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1. Introduction

The following introduction chapter presents the general theme of the thesis, public sector branding with an angle on the public sector organization's relation to the stakeholder as either a citizen or as a consumer., depending on the contemporary dominant political ideology's view of the individual. Further on, the introduction provides a presentation of the case for this thesis, the branding activities of the Swedish Armed Forces in a politically changing landscape, hence the changing ideological view of the stakeholder. After the introduction of the general theme and the case, purpose and research questions are introduced followed by a reasoning of the relevance to the field of strategic communication and the thesis demarcations and disposition.

1.1 The stakeholder as a citizen or as a consumer?

The cornerstone within the field of strategic communication is who the desired listener is. and the term of the desired listener varies among terms such as publics, stakeholders, market and audience (Cornelissen, 2020). There are some differences between the terms, but they all describe in a way who the organization either needs to communicate with or is communicating with. In order to communicate with them successfully, they need to be identified. After identifying who the organization needs to communicate with, they also need to be analyzed in order to be able to communicate with them effectively (Smith, 2017). However, could there be an implication regarding stakeholder analysis within public sector organizations, depending on the dominant political ideology?

During the 1980's, when Margret Thatcher was Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States of America, a trend of marketisation of the public sector drew over the western world. An idea that all services from the public sector would be exposed to competition in the market in order to make the services of the public sector more efficient. An effect of the marketisation is that the citizens, asking for example school or health care, has now come to be consumers of school or health care (Furusten, 2007). In the literature review, previous research on the political ideologies socialism and liberalism is presented, together with previous research on marketisation of public sector organizations. Further, the term "citizen" and "consumer" will be used to conceptualize the approach and view on the stakeholder group (i.e individuals of the society in which the public

sector organization), where citizen represents the socialist ideological view, and consumer represents the liberalist ideological view. The dichotomy of the citizen and consumer however, is interesting to study not only as a "user" or "consumer" of public services, but also as a contributor to the public sector. Therefore, this study will focus on the Swedish Armed Forces staff recruitment and how the dominant political ideology might be of interest to take into consideration when identifying and analyzing the stakeholder group employees, i.e prospective soldiers.

1.1.1 The political landscape and organizational change of the Swedish Armed Forces

Every fourth year is election year in Sweden, as within many other countries. Every fourth year, the citizens of Sweden vote for a political party which they think will rule Sweden in the best direction. The voters make up their mind from contemporary issues that they find urging and cast their vote on the political party who promises to care for the issues in the best way fit. These issues, which the voters find specifically important, tend to shift from year to year, from migration issues to school issues, from healthcare issues to justice issues. When voting however, the voters do not only vote for a political party, the voters also vote for an ideology which the political party identifies with. There are many definitions of ideology, in this case it is referred to as political ideology; a package of ideas of how the relationship between the state and society should be organized and ideas of the individuals part of the society (Hague & Harrop, 2010).

In 2006 there was a shift of power in Sweden when Alliance for Sweden, containing the four liberal parties: Moderaterna, Folkpartiet (now Liberalerna), Centerpartiet and Kristdemokraterna gained majority in the Swedish parliament. In the newly appointed Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt's government declaration, he said that a free economy draws its power from people's free choice and volunteers cooperation (Riksdagens protokoll 2006/07:6). An example of a political implementation in line with the liberal focus on the free choice of people and voluntary cooperation, was the political decision to change the law regarding muster and conscript in 2010. Due to this political decision, all military service in Sweden became based upon free choice and it changed the Swedish Armed Forces staffing. (Försvarsmakten A, n.d) Due to this, the Swedish Armed Forces faced a new situation for their staffing and an increased need of employer branding activities.

In 2014 the liberal parties lost majority in the parliament and the socialist party Socialdemokraterna together with Miljöpartiet gained majority and could therefore form a government. This led to change from a liberal government to a government with a socialist ideology. Within the government declaration the newly appointed Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, emphasized that Sweden is going to be a country characterized by the equal value of people and solidarity and that all ministries and authorities are given clearer assignments to work with gender integration in all their activities. Also, more than ten percent of the government declaration was dedicated to military issues, where Löfven said that the Swedish Armed Forces and its societal support must be strengthened. (Riksdagens protokoll 2014/15:6). The year after the new government was appointed an inquiry was made of the Swedish Armed Forces staffing, and in 2017 the government reinforced muster and conscript. Now the compulsory muster applied to both men and women of the age of 18, and if chosen by the Swedish Armed Forces to do military service, they are obligated by the law of conscript to participate. (Försvarsmakten A, n.d).

This means that we have during the last 15 years seen a shift of power between political parties, but also seen a shift of dominant political ideology with different views of the individuals as citizens. We have during these years also seen a radical change of staffing politics to the Swedish Armed Forces, going from muster and conscript for men to only be based upon the free choice of the individuals back to compulsory muster and law of conscript, but this time including both men and women.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

The Swedish Armed Forces belong to the public sector, and therefore a politically controlled organization. When the political orientation changes within a country, many public sector organizations are affected and in need of organizational changes which also affects the branding activities of the organization. The organizational changes might affect the stakeholders, and also the perception of the stakeholders as either citizens or consumers. This case study aims to answer and give insight on the following three research questions:

> *RQ 1: How does contemporary politics affect public sector branding regarding the approach to the stakeholder, citizen or customer?*

RQ 1A: Depending on the contemporary dominant political ideology, how does the Swedish Armed Forces employer brand itself?

RQ 1B: How does the contemporary dominant ideology appear in the Swedish Armed Forces employer branding campaigns of 2011 and 2019?

1.2.1 Relevance

On a general level, the study contributes to the research field of strategic communication with insights of the affects politics has on public sector branding regarding the dominant ideological view of the primary stakeholder as a citizen or consumer is highlighted. On a case level the study brings knowledge of how political phases affect the employer branding of the Swedish Armed Forces.

The study also contributes to the research field of strategic communication with some insights of public sector branding, policy branding and employer branding within the public sector

1.2.2 Demarcations

This study aims to analyze how the dominant political ideology appears in public sector branding through the case of two employer branding campaigns of the Swedish Armed Forces and does not take into consideration other political aspects such as for example a need for military rearmament. Further, the aim is not to study whether it occurs in all public sector branding, nor in all branding activities of the Swedish Armed Forces, but to study how it appears in this specific case.

1.2.3 Disposition

The study is first introduced through the introduction chapter, followed by mapping the previous research field of relevant topics to this study. A theoretical framework is presented of which this research is conducted through with the following section of the methodology. The analysis is the major part of this thesis, and is categorized after the theoretical frameworks with a summary discussion. Finally. suggestions for further research on the tropic of public sector branding within a political changeable landscape and its implications of the approach towards stakeholders are presented.

2. Literature review and previous research

This section provides an overview of previous researches that are of relevance for this research topic. First the ideological divide of the dominant political ideologies approach on the individual of the society is presented, with a following overview of earlier research on the ideological divide on the individual within public sector services in Sweden. Further on the literature review presents Ulrika Leijerholt's findings of branding within Swedish public sector organizations. As the case also is focused on policy changes: the removed requirement of muster and conscript and later the reinforcement of muster and conscript, a study of policy branding by Jasper Eshuis is also presented. Finally, previous research on employer branding and employer attraction is presented.

2.1 The ideological dichotomy: the individual vs. the collective

Eccleshall writes that liberalism has a long history where the radical protestants are seen as the earliest liberals, advocating for individual rights and the emancipation from ecclesiastical hierarchies claiming that the ordinary people are competent to judge the affair of government as well as their path to eternal salvation. The core of liberalism has since the earliest liberalists to contemporary liberalists been within the free choice of the individual. The individuals emancipation from all political, religious, economic and other constraints on the individuals life and activities. (Eccleshall, 2003). In summary, liberalism advocates for a society with individual freedom and the individuals as the best judges of their own interests (Hague & Harrop, 2010).

According to Geoghegan. the history of socialism is long and there are many different approaches to socialism crafted by different theorists. Socialism can be divided into three themes; a critique of society, an alternative and a way of transition. Amongst the theorists, the scope of the three themes varies. Some theorists mainly focus on the critique and some on the way for transition. It is therefore hard to find a general definition on what socialism is, which justifies the similarities and differences amongst the many theorists. Many socialists however agree on the saying that no man is an island entirely of itself, every man is a part of the main and a piece of the continent. A socialist critique to capitalism's view of freedom is that genuine freedom is not merely to be free of external pressures, but that freedom is fully developed amongst other free individuals in a collective. (Geoghegan, 2003)

During the 20th century the ideological dividing line, the individual vs. the collective, was mainly expressed through the issues on organizing welfare, tax collection and business regulation. During the last decades the ideological dividing line has moved from the dichotomy of the individual vs. the collective towards the ideological differences regarding the view of freedom of choice, where the marketization of welfare has been the primary utterance of the ideological dividing line. The privatization of school and healthcare as a political issue has turned the citizens into customers, where school and healthcare services are exposed to competition in the market. Marketization of welfare is when the freedom of choice is emphasized regarding welfare services, the citizen is viewed as a customer of which supplier of welfare service is to be chosen and therefore also which service is to be"purchased". Applying these market economy values, principles and practices that usually belong in the private sector to the public sector also makes the individuals choices directly decisive for the implementation of political decisions. (Strandberg, 2013).

The ideas of marketization of school services derive from the Nobel prize winner Milton Friedman's thoughts about parental influence on and the free choice of school would lead to better school results, diversity and development of the school sector. The move from the idea of "right to welfare services" towards the idea of "right to choose welfare services" sums up the marketization of swedish welfare. The marketization of school and healthcare services in Sweden is well researched and during 2016 profits of welfare businesses was heavily debated in Sweden due to two of the largest private schools being listed on the stock market. (Dovemark & Lundström, 2017). The marketization of welfare institutions such as school and health care has positioned the citizen as a consumer where freedom of choice is valued high. However, other societal institutions have also faced the process of marketisation in various stages. An example of this is the marketization of the area of societal security which function is secure law, order and national security. (Larsson, 2013).

2.2 Ulrika Leijerholt: The limitations of traditional branding theories within public sector branding

For public sector organizations the main purpose is not to be competitively strong on the market, but to contribute to be of service and benefit of the society. Public sector organizations shall therefore work to ensure the societal needs and values, in which democracy, pluralism and security are central for a fair and impartial system for the citizens

and the society. Hence, the main purpose of a public sector organization is to promote the mission of the organization, and not the brand itself. (Leijerholt, 2019a). A strong brand is of utmost importance for any service or organization, including public sector organizations. A strong brand is important in order to be able to distinguish its market offers from competitors, the brand enhances the value of the service or product beyond its functional purposes. (Leijerholt, Biedenbach, & Hultén, 2019). However, the use of traditional branding strategies within public sector organizations might be harmful for the organization, argues Ulrika Leijerholt in the dissertation *Public Sector Branding: An internal brand management perspective* (2019). Further, Leijerholt argues that the existing empirical research on branding and branding strategies are limited to fit the private sector (Leijerholt, 2019b). Due to increasing pressure on public organizations to ensure their legitimacy, research on public sector branding is well needed. (Leijerholt, Biedenbach & Hultén, 2019).

Branding strategies are well researched and many theories are presented. However, the majority of branding theories derives from the ideas of branding within the private sector. Since organizations within the private sector and public sector have different needs and conditions, different branding strategies are needed in order to take the needs and conditions of public sector organizations into consideration. Differences between branding within the private sector versus the public sector are many, for example private sector organizations are often more dependent on branding in order to differentiate themselves from other organizations and to be a strong competitor on the market and through branding, private sector organizations aim to secure a future organizational survival. This means that branding is a rather central part of many private sector organizations and the financial resources put into branding is easier to justify. Public sector organizations on the other hand are not dependent on branding as much for its organizational survival as private sector organizations are. The purpose of public sector organizations is not always connected to strengthen their competitiveness but to create value for the organization and claim its legitimacy. (Leijerholt, 2019b)

The conditions of branding within the public sector also differ from the private sector due to the demand of openness, the organization being tax-based and the incalculable political governance. Because the organization is tax-based, expensive branding activities can be heavily criticised and questioned and therefore be harmful for the organization. The political governance and the organization do not always agree on the needs of the organization nor

how the organization should meet the societal needs, which can lead to a change of, e.g. financial support for the organization. In addition to this, Leijerholt presents three risk factors: 1) ideological differences between political groups, this can lead to a public sector organization being caught in the centre of a political debate. 2) Political populism, where governance makes political decisions in order to secure and strengthen their position is another risk factor. 3) politicians lack of knowledge about the organization risk leading to political changes such as laws, resources and mission. This challenging relationship between political governance and a public sector organization makes traditional brand strategies and brand knowledge non compatible (Leijerholt, 2019b).

2.3 Jasper Eshuis:
Branding in Governance and Public Management

Branding has not historically been used as a strategy for governance and public management, as it has within the private sector. The major research on branding has dealt with branding within the private sector together with political branding. However, branding within the public management has lately become more and more used as a strategy, not only to brand politicians and political parties, but also to brand policies and policy programmes which are often implemented by public sector organizations. The branding in governance and public management has gained relatively little attention within research, both within public administration and policy science, but also communication science. (Eshuis, 2011). Jasper Eshuis (2011) is an associate professor in public administration at Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam and has through his book *Branding in Governance and Public Management* presented a theory of branding within the context of governance and public sector. Historically the governance process has relied heavily on the text and rational discourse, and not so much on the visual type of symbols and emotions as branding strategies within the private sector has. Recently however, the public sector has adopted more and more features of branding from the private sector. Eshuis argues that branding has become one of the strategies that politicians and public managers undertake to brand policy and policy programmes in order to 1) influence perception through framing issues and branding solutions, 2) engage actors and gain loyal stakeholders and 3) address the media in order to reach and influence stakeholders. (Eshuis, 2011).

In Eshuis theory of branding in governance and public management, branding is defined as a brand is a sign which has a denotation function that identifies an object and a connotative function which is associated with an underlying meaning and evokes emotions. Brands är symbolic constructions, consisting of for example a name, term, sign, symbol or design, which add value and/or meaning. Thus, the brand is not the product itself, i.e the policy programme, it is what gives meaning and defines the identity of the product. Branding is used as a marketing tool and aims to create a symbolic meaning which is valuable in the psychological and social life of the consumer and/or user. Brands are, as within the private sector, divided into five categories of brands: tangible goods, process, person, organizational and place. In this study branding process and branding organization will be the main focus. Eshuis describes branding processes within the public sector as branding of government provided services, i.e. education, health care and military service. Branding process also refers to branding of decision-making process and policies. Branding organizations refers to the identity formation and differentiation of public organizations as a whole, e. g. ministries and agencies. Further, Eshuis compares the concepts of branding and framing which both main functions are to give meaning. However, Eshuis distinguishes the concepts: branding as visual appearance and communication, emotional logic, structure as a web of cognitive associations and as a concept which other function is to add values. Framing on the other hand has a function of interpretation and understanding, verbal appearance and communication, rational logic. (Eshuis, 2011).

Further, Eshuis presents two perspectives on who gives meaning to the brand and argues that meaning creation is made both by the brand owner and by the stakeholders. The meaning to the brand is given from the brand owner is the most common perspective of branding, however through the relationship and interaction with the stakeholders the brand can be reconstructed. Eshuis therefore dismisses the view of branding being a one way street where the audience is seen as passive. Eshuis also problematizes this in the context of instrumental branding as a tool for influencing perception of policies through emotions and visual images, meaning that the brand owner cannot decide the meaning of the brand whether it is communicated through emotions or images because the meaning creation of the brand is a joint process from both the stakeholders and the brand owner. Eshuis defines instrumental branding as a way of triggering emotions and associations which will have the stakeholder to either judge or connect to an issue and to motivate the stakeholders to support and align with the presented solution to the issue. In other words, through emotions influence the opinion in

a favourable way for the brand owner's agenda. Instrumental branding through visual images is another way to influence the perception of an issue in a favourable way for the brand owner since visual images evoke associations which will help the brand owner to communicate the desired feelings as for example joy, success and/or responsibility. (Eshuis, 2011)

In the past, communication of policies has mainly focused on rational and information communication, often where policy documents have been the primary communication channel. Lately, policy communication has progressed into the branding area where activating and binding stakeholders has gained more focus. Information overload is one reason for the uprising of branding of policies, where people simply do not have enough time to engage in as much as they would like to. Eshuis argues that even though rational communication is important, branding as a way of triggering emotions increases the attention and likability of reaching the stakeholders. Eshuis presents two concepts of this: activating and binding. Activating refers to motivating the actors through emotions in order to gain support for the branded policy or project. Binding refers to the actors becoming attached and creating a relation to the branded policy or project over a prolonged period of time. The idea of branding of policies is to appeal more to the stakeholders and to gain loyal actors to the policy or project. (Eshuis, 2011)

A growing number of citizens do no longer consume newspapers or written documents, such as policy documents, as information retrieval. The main source of information is through visual media, for example television, movies and series which holds a crucial part of forming public opinion. Visual symbols and image events that appeal to emotions are pushing aside the traditional rational arguments often provided through press releases, formal public speeches and policy documents and therefore changing the landscape of persuasive communication and opinion formation. Eshuis therefore argues that branding strategies in governance processes are dependent on solid media relations due to the growing importance of media in everyday life and the development of a visual culture. (Eshuis, 2011)

In summary, branding strategies for public management and implementing policies are therefore an efficient way to influence public opinion in a favourable way. Branding is persuasive communication and its main strategy is to appeal to emotions and through visual images. Eshuis argues that activating and binding stakeholders is crucial to gain loyal stakeholders and influence opinion in a prolonged period. Brands are information carriers

thriving by emotions and in the context of visual culture, which makes the attention from media crucial.

2.4 Employer branding

The quality of an organization's workforce is an important factor of the organization's survival and success, hence a major challenge for organizations in the competitive environment is attraction of talent. Many organizations are now taking on branding strategies in order to retain employees and attract prospective employees. (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014). An organization's brand is one of the most valuable assets, and branding strategies are often used to brand tangible products, branding has merged into the area of human resource management, termed as employer branding. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Employer branding can be conceptualized as a long-term strategy in order to attract prospective employees, to keep existing employees and to create engagement and a sense of coherence amongst the employees of the organization (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). The aim of employer branding is to develop a coherent brand which can improve the recruitment and retainment of staff through a combination of financial, economic, psychological and symbolic elements (Heery & Noon, 2017). Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) presents a framework for conceptualizing employer branding.
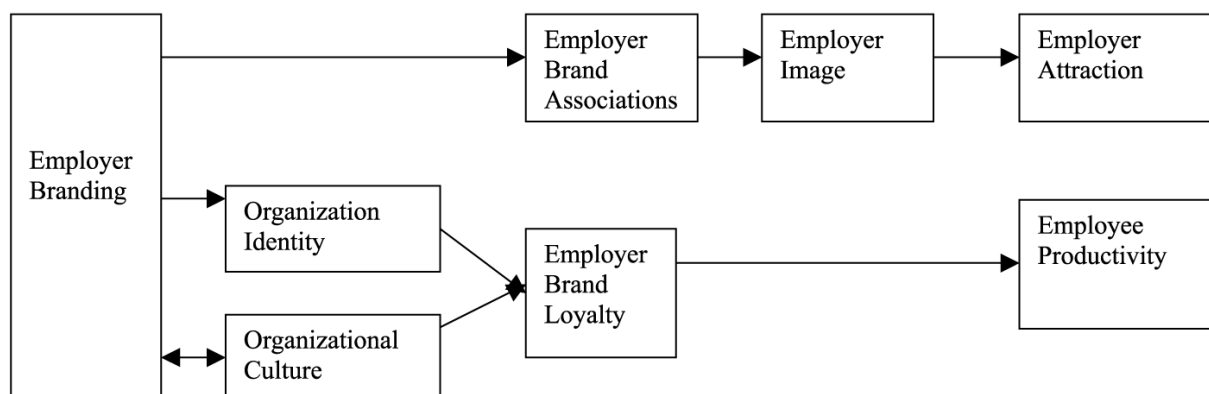
(Figure 1 in Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)

According to this model, employer attraction is a result of employer image and employer brand associations. Brand association is conceptualized as the thoughts and ideas which the brand name evokes, either on a verbal or a sensory level. Employer brand image can be described as the functional and symbolic benefits the brand offers (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Chhabra and Sharma (2014) found a positive correlation between students' likelihood to apply for a job at an organization and the organization's strong brand image. A theory which

supports the positive correlation between a strong brand image and likelihood to apply is social identity theory. Social identity theory suggests that the feeling of membership with a brand increases the positive self-concept in which the stakeholder purchases the brand. Or, as regarding employer image, prospective employees apply for a job, i.e "consumes" the brand, in order to seek membership with the brand which increases the sense of heightened self-image the membership offers. (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014). The framework of Backhaus and Tikoo (2005), presents another outcome of employer branding which is employee productivity which is a result of employer brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is explained with two dimensions; behavioural and attitudinal. The behavioral dimension refers to the willingness to repurchase a brand and the attitudinal dimension refers to the level of the commitment towards the brand (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Employer brand loyalty can therefore be described as the organizational commitment of the employees, and willingness to stay even during less fortunate conditions (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2005). Employee brand loyalty can also generate employee ambassadorship which can increase the brand image and therefore the employer attraction. Cervellon and Lirio (2017) suggests that organizations should foster brand engagement which will increase the brand commitment and strengthen the brand image.

According to Drury, the perceptions of the employer brand image is particularly important in recruitment of young workers. A study found that the interaction between functional brand attributes, such as salary, benefits, health care coverage and allowances, and symbolic brand attributes, such as work culture, career development opportunities and prestige, was a strong success factor in employer attraction amongst the group of young workers (Drury, 2016). However, in a study by Mičík and Mičudová found that the biggest shortcoming of organizations branding was the communication of organizational culture and positive image creation on social media. In the same study, social media was found to be crucial for employer brand building and employer attraction amongst generation Y (Mičík & Mičudová, 2018).

3. Theory

This section provides the theoretical framework of this study. The theoretical framework consists of the field of semiotics with Barthes concept of myths, the field of discourse research with Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) and the field of reception theory with Hall's theory of encoding and decoding process. Semiotics provides an understanding of the signs' conventional rules, how the sign creates meaning and also how it provides a theoretical framework of how the sign is culturally coded and upholds the power structure of the dominant ideology. While semiotics focuses on the sign, discourse research is broadened to *a way of speak and understand of our world* (Winther- Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). Reception theory offers a theoretical framework to understand the intermediate process of mediated communication, where the message is not only socially and culturally coded by the producer, but also decoded socially and culturally.

3.1 Semiotics and Barthes concept of myths

Semiotics is the study of signs and derives from two major theorists; Ferdinande de Saussue and Charles Sanders Pierce. Both Saussure and Pierce studied the language system and signs, and there are no objections between the two branches of semiotics, however there are some different concepts. Pierce's semiotics categories the sign into three categories: icons, index and symbols. Saussure on the other hand, focused on the interpretation of the sign as a whole but consisting of two levels; signifier (sound-image) and signified (concept) (Hawkes, 2003). Saussure meant that the sign consists of the signifier and the signified. However the signifier and signified can never be separated from each other, other than on a theoretical level. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary and the relationship is based upon linguistic and cultural conventions (Lindgren, 2009). Saussure also introduced the concept of langue and parole: langue is the societal conventions and rules of the language which the individual cannot create or modify. Parole is the individual's concrete use of the language. Parole is therefore the underlying code which we need in order to both make sense of our world and make sense of our interpersonal communication. Hence, we need parole to be able to communicate with each other because with only langue we would make nonsense for each other. With langue we create meaning of our usage of parole. (Hawkes, 2003).

The sociologist and literary critic, Roland Barthes, introduced the concept of mythologies in 1957 (Lindgren, 2009) which was developed from Saussure's semiotics and concept of

signifier and signified, but Barthes expanded it to also include non-linguistic signs (Hawkes, 2003). Barthes meant that the myth is a semiotic system built upon two levels: denotation/language object and connotation/metalanguage. Barthes denotation level is comparable to Saussure's sign, which consists of signifier and signified, which is the object language and is the language which the myth uses. In addition to the denotation level, Barthes introduced the connotation level, as a second language, in which you talk of the first language which Barthes called metalanguage. The connotation level is where the myth is, and is where the symbolic meaning is created (Lindgren, 2011), however connotation is not to be compared to associations. Connotations are culturally coded and upheld by the collective (Gripsrud, 2011). In short, the sign gains meaning from its signifier and signified in the first order of signification, the sign is then also the foundation for the second order of signification. Which means that the signifier in relation with a new signified, creates a new sign which is the myth. (Hawkes, 2003). The myth aims to appear as it is reflecting the reality, meanwhile it is actually forming reality as an ideological function. An ideology, used within cultural studies, is a view/idea of the world as it should be. There are several ideologies in society, however the dominant ideology is the one that has the most power, and with that power it gains more power to inflict even more power through (Lindgren, 2009). The myth portrays the dominant ideology as natural, and upholds a veil over the power structure, making the ideology seem obvious and perhaps even as fair. The myth also puts a veil over history, emphasizing on the parts that are beneficial for the ideology and hides the parts where the ideology was challenged by contemporary ideologies (Hawkes, 2003).

3.2 Discourse

The research field of discourse is rather wide, and offers a wide selection of approaches and definitions. Discourse research derives from a heterogeneous field of research: sociology, social psychology, history, culture studies and linguistics amongst others. The different approaches to discourse research are however unified through their common ground in social constructionism. The concept of discourse appears both within the spectrum of micro level and on a macro level. (Cromdal, Sparrman, Evaldsson & Adelswärd, 2009). The philosopher Michel Foucault is well known for his interdisciplinary approach on the concept of discourse. His definition of the concept was discourse as an order of language with its rules and practices which makes meaningful utterances possible. Foucault argues that discourse leads to a power dimension of how something is expressed which refers to the preconditioned way

of thinking, speaking and approach to social phenomenons. Power permeates and occurs in all social activities, and is not exercised by a certain actor or a centre of power. (Lindgren, 2009). Foucault's concept of power is thereby a relation which is practiced within discourses. The linguist Norman Fairclough criticizes Foucalt's approach on power and discourse and argues that the approach does not study human interaction or action in discourses. Fairclough advocates for a critical discourse approach which is characterized by its considerations of the relationship between language and society. This approach is formed by the intersection of language, discourse and social structure and enables to understand the relations between discourse, power and dominance. The critical discourse analysis, CDA, seeks to understand social power processes, orders of hierarchy, exclusion and subordination by going beyond established social orders and examining the power relations which uphold these mechanisms in society. (Cromdal, Sparrman, Evaldsson & Adelswärd, 2009). This study will use Fairclough's approach on discourse analysis and Fairclough's three dimensional model of CDA will be used as a theoretical framework.

3.2.1 Norman Fairclough:

A three dimensional model of critical discourse analysis

Fairclough's three dimensional model of CDA involves several traditions and differs from other discourse analysts. Initially he distinguishes himself from other discourse analysis by applying a linguistic focus on a thorough text analysis in which use of language in social interactions is examined. However, by introducing an interdisciplinary perspective, by placing the text analysis in relation to societal issues and phenomenons, he distinguishes himself from other linguists. Fairclough offers both a method for text analysis and a theory

as a basis for social analysis. In addition, Fairclough's CDA offers both micro and macro perspectives. Fairclough argues that discourses both constitute and are constituted. Discourse is thereby seen as both shaped by other discourse practices and structures, while it reproduces and reshapes other social practices such as identities, relationships and knowledge. Fairclough presents a three dimensional model of critical discourse analysis, CDA, containing three levels: text, discourse practice and social practice. (Winther- Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). The first level of analysis refers to describing how the text is structured. The second level is a more interpretive stage and examines the relationship between the text and discursive processes. The third level, the analysis is raised to a societal level and explains how the discursive processes are connected with social processes. (Fairclough, 2001).

The first dimension, *text*, emphasises on semiosis, which is defined as a concept for all social activity and meaning creation such as language, pictures, tv-shows, songs, commercials or any other text verbal or non verbal. Both linguistic and semiotic analysis are included in the text dimension. (Lindgren, 2009). Through a detailed semiotic and linguistic analysis of the text it can reveal how the discourses are conceptualised textually (Winther- Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). In the analysis of text, Fairclough presents the concept of modality, which is an interpersonal function, as an analytic tool. Modality refers to the extent of certainty of a statement the author of a text expresses. Modality is graded from high to low affinity, where words as "maybe", "might" and "possibly" are modalities which reveals the author's certainty of a statement. Modality can also be subjective or objective, where for example "I believe that the earth is not flat" is subjective and "the earth is not flat" is objective. Through minor choices of words or disclosure of words, an opinion for example, can transfer from being an opinion into perceived fact. The choice of modality has thereby consequences for the discourse construction of social relations, values and knowledge. (Winther- Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000)

The second dimension, *discourse practice,* deals with the process of the text, i.e the production, distribution and consumption. The semiotic and linguistic choices of the text is also taken into consideration, where it is questioned why the specific signs are chosen. It is also studied how societal preconceived ideas, cultural values and structures are constitutional of the text. The interpretation of the text is subjective in one way, but it is also limited to the cultural codes and frameworks which the text uses to aim for a preferred interpretation. (Winther- Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000)

The third dimension, *social practice,* refers to the different domains that are associated and connected to social life. Social practices refers both to discursive and non-discursive elements. Fairclough presents an example of this, where the language in a classroom can be defined as the discourse while structure of the classroom, i.e the placement of furniture, where the teacher stands, are defined as non-discursive. (Fairclough, 2001). By studying the social practices, the textual structures and categories are placed in a greater coherence which reaches beyond the frameworks identified in the initial text analysis. A social and cultural change in the structure of the society becomes visible through the changes in the order of discourse within the discursive practice.

Fairclough's three dimensional model of CDA provides an important perspective to the existing research on public sector branding through the possibility of discovering ideological dimensions within communication and branding activities of the Swedish Armed Forces as a public sector organization.

3.3 Reception Theory

During the 1970's the Birmingham School and its interdisciplinary field of cultural studies became an important contribution to media and communication research. A theory developed from the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies is reception theory (Gripsrud, 2011). CDA studies often fall short in a holistic ideal and tend to leap directly from micro-textual to macro-social analysis, leaving a gap in the intermediate level of discourse practice. This is where reception theory can strengthen the analysis by emphasizing on the process of encoding and decoding. (Schrøder, Drotner, Kline & Murray, 2003). The sociologist Stuart Hall made an important contribution of research to the field of cultural studies with his reception research. He argued for a semiotic understanding and analysis of mediated communication, where he introduced the concept of encoding and decoding in an article from 1973 *Encoding and Decoding in Television Discourse.* Hall argued that all mediated communication is encoded by the producer from social and cultural structures, making the message a carrier of values and norms. The mediated communication is decoded by the audience, where the decoding process can result in either preferred/dominant reading, negotiated reading or oppositional reading (Gripsrud, 2011). Hall's theory of encoding and decoding process challenged the contemporary mainstream approach of communication as a linear process, with a sender and a (passive) receiver of a message, by introducing communication as a circuit process. The circuit is constituted by the practices of production, circulation, distribution, consumption and reproduction (Pillai, 1992). From Hall's theory of encoding and decoding process with different positions of readings, David Morley and Charlotte Brunsdon made an important discovery and contributed to the reception theory. Morley and Brunsdons study, *The Nationwide Television Studies,* provided insights of the impact of an individual's social position and (sub) cultural frameworks on the reading. (Morley & Brunsdon, 1999).

4. Methodology and empirical material

4.1 Research paradigm: Social constructionism

Social constructionism is a research paradigm often used within social sciences to study culture and society (Lindgren, 2009). Reality is seen as an individual, cultural and social construction (Backman, 2008). The core of social constructionism is that all knowledge is shaped by culture and history and that knowledge it cannot be considered as an objective truth. Thus the knowledge about the world is not a reflection of the reality, it is rather a product of our ways to categorize the world. (Lindgren, 2009). Social constructionism positions social interaction as a source of knowledge, where knowledge is created between people, through everyday life and interactions. We are born into a culture and a world where frameworks and categories shape what we see as knowledge. Through embracing the inherited categories and frameworks, we reproduce them every day through language and culture. However the categories and frameworks that we define truth and knowledge from are constantly changed. This means that language and culture is more than just a tool for expressing ourselves, it is a tool for changing knowledge and the perception of the truth of the world. (Burr, 2003).

4.2 Qualitative research with an inductive approach

This research is conducted through a qualitative method with an inductive approach. According to Shannon Frattaroli, a qualitative research method is particularly suitable when the research question(s) are seeking an understanding of *how.* Qualitative research can provide important insights and clarity of topics that are not well researched, and where existing literature is limited as qualitative research seeks to understand phenomenons and present detailed views of the topic (Frattaroli, 2011). As this study aims to seek understanding of *how* dominant political ideology and its following view of the individual as either a citizen or a consumer is perceived to appear in public sector branding activities a qualitative method is best fitted for the research. According to Backman, qualitative research within the field of social sciences applies more frequently to an inductive approach, i.e. hypothesis generating, rather than a deductive approach, i.e. hypothesis testing (Backman, 2008).

4.3 Selection of case organization

In order to reach a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, the study is conducted as a case study of two campaigns from the same organization, but during two different political landscapes (and policies on muster and conscript). A limited number of cases enables a deeper and more detailed knowledge (Heide & Simonsson, 2014). <mark>Needs further development</mark>

4.4 Data Collection

The author collected data through qualitative focus group interviews. Due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic and national regulations of meetings, the interviews are conducted through video conference call, and are not conducted face-to-face. According to Schatzman and Strauss, by doing focus group interviews the interaction between the interviewer and respondent is minimized, which ensures that the reflections, i.e data, are mainly from the interviewees, and are not driven by the interviewer and the preconceived research (Schatzman & Strauss (1973). Group interviews stimulate the interviews without interfering from the researcher, by the group dynamic. Meaning, that when one interviewee starts talking, other interviewees follow into a discussion providing the researcher with a large source of data (Merton, Fiske & Kendall, 1990).

There are two styles of focus group interviews where the researcher either is passive and non-directive or active and directive. The former approach, the researcher only asks enough questions to keep the discussion going and is specifically suitable when the interview is conducted in a rather informal or natural setting. (Frey & Fontana, 1991). As the conditions for meeting face to face are restricted due to the national regulations, and the consequence of the sampling methods that not all interviewees know each other together with a desire from the researcher to ask several questions, the later approach is more suitable for this study.

Before conducting the group interviews, the researcher tested the questionnaire through a test group interview in order to detect implications on beforehand. The participants during the test interview were not participants in any other interviews and the results are not used.

4.4.1 Sampling

As Morley and Brunsdon discovered that social position and (sub) cultural frameworks had an impact on the audience's position of reading (Morley & Brunsdon, 1999), the researcher

strived to sample subjects with different social backgrounds and used a judgemental sampling to reach a diversity of social background amongst the interviewees, also known as purposive/selective sampling method. Judgemental sampling is statistically invalid and is a sampling method where the researcher chooses subjects who may give a representative data (Russel, 2013). In addition judgemental sampling, the data is collected through a convenience sampling method, meaning that the researcher has relied on available subjects in the researcher's vicinity. (Berg, 2009).

4.4.2 Participants

In order to avoid having individuals with too similar backgrounds, three categories of requirements are set up to meet different social backgrounds of the individuals. Working within the public sector, working within the private sector, working within the Swedish Armed Forces, has no military background, has military background, has no academic background and has academic background. Individuals who met any of these requirements were asked to participate in the study and is the source of data for this research.

The final participants were:

- A1: 29 year old female, living in Gothenburg, has a two year master's degree and works within the public sector. The participant has no previous experience of the Swedish Armed Forces and has no military background.
- A2: 29 year old female, living in Stockholm with a one year master's degree and works within the public sector. The participant has no previous experience of the Swedish Armed Forces and has no military background.
- A3: 29 year old male, living in Kamlar with a bachelor degree and works within the public sector. The participant has no previous experience of the Swedish Armed Forces and has no military background.
- A4: 30 year old male, living in Stockholm with a two year master's degree and works within the private sector. The participant has no previous experience of the Swedish Armed Forces and has no military background.
- B1: 26 year old male, living in Lund with a bachelor degree and is currently studying. Has mainly worked within the private sector, but also within school and healthcare services. The participant has no previous experience of the Swedish Armed Forces and has no military background.

- B2: 24 year old female, living in Lund and is completing her one year master's degree. Has only worked within the private sector. The participant has no previous experience of the Swedish Armed Forces and has no military background.

- B3: 25 year old male, living in Malmö and has no academic degree. Has only worked within the private sector. The participant has no previous experience of the Swedish Armed Forces and has no military background.

- B4:? Isn't chosen yet

- C1: 29 year old female, living in Skövde with no academical background. The participant has worked within the Swedish Armed Forces since her conscription in 2011.

- C2: 33 year old male, living in Skövde with no academical background. The participant has worked within the Swedish Armed Forces since his conscription in 2007.

- C3: 33 year old male, living in Lund with a one year master's degree and works within the public sector. The participant has several years of experience of the Swedish Armed Forces and has conducted military service.

- C4: X year old female, living in Bålsta with no academic degree. The participant has worked within the Swedish Armed Forces since her conscription in x.

4.4.3 Description of interview data

After a test interview, three group interviews, with four participants in each, were conducted during the period of MMDD-MMDD. The interviews were conducted through zoom and recorded. The interviews were conducted in Swedish, the main reason for that was to ensure a comfortable interview environment for the interviewees, where language would not be a limitation for them to express themselves. And since the commercials are mainly in Swedish, the interviewees had to be able to understand Swedish. After the interviews, they were transcribed but not translated to English. However, all quotes used in the analysis are translated.

4.5 Data analysis plan

After transcribing the interviews, a meaning condensation sheet was created to analyze the interviews. The meaning condensation sheet was inspired by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) which includes two columns; natural unit and central theme. The analysis is both concept

driven and data driven, meaning that the central themes were chosen from the literature beforehand making it a concept driven analysis. During the coding of the interviews, some new central themes were discovered, making it a data driven analysis as well (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

4.6 Validity and reliability

The reliability of the research concerns the consistency and trustworthiness of the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Reliability of the study, i.e how reliable the results are, demands for a strong research design. Reliability within quantitative methods is often depending on the thorough description of the research design, making it possible to ensure the research's reproducibility. Within qualitative studies, the thorough description of the study is just as important, but not to ensure the reproducibility of the study, but to describe the conditions of the results (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

Validity of research regards the scrutiny of logical arguments and the empirical evidence to determine whether they support the findings of the study (Taylor, 2013)

4.7 Reflexivity statement and ethical consideration

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Informed Consent form

<div align="center">

Informed Consent Form
Name of the thesis
</div>

This consent form is part of the process required for ethical treatment of participants in research. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about the research process or procedures, please ask.

Invitation to Participate

This research is conducted by Fanndis Hermannsdottir for master thesis within the master's programme in Stategic Communication at Lund University, spring 2021. The research is a qualitative case study of two branding campaigns of the Swedish Armed Forces.

Research Purpose

This thesis aims to study whether the contemporary political landscape affects the branding activities of the Swedish Armed Forces in relation to the contemporary political ideological view of the stakeholder as a citizen or as a consumer .

Research Method

The study is conducted through three focus group interviews, with four interviewees in each. The questions are focused on your perception of branding activities and are open ended questions.

Benefit

By participating, you will contribute to an understanding about utterances of the contemporary political ideology appears in public sector branding activities.

Confidentiality - Anonymity - Security

How to write this part when it's a focus group?

Voluntary participation

You are being asked to make a voluntary decision whether or not to participate in this study.
If there is any part of the information that is not clear, please feel free to ask for clarifications.
If you decide not to participate, or if you later decide to discontinue your participation, your decision will not affect your present or future relations with the researchers or Lund University. Upon request, a copy of the information, data, and results will be made available

to you. You will always be free to discontinue participation at any time, and all data collected up to that time as a result of your partial participation will be destroyed without being used in the study. If you decide to participate, please provide your signature as indicated below.

What Your Signature Means

Your signature on this Consent Form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in this research project and agree to participate as a participant. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without any consequences. Your continued participation should be informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

_____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____

Print Name:

_____

Signature of Investigator   Date

_____

Signature of Investigator   Date

Contact Information

Researcher: Fanndis Hermannsdottir   fa7536he-s@student.lu.se

Supervisor: Nils Holmberg   nils.holmberg@isk.lu.se

Appendix 2 - Questionnaire

A. Introduction

1. Provide consent form and explain, as for permission to record the interview.

2. Introduce the researcher/interviewer

3. Introduce research objectives:

    a) to understand how contemporary politics affect public sector branding

    b) to understand how the Swedish Armed Forces brand themselves in relation to the

       contemporary dominant political ideology

    c) to understand how the contemporary dominant ideology is perceived to appear in the

       Swedish Armed Forces branding campaigns of 2011 and 2019

4. Inform about confidentiality

B. Warm-up, ice-breaking questions

5. Can you start by telling us a little about yourself?

Kan ni börja med att berätta lite om er själva? Exempelvis ålder, könidentifiering,

utbildningsbakgrund, vad ni jobbar med och var ni bor?

- age, gender identification, educational background, current occupation, where you live

6. What do you know of the Swedish Armed Forces?

Vad känner ni till om Försvarsmakten?

7. What do you know of the Swedish political landscape?

Vad känner ni till om det svenska politiska landskapet?

C. Main research questions - 2011

Show the two commercials from 2011 - but don't say the year

8. What is the focus of the commercials?

Vad var fokus i reklamerna?

9. How do you perceive the message?

Hur uppfattade ni budskapet?

10. Who is the intended receiver of the message?

Vem är den tilltänkta publiken av budskapet?

11. How do you perceive the brand Swedish Armed Forces from these commercials?

Hur uppfattar ni Försvarsmaktens varumärke utifrån dessa reklamfilmer?

12. Name two values you associate the commercials with

Nämn två värderingar ni associerar reklamerna med

D. Main research questions - 2019

Show the two commercials from 2019 - but don't say the year

13. What is the focus of the commercials?

Vad var fokus i reklamerna?

14. How do you perceive the message?

Hur uppfattade ni budskapet?

15. Who is the intended receiver of the message?

Vem är den tilltänkta publiken av budskapet?

16. How do you perceive the brand Swedish Armed Forces from these commercials?

Hur uppfattar ni Försvarsmaktens varumärke utifrån dessa reklamfilmer?

17. Name two values you associate the commercials with

Nämn två värderingar ni associerar reklamerna med

E. Main research questions - comparison of 2011 and 2019

18. What are the differences between the two campaigns?

Vad är de huvudsakliga skillnaderna mellan kampanjerna?

19. Are there any differences on how the intended receiver is communicated with?

Upplever ni någon skillnad på hur Försvarsmakten vill kommunicera med den tilltänkta

publiken?

20. Do you perceive any political values in the two campaigns?

Upplever ni några politiska värderingar i de två kampanjerna?

D. Closure

21. Is there anything you would like to add that you think is important, that we have not covered yet?

Finns det något ni skulle vilja tillägga som vi ännu inte har diskuterat?

22. Thank you so much for all your help and participation in this interview.

23. In the consent form you can find our contact details, if you're interested in the results of our study or would like to redraw your participation.