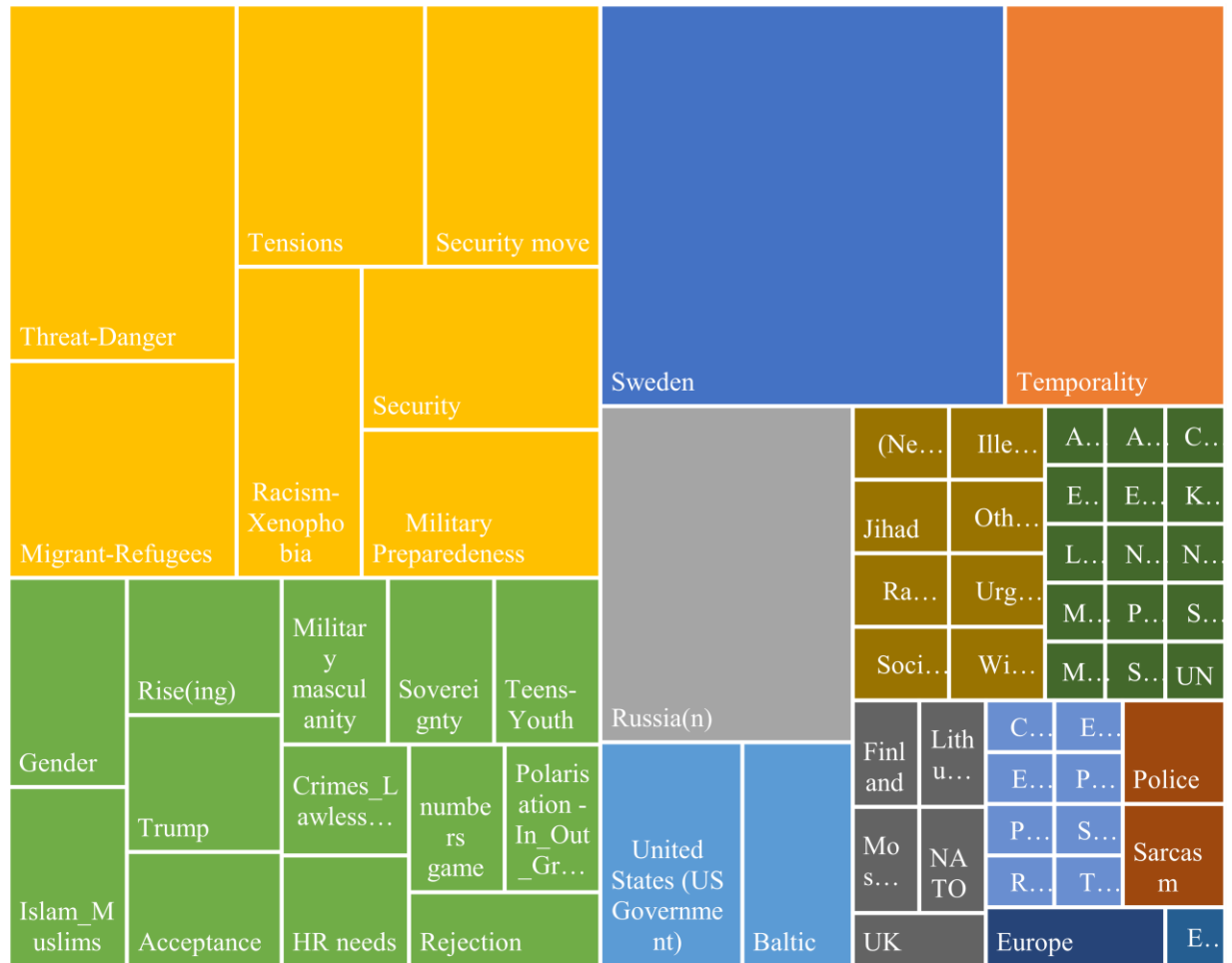
It reveals key topics and themes along the lines of *Threat–Danger*, *Migrant–Refugees*, *Tensions*, *Security Move*, and *Racism–Xenophobia*, amongst host of others. Coded references in relation to physical and political space centred on Sweden, Russia, the United, States, and the Baltics. Alongside spatiality, temporality was discovered in references to Swedish neutrality over the decades and its short–lived conscription free era in modern Swedish history. Comments and tweets used dates and era references consciously to sound alarm regarding existential threat to the Swedish sovereignty. Ethicality and morality were found to be less prevalent in comments and replies section, however, present as arguments in tweets and their intertextual links in justifying the Swedish government policy response to protect its security, citizens, and sovereignty against the perceived threat.

The following section is a qualitative analysis of 21 tweets that have been selected for examination. The analysis takes a deep dive into each tweet in its totality while placing it into *Leading* and *Secondary Actors* categories of media and non–media accounts. Lastly, I provide a short commentary on each tweet and its respective elements, as guided by my theoretical design.

5.3 KEY ACTORS

5.3.1   *Leading actors: Media Securitisation Actors*

Wikileaks

WikiLeaks generated a high engagement for its tweets on Swedish conscription, published on March 3rd 2017. It has a following of 5.4 million twitter users, making it a powerful actor in shaping political discourse. There are two tweets from WikiLeaks making the list and are subject to analysis. These tweets include primary text, intertextuality, and multimodality, a common structure for most tweets captured for this study. Its first tweet is short and concise and encourages readers to follow the story on posted link. It reads: "Is Sweden 'liberal'? ✓ No Juries ✓ Indefinite detention w/o charge ✓ Refuses to outlaw torture ✓ Conscription" (Wikileaks 2017a).

Just under 4,000 people either liked or retweeted, most by any other actor on the debate. It appears that the narrative being produced by Wikileaks is warmly received. Twitter's promoted reply, by Da Vega's, buys into Wikileaks narrative by suggesting that Swedish tactic is "kinda like US govt" (March 3, 2017, comment on Wikileaks 2017), making a possible reference to the detainees at the Guantanamo Bay and their indefinite detention by the US government.

WikiLeaks used the opportunity to question Sweden's image as a liberal democracy in order to bring light to Swedish extradition case against Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks. By raising the subject for debate, it made a statement supporting its legal case against Swedish government, which had been seeking Julian Assange's extradition to Sweden. The tweet, therefore, was politically charged and a jibe at Sweden as a *liberal* democracy. The short–embedded video is from a press conference by a Swedish minister at the end of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) meeting in 2015. The video shows Swedish minister being questioned on the state of affairs regarding Julian Assange case as he had been detained indefinitely for over 1500 days at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, surrounded by the UK police.

The video is an addendum to the rhetorical claim raised in the tweet, suggesting that a *liberal* nation supports indefinite detention even when a crime is not proven. It is made more ironic since the encounter is captured at a press conference following UN's annual HRC meeting.

This second tweet made a direct reference to the actual conscription debate with an external link in Swedish language, an article by Radio Sweden (Sveriges Radio). Adopting a more neutral tone this time, it states that "Sweden announces that it will bring back military conscription" (WikiLeaks 2017b). It is interesting to note that WikiLeaks chose its intertextual reference in Swedish language while publishing the tweet in English. It is an obvious attempt to generate greater engagements with audience from and outside Sweden. Referencing article in Swedish language gives local audience an impression of validity and authenticity of the post, as it is authored and hosted by the national radio, with broadcasts in over half a dozen languages. As is common in other tweets, intertextuality is complimented by multimodality. In this case, an image of SAF is centred by Twitter. It depicts military preparedness, with visible guns and protective military gear. It is worth noting that although new military conscription is now a gender–neutral policy, the image only portrays men in ready formation, gearing up to defend their country. The image, thus, further perpetuates military masculinity and equates it with being capable of guarding the territorial sovereignty.

Ensuing discussion and replies are centred on references to the United States president Donald Trump, whose tweets associated Sweden with lawlessness, high crimes and rapes, as a result of it accepting refugees from mostly Middle Eastern and African countries (@realDonaldTrump 2017). Lepreykan, commenting on the tweet, discredits security narrative by employing euphemism: "Is this in response to the terror attacks that never happened?" (March 3, 2017, comment on Wikileaks 2017). This response is not just a rebuttal to the misinformation propagated so flagrantly on SM but also a rejection of the presumed security threat. Remarkably then, the direct response to the comment pushed back in other direction by Doogz, stating "no it is in response to the mass rapes, violent attacks and lawlessness though" (March 3, 2017, comment on Wikileaks 2017). Lepreykan, however, disagrees and challenges the assertion by stating: "Sorry I find it suspicious that violence broke out days after Trump said there was problems" (March 3, 2017, comment on Wikileaks 2017).

Doogz' response is the kind of misinformation Lepreykan had earlier referred to. Not only did it blame the worsening external security situation to internal policing matters, it indirectly out casted a certain section of the demographic through its false entailment that strengthened military will somehow stop rapes and riots, being associated with immigrants. These arguments could be placed on two ends of the spectrum. On one end, the audience is skeptical of American media portrayal of Sweden, while on the opposing end, the audience believes that rapes, lawlessness, and lack of rule of law in Sweden is common knowledge in Europe.

BBC News World

Another tweet which had weighed considerably in shaping securitisation discourse on twitter concerning the Swedish military conscription was BBC News World. The official twitter account of BBC News World, with twitter followers in excess of 24.6 million users, is the top European actor in terms of direct audience reach. Its tweet was expertly framed to state that "Sweden brings back military conscription amid Baltic tensions" (BBCWorld, March 2, 2017). The tweet differed from that of Wikileaks' second tweet in that it is stylised as a typical news headline using geopolitical tensions to sensationalise the event and further

securitising the issue to attract readership. Most notably though, the image (figure 5.2) embedded in the news has been used extensively as part of the external media coverage on Swedish conscription.

Figure 5.2. Embedded image, @BBCWorld Tweet on Swedish Conscription, 2017

Sweden brings back military conscription
The military will call up 4,000 extra men and women from 1 January in non-aligned Sweden.

bbc.com

It shows Swedish military preparedness, focusing on masculine and mature nature of military personnel. Similar to the earlier image used on Wikileaks's tweet, it foregrounds men in military gear being deployed. The uniform clearly shows Swedish flag insignia by men wearing concerned yet authoritative look, projecting an image of serious and prepared Sweden.

The embedded text and tagline focuses on the gender–neutral policy of conscription, a progressive approach given Sweden's perceived image as a progressive country. It, however, also highlights Second World War (WW2) and Cold–War reference of non-aligned Sweden, suggesting the wind of change in Swedish military mentality. The subheading tries to capture more than the headline by stating the number of recruits needed and the effective date of policy. The tweet, when read in totality and in conjunction with the image and embedded text, highlights both issues facing Swedish politicians, namely the security concerns and

soldier shortage. However, the positioning of the two themes in the tweet appears to be a deliberate attempt in securitising the discourse. There is a greater level of detail given to back-up the headline, concerning conscription and tensions in the Baltics, in comparison to the subheading. Furthermore, the placement of the two issues are never inverted in the article attached, thus, foregrounding the securitisation discourse.

Much like the Wikileaks tweets, the ensuing debate on the comments section is filled with immigrants as problem *trope* common with right-wing populism discourse. It is squarely focused on Muslims and the need to rid of them. "Handy when civil unrest becomes too much for police..." (March 2, 2017, comment on BBCWorld 2017), mentions James Staunton. Staunton is building on the notion that policing in Sweden is an issue, a reference to sporadic civil unrest incidents in Sweden. Another commenter adds to the discourse by stating "I hope also to kick out the Muslims in the country." (Goetsch, March 2, 2017, comment on BBCWorld 2017). A third commenter perpetuates it further by stating that "nothing to do with no go Islamic zones.." (ooswerveoo, March 2, 2017, comment on BBCWorld 2017). Ooswerveoo squarely connects Muslims, no go areas, and policing together. It is important to note that the audience responses are not replies to each other, rather to the news actor. ooswerveoo's comment could have been construed as a rebuttal, due to lack of emotions and clarity, against the Islamophobia spread throughout the comments section, however, it only adds to the Islamophobia by explicitly associating no go areas with "no go Islamic zones" (March 2, 2017, comment on BBCWorld 2017).

The Independent
Another News organization, with twitter following around 2.69 million users, took a more traditional approach in an effort to reach far and beyond with relative ease. It published the following statement: "Sweden brings back military conscription in response to Russia ind.pn/2mOS9VP" (The Independent 2017). The tweet made use of a hyperlink to redirect audience to its website for detailed commentary while also employing multimodality depicting The Independent's red news banner with words BREAKING NEWS posted on it. The tweet was successful in generating 788 engagements in total.

The twitter phrase used by The Independent was a commonly used headline in Swedish military conscription debate. It was a typical news headline full of elements central to the theory of securitisation. It foregrounded the Russian threat, a security issue, the Swedish response of bringing the conscription back, a security move or action, and made a temporal reference to the 100 or so years during which Sweden had active conscription. Moreover, it avoids details and restricts audience attention to more sensational element of the debate.

The comments on the tweet are varied in manner in their responses, from hysteria to sarcasm. Jessica buys into media's war paranoia and replies with a panic: "Oh no. We fucked up so bad. I hope nothing happens before we get rid of this orange menace" (March 2, 2017, comment on The Independent 2017). The account seems to be from the US given the "orange menace" reference to the US president Donald Trump. Alarmed by the news, Jessica warns that this is a scary development especially since the commenter does not seem to have faith in the capabilities of the US president to defuse the worsening situation. Julian M Lobachewski's reply employed sarcasm and showed surprise in stating "Blew Swede Shoos Russia?" (Lobachewski, March 2, 2017, comment on The Independent 2017). It indicated the acceptance of the securitisation narrative while also being skeptical of Swedish might against the Russians. The commenter finds the development entertaining and takes a more humorous approach by using a rock-and-roll pun. Blue Suede Shoes, rock-and-roll song by Carl Perkins, is tweaked to reflect the Swedish policy change in response to perceived Russian aggression.

The Washington Post

The Washington Post used its official twitter account, with a following of 13.5 million users, to post on the Swedish conscription debate. The tweet generated over 400 engagements. It used another topical discussion, the refugee discourse, to tempt readers in engaging with the tweet, which reads: "Analysis: Is Sweden reintroducing conscription because of refugees? No. It's Russia. http://wapo.st/2mPopbo" (The Washington Post 2017). It then framed the

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discussion as a security threat and security move. The word "Analysis" in beginning of the post is used to demonstrate that the statement is not merely an opinion but rather a statement summarising a through and conclusive study, thus claiming authenticity and validity. The use of rhetorical device of hypophora is employed to excite audience and quickly transitioning to an issue of greater urgency. An assertive "No" followed by "It's Russia" is used to sensationalist the headline and to capture, and redirect, audience attention to the source article, hyperlinked to The Washington Post website. Multimodality is framed as part of the formal structure of the tweet. The attached image, figure 5.3, frames and foregrounds securitisation discourse.

Figure 5.3. Embedded Image, @washingtonpost Tweet on Swedish Conscription, 2017

The image depicts a group of soldiers marching with full gear in Swedish rural setting, a show of military preparedness. The fort in the background is symbolic of Swedish sovereignty and portrays the frontier that needs to be protected. The image also associates military strength with men, as exemplified by men only squad patrolling the frontier, a stark contrast to what the policy change in question aims to accomplish, namely a gender balanced Swedish armed force.

Just like multimodality, intertextuality is viewed as part of the tweet. It reads: "Sweden has been all over the news but for all the wrong reasons" (The Washington Post 2017). The subheading is a reference to the refugee debate surrounding Sweden and elsewhere in Europe, fuelled by Donald Trump tweets. When read in conjunction with the tweet text, it is a strong refutation to the *refugee crisis*, suggesting that the refugee debate in reference to Sweden is unwarranted and does not constitute a real concern. The *speech act* not only describes a security concern but is also successful in framing it as such. It makes the case that the Russian threat is ever present and its aggression is real enough for Sweden to take drastic measures.

A comment by Alan appears to negate the discourse by asserting that it is fabricated: "The Bullshit propaganda continues" (March 2, 2017, comment on The Washington Post 2017). Another commenter takes the news at its face value by stating that "It has everything to do with Russia which encroachs on Swedish air and water...plus drills near borders of □□□□□□□□" (Issybelle, March 2, 2017, comment on The Washington Post 2017). Alan is skeptical of the News media and, thus, frames the tweet as part of war propaganda being spewed by news outlet. Issybelle's reply is an example of audience acceptance of security threat and security move. Issybelle believes the Russian threat to be genuine, and cites as a proof, the incidents of Russian violation of Swedish territorial water and air space, as well as its threatening military trainings around the Baltic States. The aforementioned comments are a good example of two strongly opposing views, one rejecting the securitisation discourse whereas the other approving of it.

CNN and CNN International

Much like their media counterparts, CNN and CNN International focused on Russian threat as a reason for Swedish unease and reintroduction of conscription. The two account had a combined twitter following of 49.8 million users, by far the largest audience for any actor being analysed here. The accounts posted the exact same tweet text, external article, as well

as the embedded image. Therefore, the formal structure of the posts appear identical, with the exception of shortened URLs[11].

> "As tensions rise over Russia, Sweden will reintroduce conscription for the first time since 2010 http://cnn.it/2lyDD3j" (CNN 2017).
>
> "As tensions rise over Russia, Sweden will reintroduce conscription for the first time since 2010 http://cnn.it/2lBk76u" (CNN International 2017).

The tweets' use of specific keywords – *reintroduce*, *first time,* and *since 2010* – constructs Swedish identity against its temporal *Self*. However, more importantly, by positioning these keywords the text projects legitimacy over the framing of discourse. In an effort to sound impartial and authentic, the text employed the use of the year when Sweden stopped its conscription practice. Despite this, the text evidently presents elements of securitisation discourse. It ignored the other equally important aspect, namely the shortage of military personnel, of the policy change. The text centred on the security act, aptly preceded by the threat framing, and is characterized by coupling the keywords: *tension* and *Russia*. Moreover, it utilises a metaphor – *rise* – to inflate the already aggravated security situation. Russia is used to create sense of fear and as a justification for taking emergency measures.

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[11]   URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator, a reference to distinct address assigned to each web page on the internet and intranet.

Figure 5.4. Image embedded in CNN Tweet on Swedish Conscription, 2017

The embedded image, figure 5.4, further supports the securitisation discourse and the escalation of tensions in the region, hence the depiction of soldiers taking position on a tank. It, therefore, represents Sweden's military preparedness against Russian aggression. Replies to the tweets indulge in securitisation discourse framing, as intended by the tweets, as well as *refugees as threat* trope.

> "So that's what happened in Sweden....funny, involves threat from Russia." (sdselkie, March 2, 2017, comment on CNN 2017).
>
> "tensions rise against Russia more likely for martial law against own citizens due to Islamic immigration" (Waugh, March 2, 2017, comment on CNN 2017).
>
> "Because of 'Tensions with Russia' or to control the migrants/asylum seekers?" (Bobster, March 3, 2017, comment on CNN International 2017).
>
> "Scary" (Knouse, March 3, 2017, comment on CNN International 2017).

Sdselkie's comment is a reference to the President of the United States (POTUS) speaking unkindly of Sweden. The POTUS had tweeted to clarify his affixation on Sweden, and by extension Europe, during his campaign rallies:

"My statement as to what's happening in Sweden was in reference to a story that was broadcast on @FoxNews concerning immigrants & Sweden" (Trump 2017).

"Give the public a break - The FAKE NEWS media is trying to say that large scale immigration in Sweden is working out just beautifully. NOT!" (Trump 2017).

In a jibe at the POTUS, the commenter connects threat to Sweden from Russia, as the real reason why the POTUS had been trying to create distraction by heavily commenting on Sweden's immigration policies. Sdselkie's sarcasm towards the POTUS is still not a rejection of the securitisation discourse. KM Waugh and Bobster do no not reject it either, however, they are skeptical of the arguments presented and, therefore, reconstruct Muslims and migrants in Sweden to be the existential threat. Both commenters unequivocally reject the notion that Russian threat trumps immigration from Muslim countries. Patricia Knouse feels that it is a scary development and is the only commenter in full agreement with the threat framing and securitization move by CNN and CNN International.

5.3.2   Leading actors: Non–Media Securitisation Actors

David Frum

Frum s a verified twitter actor and is a conservative columnist and former Bush speech writer. The account has close to 740000 twitter followers, giving David Frum a wide audience for his political views. His single tweet generated almost a thousand engagements, most by a non–media twitter account. He only addressed, and hence highlighted, Russian threat as the reason for policy change. The tweet noted: "Facing Russian threat, Sweden's Social Democratic govt resumes military conscription for young men & women" (Frum 2017). This was a retweet of Richard Milne, Financial Times correspondent of Nordic/Baltic region, with its own text. By way of retweeting, Frum projected his own views as credible by aligning with another known *twitterati*. The intersubjective encounter between the two frames the Russian threat as the reason for policy change. The severity of existential threat is further

elaborated by Frum in associating the policy change to the Swedish Social Democrats, a centre–left political party. Moreover, it also suggests that bolstering military and military readiness is the correct and mature thing to do as the days of "naivety" are over. This is a dominant frame of thinking in realist IR traditions, more common in the United States than in Europe, and commonly associated with right–wing political thinking. It is, therefore, not at all unexpected from Frum, given his political background, to make use of the occasion, to drive home the notion that Russian aggression is credible enough to unsettle a non–aligned Sweden, prompting the latter to rethink military policy.

The comments on Frum's tweet also revealed an affixation on POTUS and the state of play within the domestic US politics in relation to Russia.

> "is this what our president meant when he said look what is going on in Sweden" (Yates, March 2, 2017, comment on Frum 2017).

> "Russia. Mideast. Syria. Oil. Exxon. Tillerson. Manafort. Sessions. Cypress Bank. Ross. Trump. Connect the dots, people…" (Tarr, March 2, 2017, comment on Frum 2017).

> "if you don't think Russian expansionism has been encouraged by a Trump administration, consider this" (thesecondellen, March 2, 2017, comment on Frum 2017).

The common theme among these responses is a direct reference to the US president Donald Trump, namely his statements on Sweden and his appeasement of Russia. The audience does not necessarily seem to be worried about Sweden but is mainly concerned with growing Russian influence on global scale and, as such, indirectly accepts securitisation move by the actor.

Ian Bremmer

A professor of politics at the New York University, columnist, and president of Eurasia Group, Ian Bremmer has a sizeable twitter audience, close to 423000 followers. At 423, the

tweet's engagement is second highest for a twitter account not belonging to a media organization. A verified twitter account and a sizeable following are conducive to amplifying one's views on twitter. His tweet is short and to the point, stating "Sweden brings back conscription. Refugee concerns? No. Russian security" (bremmer 2017). Bremmer also employed rhetorical device, hypophora, by posing a question, related to the Swedish refugee debate taking over the airways in western media, to stimulate the debate and then supplying the answer. He centred the debate on Russian security concerns instead of refugees, making it a security move as well as an acceptance of Swedish security act, without a slightest mention of military human resource needs.

> "'the 1980s called and they want their foreign policy back'" (Dominguez (USSF), March 2, 2017, comment on bremmer 2017).

> "@Otto_English US already a questionable ally, if not a confirmed Axis power yet… even a Chamberlain was re-arming in 1938/9" (Rae-Scott, March 2, 2017, comment on bremmer 2017)

> "it's an excellent form of integration, no?" (Keller, March 2, 2017, comment on bremmer 2017)

Comments on Bremmer's tweet are some of the most diverse as they touch upon different themes and bring forth distinct discourses as a response to securitisation. Allen Dominguez operates sarcasm to explicitly dismiss the securitisation discourse presented by Bremmer. Dominguez mocks the policy development as rooted in the 1980s, evoking temporal reference to the Cold–War era where having a large army was of prime importance and a sign of military superiority. Simon Rae-Scott, on the other hand, compares present security situation to that of the WW2. Rae-Scott is skeptical of the US as a credible ally, going so far as to refer it as an Axis Power (the group of countries fighting against the allied powers during the WW2). Rae-Scott seems to suggest that western alliance should not rely on the US alone for its security needs as history suggest its credibility to be dubious at best, as exemplified by the precautionary actions taken by the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain against the Nazi Germany at the dawn of the WW2. Andrew M. Keller frames it entirely differently by placing it within integration/immigration discourse. However, lack of semiotics references, such as emojis, makes it difficult to interpret whether the comment

is intended as a credible solution to the integration issue, seeking validation from Bremmer, or is spoken in jest.

Stefan Molyneux

Stefan Molyneux, a Canadian podcaster, is usually described and labelled as an *alt-right*, *right wing*, or *white supremacist* figure (Schreckinger 2017; McCullough 2017; Roose 2018). Molyneux has a considerable twitter audience, at 389000 users. His tweet generated just under 300 engagements, including highest number of comments (71) for a non-media account. The tweet is concise and just noted that "'Sweden reintroduces Military Conscription. https://gatestone.eu/sweden-conscription/ …' (Molyneux 2017)". It directed audience to an external source which, incidentally, is the infamous Gatestone Institute, known for spreading fake news and hate directed at Muslims and, in particular, against Muslims migrants in Europe (Fang 2018; Weiss 2018).

The text of the tweet only indicates an act – conscription – being executed. It is, however, considered a security act since it is being discussed in the same spatial dimension as other tweets on the day. Furthermore, the intertextual link was promoted using the same keywords that were being operated on the twitter's communicative space for Swedish conscription debate.

> "I don't understand why. What's all the fuss about? According to liberals, Sweden is a multicultural paradise!" (King, March 3, 2017, comment on Molyneux 2017).

> "send refugees to the front. Russia gets some trigger time, Sweden gets rid of its problem. Then call a truce" (Willy Pete, March 3, 2017, comment on Molyneux 2017).

> "It should involve axes and longboats" (StupidPeople, March 3, 2017, comment on Molyneux 2017).

> "Well, when your country is crawling with radical jihadists..." (Dealio, March 3, 2017, comment on Molyneux 2017).

Comments on Molyneux's tweet arguably generated some of the most extreme views on the debate. Most commenters did not directly address the policy issue but took the occasion to further the *immigrants as problem or refugees as threat tropes*. The commenters generally buy into the narrative that Swedish multiculturalism is flawed, problematic, and is a place of radical jihadist. These comments form part of the formal structure of the tweet. Here, the xenophobic discourse is present, much like other commenters on the subject, however, the nature of xenophobic attitude shown is of radical nature.

The structure of Führer King J's reply is littered with rhetorical devices. It combines *antiphrasis* – irony – and *humor* to drive home a contradictory attitude, i.e., liberal multiculturalism has brought ills to the Swedish society. StupidPeople, on the other hand, compares the Swedish military resurgence to the Vikings heydays. *Axes* and *longboats* are temporal references to the seafaring Vikings feared for their pillaging.

Dealio's reply instead relies on *hyperbole* "for the enhancement of meaning" (van Dijk 2000, 73). It exaggerates the issue of jihadis and their number in Sweden and uses metaphor – *crawling* – to express negative mental model relating to Muslim Swedes. Sweden, indeed, is one of the European countries which struggled to understand the factors, inter alia socioeconomic, cultural, demographic, and education, underpinning the decision by some Swedes to join foreign jihadi networks. However, the numbers and data do no support the assumption that Sweden is *crawling* with jihadists, especially when compared to countries in Europe and North America. "Among countries in Western Europe, France has the highest number of ISIS foreign fighters (1,700), followed by Germany (760), the United Kingdom (760), and Belgium (470)" (Benmelech and Klor 2016, 4).

The communicative interaction facilitated by Molyneux's tweet is centred on the ideology that stronger policing through military presence is what is required to put down refugees. Implied meaning is that refugees are threat to internal security. The personal belief being broadcasted is not challenged by the members of the community or by the securitisation actor. As articulated by van Dijk, "belief systems are not individual, personal beliefs, but social beliefs shared by members of social groups" (van Dijk 2011, 382). In other words, members

of society, when interacting with others, not only share but at the same time impose or project their ideologies.

Petri Mäkelä

The formal structure of this tweet included multimodality. Here, an image depicts soldiers during military drills on the coast, reinforcing the idea that Sweden is scrambling its military units for border defence. However, the image portrays military drills as a fun activity. The tweet which appears similar to most others on the subject is rather strategically worded. It reads: "#Sweden reintroduces #conscription due to deteriorating #security situation. Will apply to both men and women" (Mäkelä 2017). Firstly, it made use of hashtags for keywords, including *Sweden*, *conscription*, and *security*, which is a sure way of broadcasting the tweets to other members of the communicative situation (social group/community tied through those hashtags). Petri Mäkelä further dispatches it to specific actors by directly incorporating their twitter handle in his own reply to the tweet.

> "Ping @20committee @andrewmichta @Pabriks @GorseFires @GissiSim @JeffersonObama @ericgarland @EuromaidanPR @LouiseMensch @VeikoSpolitis" (Mäkelä, March 2, 2017, comment on Mäkelä 2017).

His tweet generated 262 engagements, highest for an un-verified twitter actor. It would be interesting to analyse whether the intended purpose of reaching and engaging wider audience is successfully materialised. Although, a social network analysis (SNA), to conduct such an examination, is beyond the scope of this paper to fully capture the range of a single tweet, it is clear that Mäkelä had a relative success in facilitating securitisation discourse.

Secondly, although from Finland, Mäkelä chose to tweet in English while sharing the source article from the Sveriges Television in Swedish, to reach local and international audience. It also demonstrates Mäkelä's attempt to preserve authenticity and validity within the securitisation discourse.

Thirdly, the tweet addressed changing geopolitics in the region as the main reason for conscription, while making note of gender–neutral hiring policy. As part of the tweet, it did not address the shortage of personnel the SAF is facing. Amongst the tweets selected for the analysis, it is the only example in which tweet text exclusively underscoring the gender–neutral aspect of the policy. However, as is exemplified through intertextuality analysed in relation to tweets thus far, the non–securitisation discourses are never foregrounded. Interestingly then, it is the subject of gender–neutral hiring policy that is most concerning to Mäkelä's audience, despite his obvious attempts to utilise security specific hashtags and invoke security actors in his tweet and reply, respectively.

The gender bias inherent in the hiring processes of Finnish military recruitment is where a commenter picked up the thread.

> "Finland is really out of step with equality on conscription. It's totally gender biased" (David Mac Dougall, March 2, 2017, comment on Mäkelä 2017).

The audience here is concerned with the hiring practices of the Finish Defence Forces and would like to see recruitment process modernised. One thing to note is that even though Mäkelä's audience only directly hinted at the broader issue of discriminatory hiring practices, common in most militaries, it assumes acceptance of the securitization discourse as it moves the discussion further to the hiring practices without questioning the security narrative. Barring the theoretical paradigm which rely on the argumentative nature of speech act for its acceptance or rejection, "the principle that securitization requires acceptance by an audience is a distinctive feature of securitization theory" (Balzacq 2010, 8). Therefore, this particular tweet could be argued to have an overall audience acceptance since there is no objection or challenge to the securitisation narrative, not to mention that the tweet is further liked/shared by 252 twitter users.

5.3.3 Secondary actors: Media Securitisation Actors

Secondary actors are those twitter users who were able to generate relatively less but still a considerable engagement through their tweets, in comparison to the *leading actors*. They are categorised as *secondary actors* since their total engagement levels were below 200. This data and analysis does not include any actor with less than 100 engagements, a minimum threshold I setup for the purpose of this study for twitter engagement to be considered effective concerning securitisation discourse. Much like the first section, this part of the analysis is divided into media and non–media actors. Given the fact that these actors use their power and clout to deliberate on the Swedish conscription matter, the analysis of tweets and responses follow the same pattern but is not as detailed due to their diminished influence when compared against the *leading actors*.

Reuters Top News

Reuters used an extremely short and concise text to convey the news. It stated: "Sweden set to reintroduce conscription: broadcaster SR http://reut.rs/2lBHygY" (Reuters Top News 2017). The tweet was only able to garner a total of 183 engagements, a relatively low level given its twitter following of 20.3 million users. The primary text neither elaborated nor explained the reasons behind the policy change. Furthermore, it was a rare example of a media broadcaster avoiding an overt framing of the headline to a specific discourse. Multimodality is utilised in framing an image of the Swedish Defence Minister, as making the announcement, around which textual elements of the tweet exist. Intertextuality (reference to Swedish broadcaster SR) completes the formal structure of the tweet. The tweet, along with its intertextual and multimodal parts, aims to present authenticity in readers' minds about the text.

Commenters on the tweet, though, honed–in on the geopolitics of the region and, subsequently, bringing Russian threat into the discourse. Alex Kovaleski seems to be stunned by the conscription decision Sweden had taken. However, the commenter feels Putin's Russia is a security threat for its neighbours.

> "@brianiselin67 amazing. I was amazed by this one. But hey, closer to Putin is more nervous" (kovaleski, March 2, 2017, comment on Reuters Top News 2017).
>
> "Sweden has long had a fear, or loathing, of Russia. Russia sending subs into Stockholm doesn't help" (Iselin, March 3, 2017, comment on Reuters Top News 2017).

Kovaleski has directly engaged with another user from his network in his reply, hoping to seek validation of his mental model and to further seek a response. Much like the first comment, the response to his reply presents a tacit acceptance of securitisation. Kovaleski uses emotional appeal – pathos – in accepting the securitisation discourse, whereas Brian Iselin makes use of rhetorical device of persuasion – logos – by employing reason and logic to support the discourse. Iselin's reference is a 2014 incident of breach of Swedish territorial waters by an unidentified underwater vehicle, to which the Swedish Navy later concluded that "a foreign submarine breached its waters" (Groll 2014).

Sky News

Sky News put out two tweets on Swedish conscription announcement, each focusing on separate elements of policy as identified by the official announcement.

> "Sweden brings back conscription amid fears of Russian aggression" (Sky News 2017a).
>
> "Sweden is reintroducing conscription next year to restore armed services numbers" (Sky News 2017b).

An image accompanies the first tweet, showing soldiers taking positions on tanks. A single file of rolling tanks appear to be closer to the shore (ships docked at bay in the background)

in what appears to be a recent off–loading for deployment. It goes along with the tweet headline which foregrounds Swedish security needs in the face of mounting tension due to Russian threat in the region. Securitisation, therefore, is foregrounded while military HR needs are backgrounded. Similarly, the intertextual reference prominently employs securitisation. Instead of phrasing the proposed recruitment number to exact figure of 4000, the text uses exaggeration – *thousands of teens* – to evoke emotional response from the audience. It is imperative to note that teens, specifically those under the age of 18, are an audience of securitization yet they do not have the agency to legally accept or reject the securitization move as they lack legislative representation in the matter.

> "- that'll be interesting with the conscription of all the immigrants they've let in!" (Socialmissfit, March 2, 2017, comment on Sky News 2017).

> "the enemy within?" (Iain Gordon, March 2, 2017, comment on Sky News 2017).

> "wonder if any of the new influx will volunteer □□□" (s. Whalley, March 2, 2017, comment on Sky News 2017).

Ensuing debate on the comments section is rooted racism discourse. Immigrants are presented as a bigger danger to the Swedish sovereignty than that of Russia. It is evident that *immigrants as threat topoi* is employed in ideological separation of outgroup. Furthermore, it accepts securitisation actor's framing of the securitization move. Intersubjective encounter presented shows a cognitive predisposition and bias towards immigrants as well as contemporary Swedish society. As is common in racism discourse or with various tropes on immigrants, the intersubjective encounters focuses on *negative other presentation*.

Van Dijk notes that this categorisation is characterised by *negative other presentation*, generally found in discourse about immigrants, and is "imbued with ideologically based applications of norms and values" (2000, 78). The racism discourse is coupled with immigrants as lazy discourse, suggesting that they will not volunteer for service. It follows the same pattern or strategy, as identified by the scholars of ideology, that categorises people in *ingroup* vs *outgroups*.

Sky News' second tweet foregrounded military HR needs and used the same secondary text, subheading and tagline, in both tweets. However, the formal structure of the tweets includes intertextuality, which only elaborates the Russian threat and the need to bolster military capabilities through conscription, hence employing securitization discourse.

"Sure it's not about Trump?" (Bishop, March 2, 2017, comment on Sky News 2017).

Paul Bishop's reply takes a critical approach to the framing of securitisation. It does not reject securitisation, rather it opposes its discursive context. Instead of accepting existential threat, that is Russia, Bishop feels it is Trump and his lack of support to his European allies that leaves Sweden vulnerable.

"great a European army full of jihads" (Meg, March 2, 2017, comment on Sky News 2017).

"it's a misplaced priority. Sweden should be more engrossed on how to sort it's home grown terrorism possibility. It's mind-boggling" (Capi, March 2, 2017, comment on Sky News 2017).

The other two replies to the tweet frame securitisation discourse within homegrown terrorism debate. Unlike Bishop, Roaring Meg and Capo Di Tutti Capi believe that existential threat is from within, i.e., the radicalised Swedes, who will be trained as part of the conscription. Like many commenters before, Meg and Capi conflate external security measures to internal social issues.

Al Jazeera News

Al Jazeera tweet is an interesting example for several reasons. It was stylised as a concise news bite, which gets the message across by being succinct and clear.

"Sweden will reintroduce military conscription 'because the security situation has changed' http://aje.io/4p6q" (Al Jazeera News 2017).

It directly quotes Swedish Defence Minister as part of the formal text, for validity and authenticity sake. The tweet, being direct and clear, centres on the securitization discourse – threat framing and securitization move by the actor – without referring to the Military HR needs. Furthermore, it constructs actors' responsibility, by assuming ethicality and morality, of taking an urgent action in the face of existential threat to the country. The significance shown through the speech act is complimented by the institutional and representative power of the actor in legitimising the appropriate and urgent response to the existential threat.

Where Al Jazeera tweet text misses the mark on reporting the evolving nature of diversified hiring policies being introduced, multimodality bring it to the front. The embedded image foregrounds female Swedish military personnel, whereas male counterpart is backgrounded and blurred out, along with the blue and yellow colours of Swedish flag. The image not only indicates the changing face of the Swedish military but also signifies the integral role of women in protecting Swedish sovereignty.

> "Their choice and their right" (Saoirse, March 2, 2017, comment on Al Jazeera News 2017).

> "The U.S.should take note of this. No religious clothing ALLOWED. No Sharia zones. No U.S. funds given to build mosque. Wake up U.S" (Retort, March 3, 2017, comment on Al Jazeera News 2017).

Saoirse's comment on Al Jazeera tweets is nonchalant and is dismissive of securitisation discourse presented in the tweet. Mitch Retort, on the other hand, appears to be enraged by the US domestic policy inaction. The comment is without contextual references. The claims made in it are unfounded and lack any explanations, a common characteristic of racism discourse or discourse on immigrants. The emphasis is on *negative other presentation*, while also constructing Muslims as threat to the American society.

The Guardian

The Guardian opted to employ a metaphor – *rising* – in constructing securitisation, it stated that "Sweden to reintroduce conscription amid rising Baltic tensions" (The Guardian 2017). In foregrounding securitisation, the tweet chose to spatially include the broader Baltic region, an obvious attempt to create war hysteria amongst the audience as *tensions in the Baltics* was a common theme during the Cold–War era. Intertextuality, as part of the formal structure of the tweet, bolsters the securitization discourse by foregrounding the threat framing and security move. The specific drafts rules applicable to young Swedes are also mentioned, however, the details are lost in the background.

> "They will do ANYTHING to deflect from the Rapes/murders/riots created by their Frankfurt School and Kalergi loving rulers!" (TheSickManofEur, March 2, 2017, comment on The Guardian 2017).

> "I think the real purpose is to be able to control the rampant migrant criminality" (Identifier, March 2, 2017, comment on The Guardian 2017).

TheSickManofEur uses Euro skepticism discourse and rhetorical devices to prop up negative hysteria, a hallmark of the far–right politics. TheSickManofEur's text is complimented by an image showing multiple events of burning cars, depicting a lawless Sweden engulfed in riots by immigrants. The imagery used is indeed from a riot taken place around Stockholm but is a rendition of same event portrayed as many. The image, thus, is misleading and exaggerated.

Much like TheSickManofEur, Idiocracy Identifier is also consumed by the lawlessness hysteria surrounding Sweden and believes it to be the actual security threat prompting the policy change. It is less clear from the reply how conscription is meant to control the migrant criminality. It employs vagueness, in particular in its use of qualifier *rampant*. Vague expressions and presupposition are common characteristics of debate on immigration and race. van Dijk notes that vagueness in speech is powerful political and ideological tool used for argument justification (2000, 52). The rampant *metaphor* invokes wildness and absence of order. The text presupposes migrants to be criminals. The level of criminality linked with

migrants, however, is not substantiated by the claimant. Therefore, such a presupposition is not only invalid but also misleading.

Daily Mail Online

At first reading, the Daily Mail tweet does not appear to be much different than its counterparts on the subject. It merely states that "Sweden to reintroduce military conscription over conflict fears in Eastern Europe" (Daily Mail Online 2017). The text is framed solely within securitisation discourse, which includes a referent object, Sweden, taking an extraordinary measure to protect against the security threat. However, the tweet and its threat construction is spatially more expansive. The text substituted the Baltics for *Eastern Europe* to make it appear a securitisation issue of greater political and geographical space. Unlike other tweets, the Daily Mail's tweet visually constructs the security threat by highlighting the strategic locations of Russian defence units, forward operating units, and its missile deployments around the Baltics and Eastern Europe, see figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5. Embedded Image, @MailOnline Tweet on Swedish Conscription, 2017

Visual, textual, and spatial references to other Baltic States (Poland and Lithuania) are used
to reinforce the threat construction vis–à–vis referent object. The Text deliberately references

Kaliningrad to convey fear in audience's mind that Russian missiles are closer to home in the Baltic, making the case for taking urgent security measures.

> "Okay so are Muslims included? Are you going to arm these guys? Or leave them home alone with your women? Quite a conundrum" (Celeste, March 2, 2017, comment on Daily Mail Online 2017).

The phrasing of aforementioned reply suggests that Celeste is a non–Swedish audience. Celeste combines a form of irony with *Muslims as extremists* trope. These rhetorical devices imply one main theme, i.e., Muslims are a threat to European society and its security, whether included in the draft or not. The ideological strategy of negative other presentation is especially useful to denigrate the outgroup. The reply by Celeste uses irony and indirect allegations in this manner. van Dijk notes that "implicitness may especially be used as a means to convey meanings whose explicit expression could be interpreted as biased or racist" (2000, 74). Once again, the racist ideology and racism discourse comes to the fore, reimagining the securitisation discourse.

The Atlantic: Ideas

The tweet by The Atlantic Ideas is similar to tweets by other news outlets on this subject. It specifies the Russian threat or aggression other tweets have only referred to. It stating that "Sweden reintroduces conscription amid Russian military drills in the Baltics http://theatln.tc/2lZW0Qx", it notes "Russian military drills in the Baltic" as the precisely the kind of aggression Sweden is concerned about (The Atlantic: Ideas 2017). The tweet is also stylised as a news headline; however, it constructs a powerful threat pronouncement for the audience, making the case for securitisation move by the actor as a legitimate and necessary course of action. Multimodality and intertextuality are present as part of the formal structure of the tweet. Multimodality is expressed through the imbedded image, whereas intertextuality is present through the URL shared in the tweet. The image depicts various military units in readiness formation in a city square holding Swedish national flags as well as other military flags. In the context of Sweden's territorial integrity under threat, the image is a symbolism of duty to protect and secure national sovereignty.

"Wow! When Sweden is like danger. This is insane. @TheAtlNews @TheAtlantic" (chang, March 2, 2017, comment on The Atlantic: Ideas 2017).

Nasty Chang's comment is a reply and also an intersubjective encounter aimed at other actors, especially the twitter handles used by The Atlantic Ideas' parent organisation, the Atlantic. Chang does not seem to object the discourse framing, however, there is an element of disbelief and a shock present in the reply regarding the outcome.

5.3.4   Secondary actors: Non–Media Securitisation Actors

JƎSŦƎR ✪ ΔCŦUΔL³³⁰¹

This unverified twitter account has a staggering number of twitter followers, sitting just over 186,000. JƎSŦƎR ✪ ΔCŦUΔL³³⁰¹ (Jester Actual?) mostly comments on internal US politics, publicises himself as a hacker who takes down jihadis websites or anyone supporting anti US agenda. This tweet is part of a thread criticizing POTUS' firing of key staff positions before hiring new ones.

"^^^ As I hinted, allies don't know if they're still allies - Sweden brings back mil conscription in response to RU >" (Actual 2017).

It is framed within securitisation discourse. The extended version of Jester Actual's original tweet elaborates on the thought that the US' allies are shoring up their defences as they have no confidence left in the US to protect against the adversary(ies). This tweet, though, illustrates a fallacy that is often repeated that Sweden is a US ally when it comes to military engagements. Sweden has had strategic partnerships with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), but it is neither a NATO member nor has been a US ally during wartimes. The reply utilises an alarmist tone, in agreement with Jester Actual's point of view, in believing that the situation in the Baltics undermines the US military hegemony. Alison Cunningham reply noted that "This underscores the point that this is a global issue;not just domestic US

matter.This impacts every NATO (& Norad) nation" (alison Cunningham, March 2, 2017, comment on Actual 2017). Cunningham's response, as well as the original tweet, are predominantly occupied with the US domestic politics where Sweden/Russia are being addressed from US foreign policy perspective. Once again, the emphasis is on NATO and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), where Sweden does not hold membership, however, Cumming's implication is that the responsibility lies on the Western/European alliance and urgency needs to be shown to counter the security threat that is Russia. The actor–audience interaction here defines security, existential threat, and suggests that extreme measure are required to safeguard against the said security threat.

Stanley Pignal

Stanley Pignal, a journalist for the Economist, did not directly address Russia or military threat facing Sweden in his tweet. Being a financial and business analyst, Pignal underscored the economic case for the suggested increase in recruitment numbers.

> "Sweden is struggling to recruit soldiers
> Sensible solution: offer more pay
> Bad solution (/its choice): conscription http://www.reuters.com/article/us-sweden-military-idUSKBN1690ND …" (Pignal 2017).

For Pignal, the solution to attrition woes for the SAF does not lie in increased hiring, rather in wage increments. This tweet is noteworthy as it neither delves into securitisation discourse nor frames the text as such. Pignal not only avoids the explicit securitisation framing but also ignores the foregrounding of security threat by the attached Reuters article.

> "apparently you don't understand where more pay comes from. Higher taxes or cuts elsewhere. More pay isn't always the answer" (Wood, March 2, 2017, comment on Pignal 2017).

> "Best way to build resistance to liberal lead U.S. mission to make war with Russia is to re-institute the draft in US @spignal @JonathanCohn" (Volle, March 2, 2017, comment on Pignal 2017).

"Good solution, and one we should apply in US. Selective service is excellent way to extend social net, affirm solidarity" (limitedinc, March 2, 2017, comment on Pignal 2017).

The commenters on Pignal's tweet generally disagree with him on conscription being a bad solution. They do not object to conscription, however, it is clear that they indirectly reject securitisation. George Wood objects to the merit of this policy as it will be financial strain on the budget but fail to realise that irrespective of increased hiring or higher wages for current personnel the policy will have budgetary ramifications. Nancy Volle and Limitedinc believe the draft to be a necessary catalyst against the liberal war agenda and a stimulus of social cohesion. Hence, they see conscription as an essential socio–political tool with vast utility.

Richard Milne

Richard Milne, a Financial Times (FT) correspondent for the Nordic/Baltic, tweeted with a FT column that he opined. His tweet read: "Sweden's return to conscription in face of threat from Russia ends period of naivete - my quick column" (Milne 2017). Milne takes a clear position and propagates securitisation, insinuating that the existential threat identified by Sweden was always present. Furthermore, Milne argues that the corrective action taken by Sweden is in line with the ground realities and regional threats. Milne calls the years of non–conscription as a period of *naivete,* implying Sweden had been unwise to ignore Russian aspirations. Multimodality is added and is part of the formal structure of the tweet. Military equipment and tanks in formation are shown to emphasize war readiness or deployment of troops, relating to the need to secure Swedish borders. It goes along with the tweet headline which foregrounds Swedish security needs in the face of mounting tension due to Russian threat in the region. Intertextuality, in conjunction with the tweet text, reinforces securitization discourse and foregrounds fear of Russian aggression. The formal structure of the tweet constructs existential threat on multiple fronts to sensationalise the story and to move readers to the FT platform. However, the article is behind paywall and only accessible to FT subscribers, perhaps limiting the engagement.

"They're accepting Muslim refugees are they not? How much of a clear and present danger do you need?" (RadioP1, March 2, 2017, comment on Milne 2017).

Armies aren't deployed at home; they'd beef up interior forces fr that. Your stupidity real or faux? (Semenova, March 2, 2017, comment on Milne 2017).

In replying to Milne's tweet, RadioP1 shows no obvious rejection to securitisation, however, constructs Muslims/refugee as existential threat in framing the discourse. RadioP1's statement is an example of racist ideology as it centres on the negative other description and displays religious and cultural prejudice (van Dijk 2018, 75). KA Semenova's reply is an example of intersubjective encounter as it is directed at RadioP1. It challenges RadioP1's threat construction and questions the logic of its argument, or lack thereof.

6. CONCLUDIGN REMARKS

I embarked on this research project to bridge the gap between traditional social science inquiry and the research methods developed in new media studies. I aimed to integrate the two by examining the research problem through the new medium, i.e., the social media. This presented a host of challenges as there was little in the way of a road map for conducting such a project, including technical limitations pertaining to data gathering to theoretical constraints in integrating various research methods. Notwithstanding these challenges, a methodological framework was devised to allow to conduct as comprehensive a study as practically possible given the scope and limitations.

My research design was guided by Hansen's framework and lenses of analysis in conjunction with van Dijk's *sociocognitive* discourse analysis to analyse how a discourse event, Swedish military conscription debate, on twitter is securitised. Three lenses of analysis – spatiality, temporality, and ethicality – were utilised at analytical level to identify the wider political discourse, the actors (*self* and *other*), and the temporal moment of Swedish conscription policy event. The analysis was conducted on a corpus of tweets and their associated elements using two identified keywords (*Sweden conscription* and *Swedish conscription*).

The coding of textual data produced a rich set of themes, some of which were entirely expected while others, not so much. Sweden, Russia, Baltics, Europe, and the United States emerged as key themes related to spatiality. Russia was exclusively used in tweet contents as the existential threat in securitisation debate, threatening not only the Swedish and Baltics security but also that of Europe and the Unites States.

The discursive context where tweets around Swedish conscription occurred had securitisation as the dominant discourse. It was observed that media and non–media actors used the event to identify existential threat, referent object, and the justification to take extraordinary measures to protect its security. The securitisation actors analysed, for example The

Washington Post, have employed *speech acts* to not only "describe an existing security situation, but bring it into being as a security situation by successfully representing it as such" (Williams 2003, 513).

> "Analysis: Is Sweden reintroducing conscription because of refugees? No. It's Russia. http://wapo.st/2mPopbo" (The Washington Post 2017).

The formal structure of the tweet, including elements such as intertextuality and modality, factored heavily in framing the intended discourse. Securitisation discourse is invoked primarily though the lexical component and is aided by tweet's non lexical elements. Discursive events and texts when reused as part of intertextuality generates newer texts (Hodges 2015, 44–45). The intertextual layers and multimodality, therefore, function to posit securitisation discourse which may be difficult to hypothesise based on the semantic alone. Neither the media nor the non–media actors appeared to actively steer the discourse presented beyond the initial tweet. Similarly, actors typically stayed away from directly engaging or challenging the extreme or polarising views posted on their tweets' communicative space, in the form of comments and replies. Securitisation discourse presented in the tweets often gave way to racism discourse in this communicative space. This is where audience accepted, rejected, or reimagined securitisation discourse, often relating migrants, refugees, and Muslims/Islam as a threat within the Swedish and European social context.

> "They're accepting Muslim refugees are they not? How much of a clear and present danger do you need?" (RadioP1, March 2, 2017, comment on Milne 2017).

Racism, *xenophobia*, *Islam*/*Muslims*, and *migrant*/*refugees* were ideology–based themes that were common in twitter's communicative space. These themes were not disconnected or isolated from the larger discourse rather they were being exploited under the very rubric of securitisation. Hence, securitisation discourse was present, albeit with different imagined threat, as exemplified by Margueritte Goetsch's reply on BBC World tweet.

> "I hope also to kick out the Muslims in the country." (Goetsch, March 2, 2017, comment on BBCWorld 2017).

It is noteworthy that the framing of tweets, in most cases, was deliberate and meant to incite twitter followers based on their group ideology. The ideology plays a key factor, in that it allows for group members to impose ideological discourse, often negatively portraying the outgroup. It is accomplished through linguistic strategies and structures (van Dijk 2011, 397). Van Dijk elaborates that "the discursive reproduction of out-group derogation that is typical of ideological text and talk" (398) is common in racism discourse. It was not surprising then that securitisation actors did not correct ideological based biases found in the group behaviour. He argues that "ideologies are not merely acquired and represented by individuals, but socially learned and collectively represented by a group of people, as is also the case for language" (2000, 30). The comment sections of SM platforms, in particular, and interactive like/share buttons, to a lesser extent, allow for personal *cognition* and *mental models* to interact with social cognition in shaping a specific discourse as well as reinforcing ideologies.

My thesis looked at how securitisation discourse, and by extension any political discourse, could be analysed on twitter. In doing so, it highlighted that specific attention must be paid to the medium and its message, placing a greater emphasis on the platform design. As I have made a point earlier, how participants behave and project their ideologies and biases on SM should be scrutinised, however, in the case of SM platforms a greater emphasis should also be placed on the role algorithms play. This thesis is an attempt to address the former part of the equation; however, scope and space constraints placed the latter issue outside the purview of this project. The platform rewards actors with significant following to easily broadcast their tweets by showcasing them in *Trending* category, in turn generating even greater engagements.

Social media platform, such as Twitter, make it easy to project securitisation, reaching a larger audience. Those directly contributing to the discourse through likes, shares, and comments can accept or reject the securitisation move, however, it is less clear how it is being perceived by those engaged passively or indirectly beyond the platform. Therefore, a comprehensive potential future project of this kind could include intertextual and multimodal elements within and across platforms. In the case of twitter, for example, one could further analyse tweet threads that are formed under a tweet as a separate monolith, developing a

discourse in a vertical intertextual manner. Such threads are places where discourse strands weave together to form discourses, hence becoming deal places for conducting discourse analysis. Similarly, adding a layer of SNA to identify communities and groups based on engagements and following would add value and context to the discourse. Twitter provides native to English text translation, however, in an area study inquiry, it would be ideal to identify organic tweets in a language most closely associated with its physical and political space. Lastly, a larger study would also have to account for platform issues, such as identifying bot accounts and their influence is forming a discourse, the formal structure of tweet as it appears on web versus mobile version, at it changes the intertextual behaviour and influences audience interactions.

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A.

Figure A.1. Search terms *Sweden conscription* versus *Sweden draft* for the period February 25, 2017 – March 1, 2018 (worldwide).
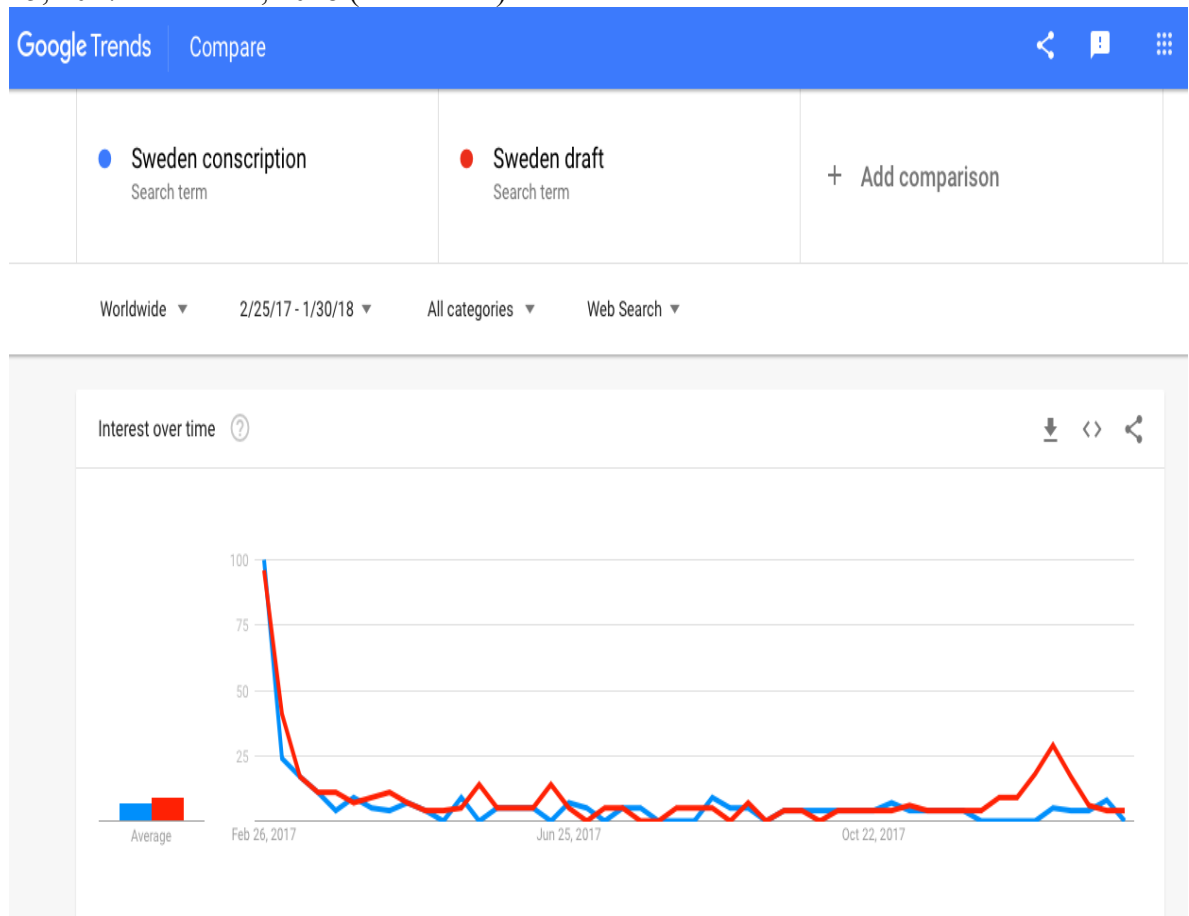
Figure A.2. Peak search for *Sweden conscription* versus *Sweden draft* by regions between
February 25, 2017 – March 1, 2018.

Figure A.3. Search interest for *Sweden conscription* by regions between February 25, 2017 – March 1, 2018.
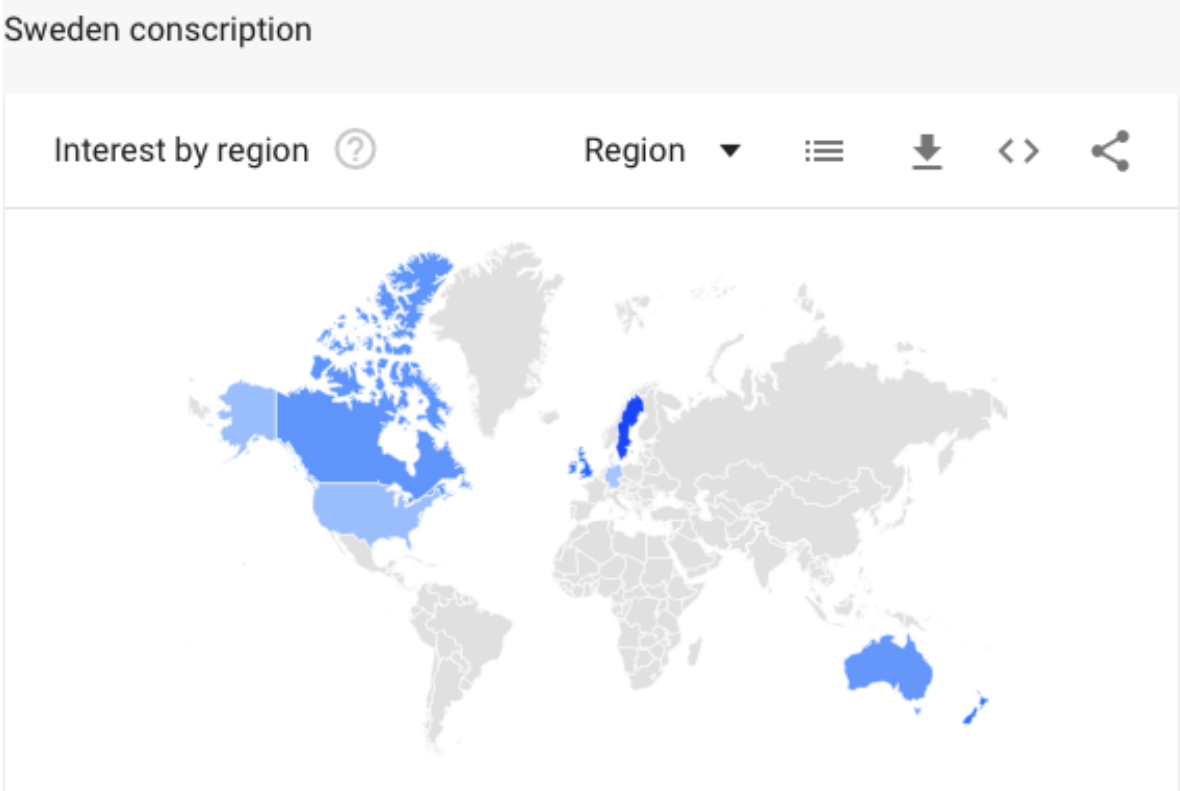
Figure A.4. Search interest for *Sweden draft* by regions between February 25, 2017 –
March 1, 2018.