The dis/appearances of violence
When a 'peace-loving' state uses force

Tua Sandman

Academic dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science at Stockholm University to be publicly defended on Friday 8 February 2019 at 13.00 in William-Olssonsalen, Geovetenskapen’s hus, Svante Arrhenius väg 14.

Abstract
The research problem that this dissertation addresses is how and with what implications the use of force in ‘distant’ places is made seen and known at home. As practices change and ‘peacework’ is becoming increasingly violent, the book argues that it is imperative to examine how war ‘comes home’ and to what extent the narratives emerging in public discourse open up for public reflection and (re)consideration. As the representation of violence varies between contexts and over time, the book contributes to ongoing debates on the representation of war and violence by offering a comprehensive and systematic examination of the representation of violence in the case of Sweden, where the engagement in war(like) activities by no means is considered normal. Though Sweden during the last decades has increased its contributions to operations of peace-enforcement, Sweden still projects an image of itself as a nation of peace and a nation at peace. Thus, Sweden could be considered a ‘most likely case’ for politicisation and dislocation once Swedish soldiers engage in violence.

Drawing on poststructuralist theorisation on the political, processes of identification and the articulation of foreign policy as well as previous literature on the representation of war and violence, the book examines and conceptualises how violence dis/appears in Swedish public narratives at the time of Swedish military contribution to war(like) engagements. Part II of the book examines the representation of violence in Swedish parliamentary debates during, altogether, five military interventions taking place between 1960 and 2014. Part III takes a closer look at public service media material during three critical episodes that could be considered (potentially) dislocatory experiences related to the use of force. For the study of how violence dis/appears, the book advances a conceptual framework that combines the concepts of in/visibilisation, de/naturalisation and dis/identification. The study uncovers how the narratives on peace-enforcement move between making visible and making invisible, between problematisation and naturalisation, and between linking and differentiating the use of force to or from Sweden. It lays bare a number of narrative themes and responses that are salient over time, and examines the political work of the dis/appearances of violence in terms of de/stabilising the link between identity and policy, and in terms of de/politicising the issue of using force. Ultimately, the book argues that the dis/appearances of violence in public discourse condition the possibility for critical reflection and (re)consideration at home at the time of war(like) engagements abroad.

Keywords: Sweden, peace-enforcement, use of force, representation of violence, narrative structuration, identity and foreign policy, de/politicisation, dislocation, in/visibility, critical war studies.

Stockholm 2019
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-163041

ISBN 978-91-7797-512-0
ISSN 0346-6620

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THE DIS/APPEARANCES OF VIOLENCE

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When a 'peace-loving' state uses force

Tua Sandman
An’ we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing
Bob Dylan


Trots alla distraktioner har jag dock lyckats stå någorlunda stadigt och behålla fokus. Medan både det lilla och det stora har flimrat förbi har jag gömt mig i arkiv, på bibliotek, på kontoret, på snabbtåg, på landet, i utlandet. Ständigt har jag knept och knäpt på denna text. Det är en text om Sveriges relation till världen och till sig själv; det är en text om våldsanvändning, om ”bilden av krig. Färdig blev den inte, avhandlingen. Men nu är den färdig nog.

Jag har många att tacka för att jag kunnat stå någorlunda stadigt. För att jag kunnat behålla fokus. Och för att forskarutbildningen blev en rolig tid i livet.


Många har under åren läst utkast till denna text och hjudit på kommentarer, råd och tips. För ovärderliga synpunkter i samband med slutseminariet, tack Emil Edenborg och Hedvig Ördén. Ett jättetack till Kjell Engelbrekt, Maria Wendt och Ulf Mörkenstam i kommittén för ert varma engagemang. Ett stort tack också till opponenter under planseminarium och mittseminarium: tack Jan Hallenberg och Maria-Therese Gustafsson, Charlotte Wagnsson och


Stockholm, januari 2019
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONUC</td>
<td>The UN's Operation in the Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNPROFOR</td>
<td>UN's Protection Force (Former Yugoslavia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFOR</td>
<td>Implementation Force (Bosnia and Herzegovina)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MONUC</td>
<td>UN's Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)</td>
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<td>OUP</td>
<td>Operation Unified Protector (Libya)</td>
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#### SWEDISH POLITICAL PARTIES

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>Sweden's Communist Party (1960s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>Left Party (from 1990)</td>
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<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>Social Democrats</td>
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<tr>
<td>mp</td>
<td>Green Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>cp</td>
<td>Centre Party (1960s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Centre Party (from the 1990s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fp</td>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kd</td>
<td>Christian Democrats</td>
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<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Right Wing Party (1960s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Conservative/Moderate Party (from 1969)</td>
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<tr>
<td>nyd</td>
<td>New Democracy</td>
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<td>sd</td>
<td>Sweden Democrats</td>
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INTRODUCTION: DEALING WITH VIOLENCE

War on home turf happened back then; it was history. If it occurred now, it occurred beyond the reach of eyes and ears, somewhere else, over there.

(Favret, 2009: 10)

Third party military intervention is a well-established practice in international politics. Throughout contemporary history, states have deployed troops in ‘distant’ places, far from their own territory, to avert the escalation of armed conflict, stop atrocities or monitor regional transitions from war to peace. Even if such interventions are often sanctioned by the UN and launched in the name of peace, all military actions are inherently violent in nature. Over time, military interventions launched in the name of peace have hardly become less violent; given the greater emphasis on peace-enforcement (as opposed to peacekeeping) during the last decades, the violent element has, if anything, become more prominent (e.g. Jakobsen, 2006: 2; Sloan 2011 & 2014). ‘Peace operations’ have become more robust and the distinction between peacekeeping and warfare has become increasingly blurred (Tullberg, 2012: 12). Regardless of shifting descriptions of military undertakings – whether called humanitarian interventions, stabilisation missions, or peace supporting operations – the ‘content’ of peace-enforcement is the use of force. Today, the practice of peace-enforcement and interventions based on Chapter VII in the UN Charter in many respects resemble what we traditionally conceive as war. However, on the basis of historical demarcations between legitimate and illegitimate aggression (Balibar, 2008: 269), these interventions are rarely categorised as wars. The general tendency to abstain from naming armed conflicts as wars represents, as has been argued, a discursive transformation of how to talk about and legitimate war, not a deviation from violent practices as such (Barkawi, 2011: 703).

The issue of using force is fundamentally a political question, an ethical dilemma, which requires a political and public conversation on how we wish to act and what we wish to be, and what it means to act with military means. In a democratic context, peace-enforcement and the use of force is a question of authorisation; political and public debates determine how we will let others act for us. As it were, soldiers, weaponry and gear are sent to ‘distant’ places in the name of the public. As military strategy evolves and practices change, there should be an open and ongoing debate on the use of force and our own role in activities such as peace-enforcement – a political debate, which opens up for identifying, thinking and acting anew, and which reflects the notion that things can be different. Generally, we – the public in
democratic societies – should (be able to) ask ourselves what the use of force means for us and for others, what we (come to) represent, and ultimately who we ‘are’ and want to be.1

How violence is rendered ‘seen’ and ‘known’ in the public sphere shapes certain frames of intelligibility through which the public understands the use of force. And, as it were, what is ‘seen’ and ‘known’ in the context of war by all means have real consequences (Gregory, 2012: 338; Patton, 1995: 11). As Henriksen (2010: 26) notes in his discussion on ‘the critical issue of recognition’, an increased distance between those who fight and the public undermines the legitimacy of individual experiences of combat confrontation and the human costs that come with it. Also Lucaites and Simons (2017: 3/10) problematise the gap between the lived-experience of warfare and the experience mediated in public culture, where representations render visible some aspects of war yet make other aspects remain unseen. Although ‘Western warfare’ is an ever-shifting practice – today largely characterised by a ‘zero-death’ doctrine, precision weapons, and technological advances which reduce (or even rule out) combat confrontation (e.g. Nordin & Öberg, 2015: 400) – military operations still include bodily violence and death (e.g. Bawkawi, 2011: 703). Western soldiers are, in short, still sent out on deadly missions, and they still engage in fighting; violence is a physical reality and a lived and body-based experience for all humans situated in war zones (Sylvester, 2013), also for soldiers engaging in practices of peace-enforcement. The support of the home front – that is, the broader public at home in whose name soldiers and weaponry are deployed – as well as home front awareness, is crucial for those engaging in combat abroad (see e.g. Henriksen, 2007: 220 & 2010: 24).

It is partly through stories and representations that war ‘comes home’; images, political statements, witness testimonies, and so forth, arrange the public imagination of what military activities are like – of what violence is and means. When societies are geographically remote from the theatre(s) of war, and participate in war without being particularly affected by it,” the public representations of violence that emerge to account for war-like engagements shape the relationship between here and there – between society and the practices of violence that it authorises. Narratives and their representation of violence – of fighting already unfolding or fighting that might come – are essential for what type of military undertakings that generally are considered acceptable, in line with prevalent self-conceptions, and hence possible, here and now or in the future. Essentially, how war and violence are talked about, or not talked

1 ‘We’ here refers to the public, the democratic demos, the ‘national collective’, the democratic society; ‘we’ who authorise, who decide; ‘we’ as all of us who have a say; ‘we’ as in ‘the West’; ‘we’ as in ‘Sweden’; or ‘we’ as those who represent ‘us’.

2 Neither physically nor economically.
about, depicted, or not depicted, tell us something about the extent to which the broader public can be said to partake in decisions that concern the use of force. To avoid and ultimately silence conversations on the use of force represents a political deficit; if the public and political debate on war and violence turns quiet, or renders invisible the very ‘content’ of military action, there is little room for critical reflection and (re)consideration, contestation and political dissent. Security policy would simply be removed from the sphere of the political to that of the social, and violence would become a ‘forgotten’ and normalised practice. Surely, we need to talk about and reflect on our involvement in violent practices and our policy on the use of force. The questions are: Are we? Have we? Can we?

RESEARCH PROBLEM
Alongside many changes in the character of late-modern wars – new technology, professionalisation of the armed forces, a shifting doctrine of intervention\(^3\), a transition to post-national defence structures, and greater emphasis on expeditionary forces\(^1\) – the character of so-called humanitarian interventions has also experienced a general shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement. This has meant that ‘peacework’ – in many respects – has become more violent.\(^3\) When ‘war’ is fought at a distance, the issue of how to know, how to learn becomes ‘massively important’ (Favret, 2009: 12); and when practices of peacekeeping shift to peace-enforcement while combat takes place at distant places, it is uncertain what the general public, at home, can envision and identify with, and ultimately conceive and determine. When deciding to send people off to war – to let them engage in and perform violence – it is decisive to know what is being authorised, and to be able to imagine what actually could happen ‘on the ground’. Hence, the changing representations and visibilities of state violence need to be examined, argues Martschukat and Niedermeier (2014: 3-5), as violent practices have tended to either be adjusted to historical notions of decency or masked and hidden to sustain their perceived legitimacy. As Welland (2017) further clarifies: ‘what publics “see” and “know” about war is integral for its social acceptance and possibility of its continuance’ (p. 13). In short, the representations of war and violence in the public sphere have implications in terms of making violence appear (ab)normal and (un)acceptable.

In light of the (ever)changing character of war and modes of operation more generally, it is imperative to examine how war ‘comes home’, to uncover the frames of

\(^1\) Consider how the principle of non-interference has become less influential in international political discourse (e.g. Håkansson, 2011). The so-called Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a reflection of this change.

\(^2\) For a detailed overview and discussion, see e.g. Kronsell, 2012.

\(^3\) As this is what the turn to peace-enforcement signifies and points to.
intelligibility and conceptions of reality that representations of violence (re)produce. Again, representations of war and violence in the public sphere affect how ‘we’ see, think about and deal with the question of using force. Hence, when the representations of violence are all we ‘know’ about the violent practices that we authorise, the dis/appearances of violence in public discourse are crucial as they condition the possibility for critical reflection and (re)consideration in the public sphere; how warlike activities are made seen and known affect to what extent the use of military force is considered a truly political issue. If the use of force is becoming an increasingly routinised and ‘forgotten’ practice – as in something we never or rarely question, challenge or even consider – we need tools to reveal and understand how the process of ‘forgetting’ unfolds and takes hold over time.

OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Generally, this book is concerned with questions on how we deal with and address the issue of using force and with what implications; what the book does not concern, however, is whether the use of force as such – more generally or in particular interventions – is right or wrong, just or unjust. The overarching objective of the study is to critically examine the frames of intelligibility that representations of violence in Swedish narratives on peace-enforcement historically have (re)produced, in order to expose and conceptualise the dis/appearances of violence in public discourse at home, and how dis/appearances shape the conditions of possibility for public, and critical, reflection and (re)consideration. To achieve this objective, the book offers a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the representation of violence in Swedish narratives on peace-enforcement, as reflected in political debates (part II) and in public service media (part III), at the time of Swedish military contribution to, altogether, five international interventions taking place between 1960 and 2014. The empirical study addresses two research questions. First, how does violence dis/appear in Swedish public narratives that emerge to account for warlike engagements? And second, how do the dis/appearances of violence in Swedish public narratives serve to de/stabilise the link between identity and policy, and how do they serve to de/politicise the issue of using force?

To address these questions and to elaborate on the overarching objective, part I of the book outlines a theoretical framework that draws on poststructuralist discussions on narrative structuration, identification, the reconciling of identity and policy, experiences of dislocation, and de/politicisation; furthermore, it develops a discussion on the idea of in/visibility. Part I also advances a conceptual framework for the study of dis/appearances of violence in public discourse. In terms of dis/appearances, the
study will look at how violence is rendered in/visible, how violence is de/naturalised, and how processes of dis/identification take shape. In other words, the study will uncover how representations of violence move between the making visible and the making invisible, between problematisation and naturalisation, and between linking and differentiating the Self to or from the use of force. Eventually, the concluding chapter(s) will draw on the poststructuralist conceptions of de/politicisation and the reconciling of identity and policy – as outlined in part I – to elaborate on the political work and broader implications of the dis/appearances of violence in public discourse.

CASE
This book will focus on the case of Sweden. In regard to de/politicisation, normalisation and the making possible of violence, Sweden is a particularly interesting case to explore further. As a substantial contributor to ‘peace operations’ ever since the 1950s, Sweden has been part of the general shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement. However, the increased participation in war-like engagements is seemingly at odds with Sweden’s deeply embedded national self-image as a peace-loving state that has been kept out of warfare for more than 200 years (e.g. Agrell, 2013; Åhäll, 2016; Åse & Wendt, 2018; Burch, 2013; Stråth, 2000; Tullberg, 2012: 41-42; Wendt & Åse, 2016; Zander, 2001: 320). Given this self-perception of peace-lovingness and exceptionality, one could expect that when involvement in war-like activities actually occurs, when Swedish troops find themselves in combat, the use of force indeed needs to be reflected upon, explained, and discussed in the public sphere. Swedish involvements in war-like activities should thus reasonably call attention to and incite a public and political discussion on the Swedish policy on the use of force, perhaps more so than in many other Western states with a different collective memory and legacy in terms of war-engagements. To paraphrase the more positivist-oriented case study literature: Sweden is, one could say, a ‘most likely case’ for politicisation and dislocation once Swedish troops find themselves in combat. Generally, the case of Sweden could thus add to our knowledge on the political work of representations of violence in public discourse; a study of the Swedish case provides an opportunity to enhance and complicate our understanding of how dis/appearances serve to open up or close down critical reflection and (re)consideration in the public sphere. Overall, the Swedish case reveals how violence could become a routinised and accepted practice even in societies that

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5 Sweden managed to stay out of both World War I and World War II; Sweden’s policy of neutrality remained until 2002; to this day, Sweden is not a member of NATO but is part of the Partnership for Peace programme. However, Sweden has been a member of the EU since 1995.
generally, and most often forcefully, advocate and identify with non-violence and peaceful resolutions to conflict.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Generally, the study is situated within the field of critical war studies. To be more precise, it seeks to complement and add specification to the study of representations of war and violence; the book offers an empirical account of the dis/appearances of violence in Swedish narratives on peace-enforcement, and a discussion on what these dis/appearances mean for the ‘presence’ of war ‘at home’ and the conditions of possibility for public reflection and (re)consideration.

First, in terms of conceptual development, the book advances a conceptualisation of dis/appearances of violence; by combining three concepts – de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation, and dis/identification – it seeks to enhance our understanding of how violence dis/appears in public discourse and with what implications. Ultimately, the book demonstrates how the discursive processes that the three concepts seek to capture are all relevant if seeking to understand how violence dis/appears (in Swedish public discourse), and how they interweave and possibly reinforce each other. Whereas previous research on the representation of war and violence (outlined on page 14 onwards), has offered insightful yet rather sweeping general observations and theoretical conclusions, this study seeks to offer further specification, concretisation, and detail, not least in regard to the idea of dis/appearances of violence and the political work of in/visibility. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide a nuanced perspective on how in/visibility plays into the process of de/politicisation as well as the process of de/stabilisation with regard to the link between identity and policy. Moreover, the book also contributes to the study of the representation of war and violence by outlining a methodological framework for the study of dis/appearances of violence in public discourse. As part of the conceptual framework, a set of analytical questions is developed and a reading strategy is presented.

Second, the book complements previous literature on the representation of war and violence through its empirical contribution and focus on the Swedish case. As will be elaborated later, previous literature on the representation of violence mostly concerns American and British warfare; largely, the experiences of the US and the UK almost seem to define the Western experience of violent engagement entirely. Thus, to explore experiences other than those of the US and UK could in itself add value to the study of the representation of war and violence. Looking at the representation of violence in a (radically) different discursive and historical setting could moreover complicate established notions of dis/appearances of violence and of
war’s shifting ‘presence’ in the West and in our time. Most importantly, a study of the Swedish case complements the discussion on the relation between in/visibility and the normalisation of war and violence.

Finally, in relation to previous literature on the Swedish case and on the Swedish experience of peacekeeping and war(like) interventions, which is briefly described on page 24, the study offers a critical analysis of the representation of violence over time; with only a few exceptions, research on the Swedish case generally lacks a thorough and critical engagement with the Swedish narratives on peace-enforcement. In the literature on the representation of violence generally, as well as on the Swedish case more specifically, there is generally a striking absence of systematic empirical studies exploring dis/continuities in the representation of violence over time.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

The remainder of this introductory chapter will elaborate on a few of the ontological assumptions informing the study and subsequently outline the previous literature that the study wishes to speak to. Part I will then present the ontological and theoretical framework that the study draws on and builds upon. Part I also outlines a conceptual framework. Subsequently, the last section of part I – on methodology and methods – will provide a more detailed discussion on the reading strategy, and give a few remarks on case selection and the collected empirical material.

Parts II and III are both empirical. Part II presents an analysis of parliamentary debates on five separate interventions,7 whereas part III presents an analysis of public service media representations during three critical periods.8 Each chapter in parts II and III ends with concluding remarks, and both parts II and III end with a chapter summarising the overall observations from the empirical case studies. The book closes with a concluding chapter, which expands upon the analysis and results, and which offers some further thoughts on the overall social, political and theoretical implications of the findings.

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8 ONUC in Congo, the autumn and winter of 1960-1962; UNPROFOR in Bosnia, July to December 1995; ISAF in Afghanistan, from 2008 to 2010.
VIOLENCE AND MEANING-MAKING: SITUATING THE STUDY

The forthcoming section will outline the literature on representations of war and violence that the study wishes to speak to. Yet first, it is meaningful to briefly elaborate on a few of the study’s ontological points of departure and basic assumptions, and to situate the study within the field of critical war studies.

THE CONCEPT OF VIOLENCE

Despite its significance for the past and present of humankind, the phenomenon of violence is often ‘placed on the periphery of social and political thought’ (Mider, 2013: 702; see also Kilby, 2013; Walby, 2012). As such a fuzzy concept and notoriously difficult to define, violence has commonly constituted a problem for scholars of various disciplines. As Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) put it: violence can be ‘legitimate or illegitimate; visible or invisible; necessary or useless; senseless and gratuitous or utterly rational and strategic’ (p. 2). Nonetheless, within the existing literature on violence, a narrow as well as a broad understanding of the concept can be distinguished (Mider, 2013). The narrow understanding clearly dissociates the concept of violence from the so-called lawful use of force, which is typically associated with the performance of state actors. A broader understanding, on the other hand, considers the concept of force and violence to be identical, denoting any use of physical force. Yet, with an even broader understanding, ‘direct’ violence is conceived as inevitably linked to cultural, political, military and legal structures, where ‘indirect’ violence has come to mean practices of inequality and discrimination (Galtung, 1969). In line with such a conception, violence cannot be understood solely in terms of its physical manifestations; beyond the use of force and infliction of pain, violence additionally involves systems of injustice and inequality, social exclusion and humiliation. An inclusive conception of violence, that recognises both its direct and indirect manifestations and their interdependence, arguably undermines the idea of war and peace as mutually exclusive. War is not detached from the social; rather it reflects, as has often been argued, a continuum of violence that runs through the social, political and economic spheres (e.g. Cockburn, 2004; Malesevic, 2010). Narrow definitions of violence, prominent within instrumentalist and rationalist theories, generally presuppose intentionality and physical harm. Yet, more inclusive definitions, concerned with power, specifically emphasise the context, process and structure of violence (Kilby, 2013). Ontologically, violence can thus be perceived as either a distinct phenomenon, with its own ‘rhythm, dynamics and practices’, or as contained within other structures, of power, culture and politics (Walby, 2012: 96).
Violence and war are, by all means, socially situated practices. Yet, if adopting a very broad understanding of the concept of violence, one is inevitably confronted by the ontological question of physicality; does not violence need to involve the use of force or physical restraint, either in action or its effect? In order to grasp the dynamics of violent human interaction, one arguably needs to acknowledge the social and cultural dimensions of violence, and the processes of justification, which essentially give violence its power and meaning, yet at the same time recognise the specificity and physical aspect of violence and the use of force.

Perhaps Walby (2012) is right when she notes that it analytically might be important not to ‘reduce violence to other forms of power’ (p. 103), but enable for an analysis of the relationship between the physical manifestations of violence, on the one hand, and, on the other, its social, political and cultural setting and the discursive processes that make violence possible.

**REPRESENTATION AS PART OF THE MAKING POSSIBLE**

According to my definition, all wars are, of course, about violence framed in political terms. It is the political justification that makes killing in war different from murder.

(Kaldor, 2010: 278)

If recognising violent conflict as essentially a social and political event, warfare and violence – as a material and concrete reality – need to be understood in relation to its social setting and conditions of possibility. Hence, a deepening of the understanding of armed conflict as ultimately a social phenomenon and a social process requires a systematic localisation of discursive formations essentially making violence possible within a given social and political context (see Jabri, 1996 & 2007).

The military interventions explored in the empirical chapters are all interventions featuring direct violence, in which Swedish troops have been engaged in activities of peace-enforcement. This aspect is important, as reasonably there is a difference between engaging and not engaging in the performance of actual violence. Hence, this study is essentially concerned with the physical violence of armed intervention, yet it nevertheless acknowledges and makes visible the fact that violence is situated within discursive processes of legitimation, which enable the introduction and continuation of the use of force.9 Violence can only be given meaning, or be

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9 ‘Violence’ and ‘the use of force’ will be used interchangeably. From a critical perspective, there are good reasons to abstain from differentiating the concept of violence from the use of force, and instead consider the two concepts as synonymous. The use of force is not considered lawful or legitimate from a political point of view merely because a state actor performs it. The use of military force is violence, regardless of the actor performing it, and is therefore always dependent on processes of justification.
considered acceptable, through a discursive structuration of war and violence, which means: discourses that rationalise and normalise the use of force as a social continuity (Jabri, 1996: 90). Representations of violence, which here is the object of inquiry, are part of the discursive structuration, and hence the making possible, of war and violence.

The violent engagements scrutinised in the empirical chapters are all what one can call ‘wars of choice’ rather than ‘wars of necessity’ (Finnemore, 2003: 2; McInnes, 2002: 143; Shea, 2012: 618; Welland, 2017: 6). Hence, it is not – let’s say – the existential survival of Sweden that is at stake, but interests beyond home defence, perhaps even beyond what’s considered vital national interests. Warfare inevitably involves questions of legitimacy, and military engagements beyond national defence most certainly require acts of justification to be considered reasonable, acceptable and doable. In democratic societies in particular, the making-possible of violent practices is fundamentally a matter of political and public debate, rather than simply a matter of legality. Although military interventions and their mandates on the use of force are regularly debated and scrutinised in relation to international law, it is not legality as such that determines what the general public will perceive to be logical and necessary, tolerable and acceptable. Nor are the Rules of Engagement in a given military intervention shaped strictly by legality; Western states continuously, for different reasons, deploy armed forces with national caveats\(^a\) or they abstain from participating with military means altogether. The use of force is thus a subject of political decision-making, and violent practices can only be made legitimate through discursive processes of legitimisation (e.g. Head, 2012: 1-2; Olsson, 2013: 56).

Ultimately, how we define events of war and experiences of violence, how we come to know and understand them, naturally have implications for what kind of actions and practices we consider acceptable.

CRITICAL VERSUS STRATEGIC STUDIES ON WARFARE AND VIOLENCE

Although war and violence are not detached from the social, war as well as violence can arguably still be regarded as distinct phenomena, worthy of particular attention (see e.g. Barkawi, 2011 & 2012; Barkawi & Brighton, 2011b; Holmqvist, 2013a; Mundy, 2013]. Recent debates on critical war studies, initiated by Barkawi and Brighton’s call for a recentering of war as an object of inquiry, has come to revolve around the (undecidable) ontology of war. While fighting commonly has been delineated as the ‘essence’ of war and warfare, and hence a feature no ontology of war can neglect (e.g. Barkawi & Brighton, 2011: 133; Brighton, 2013], some have questioned whether war

\(^a\) National caveats refer to the restrictions that states place on the use of their forces.
can have an intrinsic ontology independent from the ‘war-stories’ through which wars are conceived (von Boemeken, 2016: 239), or stressed that ‘late-modern warfare is better understood as an aesthetic rather than an ontology’ (Mundy, 2013: 149).

Along the same lines, others have drawn attention to how the notion of war as fighting has come into crisis given today’s radical imbalance in the exposure to death, as the shifting character of ‘war’ has meant that the element of fighting and combat has been eradicated (see Chamayou, 2015: 13/17/33/91; Kaldor, 2010: 274; Nordin & Öberg, 2015). The question of today is, as it were, whether (Western) warfare still can be considered warfare when combat and fighting are replaced by ‘execution’ and ‘slaughter’. Can the US, for instance, actually be considered to engage in warfare when its enemies no longer have an enemy they can fight, as is the case in drone operations and targeted killings?

This study does not seek to engage in either the politics of categorisation or the debate on war’s intrinsic ‘essence’. Yet, in relation to recent debates on the ontology of war, one can note that ‘boots on the ground’ is still an actuality in Western war(like) engagements. In various locations and instances, Western soldiers still engage in hostilities and find themselves vulnerable to harm. ‘Boots on the ground’ is often a crucial element of peace-enforcement operations. The episodes of violence explored in the empirical chapters of this book signify episodes characterised by some level of fighting (and hence exposure to death); apart from the OUP intervention in Libya\(^a\), all interventions under scrutiny involved Swedish ground forces, which (occasionally) engaged in combat. Hence, in one sense, fighting and combat is at the centre of this analysis, and has served as a criterion for case selection; after all, peace-enforcement equals the enforcement of peace by violent means. However, it is not the fighting as such that stands in focus. As noted by Barkawi and Brighton (2011a), an analysis completely centred on fighting tends to instrumentalise knowledge about war. ‘Fighting’ essentially concerns problems of how to survive and conquer, and an analytical focus on fighting thus usually implies theorisation on the instruments and means by which to win. Clearly, there is more one can say about war(like) engagements such as peace-enforcement.

Apart from (re)considering the ontology of war, the debates on critical war studies have generally redirected attention to the nexus between war, knowledge and truth, and to the imprints that war and experiences of violence leave on society at large. War and violence are thus not only enabled by and embedded in social and political structures, as noted in the previous subsection, but often also serve to reconfigure society itself. Recent literature on critical war studies has argued that although war –

\(^a\) Which merely involved the Swedish Air Force.
of course – is deeply destructive, it could also be considered a powerful generative force, and productive in the sense that it ‘consumes and reworks social and political orders’ (Barkawi, 2011: 705, see also Barkawi & Brighton, 2011a & 2011b). Jabri (2005) has also noted that war is a context that ‘brings into sharp focus the place of knowledge in relation to power’ (p. 70). Overall, the destroying and making of truth could be considered a key dimension of war; as Barkawi and Brighton (2011a) stress: ‘war’s fundamental properties are in part revealed by its disordering and reordering of knowledge’ (p. 127). Or as von Boemcken (2016) puts it: ‘war is truth, a non-truth, a truth-machine, incessantly undoing and reprocessing truth’ (p. 239).

Whilst the field of International Relations has been concerned with the causes and outcomes of war, it has generally failed to take seriously ‘those in-between moments’, and the social aspects of warring (Sylvester, 2013: 671). How war is fought and represented discloses something about ‘us’, the contemporary, and our culture. War and violence are inherently social phenomena, which have been and still are central to the formation and character of Western states and societies (Barkawi, 2011: 702; von Boemcken, 2016: 228). While acknowledging these interconnections between warfare and society, a critical study on war and violence directs attention to the discursive structuration of war and violence, and its constitutive effects on subject formation and transformation (Barkawi, 2012: 127). In contrast to strategic studies, a critical analysis ultimately sheds light on the social dimension of war and violence and the regimes of truth that war produce: what war does, and how categories and certainties are (re)produced or destabilised by experiences of violence. In this sense, a critical approach to the study of war and violence seeks to expand the analytical focus to include the social and political orders – culture, public reason, social identities – which are disrupted, undermined and renegotiated by warfare and experiences of war, fighting and violence.

Rather than being concerned with the strategic dimension of fighting, this study focuses on the representation of violence in narratives on war(like) engagements and the ‘reality’ and frames of intelligibility they produce. It attempts to recentre, as it were, the Swedish practice of violence and its representations as an object of inquiry, and critically engage with the narratives emerging to account for the use of force. Hence, rather than mapping and assessing the strategic narratives formulated for instrumental reasons, to convince the public of the necessity of force, the study explicitly draws attention to the discursive structuration of war and violence, and the representations of violence in narratives emerging in and through political debates (part II) and public service media (part III). For what the literature on strategic communication and strategic narratives generally fails to grasp is the broader
implications and constitutive function of representations, narratives, and frames of war and violence – that they fundamentally shape our understandings and truths about violent engagements and identity, and our sense of reality itself.” Storytelling is ultimately a meaning-making practice; narratives that emerge to account for war(like) activities thus arguably have social and political effects beyond the mere mobilisation of public support (cf. Angstrom & Noreen, 2017; Coticchia & De Simone, 2014; De Graaf et al., 2015: 8; Ekengren, 2015; Noreen & Angstrom, 2015). As Coker (2010) stresses: ‘it is important to view language as constituting war and being constituted by war’, not merely as ‘developed and employed in the waging of war’ (p. 135, emphasis added). Rather than seeking to evaluate government narratives in terms of their ability to gather public support for military action, the intention is quite another: to critically reflect on what narratives – with their representations of violence – do with our conceptions and understandings of violent engagements and our own role therein, and whether they open up for the possibility of reflecting on and (re)considering the use of force.

**See also Holmqvist’s (2013b) critique of the concept of strategic communication and the role of strategic communication in contemporary warfare; above all, she demonstrates how the idea of strategic communication, now embedded in the conduct of war, is inherently depoliticising.**
WAR 'COMES HOME': THE REPRESENTATION OF VIOLENCE

War is an ever-shifting practice; technological advances, new defence structures and shifting doctrines in international politics alter the ways wars are fought and represented, and ultimately the connection between ‘battlefield’ and the public ‘at home’. What these shifts have meant for the ‘realness’, ‘seenness’, and comprehension of war and violence, and ultimately the presence of war in Western discourse, has in various ways been theorised and problematised within several strands of literature in recent decades. The focal point of this study is the representation of violence in narratives on war(like) engagements and the ‘reality’ they convey to the ‘home front’, to society at large. This section provides a brief overview of the literature related to the representation of war and violence, both to chart and summarise relevant arguments in previous and ongoing debates but also to outline the potential contributions of this study.

The debates on the ‘virtuality’ of war that took off in the 1990s, following the Gulf War and later the Kosovo intervention, drew new attention to media’s shifting role in war and how representations of war and violence are not mere reflections of the real event but rather part of its constitution. Representations of war are not only crucial in the making possible of war, as in ‘framing’ and ‘selling’ war, but also form the very configurations of war itself. War has always been radically incomprehensible, impossible to immediately take in; as Der Derian (2000) notes, war has – ‘in a sense’ – ‘always been a virtual reality’ (p. 773). Yet, with the virtualised ways of conducting war in the 1990s and still today, the gap itself between the reality and virtuality of war has collapsed, which implies a further distancing of understanding. While ‘fought in the same manner as they are represented’, Der Derian (2000) asserts that ‘virtuous wars’ promote a vision of bloodless, humanitarian, hygienic wars’ (p. 772).

With the declaration that the Gulf War did not take place, Baudrillard (1995) makes a similar case, suggesting that the distinction between the real and virtual has not only been blurred, but revoked. As advanced technology removes the element of confrontation, allowing war to be organised according to a pre-planned script, it appears as a clean and essentially empty war, which ultimately becomes the real. According to his argument, the Gulf War thus constituted a staged reality, a face-lifted war, a non-war; ‘[w]ar stripped of its passions, its phantasms, its finery, its veils,

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1 When war becomes the first, rather than the last, means to achieve security in the new global disorder, what one technologically can do begins to dominate what one legally, ethically, and pragmatically should do. Virtuous war thus presents a paradox: The more we resort to virtual means to resolve political problems, the more we undermine the very ground upon which our political virtues rest’ (Der Derian, 2012).
its violence, its images’ (Baudrillard, 1995: 64). Building on his theoretisation on simulation and simulacra (1994), Baudrillard’s central argument on the ‘non-existence’ of the Gulf War is that our experience of the world essentially is so destabilised by the media – as the simulated reality becomes more real than ‘reality’ itself – that one simply is unable to determine what really is. The ‘war’ is merely a copy without an original. The images of the Gulf War – images of high-tech weapons but rarely of casualties – ultimately become the Gulf War; yet, however ‘unreal’, these images ‘have real effects and become enmeshed in the ensuing material and social reality’ (Patton, 1995: 11).

Baudrillard and others’ conception of the Gulf War as a non-war, as slaughter masquerading as a war, has bearing on contemporary debates, not least concerning war’s ontology and the shifting character of war. Moreover, recent theoretical discussions on the ‘seenness’ of war have also picked up this notion of a revoked distinction between the real and the imaginary. In her discussion on frames of war and orders of intelligibility, which will be elaborated below, Butler (2009) claims that ‘the material reality of war’ cannot be separated from ‘those representational regimes through which it operates and which rationalize its own operation’ (p. 29). Welland (2017), on her part, who’s analysis of violence and (hyper)visibility, further discussed below, explicitly draws on Baudrillard to argue that the reiteration of the ‘liberal warrior soldier’ image further removes the representation of violence ‘from its referent in the “real”’ (p. 13).

What the discussions on war and representation during the 1990s essentially share is the acknowledgement that all we ‘know’ about war are the representations of war, and these representations certainly have real consequences for the continuation and configuration of violence itself. In his disclosure of the politics of representation during the war in Bosnia, Campbell (1998) forcefully illustrates the violence of representation and the performative function of representations of violence; ultimately, representations never reflect reality, but rather constitute reality through acts of repetition. Campbell (1998) reveals how a specific conception of identity and a specific problematisation of the nature of conflict were (re)produced and eventually taken for granted (in the West); ultimately, these notions rendered certain resolutions to conflict possible while closing down alternative (more democratic) approaches. Representations of violence are, in other words, by all means associated with knowledge and power.
The NATO intervention in Kosovo in the late 1990s revitalised the debate on the virtuality of war or the ‘postmodern’ war, and the implications of air warfare, advanced technology and the shifting role of the media. Yet, regarding the representation of violence, the discussion in the aftermath of the Kosovo intervention more explicitly and straightforwardly drew attention to the shifting relation between the frontline and those ‘at home’, and advanced the idea that war has become a ‘spectator sport’ for Western societies (e.g. Ignatieff, 2000; McInnes, 2002; Angstrom, 2005). As noted by McInnes (2002: 145-46): for the many, media now provides the only experience of war – hence, its representations of war become war. Overall, this literature on the ‘virtual war’ mainly points to the implications of Western societies’ reduced (or non-existent) participation in contemporary war, media access and war’s visibility and transparency, and what the virtualisation of war means for the political engagement ‘at home’. In other words, the literature on the ‘virtuality’ of war not only deals with advances in technology and the minimised risks for Western combatants, but also notes how war no longer has direct meaning for the many (in the West) and problematises the sense of detachment among Western publics that has been a result. For instance, in his discussion on the comprehension of combat today, Henriksen (2010: 24) argues that it is the increased distance between the public and the military that ultimately makes war ‘virtual’, not necessarily new technology or the character of contemporary wars per se. Warfare is thus no less real today, yet society is insulated from the direct experience of combat; hence, ‘it is merely another instance of distance’ (Henriksen, 2010: 25). Essentially, the virtual war debate accentuates a paradox; as technology in a sense takes us closer to the ‘reality’ of war, we (in the West) concurrently become more distanced and detached from the events on the ground. Naturally, as war proves less ‘costly’ (for the West) and the public becomes less involved, affected and informed, the shifting character of war also bears political and social consequences ‘at home’.

In the wake of the wars of the 1990s, Der Derian (2000) asserted that ‘[u]nlike other forms of warfare, virtuous war has an unsurpassed power to commute death, to keep it out of sight, out of mind’ (p. 773). While primarily referring to the implications of attacking from a distance – where the ‘virtual executions of war’ make operators experience death but not its consequences – his ideas on virtual theory also invoke questions on the ‘seenness’ of war in a broader sense – beyond operators’ limits of perception – and how reality ultimately is generated. More recent literature on drone warfare, targeted killings and killing from a distance, from above, has similarly dissected how operators and strategists come to ‘view’ the battlefield (e.g. Chamayou, 2015; Gregory, 2014; Holmqvist, 2013a; Kaplan, 2013). What one sees (in a literal sense)
affects the very possibilities of violence, notes Chamayou (2015); yet, although the question of ‘distance’ is obfuscated by drone operators’ visual sighting of their victims and the immediate effects of a targeted killing, the ‘device’ nevertheless offers ‘powerful means of distancing’ (p. 114-119, see also p. 144). Similarly, Gregory (2014) discusses the problems and the threat to civilians posed by operators’ near sight, far sight, and oversight. The literature on targeted killings directs attention to what the concrete view of the battlefield (as in sight and cartographical notions) means for the experience and conduct of war, but also points to the cultural perceptions of violence and conflict that technological advances induce. In his problematisation of the ‘network thinking’ in contemporary warfare, Coward (2014) for instance sheds light on the larger frameworks through which the battlefield is seen and understood. Network, ‘as a discursive trope’, is ‘constitutive of a certain spatiality’, he claims (p. 109); ultimately, it provides ‘a grid of intelligibility’, which ‘guides current practice’ (p. 115). Aside from the abovementioned, the literature has also acknowledged, of course, that the ‘shadow warfare’ of drones generally has disappeared from public view (e.g. Gregory, 2014: 58; Niva, 2013: 186).

How those conducting war view the battlefield and with what consequences ‘reality on the ground’ is filtered through technology is not a concern of this study; it rather deals with what those authorising war – the public – are allowed to see and contemplate. Yet, the literature on air warfare and targeted killings bears relevance as it ultimately points to the interconnections between how war is represented and conducted, and for how the ‘seenness’ of violent acts bears consequences for the level of understanding. Hence, it draws attention to the implications of how the actors, the shapes and the sites of conflict are sighted and perceived.

This study focuses on how representations of violence delimit perception in a broad sense; in short, what representations of violence means for the ‘presence’ of war at home. As Shapiro (2011) asserts: Baudrillard’s reflections on the reality of the Gulf War incite questions on the ‘spatio-temporality of the presence of war’ (p. 124).

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6 The following are Chamayou’s examples: perception is filtered through the interface; ‘the little figures’ on screen are ‘blurred into facelessness’ (p. 117); the operators are never spattered by the adversary’s blood; operators see without being seen, which makes it easier to ‘administer violence’ (p. 118); physical and spatial separation of the act and its consequences.

6 ‘Near sight’ refers to situations when flight crews have close contact and operate together with ground forces, get ‘familiar’ with their areas of operation and get involved on a personal level hence, ‘everything’ becomes a threat to the comrades on the ground; ‘far sight’ on the other hand rather refers to situations when flight crews don’t rely on ground forces but solely on airborne surveillance and signals intelligence to identify, locate and target members of the insurgency and the inability to read the intimate textures of the landscape turns out to have catastrophic consequences for the innocent; lastly, ‘oversight’ or ‘top sight’ – or ‘near sight’ – refers to the protocols of the targeting process, which are often secret but allow for civilian casualties as long as it is ‘proportionate’ (p. 62-66).

7 ‘Network thinking’ refers to the idea that warfighting should ‘concentrate on understanding the network structure’ of the enemy territory and disrupt ‘its key interconnective junctions, or nodes’. Put differently, it represents a refocus from warfare as taking control of territory to warfare as targeting ‘key nodes in political, military, social and logistical networks’ (p. 103).
However, while drawing on Baudrillard, Shapiro (2011) takes issue with his conception of the (non)presence of war, pointing to ‘artistic approaches to war’ and how they can ‘re-inflect war’s presence in critical ways’ (p. 115). He elaborates on how art can ‘inter-articulate war and domestic space’ and how it can turn the spectator into a reflecting and critical subject (p. 116-117). Similarly, Adelman and Kozol (2017) discuss how banal images and images of banality – images in which ‘nothing happens’ – can dislocate the representation of violence and the notion of war, and potentially inflict critical reflection. Additionally, Guittet and Zevnik (2015) call attention to how images of ‘banal everyday experiences of soldiers’ – when appearing out-of-joint, so to speak – could ‘displace common narratives about war’ (p. 196). Dyvik (2016), on her part, shows how military memoirs can challenge the official ‘truth making’ about, in her case, Norway’s military engagement in Afghanistan by bringing into view the ‘warrior culture’ of the combat forces, and make visible both the horrors and excitement of war.

While primarily drawing on the experiences of the Iraq War and the war in Afghanistan, also Butler (2009) elaborates on the possibilities for critical intervention and for ‘new’ apprehensions to emerge. Yet, first and foremost, Butler addresses the dominant forms of intelligibility established through media’s portrayal and ‘frames’ of war. The frames, through which war is apprehended, are selective, she notes; they render reality and seek to determine what is perceptible and knowable, and are as such operations of power. Though the frames cannot determine what dis/appears, ‘their aim is nevertheless to delimit the sphere of appearance itself’ (p. 1). The visuality of war is thus essential to the conduct of war as such and ultimately the (im)possibility of war itself. As Gregory (2015) further stresses in his discussion on war photography: the frames of war regulate affect, and how we react to images of war is contingent on the wider narratives constructed around them.\(^\text{18}\) Images of war can – for instance – overwhelm us with emotion, affect us too much, or desensitise us.\(^\text{19}\) Essentially, images may be depoliticising, as when they ‘camouflage the wider problems’ that have enabled violence in the first place or ‘erase the perpetrators from view’ (p. 189). Or as McSorley (2012: 55) stresses in his piece on helmetcam recordings from the Afghanistan War: when the particular geopolitical context disappears from the narrative and representation of war, and the war engagement is simply made to appear as one of many heroic struggles, the deployment of state violence is

\(^{18}\) See Butler (2009: 66-70) and Gregory (2015: 196) for more elaboration on how the images or photographs of war themselves carry interpretation.

\(^{19}\) See, further, the literature on sensing and mediating war and/or suffering, e.g. Campbell (2007), Cronqvist & Sturfelt (2018), Chouliaraki & Orgad (2011), and Orgad (2011), on ‘strangeness and distance’, ‘distant sufferers’ and ’proper distance’.
depoliticised and brought to light as defensive and inevitable. Chouliaraki (2007) on her part notes how a BBC footage of the bombardment of Baghdad ‘effaces the presence of Iraqi people as human beings and sidelines the question of the coalition troops’ identity’, and thus suppressed ‘the emotional, ethical and political issues that lie behind’ the strikes (p. 133).

The nature and function of representations of violence have been widely debated within recent critical and feminist studies on war and violence. The most striking example is the literature on the politics of grief, which sheds light on the frames that make violence (against certain populations) possible (e.g. Butler, 2009; Gregory, 2012; Parr, 2015; Wendt & Åse, 2016; Zehfuss, 2009). Although not always articulated explicitly, the issue of remembrance and grievability essentially relate to the ‘seenness’ and ‘presence’ of war at home; as Butler (2009) puts it, the frames of war ‘seek to contain, convey, and determine what is seen’ (p. 10). Seen by ‘us’ – the Western publics, one can presume. Clearly, the discussion on the politics of grief particularly focus on exclusionary processes embedded in ‘our’ frames of intelligibility and the structures of differentiation that representations of violence (re)produce – how ‘we’ perceive ‘them’, but also how conceptions of Self are articulated. Yet, these discussions also relate to the question of how violence as such, as a practice, ‘disappears’ from or is rendered natural through representations of violence.

Butler (2009) theorises how certain lives come to be regarded as human, grievable, precarious and thus worthy of protection, whereas others are not. Grievability, she notes, precedes the ‘apprehension of precarious life’ (p. 15), and she seeks to demonstrate how representations of violence inhibit ‘us’ from recognising those being killed in war as lives lost, lives that qualify as grievable lives. Yet, in response to Butler, Zehfuss (2009) notes that ‘grievability’ as such not necessarily opens up for an alteration of the frames of war, nor disrupts the possibility of violence. The fallen soldiers from the West are grieved and remembered, she claims, yet it is the frame of war that frames their deaths; though their deaths are depicted as tragedies, the lives lost nevertheless seem to signify an ‘acceptable’ loss, as the death of soldiers inevitably are part of the expected. The obituaries of killed UK military personnel, that Zehfuss (2009) analyses, thus instead serve to make violence possible, not least since they erase violence from the portrayal of the military profession and, in her case, the Iraq intervention; ultimately, they make it appear as if Western soldiers are killed yet not engaged in the killing. Similarly, in her account of how the use of force

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20 See e.g. Gregory (2012: 334-335) and Zehfuss (2009: 423-424) for a discussion on how the ‘Western’ perspective permeates Butler’s argument.
is made possible in Western democracies by everyday ‘memory work’, Basham (2016) considers how the violence and ‘bloodiness’ of warfare, and its victims, tend to be erased and forgotten in UK practices of remembrance. The celebration of soldiers, both living and dead, ultimately makes it hard to question, she claims, the violence they have engaged in or still do engage in. Gregory (2012) on his part, while drawing on the work of Butler, seeks to account for how Afghan civilians, in contrast to (Western) soldiers, ultimately are rendered ‘lose-able’ – ‘beyond redemption’ – although the protection of the Afghan population in fact has become the very justification for a Western military presence in Afghanistan. His account of the normative framework that conditions the ‘sphere of appearance’ – how Afghans are portrayed and seen – essentially points to how representations of violence (and the loss of life) delimit our understanding of war, with real and possibly devastating consequences.

The concept of in/visibility, in relation to the question of violence, seems to have sparked new attention in recent years; Butler (2009), Simons & Lucaites (2017), Edenborg (2016), Martschukat & Niedermeier (2014), and Welland (2017) could be mentioned as prominent examples. While exclusively speaking of the American experience, Lucaites and Simons (2017) for instance seek to complicate the notion of war’s in/visibility; by referring to what they call the paradox of in/visibility, they point to ‘that which is already visible but remains unseen’ (in the US public sphere) (p. 10). Whilst the US society has been ‘fully assimilated to a war culture’ and war no longer is the exception but the rule, even the norm, war nonetheless largely remains ‘unnoticed’ (p. 3). Thus, the in/visibility of war is complex, they note; war is seen yet simultaneously unseen, it is visible yet at the same time invisible. In the case of the US, then, a critique of war needs to make citizens ‘acknowledge what they already know’, and ‘to look differently at what they already see’ (p. 11).

A study by Welland (2017) explicitly sheds light on the issue of violence and the political implications of invisibility. Drawing on Baudrillard among others, her argument is similar to the abovementioned: the hypervisibility of the British ‘liberal warrior soldiering body’ makes other (injured) bodies of war invisible. In turn, the violence performed by these hypervisible bodies is concealed. Basing her analysis on observations drawn from a particular Imperial War Museum exhibition in London, she problematises the absences of bodies other than those of British soldiers. It is not violence as such, as a practice, that is concealed – the wartime violence is displayed, she notes – yet, given its hypervisibility, it is through the ‘liberal warrior’ figure that

*See e.g. Edenborg’s (2016: 5) discussion on how hypervisibility and erasure can coexist; as in his example, migrants as a threat may be visible in public discourse, while migrants as human beings of equal worth may be rendered invisible.
the Afghanistan War comes to be understood. It is through this figure that the war ‘comes home’; hence, the ‘softer and gentler approach to warfighting’ that this figure represents becomes central to the conditions of possibility for a continuation of violence and for the acceptance of warfare among the British public (p. 13).

In her analysis of ‘the structure of war’, Scarry (1987: 63-81) demonstrated already in the 1980s how the language and words used to describe the events and acts of war takes us further from understanding the ‘content’ of war. As she asserts, the content is reciprocal violence, as in injuring and being injured. Although the act of injuring is the content of war rather than a consequence, its centrality is often concealed and ‘slips from view’ by a language that either omits or redescribes the act of injuring, the weapons being used, or the bodily damage itself. Injury is made invisible by these – in her words – two ‘paths’. Thereto, she reveals how injury at times remains visible yet is removed to a ‘marginal position’ by a number of metaphors that render injury either a by-product, a means to an end, a cost, or an extension of something that is itself benign. Reasonably, what these metaphors fundamentally do is to naturalise violence.

Essentially, Scarry (1987) theorises how injury, and thus the human body, and its centrality in war disappear from the descriptions and understanding of war. In a similar fashion, Cohn (1987) has charted the language of defence professionals in the 1980s and demonstrated how the terms used to describe weapons of mass destruction serve to make the violent consequences of such weapons seem distant, detached and abstract. In his theoretical study of today’s drone warfare, Chamayou (2015) similarly points to how the vocabulary used to define drone operations serves to conceal the violence and killings performed, and how it ‘engenders a massive euphemization and derealization’ (p. 147, see also p. 135). Furthermore, in his study on victory parades after the First and Second World War, Jobs (2014) also problematises the language as well as performances related to the parades, revealing how violence – as in the act of killing and wounding – was made invisible through ‘acts of concealment and oblivion’ (p. 231). It was a ‘glossed-over version of warfare’ that was brought home, he notes, which ‘created blind spots in the perspective on war’ (p. 236).

What these accounts, specifically Butler (2009), Scarry (1987) and Welland (2017), essentially do is to explicitly point to the relationship between in/visibility and the imagination of war – what representation of violence means for collective imaginaries,

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21 See also Dyvik (2016) who notes that ‘bodies paradoxically remain both the most visible and the most invisible component’ of the politics of war, public discourses of war, as well as academic studies of war (p. 143).
22 She thus exposes the ‘astounding chasm between image and reality that characterizes technostrategic language’ (p. 692).
23 However, the ‘clear, neat picture of war’, Jobs (2014) argues, ‘alienated the spectators in particular, who increasingly lost interest in the streamlined messages’ (p. 236).
our shared understanding of war, violence, and identity, and how the representation of violence serves to make the use of force tolerable and acceptable. What they point to, as the literature on the representation of war in general, is the political dimension of representation; that representation has political consequences, that representation guides practice, and that representation is embedded in and reinforces discourses and institutions that essentially have made and make the use of force possible in the first place. This study generally draws on some of the main points advanced in previous literature. These are, in short, that representations are not mere reflections of reality but indeed constitute reality, that representation is associated with knowledge and power, that some aspects of war typically are brought to light while others slip from view, that representations of war and violence shape the relationship between here and there and how war is rendered ‘present’ at home, and finally, that how we ‘see’ war determines how we act and conduct war.

Most literature on the ‘seenness’ of war and the in/visibility of violence focuses on the US (or UK) context; from Baudrillard to Butler, from Campbell to Chamayou, it is primarily the US experience of war that is theorised. Yet, the (cultural) militarism and excess of war and excess of information that – for example – Lucaites and Simons (2017) detect in the US are, one can argue, particular to the US context. In the US, war is shown and known, although shown and known in very particular ways; to borrow Jobs’ (2014) description, war may be represented as ‘shiny happy warfare’ whilst the bloodiness, complexities and problematics of reality might be rendered invisible. Or as Toros and Mavelli (2014) argue, the talk of collective evil and individual pathology, detected in US discourse, conceal ‘the dehumanizing aspect of war’ and ‘the complex and dispersed nature of responsibility’ (p. 510-511). All the same, the ‘normalisation’ of violent practices, and how it intertwines with in/visibility, reasonably plays out differently in different discursive and historical settings. In a society where peace, for instance, very much (still) is the norm, the ‘normalisation’ of violence most certainly unfolds in other ways. The in/visibilities of violence presumably look somewhat different depending on where one looks; that war remains unseen yet is already visible is not necessarily a statement of universal application.

This study seeks to add to the literature and theory on the representation of violence primarily by means of complementation and concretisation. First, it advances a conceptualisation of dis/appearances of violence in narrative structuration and develops a conceptual framework for the study of such dis/appearances in public

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22 Our shared understanding of war, violence, and identity, and how the representation of violence serves to make the use of force tolerable and acceptable. What they point to, as the literature on the representation of war in general, is the political dimension of representation; that representation has political consequences, that representation guides practice, and that representation is embedded in and reinforces discourses and institutions that essentially have made and make the use of force possible in the first place. This study generally draws on some of the main points advanced in previous literature. These are, in short, that representations are not mere reflections of reality but indeed constitute reality, that representation is associated with knowledge and power, that some aspects of war typically are brought to light while others slip from view, that representations of war and violence shape the relationship between here and there and how war is rendered ‘present’ at home, and finally, that how we ‘see’ war determines how we act and conduct war.

Most literature on the ‘seenness’ of war and the in/visibility of violence focuses on the US (or UK) context; from Baudrillard to Butler, from Campbell to Chamayou, it is primarily the US experience of war that is theorised. Yet, the (cultural) militarism and excess of war and excess of information that – for example – Lucaites and Simons (2017) detect in the US are, one can argue, particular to the US context. In the US, war is shown and known, although shown and known in very particular ways; to borrow Jobs’ (2014) description, war may be represented as ‘shiny happy warfare’ whilst the bloodiness, complexities and problematics of reality might be rendered invisible. Or as Toros and Mavelli (2014) argue, the talk of collective evil and individual pathology, detected in US discourse, conceal ‘the dehumanizing aspect of war’ and ‘the complex and dispersed nature of responsibility’ (p. 510-511). All the same, the ‘normalisation’ of violent practices, and how it intertwines with in/visibility, reasonably plays out differently in different discursive and historical settings. In a society where peace, for instance, very much (still) is the norm, the ‘normalisation’ of violence most certainly unfolds in other ways. The in/visibilities of violence presumably look somewhat different depending on where one looks; that war remains unseen yet is already visible is not necessarily a statement of universal application.

This study seeks to add to the literature and theory on the representation of violence primarily by means of complementation and concretisation. First, it advances a conceptualisation of dis/appearances of violence in narrative structuration and develops a conceptual framework for the study of such dis/appearances in public

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22 Whether it be orientalist or neo-colonial discourse, capitalist regimes, gendered structures, or something else. See e.g. Jabri (2007), Butler (2009), Zizek (2008).
narratives that emerge over time. Second, it seeks to complement by offering an empirical study on the dis/appearances of violence in public discourse in a case (radically) different from the US and UK context and experience. More specifically, the study wishes to expand and nuance our understanding of the political work of ‘dis/appearances’ and specifically in/visibility, by looking at the case of Sweden, where engagement in violence by no means is ‘normal’. Through the empirical analysis of the Swedish case, the study demonstrates how the process of making in/visible interweaves with processes of dis/identification and de/naturalisation, and how the three often, but not always, reinforce each other. Previous literature certainly elaborates on the role of in/visibility in processes of de/politicisation and/or normalisation, yet further specification and empirical elaboration are needed. The (theoretical) accounts outlined above primarily offer abstract constructs and sweeping empirical observations; although deeply insightful, they generally lack systematic empirical analysis, which provides a more detailed and concrete understanding of the various ways in which violence ‘dis/appears’ in public discourse and what this means in terms of making the use of force an accepted and routinised practice.
PEACEKEEPING TO PEACE-ENFORCEMENT: THE SWEDISH EXPERIENCE

Research on the representation and (shifting) character of war often tends to disassociate the period before and after the end of the Cold War as if the fall of the Berlin wall signified a fundamental break with old political and military logic.\(^{26}\) Yet, in relation to the issue of third party military interventions generally, and the dispatching of troops by Sweden more specifically, the study of contemporary warfare would benefit from an exploration of discontinuities as well as continuities in the political justification, normalisation and making possible of the use of force. Officially, Sweden has not been in war for more than two hundred years, yet it has been engaged in third party military interventions abroad since the 1990s.\(^{27}\) As a substantial contributor to the UN’s peacekeeping missions during the Cold War, Swedish soldiers were continually dispatched to war zones or post-war settings to monitor and defend peace (e.g. Agius, 2006: 109; Jakobsen, 2006: i). After the Cold War, in the mid-1990s, the character of third party military interventions fundamentally began to shift (e.g. Johansson, 2007); as the principle of non-interference became less influential in international political discourse (e.g. Finnemore, 2003: 6; Håkansson, 2011), traditional peacekeeping activities tended to transform into operations of peace-enforcement, resembling what we usually conceive as war (Agrell, 2013: 47-58). However, although Sweden has increased its participation in peace-enforcing activities considerably ever since the 1990s (see e.g. Ångström, 2010: 174), the domestic political debate still seems to portray Sweden as a non-aligned, peace-loving nation, distanced from the violent practices associated with war and armed conflict (e.g. Åhäll, 2016: 154; Eduards, 2014 & 2015; Egnell, 2016: 187).

The Swedish engagement in so-called peace operations has already been widely debated in previous literature. There is previous research on Sweden’s engagement in so-called peace operations in general, as well as Sweden’s participation in particular peace-enforcement operations (e.g. Agrell, 2013; Holmberg & Hallenberg, 2017a; Jakobsen, 2006; Johansson, 2007; Tullberg, 2012; Ångström, 2010), on strategic narratives during ISAF (e.g. Angstrom & Noreen, 2017; Hellman & Wagnsson, 2015; Noreen & Ångstrom 2015), the decision-making processes prior to and during specific peace operations (e.g. Doeser, 2014; Egnell, 2016; Eklöfd Nyman, 1999; Österdahl, 2011), and small states’ involvement in peace operations and war (e.g. Noreen et al., 2017). A large body of literature has also been dedicated to the formulation and

\(^{26}\) As for instance Barkawi & Brighton (2014) argue: ‘Broadly speaking, liberal modernity constructs and brackets war through periodization and separation’ (p. 19). See also Tullberg (2012: 15).

\(^{27}\) The first time Sweden dispatched troops to a UN mission was 1956 during the Suez-crisis. The operation was named United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) and has been regarded the first peacekeeping operation carried out by the UN.
renegotiation of Swedish foreign policy and strategic culture (e.g. Åselius, 2005; Brommesson, 2007; Brommesson & Ekengren, 2012; Doeser 2016; Westberg, 2015; and many more), to the reorganisation of the Swedish armed forces (e.g. Agrell, 2010; Haldén, 2001; Kronsell, 2012), and to the Swedish neutrality doctrine (e.g. Agius, 2006 & 2011; Lödén, 2012; Stråth, 2000 & 2001; Westberg, 2010).

Although a lot has been covered, previous research on the Swedish case has not critically engaged with the discursive and narrative structuration of war and violence in Swedish political debate or critically examined the narration of violent practices. As noted earlier (see page 10), the literature on strategic narratives has, in line with strategic studies, mainly focused on the instrumental use of narratives for the mobilisation of support; the Swedish so-called ‘catch-all’ narrative during ISAF has, for instance, been problematised given its lack of clarity regarding the motives, for creating uncertainty among the armed forces, and for ‘widening [the] gulf between policy-makers and the general public’ (Noreen & Anstrom, 2015: 295; see also Angstrom & Noreen, 2017). Yet, there are evidently studies that reflect a more critical ambition, or which more thoroughly examine the Swedish experience(s) of peacekeeping and peace-enforcement. Åse and Wendt (2018) have problematised the ‘new hero narratives’ from a gender perspective and how practices of mourning can strengthen nationalism; Hellman (2016) and Hellman and Wagnsson (2015) have scrutinised military blogs and demonstrated how they reinforce rather than challenge government narratives; Tullberg (2012) has critically engaged with the representation of the Congo experience in the 1960s. In addition, Agrell’s (2013) work on the Swedish engagement in Afghanistan raises many questions concerning Sweden’s lack of debate, self-reflection and transparency.

Research on the Swedish debates on the use of force generally lack a broader perspective that examines the narrative structuration of war and violence over time, that points to dis/continuities, and that also includes operations which have received little attention in public debate and media. This book should be regarded as an addition to the body of critically oriented research on Sweden’s peacekeeping and peace-enforcing practices, which more explicitly draws attention to the frames of intelligibility that the representation of war and violence create, and the political work of the dis/appearance of violence in narrative structuration. Many of the empirical observations presented in parts II and III resemble observations presented in many previous studies, yet given the over-time analysis, the rich empirical material and the specific focus, this study offers new insights on the representation of violence in Swedish public debate, how the transition(s) from peacekeeping and peace-enforcement has/have been debated and represented, and the conditions of
possibility for reflection and (re)consideration in the (Swedish) public sphere. The book examines the debates on military engagements abroad in a somewhat different light than any previous examinations; the theoretical framework and ontological backdrop presented in part I provide the means for a critically engaged reading of the public representation of war and violence in Sweden.
PART I: READING NARRATIVES ON PEACE-ENFORCEMENT

A conflict is visible in the world when, like a table, we might all sit around it and enter into discussion with one another about what it might mean to us. 

(Tester, 2012: 68)

Telling stories is not merely a social and cultural routine but moreover a political practice. We live with, in and through narratives, in our personal lives as well as in the political sphere. As a story line recounting the past and defining the present, narratives also give the future a meaningful direction; narratives are commonly understood as cognitive and social attempts to order, bring meaning and a sense of coherence to perceived chaos (Daute & Lightfoot, 2004; Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997; Tamboukou: 2015a). The construction of narratives is, in short, a way to systematise experience (Baker, 2006: 9); as ‘schemes of intelligibility’, they sketch out how the world should be understood and help us make sense of the events taking place around us (Edenborg, 2016: 42). Conceptions of identity, as in Who I am or Who we are, are also constituted through narration; storytelling could essentially be considered ‘a process where questions of the self are raised’, which opens up ‘scenes for ethical responsibilities and political actions to be enacted’ (Tamboukou, 2015b: 127). In other words, storytelling should be understood as a continuous process of defining oneself and one’s role in social and political activities; ultimately, stories give structure to our imagination of what we could and should be, and how we could and should act.

Reading political debates and media representations through a narrative framework provides an opportunity to explore the discursive formations that ultimately shape the understanding of particular events and make certain actions and policies possible. In terms of research focus, one should note that a poststructuralist approach to narrative analysis primarily calls attention to the structuration of narratives and the political work they perform, rather than merely the structures of narratives per se (Mottier, 2008: 189; Tamboukou, 2015a: 41). Stories do things; and as Tamboukou (2015a) asserts: ‘they produce realities’ (p. 45). Like discourses, narratives are productive in the sense that they continuously construct, reproduce and transform our knowledge of the social world, and our conceptions of reality and of Self.* In terms of violent practices, they open up or close down the possibilities for

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1 See also Jabri’s (1996) discussion on the discursive structuration of violence and armed conflict.
2 The concept of narrative certainly overlaps with the concepts of discourse or myth, not least in its ‘normalizing effect of publically disseminated representations’ (Baker, 2006: 3). Yet, narratives are not synonymous with discourse,
thinking and doing something new or different. A study of narrative structuration could hence ‘facilitate an understanding of how both the political mind and the political society come to be interwoven and mutually constitutive’ (Andrews et al., 2015: 141). While recognising the constitutive power of stories, and while understanding narratives as technologies of power as well as technologies of the self (Tamboukou, 2008: 107) – meaning that structuration of narratives is linked both to conduct and the process of self-formation – this study generally seeks to disclose the production of realities and subject. A central assumption of this study is simply that parliamentary debates and media representations establish narrative frameworks for grasping ‘our’ engagement in violence. Hence, the study is concerned with what narratives do and the political work they perform in terms of encouraging or discouraging ‘us’ – at home – to reflect on and react to the way things are.

It is partly through narratives [and their representations of violence] that war ‘comes home’: public narratives shape how we ‘see’ and ‘know’ war, and how we understand the connection between ‘us’ here and the events unfolding over there. If seeking to understand how the use of force is made possible, one should be attentive to the frames of intelligibility that narratives on peace-enforcement (re)produce. How do the narratives ‘reduce’ reality? What do they make us see and think, and what do they conceal? As Andrews et al (2015) emphasise: the most powerful narratives are the ones that become perceived as ‘natural, essential and given’ (p. 143). Just like discourse, narratives work to reduce the possibilities of interpretation over time, by normalising certain accounts of events, so they appear self-evident, incontestable and non-controversial (Baker, 2006: 11). Hence – in and of themselves – narratives could be thought to have a depoliticising effect, as they involve simplification, the forming of closure and permanence, and often serve to create a sense of continuity. It is also through stories that violence becomes seen as acceptable; it is through stories that the perceived coherence between policy and identity is maintained.

To disclose the contingency of ‘reality’, Tamboukou (2008: 11) urges the narrative researcher to carefully look for what is left unsaid, to reveal how certain narrative themes disappear, and to identify what she calls the ‘noisy silences’. Social science research has, Sue (2013: 16) further argues, generally tended to ignore the issue of absence, that is: what lies beyond and underneath explicit speech. As all representations of reality, narratives are selective; certain things, events, and aspects,

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as it specifically refers to stories and storytelling. Hence, ‘the concept of narrative is much more concrete and accessible’ (Baker, 2006: 3). As Mottier (2008) clarifies: ‘narratives are possible forms of discourse, while discourses include, but are not reduced to, narratives’ (p. 196). Like discourse theory and analysis, narrative analysis builds on a conceptualisation of language as a social practice, suggested to produce ideological effects and essentially form our actions (e.g. Baker, 2006; Bell, 2003; Dyvik, 2016: 136).

1 See page 34 on de/politicisation.
certain people, certain conditions are left *out* of the story, most often for a reason (Edenborg, 2016: 42). The ‘noisy silences’ of narratives are thus meaningful to identify, expose, and theorise. The research questions of this study concern how violence – or let’s say, the use of force – appears, or *disappears*, in narratives on peace-enforcement; given the notion that peace-enforcement operations by all means include violent practices, one can elaborate on what the narrative formations articulated to account for peace-enforcement leave out or conceal, and what articulations of Self include or exclude in relation to the actual use of force.

The point of the empirical analysis in parts II and III is to critically examine the representations of violence *found* in the narratives emerging to account for the engagement in peace-enforcement and in narrative responses to moments of disruption. Hence, the objective is not to map out the narratives as such, as they are reflected in the political debates and in public service media. Instead, the chapters will seek to critically engage with the narratives on peace-enforcement and the narrative responses, to disclose how violence ‘dis/appears’ and further elaborate on the political work of such dis/appearances. More specifically, the case studies – on the political debates of five interventions, and media representations during three critical periods will i) examine the dis/appearances of violence through the concepts of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification, and ii) discuss how the link between identity and policy is de/stabilised and the issue of using force de/politicised. The overall objective is – as noted earlier – to expose how the representation of violence open up for or delimit the possibility for public reflection and (re)consideration.

Part I will be structured as follows. Initially, the first section sets out to define and explain the study’s ontological understanding of identity and identification. The two forthcoming sections will offer more detail on first, the mutually constitutive relationship between identity and foreign policy and second, how de/politicisation should be understood within the framework of this study. Thereafter, the forth section will introduce and be dedicated to the concept of dislocation, which is closely related to the idea of de/politicisation. As will become clear, the concept of dislocation is also useful for grasping the continuous process of reconciling identity and policy. Furthermore, the concept will prove central for the motivation of selected cases in part III. The theoretical discussions in sections one to four – on identity and identification, the reconciling of identity and policy, de/politicisation, and dislocation – all originate from or draw on poststructuralist writing. The following section – the fifth – will introduce the concept of in/visibility and offer a discussion on the act or process of making in/visible. This discussion mainly draws on previous literature on
the representation of war and violence, a literature which is essential for developing a conceptual framework on the dis/appearances of violence, but also for the understanding of how the ‘presence’ of violence in public narratives – how it appears and disappears – conditions the possibility for (critical) reflection and (re)consideration. Towards the end of part I, the sixth section will outline a conceptual framework; more specifically, it will present the concepts of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification and clarify how the three – in combination – help us to identify and theorise on the dis/appearances of violence in public debate. Finally, the last section of part I will outline a set of analytical questions and specify how the three processes that the concepts seek to capture will be uncovered in the empirical material. The final section also offers a few remarks on the study’s structure, the case selection, and the empirical material.

IDENTITY IN THE MAKING

In the reading of narratives on peace-enforcement, the study will rely on a particular notion of identity, which derives from basic ontological assumptions of poststructuralism. To begin with, one can say that poststructuralism subscribes to the idea of structure, defined as discourse, as radically contingent. Social structures are understood as fundamentally incomplete, undecidable and relational, always relating to a constitutive outside. Poststructuralism thus attempts to move beyond the traditional conception of the structure/agency opposition and problematise the ‘residual dualism’ in structuration theory and critical realism (Glynos & Howarth, 2008: 161/164; Howarth, 2010: 314). The structuralist idea of human action as governed by structure cannot be valid as the structure itself is radically contingent, which means that a radical outside can always dislocate it. The poststructuralist position thus represents a challenge to the idea of a fully constituted social structure, but it also signifies a critique of the idea of an autonomous, fully constituted subject. Social agents are absorbed into a system of meaningful practices, yet although partial and temporal fixity can be reached, these systems are essentially incomplete. The ontological claim is that there can be no privileging of either agency or structure, as they are inseparable, mutually intertwined. While agents indeed are constrained by discursive structures (it is within discursive structures that human beings become subjects), such discursive structures are contingent and flexible although temporally and partially fixed (Howarth, 2000: 131). Hence, from this follows that identities are

4 See page 37 on dislocation.
5 On the question of identity and agency, poststructuralism distinguishes the idea of subject positions from the idea of
non-essential and radically contingent, and cannot be reduced to ‘real interests’ or pre-given traits (Glynos & Howarth et al, 2009: 9; Howarth, 2010: 314).

The ontological rejection of any form of essentialism, which is fundamental for poststructuralism, suggests that identity represent a continuous process of becoming rather than a static state of being – articulations of identity are never fixed, but constantly open for contestation and renegotiation. Identity is constituted through acts of identification, which means that it is constantly in the making (Johansson, 2011: 200; Laclau & Mouffe, 2014; Howarth, 2010: 314). As social structures not only are fundamentally incomplete and contingent, but essentially relational, identity is moreover constituted by a logic of difference (Nabers, 2015: 82; Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). This means that conceptions of Self are continuously defined in reference to an outside; while delineating the boundaries of one’s own identity, one is in turn defining the external and excluded. As Glynos and Howarth (2007) put it: ‘every subject is a discursive construct or entity, whose identity depends on its relationship to other subjects and objects’ [p. 127]. While delineating the boundaries between the included and the excluded, the construction of identity is fundamentally an act of power, as it reduces possibilities and precludes other forms of identifications (Howarth, 2010: 314).

These ontological premises – that identity is always in the making and essentially relational – lead to the assumption that identities are always articulated through positive processes of linking and negative processes of differentiation (Hansen, 2006). To identify processes of linking and differentiation could be considered a methodology of reading, which is consistent with poststructuralist ontology, as it focuses on the contingency and ongoing structuration of identity (Hansen, 2006: 41). As a methodology, it allows for a study of how the narrative Self comes into being through articulations of what one is and does, and what one isn’t and doesn’t do. It also allows for an examination of ‘noisy silences’ and disappearances, as it reveals what becomes excluded from, as opposed to included in, the conception of Self. Essentially, what appears and/or disappears in narratives on peace-enforcement plays a significant role in the process of becoming – becoming as in the ongoing articulation of Self as a military actor.

Security discourses are often analysed by means of an us-versus-them logic, political subjectivity (Howarth, 2000: 108; Howarth, 2010: 314; Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000: 13). While the former refers to the ‘places of enunciation that subjects can occupy in speaking and acting’, political subjectivity is understood as instances when subjects ‘act or decide in novel ways’ as a result of identification with new objects or discourses (Howarth, 2010: 314). Hence, whereas identity is associated with the subject positions one occupies within a given system of meaning, it is the processes of identification that introduce the dimension of agency. Essentially, new forms of identification, linked to new objects and discourses, ‘disclose[s] the subject as an agent’ (Howarth, 2010: 314). As will be elaborated later in this chapter, the concepts of dislocation and the political are here essential in order to fully understand the meaning and possibility of agency and reflexivity (see page 34 and 37, respectively).
suggesting that security language articulate a Self in relation to Other. Yet, discourses on security do not necessarily draw on a perceived dichotomy between the Self and a radical stranger-enemy (Norman, 2012). While defining one’s own identity, degrees of perceived Otherness are typically outlined, essentially formed through processes of linking and differentiation in which the identity of Self and a series of Others are situated within a conceptual scheme of positive and negative ascriptions (Hansen, 2006). Perceived Otherness does moreover not necessarily derive from the external and unknown, but could signify features that previously have been associated with one’s own self-conception (Kinnvall, 2004; Nabers, 2015: 113). As Nabers (2015: 95) points out, in the continuous process of defining the Self, diverse kinds of ‘Others’ become meaningful as points of reference; Self is not only defined in relation to ‘Others’ who appear threatening, but also in relation to non-threatening yet significant ‘Others’. To regard ‘radical’ identity construction as the only form of identity construction would, as Hansen (2006) argues, ‘result in an unnecessary theoretical and empirical limitation’ and ‘produce a static view of foreign policy discourse as incapable of change’ (p. 41).

Fundamentally, the narratives on peace-enforcement explored in the case studies of this book are suggested to reflect a process of becoming; by examining the representation of violence, they reveal how ‘Sweden’ is linked to or differentiated from violent practices and the use of force, and how Sweden’s military engagement is made known by contrasting Sweden’s undertakings to those of other actors in the international community. In the context of multinational ‘peace operations’, Otherness could indeed be ascribed to other actors involved in the same military operation. Rather than identifying articulations of Self in relation to a Radical Other in the event of armed conflict, such as ‘us’ versus the Taliban or ‘us’ versus Gaddafi, the case studies focus on and reveal how the Swedish Self is articulated through narrative formations that link Sweden to certain practices and attributes, though at the same time differentiate Sweden from other types of practices and attributes.6 Generally, the case studies reveal how Sweden re/positions itself, so to speak, within the international community in relation to violence, and how the political debates and public service media articulate Sweden’s role in violent engagement to their ‘audience’, the public ‘at home’.

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6 As will be clear, in discourses on ‘peacework’ there are typically no ‘enemies’; consequently, in this context, non-threatening yet significant Others seem to become more important as points of reference.
RECONCILING IDENTITY AND POLICY

The narratives on peace-enforcement scrutinised in this study are suggested not only to constitute identity; they also establish certain notions of ‘reality’ and serve to make certain policies and actions seem reasonable and acceptable. As Coker (2010) puts it, ‘war changes as we change’ (p. 133). While our moral convictions and conceptions of ourselves transform, so do the narratives we construct in order to make sense of events such as armed conflict (Holmqvist-Jonsäter, 2010: 2). War is ultimately made possible, argues Jabri (1996), through discourses on violence, which build on a dichotomy between Self and Others. Yet, our engagement in violent interaction and how we make sense of war is not only shaped by our conceptions of Self and Others, but identity construction is in itself also a product of experiences of war and violence (Malesević, 2010). Ultimately, identity could be seen as generative of action, as well as formed by it. Our identifications are thus closely linked to the frames of intelligibility through which we understand and justify the actions we take.

In order to elaborate on the constitutive relationship between notions of identity and the policy on the use of force, the book will pick up Hansen’s (2006) theorisation on identity and foreign policy. Besides the focus on de/politicisation (see next section), the book will look at how identity and policy (on the use of force) is reconciled through representations of violence. While developing a poststructuralist account of foreign policy analysis, Hansen (2006) puts forward the idea that representations of identity and policy are ‘mutually constitutive and discursively interlinked’ (p. 28). Foreign policy is, within a poststructuralist perspective, conceptualised as a discursive practice, which implies that policy and identity are ontologically inseparable. As Hansen (2006) argues: ‘it is only through the discursive enactment of foreign policy /…/ that identity comes into being, but this identity is at the same time constructed as the legitimization for the policy proposed’ (p. 21). As she puts it, ‘foreign policies need an account, or a story, of the problems and issues they are to address’ (p. xvi). While forming a fitting story, which ascribes meaning to the specific situation, foreign policies produce and draw on perceived identities of others as well as the conceptions of Self. Although competing views and accounts of reality are initially advocated by politicians, political actors, or the media, ‘consensus’, she states, ‘is often achieved through the mobilization of identities with a powerful conceptual history’ (Hansen, 2006: xvi). Needless to say, any reference to causality here would be strongly misleading; identity matters for foreign policy, not as an independent variable but by representing a product of foreign policy, yet at the same time serving as a justification for the formulation of foreign policy to begin with (Hansen, 2006: 5/26). In other words, identity is constitutive of policy yet
simultaneously constituted by policy.

In her poststructuralist account on foreign policy analysis, Hansen (2006) offers what she calls a theoretical model of combinability, which suggests that foreign policy discourse essentially seeks to uphold a stable link between identity and policy. Foreign policy discourse simply needs to make identity and policy seem coherent in the eyes of its relevant audience, or it will not be considered legitimate (Hansen, 2006: 28/29). As Tamboukou (2015b) further highlights: ‘the meaning of political narratives will always be negotiated by the audience, the community of memory that stories are addressed to’ (p. 123). As part of the overarching objective, the study will examine how narratives emerging in political debates and in public service media serve to de/stabilise the link between identity and policy, both over time and during specific events (which could be considered to disrupt the sense of coherence). Given the radical contingency of social structures, linkages between policy and identity can never be completely stable (Hansen, 2006: 29). As will be elaborated further in the section called ‘In the event of the unexpected’, certain events, experiences, or policy shifts could disrupt the previous sense of coherence, and hence the perceived legitimacy of certain actions and practices. Such disruptions could be conceptualised as potential dislocations, which enable or force subjects to engage and respond. Yet, first, the next section will turn to the concept of de/politicisation.

DE/POLITICISATION

As has been stressed by Wood (2015), the concepts of politicisation and depoliticisation will advance the field of policy analysis as they widen the explanatory focus to include rhetorical, normative and ethical arguments, justifications and interpretations. As he notes, in relation to the processes of policy shifts, ‘it is not merely the ideas themselves that should be analyzed, but the debate that lends them legitimacy and authority’ (p. 8). Besides the focus on how identity and policy is (continuously) reconciled, the analysis and concluding discussions will further be informed by the concept of de/politicisation. This section will elaborate on how the concept and process of de/politicisation should be understood within the framework of this study. The discussion on de/politicisation will later – in the concluding discussion(s) – serve as a stepping-stone for elaborating on the political implications of the dis/appearances of violence in public narratives on peace-enforcement.

Within poststructuralist literature, depoliticisation is a key term, which ‘captures the practices and articulations that keep a normalized or sedimented order in place’ (Hafsteinsdóttir, 2015: 57). The concept of depoliticisation thus relates to the concept
of hegemony, which denotes the ‘never-ending effort to generate fixations of a discourse’ (Nabers, 2015: 166). A poststructuralist notion of de/politicisation builds on a particular understanding of the political as distinguished from politics or the social (Edkins, 1999; Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Torfing, 1999). The political moment signifies a moment of undecidability, when things are open for change, when the discursive structure is contested. Politics, or the social, on the other hand, is conceptualised as the institutionalisation of a given social order, when political debates play out within the already established limits of discourse and the contingency of that structure is concealed. As Edkins (1999: 9) puts it, depoliticisation is ‘the operation through which the political subject is tamed’ and the social and political order is routinis ed. It thus signifies a process in which the political is made technical – when things are done according to how they are normally done, without much reflection or (re)consideration. On the contrary, to repoliticise would be ‘to interrupt discourse, to challenge what have, through discursive practices, been constituted as normal, natural, and accepted ways of carrying on’ (Edkins, 1999: 19). Repoliticisation would, in other words, be to open up for reflection, (re)consideration and potentially new ways of thinking and doing. Rothe (2016) defines depoliticisation as:

all those practices that move an issue from the realm of the political to the social, by suppressing contestation, silencing alternative framings or by concealing the contingency of discourses so that these appear as a matter of fact. Politicization, on the contrary, means those practices that open up political contestation by challenging established interpretations and bringing in new political alternatives (p. 64).

The degree of sedimentation is crucial for understanding processes of depoliticisation; as Torfing (1999) emphasises, ‘social relations are shaped in and through political struggles’, but when they become ‘sedimented into an institutional ensemble of rules, norms, values and regularities, which we take for granted in our everyday life’, social relations cease to be political (p. 70, emphasis added). Sedimentation refers to the normalising and naturalising of social relations, when issues are removed from the political processes of constitution and contestation. ‘The more the political “origin” of social relations is forgotten’, Torfing (1999) notes, ‘the more sedimented and institutionalized they will become’ (p. 70, emphasis added). Yet, as Norval (2007) argues, poststructuralist thinkers and researchers tend to draw too sharp a distinction between the political moment on the one hand, and the routines of ordinary politics on the other. This dichotomisation, while denigrating the latter, she suggests, has
resulted in ‘an over-emphasis on the political as dislocation and disruption’ (p. 12). Hence, it is necessary to be careful of the detailed nuances in tradition as well as novelty; all forms of novelty do not signify radical breaks and ‘all tradition is not a mere repetition of the same’ (p. 12).

Within the framework of this study, it is indeed the interplay between tradition and novelty that is significant. Naturally, debates on the use of force are not constituted merely by repetition or radical breaks with old routines; they rather represent re/negotiations where the political dimension of intervention and the use of force is foregrounded to different degrees. Glynos and Howarth (2007) supposedly attempt to escape the sharp dichotomisation between the political and the social, and describe the relationship as a continuum. The political dimension is foregrounded in instances of public contestation over the norms underpinning an existing social practice. Conversely, in instances when ‘public contestation does not arise, or is actively prevented from arising’ the social dimension is foregrounded (Glynos & Howarth, 2007: 111, emphasis added). ‘Prevented’ is here a central term that points to what this study essentially seeks to grasp – that is, when and how public reflection and (re)consideration is discouraged or encouraged. To expand on this idea of de/politicisation as a continuous move between, so to speak, preventing or opening up for public contestation, one can add Wood’s (2015) definition of politicisation and depoliticisation outlined in his discussion on policy analysis: politicisation and depoliticisation are ‘processes of discursive contestation’ during which political actors strengthen or oppose the scope for political choice or agency (p. 3). Jenkins (2011) also suggests a similar conceptualisation of the political when pointing to the generative and indeterminate character of politics, ultimately ‘concerned with agency’ (p. 159). Politics is thus essentially about contingency, conflict and the capacity for autonomy. As she claims, there can be no politics without the imagination of something different, and a strategy of depoliticisation therefore involves the forming of ‘necessities, permanence, immobility, closure and fatalism and concealing/negating or removing contingency’ (p. 160).

In this study, the concept of de/politicisation essentially seeks to capture how a political debate on the use of force is either closed down or actively stimulated. As has been noted previously, representations of violence work, as it were, either to open up or close down the space for reflection, contestation, and choice – at home, among ‘us’, who observe the practice of violence from a distance. Three concepts – de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification – later outlined in the conceptual framework in section six – help to advance a discussion on how dis/appearances of violence in narratives on peace-enforcement shape the possibility
for reflection and (re)consideration in the public sphere. The assumption guiding the reading of narratives on peace-enforcement is that the political debates and public discourse continuously move between the political and the social. At times, the issue of force is removed from the political processes of contestation and constitution; at times, it has the potential of becoming a political issue, which could be debated and challenged. Some moments have the potential of spurring reflection, (re)consideration and change more than others; hence, the next section will turn to the concept of dislocation and moments of disruption.

IN THE EVENT OF THE UNEXPECTED

To fully understand the relationship between partial fixity of meaning within discursive structures and the scope of possibility for agency and reflexivity, one needs to understand the concept of dislocation. As has been noted, as all systems of meaning are understood to be lacking, and therefore are radically contingent and undecidable, every discursive structure could be dislocated. A process of dislocation could be defined as the making visible — the exposure — of the contingency and undecidability of a given social order, which by and of itself could foster new ways of making sense of the world and one’s own place in it (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000: 13). A dislocation could thus be conceptualised as the moment of the political, in which subjects become more reflexive as practices fail, and are forced or enabled to reflect on the state of things by means of new discursive formations. Hence, it signifies a disruption of sedimented social structures, a challenge to the business-as-usual way of doing and thinking. In other words, a moment when social actors are enabled to identify with new possibilities (Glynos & Howarth, 2007: 105; Howarth, 2010: 314).

The lack in all discursive structures manifests itself in connection with particular events that reveal their lack of completion (Glynos & Howarth et al, 2009: 9). ‘A discourse is dislocated when it cannot integrate or explain certain “events”’, Nabers (2015: 167) suggests. Similarly, Marchart (2014) stresses that ‘every dislocation is perceived as an event that cannot immediately be integrated into the horizon of expectations: it is something we did not expect and which therefore threatens the sedimented routines and processes of social institutions’ (p. 277). Hence, the outbreak

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1 Poststructuralist discourse theory problematises the concept of agency by dividing it into agency within structure and agency about structure. Agency within structure is considered formal agency, that is: decisions being made within existing discursive structures, whereas agency about structure is considered radical agency, the doing of something new, the formation of ideas or a process of identification that does not follow any formal symbolic determination. This understanding of agency resembles the idea of the social versus the political.
of war could, in and of itself, of course constitute a dislocatory event if it challenges the common conception of how to act and react in the international sphere. In contemporary wars, with the ‘zero-death’ doctrine, the death of soldiers could also constitute a dislocatory experience. Similarly, an unexpected escalation of the use of force or an unexpected lack of force could indeed cause a disruption in the narrative on peace-enforcement and make visible the contingency of social relations and identities. An unexpected escalation or lack of force could thus threaten sedimented routines and processes of social institutions. However, experiences such as these do not necessarily imply a disruption of sedimented social structures; if war-related events can be accommodated within the broader discourses that make the use of force possible to begin with, they rather appear comprehensible, expected, as part of the normal state of affairs.

Inevitably, dislocatory events require responses; when the unexpected occurs, which deviates from normal routines and seems to be at odds with conceptions of Self, it needs to be made intelligible. As Glynos and Howarth (2007) explain, in a moment of dislocation, the subject is ‘called upon to confront the contingency of social relations more directly than at other times’ (p. 110). As a form of crisis, dislocated social structures ‘generate ephemeral identities and the need for subjects to identify with particular political projects promising to resuture the dislocated structure’ (Nabers, 2015: 151). Yet, a dislocatory experience does not signify crisis in line with the common understanding of the term; it could be considered productive rather than destructive, as it signifies a possibility of thinking, being and doing something new. Dislocatory experiences can thus open up for questions such as Who are we now? How did we get here? What do we want to be and do? Can we do things differently? However, responses to disruption can vary; dislocatory experiences as such do not necessarily mean that subjects act or decide in novel ways, or accept the contingency of social reality and identity (Nabers, 2015: 165; Johansson, 2012: 71). The occurrence of something unexpected, even something considered shocking, does not in itself imply change, and does not necessarily open up for radical agency or reflexivity. So-called ‘hegemonic interventions’ could be linked to sedimented discourses, which result in continuity rather than transformation (Nabers, 2015: 165).

As Glynos and Howarth (2007: 111) suggest in their discussion on the dimensions of socio-political reality, subjects either acknowledge and engage authentically with the radical contingency of social reality and identity, or they are complicit in denying or concealing the dislocatory experience. An ideological response, as they call it, thus ‘aims to repair and cover over the dislocatory event before it becomes the source of a new political construction’ (Glynos & Howarth, 2007: 117). Similarly, Hansen theorises
that in case of a perceived imbalance between representations of identity and policy, which could be considered a form of dislocatory experience, there will be ‘an attempt to make an adjustment to recreate stability through modification of either the construction of identity or the proposed policy’ (Hansen, 2006: 29). Based on Hansen’s theoretical claims, one can thus suppose that a policy reorientation would imply attempts to either adjust the conception of identity, or conceal the reorientation itself. Any event or practice deviating or appearing inconsistent with established representations of Self and Others, could theoretically be assumed to involve discursive attempts to ‘recreate’ balance and coherence between identity and policy. Silencing practices, which are briefly mentioned by Hansen (2006), could for instance be a potential strategy to uphold a sense of coherence between policy and identity. As she suggests, by shifting the discursive emphasis, ‘this strategy might be adopted when it is considered difficult to accommodate facts within the current discourse and a new policy impossible to design’ (p. 33). Perceived inconsistencies can, rhetorically, be ‘creatively resolved’ or ‘left unresolved, but dismissed’ without any changes in fundamental beliefs, as Stapleton and Wilson (2009: 1361) put it.

Part III of the dissertation will specifically be dedicated to what will be considered (potentially) dislocatory experiences related to the use of force; 8 moments when the link between identity and policy or practice seem to be more difficult to reconcile than at other times, when the discourse of ‘peacework’ is disrupted by experiences that do not seem coherent with prevalent self-representation. Do such moments open up for politicisation of the use of force? How is the link between identity and policy adjusted in such times of disruption? Do such moments open up space for truly reflecting upon and (re)considering the practice of violence in the public sphere? In terms of responses to such moments of [potential] dislocation, the study will seek to emphasise and make visible the plurality of responses articulated to make sense of the unexpected, and not only identify the so-called hegemonic interventions.

MAKING VISIBLE, MAKING INVISIBLE

Another theoretical discussion that will prove relevant to this study is the idea of in/visibility or in/visibilisation. Theoretically, as a concept, in/visibility does not (essentially) originate from the poststructuralist literature outlined above, yet will – as argued – prove crucial for understanding how the violent element of military intervention dis/appears in the public narratives that emerge, and ultimately how the

8 Hence, the concept of dislocation has been crucial for the selection of cases (and for the discussions) in Part III; three moments of disruption will be under scrutiny (see page 53).
link between identity and policy is de/stabilised and the issue of force de/politicised in public discourse.

The concept of in/visibility could be thought of in different ways. As Martschukat & Niedermeier (2014: 5) note, visibility can refer both to the phenomenological ‘being-visible’, but also to discursive presence in the public sphere – the coming into view, so to speak. Brighenti (2007) argues that visibility is a social process in itself, not simply an image; ‘visibility is a metaphor of knowledge’, he declares (p. 325). Lucaites and Simons (2017), for their part, conceptualise in/visibility not as (lack of) visual content but as ‘the active elisions and occlusions that produce a cultural optic in which some things are seen and others are either taken for granted or altogether ignored’ (p. 4). Similarly, in his discussion on visibility and the politics of belonging, Edenborg (2016) refers to the arrangements of visibility, understood as ‘specific stagings or organizations of what can be seen, heard and felt in the public sphere’ (p. 56). In line with Butler (2009) and her idea of frames, he notes that arrangements of visibility ‘seek to delimit the field of perception by excluding things from the public’, yet accentuates that such arrangements never can ‘delimit visibility altogether’ and are open for alteration (p. 56). As Tester (2012) further argues in relation to the question of making the destruction caused by conflict visible, to become visible and be considered an aspect of our world, a reality, the effects of conflict need to be mediated and ‘pulled into the light of publicity’ (p. 67). Welland (2017: 1-2) for her part refers to visibility as ‘seenness’ and discursive representation in the public sphere. In line with these conceptions, the process of making invisible could essentially be thought of as the removing out of sight and the slipping out of view.

In essence, the act of making in/visible is a political and relational ‘doing’; by making certain subjects, things and aspects visible – or in Welland’s argument, hypervisible – other subjects, things and aspects are typically rendered invisible. They remain invisible, or in Scarry’s (1987) words, they ‘slip from view’. Invisibility could thus be considered a consequence of the heightened visibility of other things, or it could simply be thought of more in terms of concealment or hiding, as when redescriptions serve to obscure the ‘true’ nature of war, or when the ‘bloodiness’ of war is erased from its representations. All the same, ‘invisible’ simply refers to that which doesn’t come into view and hence doesn’t seem to be, those aspects and practices of military engagement not brought to light in/by discourses, narratives, representations, images, conceptions. When all we ‘see’ or ‘know’ of the war experience are the representations brought home, those aspects of war that these representations exclude have – as it were – already been removed out of sight. Or to paraphrase Butler (2009), they fall outside the frame.
Clearly, the visibilities – or invisibilities – of violence do different kinds of political work (Martschukat & Niedermeier, 2014). As it were, violence could either be pulled into light or, at an extreme, be removed from sight altogether. Sometimes, violence is concealed, perhaps to shield the public from horrors or to hide that which is considered intolerable. Sometimes, by contrast, violence is displayed, to arouse excitement, to demonstrate superiority, or simply to expose the ‘truth’. Representations of war are typically complex; invisibility is complex. ‘The exercise of power’, as Brighenti (2007) notes, ‘is always an exercise in activating selective in/visibilities’ (p. 339, emphasis added). Essentially, the violent element is rarely being kept out of sight altogether. What, for instance, Alexievich’s (1992) Zinky boys attest to in terms of invisibility is clearly an extreme: that the notion of war is so absent in the public sphere that people ponder on whether the Soviet soldiers sent to Afghanistan in the early 1980s were dying from vodka, from the flu, or perhaps from eating too many oranges (p. 15). In democracies, violence clearly cannot be concealed altogether; yet some of its features can in various ways be removed out of sight, kept out of mind. At another extreme, the literature on the in/visibility of war in the US reveals how the US ‘audience’ is confronted with a kind of overexposure – war is ‘present’ everywhere, incessantly – which ultimately makes war-making a normal routine, something expected, even a norm.

As this book argues, how the use of force is brought to light, or removed out of sight, conditions the possibility for politicisation and public contestation. Following Hansen’s (2006) argument on the reconciling of identity and policy, selective visibilities also serve to make certain practices seem coherent with dominant self-conception, and hence acceptable. Ultimately, the ‘seenness’ of violence affects the room for reflection and (re)consideration in the public sphere. In the context of a ‘peace-loving state’, the (increased) visibility of violence could reasonably in itself serve to disrupt the normalised practice of ‘peacework’. Essentially, and in any case, the in/visibility of violence naturally shapes the perception of presence and distance,

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9 For elaborations on the (political) work of in/visibilities of violence, see e.g. Martschukat and Niedermeier (2014) or Simons and Lucaites (2017).

10 Taken from the following quote: ‘I was sent over there in 1981. The war had been going on for two years, but the general public didn’t know much about it and kept quiet about what they did know. In our family, for example, we just assumed the government wouldn’t be sending forces to another country unless it was necessary. My father thought that way, so did the neighbours. I can’t remember anyone thinking different. The women didn’t even cry when I left because in those days the war seemed a long way away and not frightening. It was war and yet not war, and, in any case, something remote, without bodies or prisoners. In those days no one had seen the zinc coffins. Later we found out that coffins were already arriving in the town, with the burials being carried out in secret, at night. The gravestones had “died” rather than “killed in action” engraved on them, but no one asked why all these eighteen-year-olds were dying all of a sudden. From too much vodka, was it, or flu? Too many oranges, perhaps? Their loved ones wept and the rest just carried on until they were affected by it themselves. The newspapers talked about how our soldiers were building bridges and planting trees to make “Friendship Alleys”, as they called them, and about how our doctors were looking after Afghan women and children’ (Alexievich, 1992: 15).
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

For the purpose of advancing the understanding of how violence dis/appears and how dis/appearances of violence relate to de/politicisation of violence and the de/stabilisation of identity and policy, the study brings forward three concepts, which in different ways are informed by the theoretical and ontological discussions outlined above. The three concepts are de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification, and they point to different aspects of the political work of representations of violence. Essentially, the concepts represent social and political doings. The concepts aim to capture three different discursive processes, namely the continuous movement between denaturalisation and naturalisation, between making invisible and making visible, between identification and disidentification. Importantly, there is no hierarchical order between the concepts as such – they simply point to somewhat different aspects of how violence dis/appears.

The conceptual framework presented here is productive in the sense that the concepts allow for a critical study of the representations of violence and the frames of intelligibility they (re)produce; ultimately, they help to reveal what can be seen and heard, possibly even felt and known, ‘at home’ in times of military engagements. Fundamentally, the conceptual framework is a product of extended empirical work and a continuous (re)examination of the empirical material. In other words, the conceptual framework is a research result in its own right. The analytical process has been an abductive and iterative process, truly defined by the moving back and forth between the empirical material and the theoretical framework (e.g. Berner, 2005). The process has been explorative in the sense that the material itself, in combination with loosely held theoretical ideas – as finalised above – has pointed out the direction. Hence, in terms of how the research project has evolved, the text has – during the course of time – essentially transformed from an exploration into an argument. Now, the argument takes the form of a conceptual framework. In what follows, the concepts will be elaborated briefly. Subsequently, it will be explained how and why the three concepts will be combined into a conceptual framework.

DE/NATURALISATION

Informed by the poststructuralist conception of the political, the empirical analysis will reveal how the use of force is de/naturalised in public discourse. In relation to the theoretical discussion on ‘the political’ above, de/politicisation should be
understood as a more abstract and broader, more encompassing process of removing
the issue of using force between the realm of the political and that of the social,
whereas de/naturalisation here is a more particular concept and relates to concrete
articulations in the narrative structuration and how violence is represented.

De/naturalisation could be conceptualised as a movement between naturalisation,
on the one hand, and problematisation, on the other. To problematise (or
denaturalise) the use of force would be to articulate it as a choice, which bears
consequences, and to consider the policy on the use of force as a political issue,
which is open for change and contestation. To naturalise would, in contrast, mean to
close down alternatives, to articulate the use of force as a self-evident aspect of
military action, as a non-issue, and/or to conceal the fact that things can be different.
To naturalise violence is essentially to obscure the fact that the practice of violence is
part of policy, which – in itself – could be changed. In short, the use of force could
either be acknowledged as a decision that comes with a responsibility or it could be
delineated as a complete given, as something that just has to be, and/or as something
that is essentially removed from one’s own sphere of influence. Fundamentally,
de/naturalisation relates to the articulation of agency, and speaks to the question of
how the Swedish use of force, the partaking in violence, essentially is considered.
Broadly, the concept of de/naturalisation captures how violence dis/appears as a
dilemma. Is a Swedish engagement in peace-enforcement represented as a ‘problem’,
a choice, a shift in policy, something exceptional, or is it articulated as business as
usual, a matter of course, a natural and unavoidable aspect of (so-called)
humanitarian intervention?

IN/VISIBILISATION

While the use of force may dis/appear as a dilemma in public discourse, it may as
well dis/appear as a reality. The concept of in/visibilisation (or in/visibility) could be
defined as the movement between the coming into view and the slipping out of view,
between bringing to light and removing out of sight. Violence could be concealed
and backgrounded, or acknowledged and foregrounded. Overall, the question of
in/visibility relates to the question of what peace-enforcement is represented to be:
whether peace-enforcement comes to be associated with violence and whether it
comes to signify a shift in policy. In this study, the concern is what aspects of military
war(like) activities are rendered in/visible; it will uncover how violence either slips
from view and is removed out of sight or how it comes into view and is brought to
light. To make violence invisible could – for instance – be to make peace-
enforcement appear as a peaceful practice, or to foreground other actors or other
aspects of the intervention to make the violent element associated with one’s own contribution slip from view. It could be to conceal shifts in policy and practice. Essentially, the concept of in/visibility captures how violence dis/appears as a ‘reality’ or how peace-enforcement dis/appears as a violent practice. In short, does the use of force, in which Swedish soldiers take part, come into view or is it backgrounded, concealed?

DIS/IDENTIFICATION

Moreover, the empirical analysis will seek to identify processes of linking and differentiation in the narratives on peace-enforcement and the representations of violence. Based on the poststructuralist conception of identity and identification, the concept of dis/identification here refers to how the use of force is either linked to or differentiated from Sweden; it thus relates to the question of what or who the practice of violence becomes associated with. Dis/identification could be conceptualised as the movement between linking the violent element of intervention to oneself, on the one hand, and displacing the violent element to Others, on the other. Essentially, the concept of dis/identification captures how the use of force dis/appears as ‘our’ practice or dilemma. The emphasis here is on ‘our’. As identity is constituted by a logic of difference, processes of identification include the depiction of Otherness. Yet, as meaning is fluid, the conception of Self and Otherness are continuously reconstructed. The study will be attentive to how Sweden is depicted vis-à-vis other states or actors, and how ‘Sweden’ is linked to various practices and attributes and in turn differentiated from others. The study will examine whether the use of force comes to light as a Swedish decision and responsibility, and – in case it is not – how the emphasis is shifted from oneself to others. All in all, is the use of force acknowledged as a Swedish practice, decision, problem, and responsibility?

THREE CONCEPTS COMBINED

The empirical study will centre on the three concepts of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification. These three concepts will also provide structure to the concluding discussion(s). As demonstrated above, de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification point to somewhat different aspects of the representation of violence and speak to slightly different questions. In analytical terms, the concept of making in/visible concerns how narratives account for what is (whether, for instance, peace-enforcement is acknowledged as the use of force), whereas the concept of de/naturalisation concerns how that which is addressed (whether, for instance, the use of force is considered and articulated as a dilemma or
as a non-issue). Dis/identification, in turn, refers to how the use of force is linked to or differentiated from the conception of Self. In relation to the practice of peace-enforcement, in/visibilisation, de/naturalisation and dis/identification, respectively, relate to the questions of *What kind of activity do we engage in? What does our engagement signify to us? and Who practices violence?*

There are two arguments linked to the conceptual framework advanced here. The first argument is that all three concepts are relevant if seeking to understand how violence dis/appears in Swedish public discourse and ultimately to grasp how the link between identity and policy is de/stabilised and the issue of using force is de/politicised. Essentially, the study seeks to illustrate that by considering both how violence dis/appears as a reality as well as a dilemma and/or as our reality and/or our dilemma, we may reach a more complex and detailed understanding of how violence generally ‘dis/appears’ in the public sphere. In turn, an examination of processes of de/naturisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification could furthermore tell us something about how the link between identity and policy is de/stabilised and how the issue of using force is de/politicised over time. Here, in terms of conceptual hierarchy, de/stabilisation and de/politicisation should be understood as (more) abstract concepts. Whereas the concepts of in/visibility, de/naturalisation and dis/identification enable an analysis of how violence is represented and dis/appears, the concepts of de/stabilisation and de/politicisation open up for a discussion on the political work of these dis/appearances. Ultimately, the concepts of de/stabilisation and de/politicisation could enhance our understanding of how the representations of war and violence on a more principal level shape the room for reflection and (re)consideration in the public sphere. Hence, as the book argues, the
dis/appearances of violence in public discourse essentially set the conditions of possibility for reflecting upon and politically (re)considering the issue of force in the public sphere; the examination of the processes of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification could ultimately tell us something about the room for public debate and reflexivity. By bearing in mind the concepts of de/naturalisation, in/visibility and dis/identification we might be able to ‘see clearer’ how processes of normalisation unfold and take hold, and how the practice of peace-enforcement, as an activity, becomes an accepted yet distant routine – something we rarely see, identify with or think about.

The second argument relates to the empirical analysis and results. Although the three concepts point to different processes and represent different aspects of what ‘happens’ in the narratives on peace-enforcement and of how violence dis/appears, they still – in an analytical and empirical sense – overlap in terms of what they seek to capture. In short, the discursive processes that the three concepts seek to capture overlap and interweave with one another, as the empirical explorations will demonstrate; thereto, the processes often (but not always) unfold in conjunction and reinforce each other. Generally, the study combines an analysis of the in/visibility of violence with an examination of the de/naturalisation of violence and processes of dis/identification; it seeks to point to the role of in/visibility in processes of de/naturalisation and dis/identification and the role of de/naturalisation and dis/identification in acts of in/visibilisation. A particular narrative theme or representation can simultaneously serve to naturalise and invisibilise the use of force and differentiate the practice of force from Sweden. Similarly, processes of disidentification can serve to make violence invisible, and invisibility can serve to naturalise the use of force, as – evidently – for something to be considered a dilemma, it needs to be considered a reality; disidentification, in turn, can make violence appear as a self-evident, unavoidable practice, and thus serve to naturalise the use of force. In short, naturalisation can serve to invisibilise; disidentification can serve to naturalise or invisibilise; making invisible can serve to render the practice unproblematic or make the use of force appear associated with someone else. In line with this second and more empirically grounded argument, the model with analytical questions presented in the next section further specifies how the three concepts have been integrated into a conceptual framework and how some analytical questions (therefore) come to overlap.
READING AND PRESENTING THE EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

Parts II and III examine and discuss the dis/appearances of violence in narratives on peace-enforcement and narrative responses to moments of disruption. The model below provides a set of analytical questions and illustrates how the empirical material has been examined through the concepts of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification. As the concepts overlap in terms of what they capture or include, a few questions relate to more than one concept. In short, questions placed in the overlapping sections relate to both respective discursive processes. Hence, the model illustrates and reflects the argument that the processes of in/visibility, de/naturalisation and dis/identification relate to each other and – in an analytical and empirical sense – overlap and interweave.

When reading the empirical material, the approach has been to identify narrative themes, patterns and dis/continuities: essentially, the analysis seeks to identify what is foregrounded in the debates and broadcasts (and by extension what is backgrounded, what slips from view or receives little or no attention). Hence, the
question that is centered in the model, concerning what dominates and is foregrounded/backgrounded, is a general yet fundamental question. However, to say that the analysis focuses on narrative themes, patterns and dis/continuities is not to suggest that it has disregarded details and specific articulations; the analysis has been conducted through close reading, with a careful attention to detailed nuances and to the use of specific words, phrasings or images.

Rather than looking for coherent story lines or fully articulated stories with a beginning, middle and end, the empirical analysis has mainly been attentive to the articulations that relate to *Sweden and the use of force*. In short, the study focuses on the meaning-making processes of Swedish engagements in peace-enforcement and the actual use of force, and the political work of de/naturalisation, in/visibility and dis/identification. That is to say, the objective is not to map out narratives as such, but to analyse and problematise the representations of violence found in narratives on peace-enforcement. Neither is the study dedicated to the ‘conflict narratives’ outlined in parliamentary debates or in public service media – in other words, how the conflicts or wars, their causes and dynamics, generally are interpreted. The analysis exclusively concerns how the Swedish engagement in the use of force is represented and how violence dis/appears; it seeks to capture how Sweden’s engagement in peace-enforcement becomes ‘seen’ and ‘known’.

Although the empirical analysis by all means concerns the representation of violence and the narrative construction of Self, the study does not explicitly speak to previous research on the construction of gender or ethnic and national identity in discourses on war, nor discussions on how (conflict) narratives or discourses on violence reflect, reproduce and reinforce neo-colonial relations or gendered subjectivities. Much has been written on these topics. In relation to the case of Sweden, previous research has, among other things, elaborated on the construction of gender and expressions of neo-colonialism in discourses on war. It has, for

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9 Thus, the analysis has been attentive to any references to the Swedish military involvement, the troops that have been deployed, the scope of their mandate, potential concerns regarding the involvement, or descriptions of violent events involving the Swedes. The analysis has also been attentive to how other actors engaged in the interventions are depicted in relation to Sweden particularly when it comes to the use of force; and how Sweden is positioned vis-à-vis these actors in the debates and individual statements. Furthermore, although the construction of national identity as such is not the focus of the study, the analysis has been attentive to articulations of identity and depictions of Sweden, which reproduces or challenges a certain national self-image. This could include references to neutrality or responsibility, superiority or inferiority, special national characteristics, and so on.

10 One should note that the empirical analyses do not in any way seek to examine or suggest that the representations of violence are true or false; instead, they seek to reveal what frames of intelligibility and apprehensions of reality the political debates and the media representations of violence reproduce and reinforce.

11 Consider e.g. Campbell’s (1998) and Hansen’s (2006) studies on the representation of the war in Bosnia in the 1990s and their discussions on the construction of identity and ethnicity in Western discourse.

12 See e.g. Tullberg’s (2002) study of the Swedish press, the Armed Forces’ internal communication and the government’s public statements during the Congo mission in the early 1990s, which offers a detailed and critical examination of the expressions of neo-colonialism, imperialism and racism. Furthermore, Åse and Wendt’s (2008)
instance, unveiled how the making of national identity is a gendered process and how (shifting) military gender regimes enable certain policies and actions. However, what this particular study seeks to capture is primarily how violence as such dis/appears in narratives on peace-enforcement, and not necessarily how military intervention is justified in the first place, or how the military as an institution and the general work it performs is conveyed and legitimised.

The analysis of parliamentary debates and public service broadcastsings by all means represent an interpretation. In the reading of the material, numerous aspects have proven to be relevant; all from the general focus and overall arguments, to diffuse and vague configurations, narrative fragments, the sequence of phrases, single statements, the use of specific words, the absence of specific words, the use of specific images, the absence of specific images, accentuations, the tone of voice or even facial expressions. In the analysis of parliamentary debates, the debates have been read time and again in order to summarise and thematise the articulations related to Sweden and the use of force. In the analysis of public service media, the reports and shows have been reviewed, then transcribed, and finally read time and again, all to summarise and thematise the articulations related to Sweden and the use of force. All (relevant) observations are presented in parts II and III.

The analysis of parliamentary debates and media representations has not relied on computerised and formal counting or coding of words, statements or arguments, as such methods would result in a framework that is too rigid for truly grasping what the narratives really do. The analyses have rather sought to consider all that is being said and displayed. Arguably, how many times something is articulated does not necessarily tell us anything about the (in)significance of a particular statement or representation. The empirical analysis has instead considered the texts as a whole, as specific articulations are only meaningful given the (narrative and textual) context in which they are communicated (e.g. Whooley, 2006; Nealon and Giroux, 2011). Moreover, to let the perplexity, uncertainty and inconsistency of narrative (re)formation be displayed – and to be ‘fair’ – the empirical explorations have sought to accentuate the plurality of accounts, articulations and representations that emerge. As all that is being said and displayed (concerning Sweden and the use of force) has been taken into consideration, the analytical process has been open for surprises and ‘unexpected’ observations; however, the theoretical and conceptual framework that

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work on the representation of military death during the Swedish engagement in ISAF in Afghanistan investigates how – among other things – masculinity and femininity are negotiated in media narratives. See also Krensell’s (2012) study of Sweden, ‘postnational peacekeeping’ and the construction of gender during ISAF, or Strand and Kehl’s (2008) critical examination of how ‘gendered and sexualized subjectivities and symbols are mobilised in recent marketing campaigns launched by the Swedish Armed Forces’ (p. 1).
has been developed is productive in the sense that it creates an interpretive and critical gaze, a sharp focus; ultimately, it creates meaning (e.g. Nealon and Giroux, 2011). In short, one should note that the analysis presented in parts II and III relies on a specific ontological and epistemological position informed by critical studies on war and violence and the basic assumptions of poststructuralism. The theoretical framework opens up for a specific, perhaps alternative, reading of the Swedish public discourse on the use of force. Hence, the empirical chapters in parts II and III do not necessarily (re)present the whole story; they lay out a story, a different kind of story from what we usually get to hear, in public discourse as well as in previous research.

Two things are worth mentioning concerning the presentation of the empirical observations. Although all chapters begin by providing a brief overview of the respective interventions, it is a deliberate decision to only provide little context. Generally, the chapters will not offer much information concerning the causes and dynamics of conflict, the different actors involved, nor on the general political dividing lines in Swedish politics. Why? The observations are stripped of (detailed) context, first, to clearly foreground the dis/continuities over time and to recentre – as it were – the representation of violence as such. To exclude (long) discussions on the empirical background and context is also a way to uncover and denaturalise (in a methodological sense) the representations and narratives that emerge in the material. To be able to offer a different story from those normally presented in public discourse, the representations, statements, images, etcetera, need to be examined in their own right. Another thing worth mentioning is that the empirical chapters are presented in a (more or less) chronological fashion. Most of the military interventions under scrutiny here progress over a longer period of time. Therefore, the representation of violence is (re)shaped over time and during the course of events. At times, the narrative themes are similar throughout the interventions; at times, they transform. To let the reader notice and follow the (possible) shifts and changes, the empirical analyses have been structured (more or less) chronologically. Ideally, it also serves to enhance transparency and thus increase the credibility of the conclusions.

STRUCTURE, CASE SELECTION AND MATERIAL

To critically examine the representation of violence in the public sphere – in Sweden, at the time of war(like) engagement – the study will draw on the ontological framework and theoretical concepts outlined above. The case studies presented in parts II and III will explore the narratives on peace-enforcement emerging in political

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50 See e.g. Åse & Wendt’s (2019) discussion on denaturalisation as a methodological approach in gender studies and critical security analysis.
debates and in public service media, respectively. As has been clarified, the study offers a reading of the representations of violence through the concepts of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification. The overarching purpose is to explore how the link between policy and identity is de/stabilised and to uncover how the issue of using force is de/politicised. Part II will be dedicated to parliamentary debates on peace-enforcement operations, and will thus point to the ongoing and continuous ‘dealing’ with violence, whereas part III will be dedicated to public service media and the responses emerging to account for particular moments of disruption related to the use of force. These moments are regarded as potentially dislocatory experiences, which have the capacity to disrupt the perceived coherence between policy and identity, and politicise the issue of using force. The analysis thus covers how violence is represented and talked about in the continuous and ‘normal’ processes of politics, as well as in times of the unexpected and exceptional. Both parliamentary debates and public service media have a public dimension, and condition – to a certain extent – how ‘the use of force’ is seen, known and talked about in the public sphere. Given that the narratives emerging in parliamentary debates and public service media have a public audience, they are generative in the sense that they produce realities, which have implications for the public imagination of violent practices and Sweden’s role in those practices.

Part II: Let’s (not) talk about violence

Part II explores the parliamentary debates on ONUC in Congo (1960-1964), UNPROFOR in Bosnia (1993-1995), Operation Artemis in Congo (2003), ISAF in Afghanistan (2002-2014), and OUP in Libya (2011). The interventions explored in part II diverge in terms of location, duration, context, rationale, deployment, level of risk, and level of force. Yet, all five interventions represent operations of peace-enforcement or operations including ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement. However, all interventions of peace-enforcement in which Sweden has taken part are not part of the empirical study. One criterion for case selection has been the actualisation of violence, i.e. that the violent element of peace-enforcement has been manifested.6

Another criterion has been the number of military personnel deployed; hence, only military operations involving a considerable number of Swedish soldiers have been

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6 For instance, IFOR in Bosnia (later called SFOR, 1995-2005) is not part of the study, mainly since IFOR came to resemble a peacekeeping intervention (e.g. Agrell, 2003: 50). Yet, the shift from UNPROFOR to IFOR is at the centre of the analysis, as IFOR officially was an operation of peace-enforcement. Another operation of peace-enforcement that has been excluded is KFOR in Kosovo (1999-2003); apart from the riots in 2004, KFOR proved to be a relatively ‘peaceful’ experience. Other cases that have been excluded are EUFOR Chad/CAR (2007-2008), given the lack of combat incidents, and MINUSMA in Mali (2015-), on the basis that the operation, at the time of writing, is still ongoing. Operation Atlanta/EU NAVFOR (2009-) has also been discarded, as it essentially could be considered a coast guard policing operation.
included. In terms of representation of violence, the selected interventions are informative not *in spite of* but *because* of their dissimilarities; arguably, the continuities in how to talk about – or not talk about – military engagements are revealing just because the circumstances differ and because the interventions are set in different times and in different locations.

In brief, one can say that ONUC in Congo (1960-1964) represents a large-scale peacekeeping mission that turned into something unexpected – a true crisis – where Swedish soldiers found themselves in combat for the first time in 136 years. UNPROFOR in Bosnia (1993-1995) signifies a peacekeeping operation with ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement, well-observed and debated, which due to the lack of force (when anticipated) led to a Swedish decision to engage fully in peace-enforcement within the framework of IFOR. Operation Artemis in Congo (2003), on the other hand, represents an international intervention that almost went under the radar, a short and rapid reaction to a deteriorating situation in Congo, including Sweden’s most well-trained and skilled combat soldiers. With the provisional yet quick shift from peacekeeping\(^7\) to peace-enforcement, it signifies a decisive moment in terms of accepting to take part in war\(\text{-like}\) engagements.\(^8\) In contrast to Operation Artemis, ISAF in Afghanistan (2002-2014) represents a protracted and well-debated military involvement, during which the use of force escalated; Sweden had a substantial number of soldiers ‘on the ground’ and the engagement proved to have major implications for Swedish security policy, inter alia in terms of doctrine and concept development (e.g. Holmberg & Hallenberg, 2017b: 9). Lastly, OUP in Libya (2011) represents an intervention with no ‘boots on the ground’, yet the Swedish Air Force was put into action for the first time since ONUC in Congo in the 1960s; although Swedish jet fighters did not take part in the ‘dropping of bombs’, Sweden is considered to have made a substantial contribution, and the operation was overall considered a success (e.g. Egnell, 2016).\(^9\)

The analysis of parliamentary debates is based on all debates on the five respective interventions, and all statements that have been articulated in parliament relating to the interventions. In total, the collected empirical material includes 83 parliamentary

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\(^7\) i.e. MONUC, the UN peacekeeping mission in Congo established in 1999, which had traditional peacekeeping tasks but also had a mandate from the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Still, ‘the Swedish troops were exclusively armed for purposes of self-defence’ (Osterdahl, 2011: 53-53).

\(^8\) Operation Artemis was not publically debated at the time of intervention, yet five years later, in 2008, the operation was discussed in media when it was revealed that Swedish soldiers – as it was claimed – had witnessed a prisoner of war being tortured by French soldiers. This will be briefly elaborated on page 99.

\(^9\) The specifics and context of the interventions will be further outlined at the beginning of each chapter in part II (see page 51, 81, 99, 107, and 106, respectively).
debate protocols (see page 270).20 The material includes every piece of debate, even fragments, dealing with the Swedish military contribution to the particular operation in question. Put together, these pieces are considered to reflect a narrative structuration of peace-enforcement; to illustrate the (lack of) plurality of narratives and perspectives taking shape, and to critically engage with all representations of violence, the analyses have been attentive to the general narrative emerging as well as those ‘counter-narratives’ articulated to challenge dominant conceptions.21 The rationale for choosing parliamentary debates as the empirical material rather than official reports, government bills or non-government bills is that parliamentary debates reflect the negotiations of a political issue. The empirical material makes possible an analysis of the narrative structuration of peace-enforcement and how representations of violence are reproduced and/or challenged over time. It is within the framework of parliamentary debates that politicians motivate and justify their decisions and their votes; it is through debates that policy receives legitimacy and authority. Most importantly, parliamentary debates clearly have a public dimension; rather than debating an issue behind closed doors, politicians are here forced to motivate their positions before an audience: the general public and each other. To participate in operations based on Chapter VII in the UN Charter requires authorisation from the Swedish parliament, which nowadays the deployment of peacekeeping troops does not (Act 2003:169, from 2010).

Part II: Policy and identity un/disturbed

Part III explores the narrative responses to (potentially) dislocatory experiences, as outlined in public service media, relating to the Swedish narrative and policy on the use of force. Three moments of disruption will be under scrutiny, offering illustrative examples of different eras. Essentially, the selection of periods is a result of empirical observations and analysis, in combination with previous research and prior knowledge of the cases.22 In other words, these cases have been selected partly

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20 When digital material has been available, from the 1990s onwards, searches have been made in the Parliament’s own database, on the name of the intervention and/or the name of the country that was intervened. Every debate in which the intervention was mentioned has been scrutinised. The Swedish military engagements abroad are at times discussed in parliamentary debates essentially devoted to a different topic. In those cases, the analysis has only focused on the paragraphs or exchanges of argument that concerns the military engagement of interest, discarding the rest of the debates. When no digital material has been available, as in the case of ONUC in Congo, the published collection of parliamentary documents has been looked through systematically, searching for the word ‘Congo’ in every parliamentary debate considered relevant that took place between the year 1960 and 1964. Every section mentioning Congo has been included in the empirical material.

21 In this study, ‘general narrative’ refers to the dominating narrative, often articulated by those supporting an intervention, whereas ‘counter-narrative’ typically refers to the articulations of those questioning Swedish participation, yet not necessarily challenging the general narrative as such.

22 The reasons for why these episodes signify moments of disruption will be elaborated further at the beginning of each chapter in part III (see page 163, 184, and 309, respectively).
because the events/episodes likely ought to be disruptive, partly because the media actually portrayed these events/episodes as a disruption. The first period is ONUC in Congo between the autumn of 1961 and spring of 1962, when Swedish soldiers suddenly became engaged in heavy fighting, leaving five Swedish soldiers killed.\textsuperscript{35} During this period of ONUC, the UN was accused of going on the offence, and the combat that followed was generally unanticipated. Ultimately, for nearly 30 years following the ONUC experience, Sweden proved reluctant to participate in anything but peacekeeping. The second period that will be examined is the last six months of UNPROFOR in Bosnia in 1995, when the UN failed its promise to protect the safe zones and was proven unable to stop the Srebrenica massacre. Generally, the lack of force was here unexpected. As part of the peace-agreement, IFOR was established, based on a mandate of peace-enforcement. Sweden accepted the request to contribute to IFOR without any national caveats, which signified a shift in the policy on the use of force. The last and third period under scrutiny will be the Swedish involvement in ISAF in Afghanistan between 2008 and 2010, a period characterised by a dramatic escalation of violence, the death of several Swedish soldiers, and an increased public awareness of Sweden’s involvement in war-like combat.\textsuperscript{34}

As the focus of this study is the representation of violence in the public sphere, part III will explore the narrative responses that emerge in public service media to account for moments of disruption. More specifically, the analyses will build on material from the biggest TV channel and radio channel in Sweden: SVT and SR.\textsuperscript{35} In the case of Afghanistan (2008-2010) and Bosnia (1995), the chapters will study TV broadcastings, whereas in the case of Congo (1961-1962), the chapter will study radio broadcastings.\textsuperscript{36} In total, the collected empirical material includes 92 TV reports and shows on Afghanistan, 31 TV reports and shows on Bosnia, and 41 radio reports and shows on Congo (see page 275), all of which have been reviewed and transcribed by the author. To collect the material for part III, systematic searches have been made in

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\textsuperscript{35} In total, 19 Swedish soldiers were killed during ONUC in Congo between 1960 and 1964.

\textsuperscript{36} More specifically, the chapter on ONUC in Congo covers the radio broadcastings between September 1961 and May 1962 but mainly focuses on the period between September 1961 and January 1962. Fighting erupted in September and December of 1961, but as the chapter will show – some of the soldiers of the 23rd battalion didn’t return from Congo until January 1962. The chapter on UNPROFOR in Bosnia covers the TV broadcastings between July 1995 (when the massacre in Srebrenica took place) and December 1995 (when NATO officially replaced the UN in Bosnia). The chapter on ISAF in Afghanistan covers the TV broadcastings between early November 2008 when it is revealed that the government – yet again – will propose to increase the number of soldiers and early November 2010 (when the government and the opposition have agreed on a strategy of withdrawing); with this time frame, the chapter seeks to cover the period during which Swedish soldiers’ involvement in combat intensified drastically. The last Swedish soldier to be killed in action in Afghanistan was killed in October 2010.

\textsuperscript{37} SVT and SR are public service media channels, which means that their content is produced in the public’s interest, with an ambition of neutrality and objectivity (although this, of course, by some and at times is disputed).

\textsuperscript{38} In Sweden, Swedish Radio (SR) was, in the early 1960s, still the primary broadcaster of news and public source of information (e.g. Hadenius & Weibull, 1970: r36). The TV reports and shows on the Congo crisis, which are saved in SVT’s archive, most often lack sound, which makes an analysis of TV broadcastings during Congo unfeasible. For these reasons, the chapter on Congo in part III builds on an analysis of the broadcastings on Swedish Radio.
SVT’s and SR’s own digital archives. All hits in the database relating to Sweden’s involvement and the use of force have been reviewed, although not all of them have been considered relevant in light of the overall research questions. As the focus has been on TV/radio coverage relating to Sweden’s military involvement, TV/radio reports or studio debates on the conflicts in general, on the peace negotiations, the refugee situation, humanitarian aid or other states’ involvements have been discarded. All TV/radio reports and studio debates that have been considered relevant have been transcribed and analysed.

Essentially, TV and radio broadcasts reach larger parts of the population than printed material and newspapers, at least prior to today’s digitalisation. It is through TV and radio representations that the general public often obtains knowledge about politics; as Sylwan (2011) puts it: ‘the news media are not just information providers, but also supply material for making sense of society and serve to make certain ideas significant’ (p. 170). As Chouliaraki (2007) further notes: ‘it is difficult to deny that the power of television to provide images and information is crucial in the shaping of public opinion’ (p. 130). TV as well as radio thus has a significant role in communicating political events and reorientations and in the formation of a sense of national identity; they also have a significant role in terms of opening up space for public debate. As the previous discussion on the literature on the representation of war and violence has elaborated (see page 14), media representations clearly constitute realities and shape how war, as it were, ‘comes home’. Of all media channels in Sweden, SVT is today the most trusted source of information, with seven out of 10 stating that public service broadcasting gives a completely, or for most parts true, representation of reality (Ipsos, 2016). Throughout the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, TV and radio were far more trusted among the public than the daily press (Hadenius & Weibull, 2003: 437). In 1990, SVT had 87 per cent of the total viewings; by 1997, it was still as much as 48 per cent (Fogelberg, 2004: 181). In the year 1960, 50 per cent of the population listened to the radio evening news (Hadenius & Weibull, 1970: 216).

The rationale for including media material in the study is simply that the representation of violence in media is very much part of public discourse and how violence is made seen and known in the public sphere. That is to say, the chapters in

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27 On Bosnia in 1995, the database search was: (Sverige* OR svensk*) AND (Bosnia OR UNPROFOR) AND (bataljon* OR stryk* OR trupp* OR förband* OR soldat* OR roll* OR strid* OR anfall*). On ISAF in 2008-2010, the database search was: (Sverige* OR svensk*) AND (Afghanistan). On ONUC in Congo, the database search was: (Kongo). These databases are not publicly available; hence, staff members at SVT and SR have conducted the database searches and provided the author with the lists. As the archives of SVT and SR are no official archives, they are not obliged to register and/or save all that has ever been broadcasted; hence, the author can’t guarantee that the empirical material on the three respective periods are all-inclusive, especially in regards to the material on Congo in the 1960s.

28 The tabloid press included.
part III are not case studies of media representations, but case studies of the representation of violence as such. Although the previous literature that this study draws on evidently intersects with various debates on media and war found in media and cultural studies, the analytical focus is solely on how violence is represented in the public sphere and the political work of the specific representations identified, not on why violence is represented the way it is and what that could tell us about the role of media in public debate or media as an actor, producer and medium. A number of research debates on media and war therefore fall outside the scope of this book; for instance, theories on the media logic of news or how the media dramatise, simplify and personalise news etcetera (e.g. Altheide, 2004; Altheide & Snow, 1979; Bourdieu, 2011: 19; Nord & Strömbäck, 2003: 58) or discussions on mediatised war and media as an actor in war (e.g. Chouliaraki, 2007; Cottle, 2006; Der Derian, 2009; Orgad, 2011; Cronqvist & Sturfelt, 2018).
To participate in operations of peace-enforcement essentially means the deployment of violence. Soldiers who are sent out on peace-enforcement operations will likely get involved in fighting, or in the act of killing; they will be subjected to violence while at the same time perform violence themselves. Ultimately, this is what peace-enforcement is about: an authorisation to use force to enforce peace. The violent element of military intervention is indeed a concrete phenomenon; violence is a lived experience and a reality ‘on the ground’. The decision to use force, to participate in operations of peace-enforcement, is fundamentally a political question, essentially a dilemma, as soldiers might get injured, or killed, and be forced to inflict injury on others. In Sweden, these decisions are negotiated and motivated (publically) in parliament, in dialogues between the sitting government and the opposition parties. Though Sweden also took part in war-like interventions in the past – above all in Congo in the 1960s – there has, one can notice, been a shift in Swedish policy on the use of force since the 1990s. The turn towards peace-enforcement has meant that Sweden, largely, has chosen to take an active part in Chapter VII-missions.¹

How has the use of force, the practice of peace-enforcement, and the involvement in combat been debated, represented and accounted for? Part II will be dedicated to parliamentary debates on the Swedish involvement in interventions of peace-enforcement, and take a close look at how the violent element has been represented and addressed in the public political debate. It will critically engage with the narratives emerging in parliamentary debates to justify or question involvements in the violent practice of peace-enforcement. Essentially, the analysis will problematise the narratives on peace-enforcement that emerge and the representations of violence they include. More specifically, the chapters in part II offer a reading of the narratives on peace-enforcement through the concepts of de/naturalisation, in/visibility and dis/identification. The analysis ultimately reveals how the engagement in violence and the policy on the use of force are explained to the public. On the whole, the narratives emerging in these debates represent – and constitute – certain frames of intelligibility, which condition the possibility to imagine and reflect on the use of force in the public sphere.

Part II consists of five case studies, and covers the debates on five separate interventions between 1960 and 2014. Each chapter is structured as follows: the background and context to each intervention will be discussed briefly, then the

¹ Chapter VII in the UN Charter authorises the use of coercive measures, including armed force.
analysis of the representations of violence will be presented, ending with a brief summary of the main observations. At the end of part II, the main observations from all chapters will be brought together and discussed in terms of narrative themes and continuities over time. The concluding chapter will also elaborate on how the narrative themes that come to dominate the parliamentary debates over time serve to de/stabilise the link between identity and policy, and ultimately de/politicise the issue of using force.
ONUC: Congo 1960-1964

The decision to participate in the ONUC mission in Congo was taken by the Foreign Affairs committee on 18 July 1960 after the UN general-secretary Hammarskjöld had requested that Sweden transfer some of its troops in Gaza to Congo. In an announcement made on national radio on the same day, the Minister for Foreign Affairs proclaimed that the transferred battalion would take no part in fighting or in any sense interfere in the internal affairs of Congo. Rather, the UN troops would serve as an international gendarmerie, armed with light weapons, and was expected to have a psychologically calming effect in the region (Utrikesfrågor 1960 nr. 22). However, what the Minister for Foreign Affairs did not know at the time was that the character of the mission would change drastically during the forthcoming months.\(^2\) Due to the situation on the ground, the policing and monitoring force mobilised during the summer of 1960 eventually turned into a warring party engaged in the internal armed conflict in Congo (Agrell, 2013: 33). As it turned out, the ONUC engagement became one of the most violent military engagements in Swedish peacekeeping history, with 19 Swedish soldiers killed as a result. Despite domestic and international criticism during certain periods of the mission, Sweden was one of few states that stayed in Congo until the ONUC was dissolved in June 1964 (Ekfeldt Nyman, 1999: 7).

During the mission, three phases particularly stand out in terms of violence and combat. In late 1960 and early 1961 the Baluba militia attacks the Swedish troops while they escort trains in Katanga; for the first time in 146 years, Swedish soldiers now become engaged in combat (Tullberg, 2012: 117-121). In September and December of 1961, the Swedish battalion once again get involved in heavy fighting, now in Elisabethville. This time the clashes become more intense and the enemy, the Katanga gendarmerie supported by Belgian troops, is better equipped than the Balubas had been. As Tullberg (2012) points out, these events challenged the pre-understanding of what ONUC would represent; ultimately, it looked as if the UN was interfering with the internal affairs of Congo (p. 156/159). Finally, the Swedish battalion become involved in combat again in late 1962 during the assault on Kaminaville. In contrast to the previous incidents, the combat operation is now generally considered a military and political victory (Tullberg, 2012: 253).

The Congo-question is first introduced as an issue of parliamentary debate late into the autumn of 1960. The operation in Congo takes place at the height of the Cold

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\(^2\) According to Tullberg (2012: 117), it became clear to the Swedish military already in 1960 that the peacekeeping tasks assigned to the Swedish battalion would not come to involve symbolic patrolling and monitoring alone; the battalion would instead possibly be required to perform its duties under war-like conditions.
War, which naturally influences the Swedish political debate and the rhetoric justifying a Swedish engagement. During the years of the Congo mission, the world experiences the Berlin crisis and the Cuban missile crisis, and the fear that the Cold War is on the verge of turning hot clearly permeates the parliamentary debates on the ONUC mission. Although the military actions take place in the midst of an ongoing international crisis, there nevertheless seems to be room for political contestation and problematisation of the campaign. Different actors in parliament raise concerns regarding the Swedish battalion’s involvement in violence, yet – as will be demonstrated – the criticism is rarely directed towards the battalion itself or the Swedish government. Apart from the Communist Party, which at the very beginning calls for a withdrawal of the Swedish military contribution (I kam 1960 nr. 29, Persson, k. p. 4), all political parties represented in parliament stand behind the government in the decision to participate in and fulfil the mission.

In the conflict narrative formulated in parliament, Sweden’s role is outlined: Sweden is a vindicator for neutrality, essentially representing a balancing actor effectively ruling out any involvement of the great powers. The Swedish involvement thus averts a scenario in which Congo turns into an arena on which the Cold War could be played out (e.g. I kam 1960 nr. 29, Undén, s. p. 40; II kam 1961 nr. 14 Hedlund, cp. p. 125). The idea of being there first is a striking narrative theme in legitimising the intervention in the first place. For once the great powers interfere, the consequences would not only be disastrous for Congo and the African continent, but for the world as a whole (e.g. II kam 1961 nr. 36, Undén, s. p. 68; II kam 1961 nr. 36, Wedén, fp. p. 73; I kam 1962 nr. 11, Erlander, s. p. 48). In contrast to the other actors that are directly or indirectly involved in the Congo-crisis, neutrality, altruism and a lack of self-interest are continuously ascribed to Sweden and its military contribution (e.g. I kam 1960 nr. 29, Undén, s. p. 39; I kam 1961 nr. 3, Lundström, fp. p. 5; II kam 1962 nr. 3, Undén, s. p. 67). These characteristics are not only at the core of Sweden’s foreign policy, but they also constitute the very reason why Sweden is truly needed in this particular context (I kam 1962 nr. 11, Erlander, s. p. 48; I kam 1962 nr. 11, Lindström, s. p. 57). At times, the Swedish policy of non-alignment is explicitly described as a precondition for ONUC as a whole (I kam 1962 nr. 3, Boheman, fp. p.

1 The government’s conflict narrative is clear and consistent throughout the years in Congo. Following a request for military support issued by the Congo government, Sweden is now in Congo to support the UN to uphold law and order. The background is described as follows: due to the chaotic situation in the country, Belgium sent troops to secure its interests and protect its citizens living in exile, a response that from the Congolese side was perceived as a Belgian attempt to regain power in Congo. Hence, the Security Council became deeply concerned that the Congo crisis would spread throughout the region if the Belgian troops remained in Congo. The presence of the UN troops could thus hopefully restore order and facilitate a withdrawal of Belgian troops (e.g. I kam 1961 nr. 14, Erlander, s. p. 78).

2 In her discussion on the Swedish motives for contributing to ONUC, Ekfeldt Nyman (1999: 35) also identifies that the threat of great power interference is of primary importance.
These are characteristics that fundamentally distinguish Sweden from all other states involved, and represent capacities only a few other states could provide. This notion of Sweden’s neutrality as a political and now military resource, which brings a certain obligation, is a persistent narrative theme in the discussions on the engagement in Congo. As will become clear, the idea of the Swedish contribution as a vital factor for keeping the great powers out of Congo will have implications for the discussions on the issue of violence.

We can now conclude that the UN campaign so far at least has succeeded in its primary assignment, to prevent a civil war sponsored by the interests of the great powers, which easily could have escalated into a conflagration. It has cost us victims – heavy sacrifices of life and limb.  

(I kam 1962 nr. 3, Lundström, fp, p. 11)

THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE

Differentiation, defensive violence and no alternatives

In the debates on the military contribution to ONUC in general and on the use of force in particular, there is one narrative theme which is particularly striking: all throughout the ONUC mission, the narratives reflected in parliament clearly distinguish between the UN and their actions on the one hand and Sweden on the other. This distinction is accentuated throughout the whole period of the mission, yet is particularly emphasised when Swedish soldiers engage in fighting, or when foreign powers have criticised the Swedish involvement and position. The differentiation between UN and Sweden is, in other words, especially salient during and after the autumn of 1961. At this time, it is repeatedly accentuated that ONUC is UN’s mission and not Sweden’s (see e.g. I kam 1961 nr. 27, Jacobsson, h, p. 84; II kam 1962 nr. 3, Hedlund, cp, p. 19). In the winter of early 1962, after a long period characterised by violent confrontations, during which Swedish soldiers have both killed and died, the Minister for Foreign Affairs clarifies the status of the Swedish battalion in Congo as follows:

5 As the Minister for Foreign Affairs puts it in his announcement on national radio on 18 July 1960: ‘Our country’s position as a neutral state can in some cases make our participation in international settings easier, when frictions between involved states is to be feared. It is also our duty, as neutrals, to undertake commitments in the interest of the peaceful community’ / In Swedish: Vårt lands ställning som neutral stat kan i somliga fall underlätta vår medverkan i internationella sammanhang, där friktioner mellan inblandade stater är att befara. Det är också vår plikt just som neutrala att åta oss förpliktelser i det fredliga umgångets och samförståndets intressen. / Utrikesfrågor 1960 nr. 23.

6 In Swedish: ‘Vi kan också konstatera, att FN-aktionen åtminstone hittills har lyckats med sin primära uppgift att förhindra ett av stormaktsintressen understött inbördeskrig, som lått hade kunnat utvecklas till en världskrig. Det har kostat oss offer – tunga offer till liv och lem.’

7 Cont. II kam 1961 nr. 36, Undén, s, p. 68; I kam 1962 nr. 11, Lundström, fp, p. 24; I kam 1962 nr. 11, Bengtsson, cp, p. 31.
It is not Sweden, but rather the UN, that has responsibility for its activities. This goes for both its stationing, its operations and the determination of conditions for its use of weapons /.../ For Sweden, the mission in Congo is a sacrifice that we bring in the interest of the UN and the peace. We have no other interests in Congo. We do not wage a war in Congo. Our motives are of an altruistic nature; that we can truly claim.\(^8\)

\[(II \text{ kam } 1962 \text{ nr. } 3, \text{ Undén, s. p. 66/07)]\]

As the argument goes, it is the UN that is responsible for the Swedish soldiers; the Swedish battalion in Congo is under UN command and only obeys UN orders (I kam 1961 nr. 27, Jacobsson, h, p. 84; II kam 1961 nr. 36, Alemyr, s, p. 80; I kam 1962 nr. 11, Lundström, fp, p. 24).\(^9\) The Swedish Army’s influence on the battalion in Congo is thus minor; Sweden simply has no direct responsibility for its troops in Congo (I kam 1961 nr. 27, Boheman, fp, p. 74; II kam 1962 nr. 4, Hamilton, h, p. 33). As emphasised in the debates, the Swedish soldiers serve in Congo not as *Swedes* but as *UN soldiers* (II kam 1962 nr. 3, Heckscher, h, p. 68; I kam 1962 nr. 3, Bengtson, cp, p. 9).\(^10\) Hence, it is not Sweden that conducts a military or police operation in Congo, but the military aid provided by Sweden is strictly under UN command\(^a\) (I kam 1962 nr. 11, Lundström, fp, p. 24; I kam 1962 nr. 11, Bengtsson, cp, p. 33).

By assigning the responsibility for the use of force to the UN, and by emphasising Sweden’s lack of influence, these statements could be considered to essentially differentiate Sweden from the violence unfolding in Congo. If the practices used in Congo essentially are UN’s responsibility, it almost becomes irrelevant whether Sweden supports the practices or not. As will be further discussed in the subsequent section, this is very much noticeable in relation to the scepticism raised by the right wing and centre opposition, which is almost exclusively directed towards the UN and rarely concerns the Swedish government or its decisions. For instance, in late 1962, a conservative representative is very critical toward the UN in regard to the violent measures that have been taken, the orders that have been given; some of the measures have reached beyond the UN directives, he claims (I kam 1962 nr. 31, Hernelius, h, p. 43-44]. At the same time, he emphasises that the UN has taken these measures *long after* the summer of 1960 when the Swedish decision to participate was taken. It cannot be right, a liberal representative argues, that Sweden should be

\(^8\) In Swedish: ‘Det är inte Sverige som har ansvaret för dess verksamhet utan FN. Detta gäller både om dess stationering, om dess operationer och om bestämmandet av förutsättningarna för dess bruk av vapen /.../ För Sverige är uppdraget i Kongo ett offer som vi bringar i FN:s och fredens intresse. Vi har inga andra intressen i Kongo. Vi för inte ett krig i Kongo. Våra motiver av altruistisk art, det kan vi med rätta påstå.’

\(^9\) *Cont.* I kam 1962 nr. 11, Bengtsson, cp, p. 33; II kam 1962 nr. 4, Hamilton, h, p. 33.

\(^10\) *See also* I kam 1963 nr. 17, Sundin, cp, p. 38.

\(^a\) Tullberg (2013) makes similar observations of a number of government statements [p. 64/070/234].
faulted for measures that the UN has decided on and implemented (I kam 1962 nr. 11, Lundström, fp, p. 24). Yet another Centre Party representative notes that Sweden has been criticised, but the critique is unwarranted, he claims, as it is the UN – and the UN only – that is responsible for the troops placed at their disposal (I kam 1962 nr. 11, Bengtson, cp, p. 33).

Generally, the differentiation between Sweden and the UN could be thought of as an act of disidentification, as the use of force is articulated as the decision and concern of the UN rather than Sweden. In terms of selective visibilities, Sweden’s role in warfare is backgrounded since the role of the UN comes to dominate the debates. Ultimately, the differentiation serves to naturalise Sweden’s engagement in warfare, as Sweden now seems to lack influence and alternatives.

In Swedish papers one can repeatedly read about ‘the Swedish Congo campaign’... It would be unfortunate if, with such classifications in the press, this misunderstanding would sneak in: that it is Sweden as such, and not the UN, that takes action in Congo.”

(I kam 1961 nr. 27, Jacobsson, h, p. 83-84)

During the debates on the mission in Congo, a rather ambiguous position towards the UN evolves. On the one hand, loyalty towards the UN is continuously and repeatedly upheld as absolutely essential (see e.g. II kam 1961 nr. 36, Heckscher, h, p. 75-76; II kam 1961 nr. 36, Ohlin, fp, p. 77). One the other hand, it seems to be important to criticise the UN for its decisions throughout the campaign. The general narrative emerging in parliament builds on a notion that the UN is in deep trouble; the organisation actually appears to face an existential threat due to the events in Congo as well as the status of the Cold War (I kam 1961 nr. 14, Lundström, fp, p. 84; II kam 1961 nr. 6, Rimmerfors, fp, p. 19). This approaching crisis, which is imagined to jeopardise the whole UN and its prospects for doing good, sets the conditions of possibility for critique in the parliamentary debates. As the UN is primarily a support for small states such as Sweden, Sweden should contribute to the strengthening of the UN as a real world power (I kam 1961 nr. 27, Lundström, fp, p. 17; I kam 1961 nr. 27, Bengtson, cp, p. 93; II kam 1961 nr. 3, Ohlin, fp, p. 5). Hence, when people are risking their lives to protect the peace in Congo while the UN is on the verge of crisis,
Sweden should thus be able to abstain from unnecessary ‘squabble’\(^{16}\) (II kam 1961 nr. 3, Ohlin, fp, p. 5). The image of a UN in crisis already takes shape by the beginning of the UN intervention in Congo. As a small state, essentially relying on the forcefulness of the UN, Sweden’s role appears to be to ‘save what can be saved’ and contribute to the ONUC mission, a mission that now seems to be the last opportunity to restore UN’s influence on international affairs (e.g. I kam 1960 nr. 23, Boheman, fp, p. 39).

In line with the idea of loyalty, the motives of the UN are rarely questioned. This goes for a majority of the members of parliament, all those essentially supporting the Swedish engagement in Congo. However, the efficiency and legitimacy of the UN actions in Congo are questioned at times. Hence, even though the organisation is on the verge of crisis, it seems possible to question, for example, the UN’s judgement (e.g. II kam 1961 nr. 36, Eliasson, ep, p. 70; II kam 1962 nr. 3, Heckscher, h, p. 68). For instance, after the autumn of 1961, the responsibility for the violent confrontations that the Swedish battalion has been engaged in becomes a point of debate. Critical questions directed towards the UN are now expressed, primarily by the right-wing and centre opposition: *Who was giving the orders during the September crisis in Katanga?* (I kam 1962 nr. 11, Hernelius, h, p. 66), and *Is this really the UN that we once joined?* (II kam 1962 nr. 4, Hamilton, h, p. 23).

All in all, it appears to be desirable that guarantees are made that Swedish military power is not put into action in such bloody operations without a Parliamentary hearing. But as it, in connection therewith, is said that Sweden has acted on behalf of the UN, could it not be of interest to get authoritative information on to what extent the states affiliated to this organisation can be regarded as democracies, in the sense that is well-recognised in this country.\(^{17}\)

(I kam 1961 nr. 27, Nilsson, ep, p. 65)

Notwithstanding the criticism towards the UN reflected in the debates, the narratives emphasise that Sweden is in a very difficult position, with limited room for manoeuvre. As the UN is on the verge of crisis, there seems to be no alternative course of action for Sweden, regardless of whether Sweden is content with the UN actions in Congo or not. The Prime Minister acknowledges in late 1961 that the situation in Congo is very precarious; yet, as he stresses, when the decision to participate was taken, the future was unknown. The Swedish soldiers are performing their duties in an honourable way, he points out, but they could yet again be forced

\(^{16}\) In Swedish: ‘kiv’.

\(^{17}\) In Swedish: ‘Over huvud taget det såsom önskvärt att garantier skapas för att svensk krigsmakt icke utan riksdagens hörande insättas för så blodiga företag. Men då det i samband härmed hänvisas till att Sverige handlat på anvisning av Förenta Nationerna, kunde det vara av intresse att få en auktoritativ upplysning om i vilken utsträckning de till denna organisation anslutna staterna kan betraktas som demokratier i den mening som här i landet är vedertagen.’
into risky situations. Still, Sweden cannot let the UN down, and will continue to have confidence in the UN (I kam 1961 nr. 27, Erlander, s. p. 74). The policy of loyalty thus appears superior to any possible concerns regarding the use of force, although the mission has – as vaguely expressed – ‘changed character’ and turned into ‘something different and far more adventurous’:

Precisely due to our position as a non-aligned country, it was natural that the UN turned to us when troops were needed for the peace campaign in the Congo. It was equally natural that the Swedish government in full agreement with the opposition found it to be Sweden’s imperative duty to help. But the campaign became something different and far more adventurous than any of us had imagined. Criticism has been levelled against the government because our troops were not withdrawn when the UN operation changed character. To me, the criticism does not appear to be fair. Once we had placed troops at the disposal of the UN, we had no moral right to abandon the UN in its time of affliction, although there may be grounds for criticism regarding the way in which the actions in Congo have been carried out. We could as a member state have sought to influence UN’s actions but we had no right to paralyse the UN by calling home our troops.

Although indicating that Swedish soldiers now are involved in something unforeseen and rather disturbing, the government rarely addresses the incidents that have occurred, neither do they talk of the death of Swedish soldiers. Thus, in terms of making in/visible, the Swedish soldiers’ involvement in violence is partially removed out of sight given the lack of detail and focus. Moreover, one can notice a distinct lack of critical reflection on the progress of events and where, so to speak, the engagement is heading. With reference to de/naturalisation, the government thus fails to problematise the use of force and Sweden’s role in Congo, and rather makes the violent element seem inevitable, out of the soldiers’ but also out of the government’s control. As a case in point, the Prime Minister, for instance, simply concludes that the alternatives are worse than the current situation (I kam 1961 nr. 14, Erlander, p. 110). A liberal representative likewise notes that the situation in Congo is risky and insecure, but that the UN’s work cannot be stopped, even though the sageness of the UN’s decisions at times could be questioned, not least the decision to

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battle so-called ‘militarily active whites’ in Katanga. In line with the no-alternative logic, he further explains that the decision to deploy the Swedish air force is legitimate; it is essential to reduce the risks for Swedish soldiers on the ground, he claims (II kam 1961 nr. 27b, Ohlin, fp, p. 26).

In the autumn of 1961, the Swedish battalion is reinforced with heavier and complementary armament (I kam 1961 nr. 27, Lundström, fp, p. 16). Although these kinds of decisions – to increase the number of soldiers or deploy further equipment – by all means are Sweden’s own, it almost appears as if the Congo campaign is a force of nature, a state of affairs from which there simply is no escape. Sweden’s engagement in violence is thus naturalised – as it appears: it just has to be. In this sense, the narrative theme of ‘no alternatives’ could be said to enable a continued engagement in violence, although no one appears to be particularly happy with what the Congo campaign so far has come to represent.

I can in a sense understand the concerns that the combat operations in Congo, now and earlier, which to a significant extent have involved Swedish and Irish troops, may leave the impression that here white troops are shooting on black people and not only on other whites. But what is the alternative?29

(II kam 1961 nr. 36, Wedén, fp, p. 73)

From the onset of ONUC and throughout the years, the idea of letting the UN down generally seems to be unthinkable for the government and those in support of the mission. Overall, the parliament seems to share the Prime Minister’s concern that to ‘fail’ the UN would mean a break with Swedish foreign policy and the obligations it implies (e.g. I kam 1961 nr. 27, Erlander, s, p. 74; II kam 1962 nr. 4, Hamilton, h, p. 23). At times, the issue of violence becomes a subject of discussion, as demonstrated in the forthcoming sections; yet, above all, the Swedish engagement in ONUC causes concern mainly due to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a foreign state, not necessarily due to the use of force per se (see e.g. II kam 1961 nr. 36, Undén, s, p. 68; II kam 1961 nr. 36, Eliasson, cp, p. 70; II kam 1962 nr. 4, Hamilton, h, p. 23).

We are on the one hand keen that the UN is strengthened, but on the other hand we consider it to be a rather serious problem that the UN policy appears to go in the direction of a larger interference of the organisation than what could be considered necessary. Especially when it comes to the policy in Congo – which right now is a current issue – I believe that we all think that Sweden should

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29 In Swedish: ‘Jag kan på sätt och vis förstå farhågorna för att stridshandlingarna nu och tidigare i Kongo, med i betydande utsträckning svenska och irlandiska engagerade, kan komma att efterlåtna intrynket, att här skjuter vita tropper på svarta och inte bara på andra vita. Men vad är alternativet?’
contribute to the work of the UN as long as it essentially builds on the objective of peacekeeping, but that we cannot allow our resources to be used to support one or the other party in what now is developing into a Congolese internal conflict."

(HI kam 1962 nr. 32, Heckscher, h, p. 16)

Of course we shall support the UN, but it has to be strongly emphasised that the aid we provide there must not involve any interference in internal affairs of Congo."

(HI kam 1962 nr. 32, Hedlund, ep, p. 23)

The principle of non-interference is often foregrounded in the debates, and it is evident that use of force as such makes it uncertain whether Sweden is or is not compliant with this principle. However, by repeatedly referring to the principle of non-interference, the debates mainly focus on the policy of the UN rather than the actions and policy of Sweden. This focus thus plays into the theme of differentiation. Whereas the use of force certainly has something to do with the Swedish soldiers, the decision to interfere with force is UN’s and UN’s alone. The ‘problem’ with the UN actions in Congo – i.e. the interference in internal affairs – thus falls out of Sweden’s own sphere of influence; it is out of Sweden’s control and essentially does not reflect the wishes or aspirations of Sweden.

Already by late 1960, the Minister for Foreign Affairs declares that if the mandate were to be expanded in a way that Sweden would not be able to accept, Sweden would have to withdraw its troops (I kam 1960 nr. 29, Undén, s, p. 41). In the following year, other members of parliament express similar positions: if the fighting deepens, and the UN force would transform from a police force to an aggressive force, Sweden would need to withdraw (I kam 1961 nr. 3, Lundström, fp, p. 5; II kam 1961 nr. 3, Ohlin, fp, p. 5-6). However, despite such statements early on, the debates that follow – even after the heavy fighting in late 1961 – portray a withdrawal from Congo as impossible; Sweden’s loyalty towards the UN cannot be questioned (e.g. II kam 1961 nr. 36, Wedén, fp, p. 74; II kam 1961 nr. 36, Heckscher, h, p. 75; II kam 1962 nr. 4, Hamilton, h, p. 23). At this point, not even the Communists advocate a withdrawal, as – they argue – it would be a betrayal against Swedish troops (II kam 1961 nr. 36, Hagberg, k, p. 79). Although the UN actions in Congo evoke feelings of

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"In Swedish: ‘Vi är å ena sidan angelägna att FN förstärkas, men å andra sidan ser vi med rätt stort bekymmer, att FN-politiken ibland tycks gå i rikten mot större inblandning från organisationens sida än vad som kan anses nödvändigt. Särskilt när det gäller Kongo-politiken - den är ju aktuell just nu - tror jag att vi allesammans menar att Sverige skall medverka i FN:s arbete så länge det har ett i allt väsentligt fredsbevarande syfte, men att vi inte kan låta våra resurser användas för att stödja den ena eller andra parten i vad som håller på att utveckla sig till en inre kongoleisk konflikt.’

"In Swedish: ‘Självtallet skall vi stödja FN, men det måste starkt strykas under, att den hjälp vi där lämnar inte får innebära någon inblandning i Kongos inre angelägenheter.’"
distaste, as a member of the Liberal Party puts it (I kam 196I nr. 14, Boheman, fp, p. 104), very few objections toward the Swedish contribution are in fact raised. Most members of parliament continuously declare their continued support, and the decisions that have been taken are rarely revisited, irrespective of how dreadful the campaign begins to appear.

The government admits in early 196I that the rules on the use of weapons have become softer, but they do not motivate the change or really problematise the situation; they only emphasise that it is in Sweden’s interest that the guidelines are kept intact (I kam 196I nr. 3, Undén, s, p. 29). The Minister for Foreign Affairs acknowledges in early 196I that mistakes surely have been made, but at the same time: no one is perfect (I kam 196I nr. 3, Undén, s, p. 30; see also I kam 1963 nr. 17, Undén, s, p 52). In late 196I, he deplores the fighting but emphasises that the UN cannot be held responsible (II kam 196I nr. 36, Undén, s, p. 70). The Prime Minister similarly points out that the UN mission is a historical mission with essential meaning, despite the mistakes that have been made (I kam 196I nr. 14, Erlander, s, p. 110). At this point in time, the Swedish mission will be expanded by 100 men. A liberal representative also emphasises that mistakes and setbacks have occurred, but explains that the mission nevertheless is a success (I kam 196I nr. 14, Lundström, fp, p. 83). A conservative representative further acknowledges that mistakes have been made, yet stresses that it has been possible to refuse all allegations of intentional cruelty and brutality (II kam 1962 nr. 11, Cassel, h, p. 62). Overall, in the narrative(s) emerging, ‘mistakes’ is as close to critical reflection one gets. Yet, that mistakes have been made do not seem to imply that there are any improvements to make or lessons to be learned. The so-called mistakes are just a matter of fact, unnecessary to dwell on or address further; the ‘mistakes’ – which are related to the use of force – essentially appear as a natural or inescapable part of peacekeeping. Evidently, this representation of violence as isolated ‘mistakes’ makes the use of force seem irrelevant from a policy perspective; as the fighting never was part of the plan, the use of force is neither a Swedish decision, a Swedish responsibility, nor a Swedish problem. Thus, in terms of de/naturalisation, in/visibility and dis/identification, the political work of such a representation is threefold: the rhetoric of ‘mistakes’ obscures the war-like dimension of the ONUC mission, it downplays the exceptional aspect of engaging in combat and hence backgrounds the dimension of agency, while at the same time it distances Sweden from the decisions and responsibility that come with engaging in war.

*Formulated specifically by those supporting the mission in Congo and those who abstain from criticising neither the UN nor the Swedish government.
Nevertheless, while the government and others talk of mistakes, the violent element of the ONUC mission is certainly spoken about, and it causes concern. The fact that the Swedish battalion is involved in direct fighting in Congo is hardly concealed in the narratives reflected. The combat operations are described and acknowledged, albeit briefly, and the descriptions of the violent events are generally quite graphic and frank. In short, the duties of the Swedish battalion and the violence and combat associated with ONUC are generally made visible. Already after the incidents related to the train escorts in late 1960, a Social Democrat emphasises how severe the situation in Congo really is:

A group of Swedish soldiers in Congolese jungles, in combat with the jungles’ own people, has been the last weeks’ serious reminder of the tension and insecurity that characterise the world.\(^{23}\)

(I kam 1961 nr. 3, Alemyr, s. p. 215)

The government repeatedly ascertains, however, all throughout the intervention, that the Swedish battalion essentially was intended to serve and still serves as a ‘police force’. They are not to interfere in the internal conflict, the government insists; they are there to uphold law and order, and perform police tasks (I kam 1960 nr. 29, Undén, s. p. 40; II kam 1960 nr. 30, Undén, s. p. 132-134).\(^{24}\) A liberal representative further announces his support for the enlargement of the battalion and the heavier equipment, all for the purpose of solving ‘the task of upholding order’\(^{25}\) (I kam 1961 nr. 27, Lundström, fp, p. 18; see also I kam 1963 nr 17, Sundin, cp, p. 38). In terms of selective visibilities, the talk of upholding law and order certainly carries specific connotations; images of peacekeeping, first and foremost. By insisting that the Swedish battalion constitutes a ‘police force’ one can say that the government portrays the violent undertakings in Congo as essentially defensive in character.\(^{26}\) The war-like dimension is thus removed out of sight, as the use of force is represented as ‘defence’ rather than ‘aggression’; ultimately, ‘policing’ essentially seems to imply ‘non-violence’. Defensive violence is presumably easier to incorporate into the conception of Self, as it corresponds with previous practices and routines, peace-lovingness and peacekeeping. In regard to dis/identification, the references to police tasks – during the autumn of 1961 and onwards – essentially seem to serve as a

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\(^{23}\) In Swedish: ‘En grupp svenska soldater i kongoleiska djunglar i strid med djunglernas eget folk har blivit de senaste veckornas allvarliga gästster ordensuppgiften’.\(^{24}\) Cont. I kam 1961 nr. 3, Undén, s. p. 28; I kam 1961 nr. 15, Erlander, s. p. 78; II kam 1961 nr. 36, Undén, s. p. 69; I kam 1963 nr. 3, Strand, s. p. 32; II kam 1963 nr. 17, Nilsson, s. p. 26.

\(^{25}\) In Swedish: ‘ordningsuppgiften’.

\(^{26}\) Although, according to Tullberg (2002) and others, the violent confrontations in September and December of 1961 indeed take the form of offensive operations.
narrative response to the recurring reports on how Swedish soldiers are, in fact, taking part in war.

*Disruption?*

Although the government and those supporting the ONUC engagement point to the responsibility of the UN, the limited room for manoeuvre, and the *essentially* non-violent character of the Swedish military undertaking, other voices are present too.

For the Communist Party, which opposes the Swedish involvement from the beginning, there – at least initially – seems to be an alternative course of action. In the dialogue between the government and the Communist Party during the first year of ONUC and after the train escorts in Katanga, it becomes clear that the Communist Party challenges the general narrative with a different representation of reality and an alternative conception of Swedish identity and responsibility. Although both positions build on a shared concern to preserve the Swedish neutrality doctrine, conflicting notions of how a neutral state ought to behave characterise the debates between the government and the Communists. For the government, the Swedish neutrality prescribes military interference in Congo as it keeps the great powers out, which in the long run would benefit and secure Sweden’s neutral position. For the Communist Party, however, Swedish neutrality is now jeopardised as a result of the intervention in Congo, not merely due to the battle situations (with the Baluba militia) that Sweden is being forced into, but as Sweden now is at risk of being exploited by neo-colonial forces and ultimately becoming an instrument for a new colonial line of policy (Il kam 1960 nr. 30, Johansson, k, p. 132/137). As the set objective of driving out the Belgian troops not has been achieved, the UN mission has been no less than a failure. What the UN on the contrary has succeeded in doing is to split the country into four-five different governments while the number of Belgian soldiers in Congo has increased. Hence, the UN simply seems to have adopted the trademark of colonialism, that is: to divide and rule (I kam 1961 nr. 14, Persson, k, p. 102). In the statements made by the Communist Party, the Belgians are indeed depicted as the great enemy in Congo, an enemy that Sweden accidentally seems to support (e.g. Il kam 1961 nr. 3, Hagberg, k, p. 53). An image of a Belgian officer taking the fingerprints of Baluba prisoners while being assisted by a Swedish UN soldier holding the ink pad is one of the representations which essentially suggests that Sweden engages in questionable activities. Swedish soldiers are furthermore described to proudly have announced that the Baluba soldiers they were escorting

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2 In the very beginning of ONUC, the Communists advocate humanitarian efforts rather than military (I kam 1960 nr. 35, Ohman, k, p. 36; Il kam 1960 nr. 34, Hagberg, k, p. 65).
were *enchained*, a visual image that seems to relate to the history of slave trade. The Swedish soldiers do not even know how many Baluba soldiers they gunned down, it is claimed (II kam 1960 nr 30, Johansson, k. p. 132).

Clearly, the Communists initially offer an alternative representation of the Swedish battalion and the military activities they are engaging in; their representation constitutes a challenge to the more general representation of the Swedish undertaking as a honourable commitment and an act of UN loyalty. During the first year of the ONUC mission, the Communist Party links the Swedish actions undertaken in Congo to the Belgians, their abuses and their history of colonialism. What Sweden instead should be doing is to drive out the Belgians from Congo in a robust manner, one representative asserts: ‘Instead of going on the offensive against those who fought the separatists one should have gone on the offensive to get the Belgians out and to end this farce, which since has taken place in Congo’" (II kam 1961 nr. 14, Hagberg, k. p. 138). They challenge, so to speak, the representation of there being no alternatives. However, from the perspective of the Communist Party it is not the use of force *per se* that is here defined as a problem, but rather the UN’s and Sweden’s impotent position vis-a-vis the Belgians. In short, they never problematise the use of force as such.

No, the UN has certainly not had a glorious role in Congo."9

(II kam 1961 nr. 14, Hagberg, k. p. 130)

In response to the narrative (initially) outlined by the Communists, the government and the Minister for Foreign Affairs depict Sweden’s passiveness and submissiveness as virtues and as instruments for challenging former structures of colonialism. The reluctance to interfere in Congo’s internal affairs thus represents, it is claimed, a rejection of colonialism and the promotion of self-determination (II kam 1960 nr. 30, Undén, s).

It is important to stress that the Communist’s critique against the UN, the government and the Swedish battalion largely vanishes after the first year of ONUC. From late 1961 and onwards, it is primarily the right-wing opposition, rather than the Communist Party, that come to represent the voice of scepticism and criticism. Below is a quote from a conservative representative, which demonstrates how the violent practices at times are reconsidered in light of Sweden’s foreign policy and conception of Self. As the quote suggests, perhaps the chosen path is not the only way forward.

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*In Swedish: ‘I stället för att gå till offensiv mot dem som bekämpade dessa separatister skulle man ha gått till offensiv för att få i väg belgierna och göra slut på den komedi, som sedan har utspelats i kongo’.*

*In Swedish: ‘Nej, det är verkligen ingen årofull roll FN spelat i kongo’.*
after all, as the current policy will come with grave consequences. Generally, the articulations of scepticism among the right-wing opposition serve to make visible and denaturalise the Swedish engagement in heavy fighting, as the war-like dimension of the Swedish undertaking is brought to light and is being questioned on the basis of whether Sweden really should engage in such practices. Accordingly, Sweden is clearly also linked to the use of force.

One condition that is utterly serious, which already has been addressed here, is that Swedish military kills Africans every day. It causes hate and bitterness, which will remain for a long time. The Swedish troop is the dominant contingent down there. I have always believed that Sweden, with its position and because of other circumstances, has a special role as conciliator between nations. This task is made more difficult by what is happening down there.  

(Ii kam 1961 nr. 36, Dickson, h. p. 80)

Another statement, from a representative of the Centre Party, situates the Swedish troop in an on-going war, and questions whether it is appropriate that Swedish troops actually play such a significant role in Katanga: ‘It is not this form of activity that has made Sweden recognised and well-known in international contexts’ (II kam 1961 nr. 36, Eliasson, ep, p. 71). He suspects that the UN has misjudged the situation in Congo, and further wonders: where is the line between police tasks and being part of the conflict? (e.g. II kam 1961 nr. 36, Eliasson, ep, p. 70). He thus challenges the government’s description of Sweden’s involvement by bringing to light the fact that the Swedish military undertaking has gradually transformed beyond police matters. In a different debate, a liberal representative claims that the Swedish battalion, previously armed for police operations, is now armed for battle and has, as a matter of fact, already been used for such purposes. ‘For me, it is completely repulsive’, he states, ‘that Swedish soldiers will gun down natives, whether they are Katanga gendarmes or they belong to the Baluba tribe’ (I kam 1961 nr. 27, Boheman, ḫp, p. 45). He still wants to make it clear, though, that his statement in no way means to criticise the government.

In terms of invisibility and de/naturalisation, the debate on 15 December 1961 (II kam 1961 nr. 36) could be considered one of the more significant debates, where the policy on the use of force is brought to the fore. This particular debate is an

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31 In Swedish: ‘Det är inte denna form av verksamhet, som gjort Sverige känt och välkänd i internationella sammanhang’.

32 In Swedish: ‘… det är för mig något ytterst motbudande att svenska soldater skall skjuta ner infödingar, vare sig de är Kentangagendarmer eller de tillhör Balubastammen’.
interpellation debate, which is motivated by the growing concern among Sweden’s population, and what appears as a deteriorating situation in Congo. The debate takes place during the ongoing strife in Katanga, when the Swedish battalion is involved in heavy fighting. Here, it becomes clear that the Congo mission as a whole and the Swedish battalion’s engagement in combat most specifically have disrupted the notion of Swedish identity and narrative on the use of force. What now is happening in Congo was simply not meant to happen.33

In general, one can here notice two ways of dealing with the issue of violence and the Swedish military undertaking. Either, the statements simply acknowledge and offer descriptions of the engagement in violence, or the statements truly problematise Sweden’s role in combat. Generally, this is what distinguishes the narrative delineated by the government from many of the statements now presented by the right-wing opposition. Yet, it is important to stress that regardless of recent developments on the ground, everyone still supports a continued military presence in Congo. Despite the expressed concerns, no one advocates a withdrawal of the Swedish troops (e.g. II kam 1961 nr. 36, Wedén, fp, p. 71; II kam 1961 nr. 36, Heckscher, h, p. 75; II kam 1961 nr. 36, Ohlin, fp, p. 77).

As a representative of the Right Wing Party stresses, the government has ascertained that the Swedish battalion will only be used for police tasks, for the purpose of upholding calm and order, which – of course – does not exclude the use of force for defensive purposes. ‘We have relied on this,’ the representative clarifies, ‘and I believe that we all still rely thereon’34 (I kam 1961 nr. 36, Jacobsson, h, p. 4). Prior to this clarification, he has already announced that he shares the concern with the Swedish population: Swedish lives have been lost and Swedish lives are still at risk. His worry, he explains, is related to the uncertainties on whether Swedish soldiers have been used for operations that reach beyond what Sweden has agreed to take on and what Sweden could take on, given its neutrality doctrine (I kam 1961 nr. 36, Jacobsson, h, p. 3). He acknowledges the dissonance, as it were, between the Swedish identity and the practice of violence, and opens up for a critical reconsideration of the mission. Even still, his statement is regardless concluded with a declaration of how reassured he feels by the Minister for Foreign Affairs’ reply, which confirms that the government seeks a peaceful solution to the Congo crisis.

Throughout the whole ONUC period, political representatives are envisioning what could go wrong; as it is portrayed, a ‘colonial war’ in Congo seems to be on the

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33 All parties seem to agree that what now has happened in Congo was not foreseen by the Swedish decision makers, and they all to various degree acknowledge that something went out of plan (e.g. I kam 1961 nr. 37, Erlander, s, p. 74).
34 In Swedish: ‘Vi har förlitat oss på detta, och jag tror att vi alla alljämt förlitar oss därpå.’
horizon. As the representative of the Right Wing Party stresses, anything like it would be ‘a bad dream’; to solve the Congo question through military violence and bloodshed would simply be unthinkable, he states (I kam 1961 nr. 36, Jacobsson, h, p. 4). Many consider the Swedish engagement to be riskful and worry that Swedish soldiers will get involved in ‘real’ fighting (I kam 1961 nr. 27, Boheman, fp, p. 74; I kam 1961 nr. 27, Jacobsson, h, p. 83). Beyond that, some members of parliament express concern not only for what could happen or already is happening in Congo, but also for what the practices of violence mean for Sweden in a broader sense. A major concern is how the events unfolding in Congo might jeopardise the Swedish image and position. How could the war-like events and actions undertaken in Congo be reconciled with the neutrality doctrine? And what will become of the virtues characterising Swedish foreign policy? Without doubt, the debates – both on 15 December and generally during the autumn of 1961 and onwards – reflect an awareness that the incidents in Congo are not consistent with the image of Sweden and that they may appear illegitimate.

Many of those who represent the right wing and centre opposition are deeply concerned. Yet, despite the problematisation and expressed scepticism, they trust the government; they assume that the Swedish soldiers will not be used for direct offensive operations or interfere in Congo’s internal affairs (I kam 1961 nr. 27, Jacobsson, h, p. 83; I kam 1961 nr. 36, Jacobsson, h, p. 3-4). Additionally, with reference to dis/identification, the Swedish soldiers never become a subject of criticism; they are repeatedly and throughout the intervention praised for their conduct, which is often contrasted against the questionable conduct performed by other states’ soldiers. The Swedish soldiers thus come to represent anything but violent, and anything but immoral. If anything, what causes concern is what the UN has forced these Swedish soldiers into, and whether Sweden could and should accept involvement in war.

Regarding the practice of using force, one can say that the parliamentary debates move between problematisation and naturalisation. Representatives from the right wing and centre opposition are troubled by and sceptical of the undertakings in Congo – something just doesn’t seem quite right. Yet, the debates nevertheless seem to bring unity and consensus; the confusion and scepticism ‘fade’ as a result of the continuous dialogue and reassurances from the government. Critical reflection is there, but toned down or contradicted by the reassurances from the government, the

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5 Apart, perhaps, from some statements made by the Communist Party after the train escorts incidents in late 1960.
affirmations of loyalty, and the lack of blame. Although the violent element indeed is present, linked to Sweden and depicted as a concern, the use of force is nevertheless represented as a no-choice; thus, the debates do not open up for the envisioning of alternatives. The use of force does not appear as a choice (for Sweden), a decision, which inevitably comes with a responsibility; ultimately, the military undertakings in Congo are not the ‘fault’ of Sweden. When the offensive character of the mission is brought to light, made visible – as when the police tasks are claimed to have transformed into combat tasks – the support remains; somehow, to criticise the Swedish government (rather than just the UN or other states) seems to be out of place (e.g. I kam 1961 nr. 27, Boheman, fp, p. 44).

Final years: Time to reflect?

During the last two years of ONUC – in 1963 and 1964 – remarkably little is said about the past years in Congo or the fighting in which the Swedish battalion has taken part. In the parliamentary debates, the remarks on Congo predominantly reflect relief and contentment; the situation in Congo has improved and the representatives now seem to expect that the episodes of fighting are history (e.g. I kam 1963 nr. 3; I kam 1963 nr. 17). Many refer to the previous lack of knowledge and information, and note that it was unclear what was actually happening on the ground (I kam 1963 nr. 3, Hagberg, h, p. 6; I kam 1963 nr. 17, Segerstedt Wiberg, fp, p. 49; see also I kam 1961 nr. 27 Erlander, s, p. 73). One can also add that the issue of disinformation has been brought up repeatedly, for years (II kam 1962 nr. 3, Undén, s, p. 66-67; II kam 1963 nr. 17, Gustafsson, s, p. 36; I kam 1963 nr. 17, Hernelius, h, p. 45).

A leading Social Democrat claims that the media has ‘blown up’ the combat in Congo; he accentuates that the Swedish troops have not been sent down to Congo to engage in combat, but to uphold order. They now seem to have succeeded, he adds (I kam 1963 nr. 3, Strand, s, p. 42). A Centre Party representative further states that given the achieved results, one should not regret the sacrifices that have been made (I kam 1963 nr. 17, Bengtson, ep, p. 10). Some even explicitly criticise the criticism that was raised during critical periods (e.g. I kam 1963 nr. 17, Sundin, ep, p. 38).

Far better than to try to cast suspicion on the Swedish efforts, we have all reason to be content with the fact that our country has been given the opportunity to carry out a meaningful mission in Congo in the service of peace.\(^8\)

(II kam 1963 nr. 17, Gustafsson, s, p. 36)

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\(^8\) In Swedish: ‘Långt hellre än att försöka misstankliggöra de svenska insatserna har vi all anledning att vara tillfreds med att vårt land fått möjligheter att i kongo utföra ett betydelsefullt uppdrag i fredens tjänst.’
Today there is presumably a general satisfaction that these efforts were made.\(^3\)

(I kam 1963 nr 17, Sundin, cp, p. 38)

With satisfaction and joy, I now notice, that they have let us know that this ill-fated Congo adventure finally is phased out.\(^4\)

(I kam 1964 nr. 15, Nilsson Ferdinand, cp. p. 54)

For the most part, the Swedish decision to engage in the so-called Congo adventure is neither reconsidered nor discussed. Consequently, the military engagement does not generally appear as something exceptional, which will have consequences into the future – for Sweden and Swedish policy – but as something that just occurred and now lies behind, or as a (peace) work well done. Occasionally, however, the debates heat up, and the course of events do not always seem as a given. With regard to invisibility and de/naturalisation, the instances of dispute – which are few – are characterised by the struggle to make the Congo engagement appear un/controversial and/or keep it un/seen. Yet, in terms of dis/identification, the focus is continuously and primarily on the UN and its leadership, rather than the Swedish actors involved or the Swedish actors responsible. In early 1963, for instance, a liberal representative claims that the UN leadership has clearly been operating on the very limit of what the initial directives would allow (II kam 1963 nr. 3, Ohlin, fp, p. 12; see also I kam 1964 nr. 18, Hernelius, h, p. 34). Stricter directives should be formulated, he says, but he is careful to stress that his remark does not represent criticism, either of the UN leadership or the Swedish government. As many others, he is careful with the words; as a result, clear demands or full-on criticism are often absent.

However, in the spring of 1963, a conservative representative offers a narrative that stands in deep contrast to that of the majority (II kam 1963 nr. 17, Edlund, h, p. 65-67). The UN has failed, he says; the UN principles have been set aside, and one can question the truthfulness in UN’s own information about the mission. The Swedish government should call for an investigation of the war in Katanga, he suggests; the contentment with the Swedish soldiers’ high combat morals, competence and discipline is overshadowed by the questionable methods of the UN, and success cannot justify the means, he continues.

These testimonies [on how bravely and calmly the Swedish battalion has acted] ought to be as true today as when they were uttered, and that is certainly satisfying, when these Swedes now have to take part in the war that the UN has initiated, with all it means in terms of unjustified suffering for the civilian

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\(^3\) In Swedish: ‘Idag råder nog allman belåtenhet över att de insatserna gjordes.’

\(^4\) In Swedish: ‘Med tillfredsställelse och glädje konstaterar jag, att man nu ger oss besked om att detta olyksaliga Kongo-äventyr antingen avvecklats.’
population. The same could, however, not be said about some other UN units and staff. Sadly, one can find many harrowing documents suggesting the opposite.\(^{\text{ii}}\)

\begin{quote}
(II kam 1963 nr. 17, Edlund, h, p. 67)\(^{\text{ii}}\)
\end{quote}

The government – i.e. the Social Democrats – never replies to his accusations and demands. A few weeks later, another conservative representative initiates a heated debate with the government on the legitimacy of the war and the responsibility for the war (II kam 1963 nr. 20). The debate could be thought of as an attempt to problematise the decision to use and engage in violence; the government’s response, on the other hand, which is described a few paragraphs down, could be considered a naturalising move.

Firstly, the conservative representative argues that the Foreign Affairs Committee has demonstrated a resistance to discuss what has happened in Congo, and that they pretend that the UN is flawless. The Swedish troops have been put into action, so who is responsible for this war? Although the Swedish battalion has acted exemplarily, he asserts, war crimes have been committed under the UN’s responsibility, yet the UN acts indifferent and show no intention of dealing with or addressing the problems (II kam 1963 nr. 20, Wachtmeister, h, p. 127-128).

But if one, to this day, still doesn’t know how a war could be started completely anonymously, it is certainly about time to start to investigate that question.\(^{\text{iii}}\)

\begin{quote}
(II kam 1963 nr. 20, Wachtmeister, h, p. 127)
\end{quote}

The conservative representative further adds that Sweden should reflect on the events that have unfolded, in order to do better next time (II kam 1963 nr. 20, Wachtmeister, h, p. 131). Additionally, a fellow party member urges the government to examine whether it was right that Swedish troops took part in the UN actions in Katanga in the first place; such an inquiry is certainly significant for Sweden as a country (II kam 1963 nr. 20, Braconier, h, p. 130). Although these statements first and foremost reflect scepticism towards the UN, they also touch upon broader issues regarding questions of responsibility and the Swedish policy on the use of force. As such, they indeed represent the strongest attack on the government during the whole intervention.

\(^{\text{ii}}\) In Swedish: ‘Dessa omdömen torde vara lika berättigade idag som då de fälldes och detta är ju i och för sig tillfredsställande när dessa svenskar nu måste deltaga i det av FN-sidan igångsatta kriget med allt vad det innebär av oförskylld ledande för civilbefolknings. Emellertid tycks inte samma omdömen kunna göras om en del andra FN-forbund och FN-personal utan dessvärre finns många skakande dokument som tyder på motsatsen.’

\(^{\text{iii}}\) In the spring of 1964, a representative of the Centre Party further points to the bias reporting from Congo, where no one ever reports on the number of African deaths and causalities caused by the Swedish engagement (I kam 1964 nr. 15, Nilsson-Ferdinand, cp, p. 54).

\(^{\text{iv}}\) In Swedish: ‘Men vet man ännu idag inte hur ett krig kunnat sättas igång helt anonymt, är det verkliga på tiden att man börjar utreda frågan.’
The response from the Social Democratic spokesperson is intriguing, yet corresponds with the narrative that has been outlined from the very beginning of ONUC. To blame the UN for the actions of war in Congo reflects mistrust in the UN as a whole, it is argued. Sweden should instead be thankful to the UN; if the UN had not stepped in, the war could have expanded to include the whole of Africa. The bloody fights, which represent self-defence on behalf of the UN troops, have been deplorable but no one benefits from a deeper exploration of the questions brought up by the conservative representatives (II kam 1963 nr. 20, Bengtsson, s. p. 129).

Hence, what the government representative suggests is that there is no reason to reflect further on the events that have unfolded; again, there does not seem to have been any alternative course of action. Perhaps to contrast the narrative of the Right Wing Party, as it is outlined in this particular debate, the Social Democrat uses terms such as ‘peacework’, ‘peace action’ and ‘bring peace and order’\textsuperscript{41} to describe the UN mission in Congo (II kam 1963 nr. 20, Bengtsson, s. p. 132). Essentially, he says, it is not the UN’s fault that what happened, happened. In short, the criticism raised, the questions asked, are never really addressed or confronted by the government; the ‘problems’ of the ONUC mission and the Swedish engagement in war are instead, as it were, dismissed and swept aside.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURATION: IN/VISIBILITY, DIS/IDENTIFICATION & DE/NATURALISATION

ONUC represents an intervention during which the violent element generally is being exposed, made visible, and represented as a concrete aspect of military activities. The descriptions of Sweden’s involvement in combat are – which some of the quotes above illustrate – generally quite concrete and revealing. The events unfolding in Congo are also depicted as deeply troubling and disturbing; ultimately, the practices in Congo are – at least in some statements – recognised as conflicting with the Swedish identity. The violence is generally articulated as exceptional rather than routine; it is represented as a deviation from previous practices rather than a natural and expected aspect of peacekeeping. A lot is now at stake, it seems: the conception of Sweden, world peace, the principle of non-interference and the existence of a well-functioning UN.

Although the violent element of ONUC is very much present throughout the debates, and articulated as abnormal and unexpected, the narratives emerging are clearly characterised by a displacement of responsibility. The violent element of ONUC is repeatedly differentiated from Sweden and Swedish policy. In terms of dis/identification, the practice of using force is linked to the UN while differentiated

\textsuperscript{41} In Swedish: ‘fredsarbeje’, ‘fredsaktion’, ‘bringa fred och ordning’.
from Sweden, although it is Swedish soldiers that engage in violence. It is repeatedly and continuously emphasised that the UN takes action in Congo, not Sweden. This could ultimately be understood as a way of distancing Sweden from the decisions and responsibility related to the use of force. One may say that the differentiation between Sweden and the UN renders the Swedish use of force less visible, as the role of Sweden and its battalion is continuously backgrounded. For instance, it is rather striking how little focus is given to the soldiers that have been killed in Congo.6

At the same time, by differentiating Sweden from the decision to use force, the Swedish engagement in violence is naturalised; overall, there doesn’t seem to be an alternative course of action for Sweden – not merely because the situation is desperate, but because the UN is in charge. As made clear by many, Sweden cannot withdraw its battalion, as it would signify an act of disloyalty. The UN can be criticised but not to the extent that it threatens the UN’s existence or the ambition of keeping the great powers out of Congo. This alleged lack of influence on the actions taken in Congo almost makes the combat confrontations seem inevitable, unless, of course, the UN would change its strategy or directives. Hence, the use of force doesn’t appear as a political decision and a choice; however disturbing the Swedish engagement in Congo may appear, the Swedish soldiers are really not Swedish, and the decision to engage in battle has really not been a Swedish decision.6 Ultimately, this logic makes the scepticism that is actually articulated seem misplaced or irrelevant. On the whole, the debates on Congo do not seem to open up for a revision of Swedish policy or for identifying anew, as the ‘ill-fated’ and ‘unfortunate’ adventure in Congo essentially is not linked to Sweden; regardless of whether the events are portrayed as disastrous or successful, Sweden as a state has little to do with the actions that were taken. Instead, the questionable inference in Congo is either the responsibility of the UN or the ‘fault’ of other states’ soldiers.

In terms of how violence is made seen and known, the debates generally reflect a continuous movement between making visible and concealing, and between problematisation and naturalisation. One can – for instance – notice a difference between the government’s rhetoric and that of the Communists or parts of the right wing and centre opposition. As has been noted, there is clearly a difference between describing the involvement in violent confrontations and problematising such involvements. At times, the engagement in ONUC is considered a dilemma and/or a political problem, with implications that need to be addressed. Yet, the government,

6 According to Tullberg (2012) the government distanced itself from direct responsibility by stressing that the Swedish battalion consisted of voluntary soldiers who were deployed on an international mission [p. 234].

6 Once, however, the government acknowledges that a continued participation in ONUC means a great responsibility [I kam #61 nr. 3, Undén, s. p. 38].
on its part, describes and acknowledges the incidents – the incidents as such are not denied – yet foregrounds the defensive character of the work of the Swedish battalion. By reassuring the members of parliament that the battalion indeed constitutes a police force, the practices in Congo are made to appear more in line with the Swedish self-image and previous routines than is suggested in the press, with pictures of Sweden at war.\(^6\) As the government narrative portrays the use of force as defensive (as in patrol or policing) rather than simply as an engagement in violence and fighting, one can argue that the government redescribes the events on the ground; the war-like dimension of the events unfolding and the exceptionality of engaging in combat is generally concealed by, for instance, the talk of ‘mistakes’ and lack of knowledge. Fundamentally, by emphasising the defensive character of the Swedish mission, the war-like dimension is backgrounded and removed out of sight, while the mission at the same time appears to be more in line with the expected rather than a break with old routines – hence, it doesn’t appear as a political dilemma, a political choice, but as a natural part of the mission.

Ultimately, it is evident that the government’s reassurances, among other things, help to create consensus and unity. With the representation of the Swedish military undertaking as defensive, and essentially the concern of the UN, it appears as if the ongoing practices in Congo do not require further discussion. Although critical reflections regarding the practice of force are articulated, the government and many of those supporting the intervention nevertheless reduce the use of force to something unavoidable and incontestable, ultimately out of Sweden’s control. At the end of ONUC, the violent events are only acknowledged by a very few as something that needs to be revisited, something to learn from or reconsider and examine, something to take responsibility for. At times, the government even avoids further discussion on the events that have unfolded. Paradoxically, although the narratives delineate the violent confrontations as a problem, violence ultimately appears as a natural part of peacekeeping, rather than essentially a disruption. In that sense, the significance and ‘problem’ of violence is largely being concealed.

\(^6\) See e.g. Tullberg (2012) and the chapter on Congo in part III.
UNPROFOR: Bosnia 1993-1995

UNPROFOR was established in early 1992 and was, from the onset, intended to be a traditional peacekeeping operation. However, as the operation proceeded and the peace process did not advance, it became clear that the UNPROFOR operated within a grey zone between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement, and it quickly turned into a so-called peacekeeping operation ‘model six and a half’ (Agrell, 2013: 31; Dalsjö, 1995: 105). To adapt to the changing conditions on the ground, the mandate of the UN operation in Bosnia was gradually expanded, and the character of the mission transformed from traditional peacekeeping to peacekeeping that included elements of military intervention in line with Chapter VII in the UN Charter. With time, the objectives and practices of peacekeeping and peace-enforcement were proven to be incompatible, and the idea of combining the two were to have devastating effects, as became manifest during the summer of 1995 with the UN’s failure to protect the so-called safe areas (Agrell, 2013: 41). In late 1995, once a peace agreement had been signed, UNPROFOR was replaced by IFOR, which was a peace-enforcement mission.

On 19 August 1993, the Swedish government took the formal decision to place a military unit at the disposal of the UN for service in UNPROFOR in Bosnia. The decision was taken after the parliament’s formal approval and after a half-year-long period of planning and preparation within the Armed Forces (Dalsjö, 1995: 105/107). Swedish units or individuals were already serving within UNPROFOR, but now Sweden had been requested to expand its military contribution and dispatch troops to Bosnia. Hence, a Nordic mechanised battalion called NORDBAT 2 was established, which included three Swedish armoured infantry units, a Danish tank squadron, and a Norwegian medical company (Agrell, 2013: 44; Dalsjö, 1995: 96). The two prime tasks of NORDBAT 2 were to protect the humanitarian transports and the newly declared safe area around Tuzla. The battalion had authorisation to use force to protect the humanitarian convoys but had not been given authority to stop attackers or to inflict a cease-fire (UD 1995-10-04). BA02 and BA03, the second and third Swedish battalions in Bosnia, were both engaged in fighting, but no Swedish soldiers were ever killed in action in Bosnia (Dalsjö, 1995: 111; Försvarsmakten.se, UNPROFOR). As Dalsjö (1995) describes it at the time, the Swedish battalion in Bosnia was ‘the heaviest, most well-equipped and well-trained unit Sweden has sent out into UN-service’ and ‘the first to take major part in combat or combat-like operations since the Congo’ (p. 96).

THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE

In terms of political contestation regarding the use of force, no one is opposing a
Swedish military engagement in UNPROFOR. Yet the issue of peacekeeping versus peace-enforcement initially becomes a prominent subject of debate. In light of the events in the Balkans, the ‘passive’ character of peacekeeping is considered insufficient and even morally reprehensible, and new forms of military involvement are debated and legitimised in Swedish parliamentary debates. As reflected in the Committee on Foreign Affairs’ report in the spring of 1993 (1992/93: UU35), the government stresses that the military troops need to have the capacity to defend themselves and others. They thereto need to have the capacity to forcefully claim authority and carry out decisions even if armed groups in Bosnia dissent. The Swedish troops are said not to take any initiatives to use force and the intervention is expected to essentially take the form of a peacekeeping mission.

In parliament, no one is questioning the legitimacy of dispatching troops to Bosnia, not even the right-wing populist party, New Democracy. New Democracy even suggests that Sweden could and should do more in terms of military deployment (e.g. 1993/94: 65, Windén, ndy, anf. 3; see also 1992/93: 124, Moquist, ndy, anf. 28). After half a year, the Left Party also notes that a peace-enforcement operation is required, as peacekeeping has proven to be ineffective (1993/94: 65, Måbrink, v, anf. 4). Generally, Sweden is described as an advocate for peace, but at this moment forced to deploy violence against its will. Sweden is a ‘peace-loving nation’ (1993/94: 65, Eriksson, m, anf. 124), yet ‘even keen supporters of peace’ are obliged to realise that violence and the threat to use force at times are necessary (1993/94: 65, Schori, s, anf. 125). ‘Pacifists and humanists’ thus need to use violence to uphold peace, humanism and international law:

Otherwise we would live according to the law of the jungle and in a world of barbarity. It is the force in the UN’s and NATO’s decision that now saves lives; it is the former weakness that claimed so many victims.\(^a\)

(1993/94: 65, Schori, s, anf. 125)

During the UNPROFOR debates, violence is described as a necessity. However, the use of force is depicted as an exceptional measure, which requires justification; hence, the use of force seems to be out of the ordinary. The framing of the war as a European apocalypse serves the legitimization of violent interference\(^b\); the use of force

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\(^a\) In Swedish: ‘även fredsvänner’

\(^b\) In Swedish: ‘Annars skulle vi leva enligt djungelns lag och i barbariets värld. Det är krafterna i FN:s och NATO:s beslut som nu räddar liv; det är den tidigare svagheten som skördat så många offer’.

\(^c\) In parliamentary debates during the first year of the Swedish engagement in UNPROFOR, the war in Bosnia is indeed depicted as a great disaster for the Balkans, yet it is thereto considered a great tragedy for Europe as a whole (e.g. 1993/94: 4, Granstedt, c, anf. 21: 1993/94: 4, Holmberg, fp, anf. 7). A representative of the Liberal Party speaks of an apocalypse and suggests that it is ultimately the European great powers that are responsible for the destructive history of the Balkans; just as they redrew the map of the Balkans after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, they now...
is described to be the only alternative, and hence the given choice. Still, although the representatives agree on the legitimacy of using force and portray it as the only choice, what ‘the use of force’ will mean in practice seems harder to determine.

**Something in between: persisting vagueness**

The initial debates on the question of deploying ground troops to Bosnia, which take place prior to any formal request has been issued by the UN, are clearly characterised by a certain confusion regarding the character of the UN mandate under which the troops will serve. During an interpellation debate on 7 May 1993 the Minister for Foreign Affairs proclaims that the mandate is expected to be of a peacekeeping nature, yet the Swedish battalion should be ‘flexible’ regarding the tasks and have an ability ‘to solve peacekeeping missions also in a fairly difficult threat environment’ (1992/93: 107, af Uggglas, m, anf. 28/31). She thereto recognises that there is a substantial risk that the Swedish peacekeeping force will be drawn into combat operations. Again, the troops are not supposed to take initiative, but might nevertheless be forced into combat. In response, a representative of the Centre Party emphasises that the Swedish force will bear a great responsibility for how it acts; violence should only be used in extreme situations of emergency, to save human lives. It is important, he notes, that the military personnel are allowed to act more like civilian mediators than as soldiers in the traditional sense (1992/93: 107, Granstedt, c, anf. 29/32). To carry out civilian duties within the framework of UN missions is something that Swedish soldiers are fairly good at, the Minister for Foreign Affairs confirms.

A month later, on 8 June 1993, the government has issued a proposition and the Committee on Foreign Affairs has concluded a report regarding a Swedish military engagement in the intervention in Bosnia. Although the UN has not yet issued any formal request, it is expected that a Swedish contribution will soon be requested. It is now that the question of peacekeeping versus peace-enforcement becomes salient:

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51 In Swedish: ‘att lösa fredsbevarande uppgifter även i relativt svår hotmiljö’.

52 The government receives a formal request from the UN’s Secretary General on 17 August 1993. On 18 August, after deliberations in the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs, the government takes the decision to make available an armed force including 880 people to the military mission in Bosnia (1993/94: 22, Minister of Foreign Affairs, anf. 1).
what kind of engagement are the members of parliament really discussing? At this time, the Security Council resolution has been passed and it is clear to everyone that UNPROFOR will not take the shape of a traditional peacekeeping mission. Nonetheless, what the mandate means for the Swedish battalion, and to what extent the use of force will and should be authorised becomes an issue of debate.

A Social Democrat begins by defining UNPROFOR as essentially a peacekeeping operation, yet one which includes ‘elements’ reaching beyond the traditional practice of strict peacekeeping (1992/93: 124, Schori, s, anf. 3). The Left Party, which generally supports the proposition issued by the government, acknowledges that the UN troops in Bosnia will not only serve under a peacekeeping mandate but also under a peace-enforcement mandate. The main tasks of the battalion should be peacekeeping, but they recognise that peace-enforcement is required in Bosnia and accept that Swedish soldiers will also engage in some peace-enforcement actions. The ethnic cleansing must be stopped and it is necessary to establish respect for the UN forces; the UN troops should therefore be allowed to use violence in self-defence, to protect the civilian population and to take action against groups that do not accept a negotiated peace plan53 (1992/93: 124, Mäbrink, v, anf. 5).

A majority of the statements articulated in the debate are supportive of the government’s proposition and recognise that an intervention reaching beyond traditional peacekeeping is required in Bosnia. To demonstrate solidarity with the UN and to take responsibility for the security of Europe, also Sweden should be prepared to participate (1992/93: 124, Tarschys, fp, anf. 6; Grönlund, m, anf. 9; Söderberg54, anf. 18). Given the uncertain and dynamic nature of the situation in former Yugoslavia, one cannot expect the mandate to be anything else but broad (Grönlund, m, anf. 23).

However, a few members of parliament, primarily representing the centre and right wing of the political spectrum, are sceptical to the idea that Swedish soldiers should now engage in actions reaching beyond peacekeeping (1992/93: 124, Theorin, s, anf. 11; Hambraeus, c, anf. 17). While adding to the general confusion regarding the character of the mandate, a Social Democratic representative states that she will not accept so-called elements of peace-enforcement, but that she supports a peacekeeping mandate, in which the soldiers are given authority to defend themselves and the safe zones, and protect the civilian population and transports (1992/93: 124, Theorin, s, anf. 11). These tasks resemble what a liberal representative, among others, already has identified as an expansion of the mandate in terms of using

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53 Given, of course, that there will be a peace plan in place, which is not the case until December 1995.
54 Independent, former representative of New Democracy.
55 Cont. Irhammar, c, anf. 15; Viklund, kds, anf. 16; Lemmmarker, m, anf. 19; Moquist, nyd, anf. 28.
56 Cont. von der Esch, m, anf. 22/24; Bergdahl, nyd, anf. 26.
force, which the majority of representatives have also approved (1992/93: 124, Tarschys, fp, anf. 6).\footnote{Theorin (s) further refers to the Swedish request during the Congo crisis in the 1960s, which stated that the UN troops should not initiate the use of force, and suggests that such a restriction, where, as she says, the so-called elements of peace-enforcement are excluded, could also be applicable in this case (1992/93: 124, af. n.).}

With reference to attempts to problematise and make the use of force visible, the sceptics portray a military intervention that includes ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement as a potential war. When given authority to ‘defend others’, one takes side with one of the parties of conflict, and what will the other parties of conflict do then? (1992/93: 124, Theorin, s, anf. n). As a representative of the Centre Party suggests, there is a risk that the mission turns into a war between the UN and... well, who? (1992/93: 124, Hambraeus, c, anf. 17).

I believe that Sweden shall not break with its centuries-old tradition by starting to wage war.\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Jag anser att Sverige inte skall bryta sin sekelgamla tradition genom att börja föra krig.’}

\[1992/93: 124, 
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Not for generations have Swedish soldiers been sent out to direct acts of war, albeit now for the purpose of peace-enforcement. Yet, what acts of war are not peace-enforcement?\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Inte sedan flera generationer tillbaka har svenska soldater skickats ut i direkta krigshandlingar, låt vara att det nu sker i fredsframtvingande syfte. Men vilka krigshandlingar är inte fredsframtvingande?’}

\[1992/93: 124, 
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In this first parliamentary debate, and during the initial phase of Sweden’s military engagement, the critical voices articulate peace-enforcement as a practice of war rather than a modernised and updated version of traditional peacekeeping. The concept of war evokes a different set of connotations than peacekeeping, of course, which essentially appear incompatible with the deep-rooted Swedish self-perception of being a non-warring state. The few being sceptical of the ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement differentiate Sweden from the US and other great powers in Europe in regard to Sweden’s lack of war experience. These other countries, which are accustomed to waging war and engaging their men in battle, should know the risks and know about the consequences such an engagement could bring. Sweden, on the other hand, which lacks any war experience, should not be too hasty, and restrain its eagerness to contribute with troops (e.g. 1992/93: 124, Hambraeus, c, anf. 17; 1992/93: 124, Bergdahl, nyd, anf. 26). Sweden’s lack of war experience, which is emphasised by the sceptics, is delineated as a valuable trademark of Swedish identity.

In October and November 1993, after the first Swedish battalion has been deployed to Bosnia, the character of the mandate yet again becomes an issue of
debate. In terms of dis/identification and in/visibility, the most significant narrative theme that now takes shape in the debates on Bosnia is the differentiation between defensive and offensive violence (1993/94: 4, af Ugglas, anf. 4; 1993/94: 22, af Ugglas, anf. 3; 1993/94: 22, Måbrink, v, anf. 4). The term *defensive violence* is first introduced as a descriptive concept after the Swedish troops have already been deployed, on 7 October 1993, when the Minister for Foreign Affairs attempts to modify the Left Party’s classification of the Swedish engagement as peace-enforcement (see 1993/94: 4, Zetterberg, v, anf. 3). Although the mission will likely become more dangerous than previous deployments and the mandate needs to allow a certain level of violence, it should be ‘kept to a minimum’:

> It is not in itself a peace-enforcement mandate. It is a mandate that includes an expanded possibility to use defensive violence. Precisely because this was a considerably more dangerous mission, which could include elements of defensive violence, the government took an additional measure and made the effort to present a bill in parliament, which asked for authorisation from the parliament.60

(1993/94: 4, Af Ugglas, m, anf. 4)

To expand the possibility to use defensive violence does not appear to be a controversial issue; instead, it is something that all parties subscribe to. However, it is never specified what the term *defensive violence* actually could come to include; the mission will evidently not take the form of a classic peacekeeping mission, nor will it be a distinct peace-enforcement mission. As peacekeeping mandates traditionally include a right to use force for defensive purposes, the concept of defensive violence could be considered a rhetorical move to differentiate Sweden’s actions from those of the warring parties, and ultimately to differentiate Sweden from practices of warfare. Hence, with regard to selective visibilities and processes of linking and differentiation, the Swedish military undertakings are depicted as something *different* from those of others. Essentially, the concept consolidates the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate violence, as well as legitimate and illegitimate actors engaged in the use of force, and ultimately reproduces the notion of Sweden being an observer rather than an intervening actor. As previously noted, sceptics of the Swedish engagement have suggested that peace-enforcement would come to mean a war-like engagement and that the use of force would mean the taking of sides. By emphasising the distinction between defensive and offensive violence, the debates reconcile, one may say, this new type of military involvement with already established visibilities.

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representations of Self.

At this point in time, in October and November of 1993, the few attempts to articulate political dissent in relation to the Swedish involvement revolve around Sweden’s position of neutrality and what form of violence Sweden eventually may get involved with. It is not the concept or practice of defensive violence as such that is questioned but a potential future cooperation with NATO; such a cooperation would – it is argued – blur the distinction between defensive and offensive violence. It is also claimed that the government has concealed this eventuality. What distinguishes offensive from defensive violence has not been clarified; still, the distinction serves to differentiate Sweden from other actors militarily engaged in the Balkans. Even though the Swedish troops by all accounts will engage in some form of peace-enforcement also under UN command, the questions raised concerning the use of force refer to NATO and their presence in the region.

Then it is interesting with the NATO-troops, as they will have three tasks, according to Bill Hopkinson from the English Ministry of Defence. The first is to keep the warring parties apart. That is not a defensive mission in my view. That is something completely different from that of using defensive violence, which we agreed upon here in June. /…/ Did you know about this already on 8 June when the parliament discussed this, that NATO would go in with troop contingents as large as is now the case, and that Swedes would be part of the offensive activities that will be carried out?

The force will be under NATO’s south command and led by an American officer. That is my main problem.

It is noteworthy that the term defensive violence was never used during the debates on 8 June; rather, at that time the Left Party approved the proposition that UNPROFOR would include elements of peace-enforcement. Now, however, the possible deployment of a NATO-led intervention force comes to represent peace-enforcement; such a force could, as the Left suggests, compromise the Swedish policy of non-alignment. NATO is linked to the practice of offensive violence and to

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61 In Swedish: ‘Sedan är det intressant med NATO-trupperna, därför att de skall ha tre uppgifter, enligt Bill Hopkinson från det engelska försvarsdepartementet. Den första är att hålla isär de stridande parterna. Det är inte en defensiv insats, enligt min uppfattning. Det är något helt annat än den att använda defensivt våld, som vi var överens om här i juni månad.’ /…/ ‘Visste ni om det redan den 8 juni när riksdagen diskuterade det här, att NATO skulle in med så stora trupper i området som det handlar om och att svenskar skulle vara en del i den offensiva aktiviteten som det skall genomföras?’


63 As they argue: by many states as well as the conflict parties, a NATO-led force will not be regarded as a neutral part but as one of many warring parties in Bosnia.
‘Western interests’; if Sweden would be part of such a NATO-led force, the Left argues, Sweden would get involved in a war without a perceivable end (1993/94: 22, Måbrink, v, anf. 2). Here, in the Left’s rhetoric, NATO comes to serve as an Other, to which Sweden is contrasted against. By linking NATO to offensive violence, the differentiation between defensive and offensive violence could be said to render invisible and naturalise the use of force enacted within the framework of the UN mission. As the UN actions are backgounded, they also appear less controversial.

In one sense, the question of violence is very much present in the parliamentary debates on the intervention in Bosnia; a new type of military involvement is required and it needs to be acknowledged and motivated. Overall, a Swedish military involvement is never questioned. But, as has been demonstrated, in the name of neutrality and non-alignment, some problematise Sweden’s role and military affiliations with other actors. Generally, without any true clarification of what the role of Swedish soldiers in Bosnia will be, and as the parliamentary statements move between characterising their tasks as peacekeeping to peace-enforcement to something in between, the debates on the use of force are certainly marked by ambiguity. With regard to in/visibility, the vague distinction between defensive and offensive violence, between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement, could generally be considered to obscure the violent element associated with the Swedish involvement. The recurring references to ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement, without ever clarifying what these elements really consist of, could be considered an example of how the violent element is concealed. Similarly, in regard to dis/identification, the talk of defensive violence ultimately differentiates Sweden from offensive violence. And, in terms of de/naturalisation, the talk of defensive violence makes it seem as if peacekeeping with ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement is just peacekeeping after all, simply representing a small adaptation to the reality on the ground, with little political relevance.

In the spring of 1994, the debates on UNPROFOR are devoid of political controversy; instead, the Minister for Foreign Affairs accentuates the value of consensus regarding the Swedish military engagement (1993/94: 78, af Ugglas, m, anf. 1). An interesting fragment during the spring of 1994 is the expressed expectation of soon being able to return to traditional peacekeeping (1993/94: 77, af Ugglas, m, anf. 44; 1993/94: 78, af Ugglas, m, anf. 1/3; 1993/94: 78, Franck, s, anf. 2). Thus, peace-enforcement is just an exception, it seems, whereas peacekeeping appears as the normal state of affairs. In other words, the engagement in Bosnia doesn’t appear to signify a shift in policy. At this point, there is no talk about the ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement, although the Minister for Foreign Affairs acknowledges that Swedish
soldiers have been under ‘almost constant fire’ and have been praised for their firm conduct (1993/94: 78, af Ugglas, m, anf. 1). Though ‘being under almost constant fire’ does not really resemble what one would normally expect for a peacekeeping mission (‘in essence’), this aspect is given little attention. The combat incidents and escalating violence thus slip from view; what instead is emphasised is the humanitarian work of the UN mission in general, and the Swedish battalion in particular (1993/94: 78, af Ugglas, m, anf. 1). Despite the fact that the civil war is still very much ongoing, the Minister for Foreign Affairs also repeatedly addresses the question of reconstruction, which conveys an idea of building peace rather than being part of war (1993/94: 78, af Ugglas, m, anf. 5; 1993/94: 96, af Ugglas, m, anf. 29). Thus, in terms of selective visibilities, the humanitarian dimension of UNPROFOR and the Swedish mission is here clearly foregrounded whereas the combat element – the violence as such – is backgrounded.

Ongoing intervention: Sweden versus the rest

A striking narrative theme, which comes to dominate the debates throughout a large part of the intervention, is the focus on the reluctance of other UN members, especially in Europe, to contribute with troops to UNPROFOR. In turn, many representatives emphasise that Sweden indeed does a lot (1993/94: 77, af Ugglas, m, anf. 44/46; 1993/94: 96, Rohdin, fp, anf. 30; 1993/94: 96, af Ugglas, m, anf. 31).64

The Nordic countries were among the few countries that really came forward, when trying to implement the Security Council’s resolution on safe areas.65

(1993/94: 77, af Ugglas, m, anf. 46)

We make an important contribution through the peacekeeping troops in former Yugoslavia. A great deal of criticism has – one should say – been directed towards the UN and much of the troops’ efforts, but everyone has testified that particularly the Swedish and Nordic troops’ performance has been good.66

(1994/95: 64, Zetterberg, v, anf. 6)

Sweden is often differentiated from the rest of Europe. While other European UN member states are accused of passivity, Sweden generally comes to represent decisiveness and action. The parliamentary debates are in other words dominated by a continuous accentuation of Sweden’s position as a leading nation and a continuous

64 Cont. 1993/94: 105, af Ugglas, m, anf. 38/40; 1993/94: 105, Rohdin, fp, anf. 43; 1993/94: 77, Ekholm, s, anf. 45; 1993/94: 78, Rohdin, fp, anf. 47; 1993/94: 78, Koch, m, anf. 6; 1993/94: 64, Hjelm-Wallen, s, anf. 2.
65 In Swedish: ‘De nordiska länderna var några av de få länder som verkligen ställde upp när det gällde att försöka implementera säkerhetsrådets resolution om fredade områden.’
66 In Swedish: ‘Vi gör en viktig insats genom defredsbevarande trupperna i f.d. Jugoslavien. Det finns i och för sig mycket kritik mot FN och en hel del av truppernas insatser, men just de svenska och nordiska truppernas beteende har enligt vad alla omvittnat varit gott.’
focus on how little the rest of Europe really does. In a sense one may say that Europe and other UN members come to serve as the Others, or perhaps ‘passivity’ as such becomes the Other, as an Other within – within Europe, of which Sweden is a member, but perhaps also within the Swedish past, as a feature (at times and among some) associated with the Swedish position of neutrality and Sweden’s ability to stay out of World War II (see e.g. 1993/94: 65, Windén, nd, anf. 3). As, for instance, a Social Democratic representative puts it: all people of Europe are connected to the events in former Yugoslavia, hence a position of neutrality and passivity is simply impossible to pursue at this point in time (1992/93: 124, Schori, s, anf. 3).

The debate on what Sweden actually represents often comes to dominate the parliamentary discussions. Two competing notions of Sweden could be distinguished. Sweden is, on the one hand, depicted as a leading nation in terms of assistance to Bosnia; it is one of the leading figures both in terms of humanitarian and military efforts and it has been exceptionally quick in its responses compared to other nations. In parallel, Sweden is at times and by some accused of not doing enough; Sweden is here depicted as a passive actor, which follows the directives of great powers in Europe without showing any sign of autonomy, freethinking or creativity. In both perspectives, it is generally envisioned that Sweden should be a leading country in efforts promoting peace.

However, being ‘passive’ or ‘active’ is not always explicitly linked to the use of force as such. In fact, very little is actually said about the Swedish battalion in Bosnia, its tasks and use of force; never do parliamentarians inform about or discuss specific incidents that the Swedish soldiers have been involved in or what they are experiencing on the ground. Whilst the debates are dominated by talk of

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90 A few of the parliamentary parties representing the conservative coalition government distinctly depict Sweden as a leading figure in the support to Bosnia. Not only does Sweden contribute to the military intervention, it has also been the fourth greatest contributor in absolute numbers to the humanitarian efforts in former Yugoslavia, and has, per capita, accepted the largest number of refugees from the Balkans (1993/94: 4, af Ugglas, m, anf. 8: 1993/94: 4, Holmberg, fp, anf. g: 1993/94: 65, Rohlin, fp, anf. 177: 1993/94: 65, af Ugglas, m, anf. 5). Overall, Sweden appears to do most to mitigate the effects of war, a lot more than the great powers of Europe. While the rest of the international community keeps acting like bystanders, Sweden is one of those countries that actually took action and the only state that immediately responded to the UN request to increase the number of military observers (1993/94: 65, af Ugglas, m, anf. 5). Sweden is a pioneering country and a central figure in the attempts to mitigate the conflict and end the atrocities; what Sweden does and says thus attracts attention (1993/94: 4, Viklund, kds, anf. 11).

91 The main objection towards Swedish policy in Bosnia articulated in parliament concerns Sweden’s so-called passive approach. Within this narrative of insufficiency, Swedish identity appears to be threatened, not due to the war in Bosnia or the general level of threat, but due to Sweden’s own foreign policy. Among the opposition parties, Sweden is said to have transformed from an active international actor to a reactive bystander, now lacking autonomy and creativity. As one leading Social Democrat expresses his discontent with the present self-imposed international role: ‘how often do we hear from around the world that they no longer recognise Sweden? An active foreign policy has become a reactive foreign policy’ [in Swedish: Hur ofta hör vi inte tvekt om att man inte längre känner igen Sverige? Av en aktiv utrikespolitik har det blivit en reaktiv utrikespolitik] (1993/94: 65, Schori, s, anf. 2). A representative from the newly founded right-wing populist party New Democracy also questions Sweden’s current role in Europe, urging the government to take a greater responsibility. Although Sweden is a small country, it needs to take a greater responsibility for its part of the world; in times of war one cannot be neutral (1993/94: 65, Windén, nyd, anf. 3).
humanitarian issues and general discussions on the significance of the UN presence (past and present), less attention is given to the military aspects of the Swedish involvement in Bosnia. While Sweden’s [great] humanitarian efforts or the passivity of ‘the rest’ come to dominate, the explicit issue of using force is largely backgrounded. In late spring of 1995, for instance, the Nordic battalion – when mentioned – is referred to as part of the ‘protective forces’, which are claimed to perform significant work. Yet, overall, their efforts are portrayed to be of a civilian nature, with food distribution as the only actual task being mentioned in the debate (1994/95: 90, Lennmarker, m, anf. 7; see also 1994/95: 90, Rohdin, fp, anf. 18). Again, one can notice that the debates are marked by ambiguity, and lack of clarification; generally, the debates make the violent element of UNPROFOR appear as an abstract rather than a concrete feature and reality. In terms of in/visibility and de/naturalisation, the violent element is rarely brought to light and foregrounded as a central issue, concern or dilemma.

At the turn of the year 1994/1995, a ceasefire is declared in Bosnia. The year 1995 begins with a brief interpellation debate on the latest informal UN request to enlarge the Swedish troop contribution (1994/95: 52). There has now also been a change of power in Sweden; Sweden has a new Minister for Foreign Affairs, and just as her predecessor, the new Minister highlights how much Sweden has already done and still does for the UN and Bosnia. Through its contribution to NORDBAT, Sweden has dispatched a substantial force to UNPROFOR, which by Swedish standards is exceptionally large; Sweden’s troop contribution is one of the largest besides the contributions from the great powers. Besides, Sweden has also received the largest number of refugees per capita and is already among the greatest donors of humanitarian aid. The pain threshold has now been reached, the Minister for Foreign Affairs claims; Sweden simply doesn’t have the ability to do much more (1994/95: 52, Hjelm-Wallén, s, anf. 9/11). The questioner in the interpellation debate, a Liberal member of the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs, certainly acknowledges that Sweden has done more than most, but he nevertheless argues that Sweden could do even more (1994/95: 52, Leijonborg, fp, anf. 10/12; see also 1994/95: 64, Leijonborg, fp, anf. 5). We cannot let ourselves believe that the Swedes can manage to bring peace to Bosnia by ourselves, the Minister for Foreign Affairs replies; the burden must be shared among different countries (1994/95: 52, Hjelm-Wallén, s, anf. 11).

Throughout the spring of 1995, the parliamentary debates are dominated by a general disappointment with the UN, its member states, and the international community at large. The debates reflect frustration over the UN’s and specifically the
Security Council’s failure to manage the escalation of conflict at an early stage, and to subsequently stop the war and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia (1994/95: 90). Again, the passivity that is ascribed to the international community as a whole is rarely linked to Swedish policy. Instead, many representatives foreground the great efforts that have been made by Sweden, both in terms of humanitarian assistance and military engagement (e.g. 1994/95: 90, Hulthén, s, anf. 2; Lennmarker, m, anf. 7/34; Rohdin, fp, anf. 8).

Although many members of parliament emphasise Sweden’s great efforts, not everyone is content with the Swedish approach. As noted, there is a dividing line between (primarily) the Liberal Party and the rest; the liberal representatives continuously problematise the UN’s insistence to keep the arms embargo on Bosnia, although the UN is unable to live up to its promises of protection (1993/94: 38, Rohdin, fp, anf. 35; 1994/95: 90, Rohdin, fp, anf. 1; 1994/95: 90, Holmberg, fp, anf. 29). The flight ban over Bosnia is being violated and artillery shooting occurs without any response from UN troops, it is stressed (1994/95: 90, Rohdin, fp, anf. 1). Accordingly, the Liberal Party depicts Sweden as a passive follower, incapable of bringing forward new ideas on how to put an end to the atrocities in Bosnia. A few other members of parliament echo the Liberal Party’s depiction of Sweden as part of the problem of passivity (1994/95: 90, Andersson, e, anf. 12; Francke Ohlsson, mp, anf. 20), while others reject such descriptions (e.g. 1994/95: 90, Hulthén, s, anf. 2; 1994/95: 90, Persson, m, anf. 24). When the Liberal Party calls for ‘all available means’ to be utilised, they are accused of promoting war-like efforts. What ‘means’ do the Liberal Party really want to utilise?, a few representatives ask (1994/95: 90, Persson, m, anf. 28; 1994/95: 90, Hulthén, s, anf. 30). As a conservative representative notes, Sweden will not engage in war on the side of the Bosnians, and should thus not require others to do something that Sweden itself does not want to do (1994/95: 90, Lennmarker, m, anf. 34/36).

Things are about to change, however. As the situation in Bosnia is getting even more desperate, the Swedish debate on the use of force is revived. Now, given the dominating narrative theme of passivity versus decisiveness throughout the intervention, an increased use of force will eventually appear inevitable. In early summer of 1995, before the massacre in Srebrenica, when the situation in Bosnia is deteriorating significantly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs affirms that a withdrawal is unthinkable although the UN troops now find themselves in a very precarious situation. NORDBAT’s situation is somewhat different to that of other UN battalions, she states, as they are heavily equipped already and have better possibilities of defending themselves. To adopt a more robust code of conduct is both possible and
necessary, she claims (1994/95: 113, Hjelm-Wallén, anf. 94/97). According to the Liberal Party, there are only two options at this point: acting more robustly or withdrawing (1994/95: 113, Rohdin, fp, anf. 96/98). Evidently, in light of Sweden’s self-proclaimed role as a leading nation, the shift to peace-enforcement that is now underway ultimately appears as a natural direction to take; the military undertaking in Bosnia simply has to become ‘more robust’.

The shift to peace-enforcement

During the last debate on UNPROFOR, and the first dealing with the new NATO-led mission in Bosnia called IFOR, on 15 December 1995, it seems to have become clear to all parliamentary parties that the UN intervention in Bosnia has generally proven to be a failure. This revelation generally seems to have enabled the more ‘robust’ intervention that will now follow. By some, the US and NATO are repeatedly depicted as a disappointment, which has ultimately contributed to the UN’s weakening (1995/96: 39, Samuelsson, mp, anf. 7/12/14/50; 1995/96: 39, Hjelm-Wallén, s, anf. 34). By others, however, NATO comes to signify robustness and leadership at a time when the UN is suffering from fragmentation and breakdown (1995/96: 39, Furubjelke, s, anf. 13; 1995/96: 39, Holmberg, fp, anf. 43). Although being critical and sceptical of the fact that NATO will take over the command, the Greens as well as the Left Party accept the Swedish engagement in IFOR. There seems to be no alternative, they suggest (1995/96: 39, Zetterberg, v, anf. 2; 1995/96: 39, Samuelsson, mp, anf. 50).

Although the military practice of the Swedish battalion may not come to differ considerably between the two operations UNPROFOR and IFOR, the mandate has indeed been altered; essentially, the new mandate of peace-enforcement opens up for a more extensive use of force. Whereas the early debates on UNPROFOR were dedicated to explicit, although vague, discussions on the practice of peacekeeping as compared to peace-enforcement, now – when NATO is about to take over and the mandate is far more definite and specific – the question of peace-enforcement is left undebated and unproblematised (1995/96: 39). As a case in point, a conservative representative stresses the importance of the military task force being ‘big and strong’, but never clarifies the nature of the mandate (1995/96: 39, Lennmarker, m, anf. 22).

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69 This shift from UNPROFOR to IFOR, and the moment of dislocation following the massacre of Srebrenica, will be further explored in part III.

70 IFOR is based on Chapter VII and hence constitutes a peace-enforcement mission.

71 As many have noted previously, it is certainly an irony that a peacekeeping mission is deployed in an ongoing war, whereas a peace-enforcement mission is established once a peace-agreement has been signed.
In this last and concluding parliamentary debate, there is no detailed discussion on the peace-enforcement mandate of the new intervention and not much reflection on the mission that has now come to an end. Generally, the shift from peacekeeping ‘2.0’ to peace-enforcement almost passes by unnoticed. The increased use of force is thus made invisible and the shift generally appears as a natural transition, of little relevance either in terms of practical implications or in relation to Sweden’s policy on the use of force. What the debate mainly focuses on is NATO and how a new command structure may help to improve the situation or possibly jeopardise the Swedish position of non-alignment. Little attention is given to the actual alteration of the mandate itself. The representatives never explicitly discuss the peace-enforcement character of IFOR, and the intervention is described with other terms, for instance: ‘a peace force with military capacity’ (1995/96: 39, Zetterberg, v, anf. 2), ‘a peacekeeping force in the true sense of the word’ (1995/96: 39, Furubjelke, s, anf. 13), or ‘this unusual operation’ (1995/96: 39, Hjelm-Wallén, s, anf. 28). In regard to in/visibility, it is generally the term peacekeeping that comes to describe the new NATO-led mission; the term peace-enforcement is never used. Instead, the Minister for Defence declares that the engagement in IFOR does not signify a break with the peacekeeping tradition; the IFOR engagement will rather expand the Swedish peacekeeping ‘profile’. Hence, from what it seems, IFOR doesn’t signify anything particularly new, but essentially a continuation:

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

Our engagement in IFOR is a new chapter in this process. But it is not a new type of mission.\(^2\)


Overall, the debate gives the impression that not much is about to change for the Swedish soldiers, aside from the NATO command. The decision is portrayed as an easy decision, of little significance in terms of policy (reorientation). IFOR is
portrayed as a continuation rather than a break with old routines; as it seems, IFOR is a natural continuation of 30 years of peacekeeping experience (e.g. 1995/96: 39, Nilsson, c, anf. 27; 1995/96: 39, Peterson, s, anf. 39). Hence, one can say that the transition from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement generally is concealed, backgrounded; all of a sudden, peace-enforcement appears as a routine rather than a disruption. What previously by all means seemed exceptional now simply seems normal, even though Swedish soldiers for the first time will serve under NATO command in a combat operation.

The contribution to IFOR also appears justified given the competence shown by the Swedish soldiers that already serve in Bosnia. Generally, the Swedish soldiers are described as prepared yet essentially non-violent; therefore, they seem to be especially suited for the tasks to come, and the engagement in peace-enforcement seems like a natural step forward. For example, one representative notes that the Swedish soldiers have been well appreciated (1995/96: 39, Nilsson, c, anf. 27). Another representative stresses that Swedish soldiers are well suited for the tough conditions in Bosnia (in terms of training and armament) and hence no restrictions are required (1995/96: 39, Rohdin, fp, anf. 1). The Minister for Defence, in turn, is also careful to emphasise the Swedish soldiers’ competence and ability to act in a very difficult and risky environment. Yet, as he suggests, the soldiers are not prone to use violence, and this capability is what they’ll bring to the IFOR mission (1995/96: 39, Peterson, s, anf. 39).

And they are capable of much more, precisely since they are conscripts and not professional soldiers. They unite firmness with patience and negotiating skills. To resort to violence is not their first reaction, which likely will prove to be an invaluable asset in the difficult work that lies ahead.25

(1995/96: 39, Peterson, s, anf. 39)

This particular representation of Swedish soldiers – that they will not ‘lose’ their peaceful attitude and conduct – also creates an impression of continuity rather than disruption. The representation of IFOR as being no different from previous engagements further reinforces such a notion; Swedish peacekeeping practices will essentially remain the same and Sweden will still be associated with peacework. All in all, the competence of the soldiers is continuously foregrounded, yet the debate lacks reflections on the political implications of a shift to peace-enforcement. As the question of capability is foregrounded, the question of policy is moved to the

25 In Swedish: ‘Och de kan mycket mera, just därför att de är värnpliktiga och inte yrkessoldater. De förenar fasthet med tålamod och förhandlingsförmåga. Att gripa till våld är inte deras första reflex, vilket nog kommer att visa sig vara en oskattbar tillgång i det svåra arbetet framöver.’
margins. However, whereas capability is an asset, policy is a choice. Thus, given the focus on capability, IFOR appears as a natural continuation and is not debated and justified as essentially a political issue. All in all, the representation of IFOR as ‘more of the same’ rather than a new experience both renders the violent element of peace-enforcement invisible and – as the use of force is depicted as business as usual – naturalises the shift to peace-enforcement. By further differentiating Swedish soldiers from offensive violence, Sweden is continuously linked to peacekeeping.

Another critical observation is that the ‘peace force’ which now is being established (i.e. IFOR) is repeatedly differentiated from what the representatives define as ‘outright attack operations’\(^{75}\) (e.g. 1995/96: 39, Rohdin, fp, anf. 1; 1995/96: 39, Lennmarker, m, anf. 22). As will become clear in part III and the case study on TV representations during the Bosnia crisis, the talk of taking or not taking part in ‘attack operations’ is a striking feature of the public debates prior to IFOR. Here, in the concluding parliamentary debate on UNPROFOR and the first on IFOR, the term ‘attack operations’\(^{76}\) seems to signify ‘war’. Hence, if Sweden were to take part in ‘attack operations’ it would suggest that Sweden engages in war, whereas to not take part seems to suggest a continuation of peacekeeping. The Minister for Defence confirms that the Swedish soldiers will not do anything that does not correspond with their training, capabilities and armament, and these conditions have been accepted by NATO; the Swedish soldiers are not armed for attack operations, and hence will not take part (1995/96: 39, Peterson, s, anf. 28/39). A conservative representative affirms that, although the protection of the so-called separation zones will possibly require ‘forceful military measures’,\(^{77}\) ground troops will not take part in ‘attack operations’ – it is simply out of the question. Hence, it is assured that Swedish soldiers will not be involved in such operations (1995/96: 39, Lennmarker, m, anf. 22/22).\(^{78}\) Ultimately, others might get involved in attack operations, but not the Swedish troops; this much seems clear.\(^{79}\) That others might take part in attack operations on behalf of all the contributing states is not depicted as a problem or dilemma; it is just what, specifically, the Swedish troops will take part in that becomes an issue of concern. Essentially, by emphasising the Swedish troops’ non-participation in attack operations, the debate arguably differentiates Sweden from practices associated with war or offensive violence; ultimately, peace-enforcement,

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\(^{75}\) In Swedish: ‘regelrätta anfallsföretag’.

\(^{76}\) The term repeatedly used in Swedish: ‘anfallsföretag’.

\(^{77}\) In Swedish: ‘kraftfulla militära åtgärder’.

\(^{78}\) As he continues: IFOR will have to prevent breaches of the peace treaty in a robust manner, yet the Swedish force will be spared any such counter attacks or ground operations as the Americans contribute with support units, attack helicopters and so on (1995/96: 39, Lennmarker, m, anf. 22/22).

\(^{79}\) As will become clear in part III, public service TV gave a slightly different impression at the time.
the new mission, appears no different from the tasks that Swedish troops have performed for decades, no different from ‘traditional’ peacekeeping. Yet, paradoxically, as the representatives note that the Swedish troops under no circumstances will take part in attack operations, the representatives seem to acknowledge that the engagement in IFOR indeed represents a new level of involvement.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURATION: IN/VISIBILITY, DIS/IDENTIFICATION & DE/NATURALISATION

The debates on UNPROFOR, and later IFOR, generally represent a period when the issue of peacekeeping versus peace-enforcement is brought to the fore. New forms of military interference are required in Bosnia, and the decision to interfere thus needs to be justified. When it is time to decide on a Swedish contribution to UNPROFOR in 1993, the deployment of violence, and especially the inclusion of ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement, is delineated as a rather exceptional measure – as in something we have not seen before – but as a self-evident alternative, indeed the only choice. Although the general narrative continuously portrays the military undertaking in Bosnia as peacekeeping ‘in essence’, it is acknowledged that so-called ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement will be included. Yet, what ‘elements’ actually refer to is a question that remains unanswered throughout the mission. While some imagine a war, most prefer to emphasise the peacekeeping character of the mission; although the mandate of UNPROFOR perhaps represents a modernised and updated version of traditional peacekeeping – peacekeeping 2.0 – it is a question of peacekeeping nonetheless. Hence, in terms of selective visibilities, UNPROFOR – and eventually IFOR – generally appears as peacekeeping, while the violent element and the exceptionality of engaging in peace-enforcement are generally concealed.

By continuously emphasising the defensive character of the tasks that will be performed – not least by repeatedly using the term ‘defensive violence’ – the Swedish military undertaking is differentiated from military undertakings associated with offensive operations, or acts of war. In that sense, the practice of violence, peace-enforcement, is redefined. By emphasising the defensive character, the practices in Bosnia are made to seem coherent with the Swedish self-perception of being neutral, a peacekeeper, an observer, and essentially a non-violent state. However, the practice of force is not only redefined but also generally undefined, as the character of the tasks remains unspecified. It remains unclear what the mandate of UNPROFOR actually allows and what the soldiers are actually experiencing on the ground. To say, for instance, that one can soon return to traditional peacekeeping does not make it any clearer what one is returning from. As the practices during UNPROFOR are
neither defined nor described one can say that the policy reorientation is concealed. The practical and policy implications of moving beyond peacekeeping are never made visible or denaturalised; what the mandate actually means remains vague throughout the debates. Through the general lack of definition and description, violence is dealt with as an abstract rather than a concrete phenomenon, and rejected as a relevant issue to debate thoroughly.

Neither is the shift from peacekeeping ‘2.0’ to peace-enforcement – when UNPROFOR is replaced by IFOR – truly problematised. What it means for Sweden, or indeed Swedish soldiers, to engage in peace-enforcement, to deploy forces that are ultimately authorised to engage in war-like activities, is never reflected upon or made an issue of debate. With regard to in/visibility and de/naturalisation, the shift appears rather as a continuation. Whereas Sweden’s military undertaking during UNPROFOR initially is delineated as exceptional, the contribution to IFOR is rather portrayed as a continuation of Sweden’s peacekeeping tradition, as more of the same, and – with the representation of the Swedish soldiers as ‘non-violent’ – as coherent with Sweden’s peacekeeping image. In the parliamentary debates, the turn to peace-enforcement is not associated with disruption and new identifications, but ultimately comes to signify continuity and tradition. Thus, in terms of how war is made seen and known, the narratives throughout the intervention generally move from ‘the exceptional’ to ‘the ordinary’, from problematisation to naturalisation; ultimately, the use of force comes to appear as a routine, as something that always has been – not as a new feature, a new direction. Such a representation conceals the use of more excessive force and the political dimension of a deeper engagement in war-like activities. By delineating the contribution to IFOR as business as usual, as nothing particularly new or noteworthy, the gradual alteration of the mandate is concealed, and the policy reorientation slips from view. Ultimately, violence – the use of force – is articulated as a self-evident element in any military engagement.

With regard to dis/identification, various ‘Others’ are constructed in the narratives that emerge, and these ‘Others’ seem to serve different roles. Whereas the ‘other UN members’ and ‘EU members’ are linked to passiveness, Sweden generally comes to be associated with decisiveness, which in turn makes the use of force appear as a given, indeed the only choice. As every so often, ‘NATO’ or the ‘Americans’ come to represent ‘war’ and eventually ‘attack operations’, while Swedish soldiers are depicted as essentially peaceful; given that Swedish soldiers will take no part in ‘attack operations’, they appear to remain less violent than others, even when they – for the first time ever – are about to serve under NATO command in a combat operation.
Operation Artemis was in place between the 12 June and 1 September 2003, for the official purpose of supporting MONUC in what was described as a deteriorating security situation characterised by intensified fighting in the region of Bunia in Congo. MONUC was a peacekeeping mission, established in 1999 following the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The core objective of Operation Artemis was, in turn, to stabilise the security situation and reinforce the ‘ongoing peace process’. In contrast to MONUC, Operation Artemis was essentially a peace-enforcement mission, EU-led yet UN-authorised, with France as the lead nation.

Operation Artemis was indeed a rapid reaction and a short operation, yet it was based on a mandate of peace-enforcement and included Swedish Special Forces, i.e. Sweden’s most well-trained and skilled combat soldiers. And Swedish soldiers became engaged in fighting – the heaviest fighting since the Congo crisis in the 1960s, according to the Swedish Supreme Commander (Aftonbladet.se, 2003). In 2008, a Swedish investigative TV programme revealed that Swedish soldiers had witnessed an incident involving torture, without this being reported to the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters (e.g. Engdahl, 2010: 522; Svt.se, 2008). This revelation was initially considered a ‘scandal’, and resulted in an internal investigation within the Armed Forces (e.g. 2007/08: 103; Engdahl, 2010; SR Ekots lördagsintervju, 2008).

At the time, the EU’s risk assessment highlights that the conflicting parties in Congo to a large extent consist of forcibly recruited child soldiers (2002/03: UFöU2, p. 11). Generally, the rebels are assumed to be irrational and unpredictable, the command structure seems to be defective, and a low morale appears to prevail. The use of drugs and alcohol, they state, is also common. As the EU seems to have had difficulties in mobilising contributing states to missions on the African contingent, Sweden is, in the parliamentary debates, depicted as a forerunner or pioneer; the Swedish troops that are to be dispatched to Congo come to represent a Swedish political initiative, generally depicted as a first step to get other European countries to engage in the struggle for peace in Congo and Africa as a whole. Sweden is here at the forefront, and has paved the way for an increased engagement in Africa, some representatives suggest (2002/03: 121, Wigström, fp, anf. 124; 2002/03: 121, Sabuni, fp, anf. 130; 2002/03: 121, Hamilton, m, anf. 131). For a long time, Europe has not shown any interest in the internal affairs of Africa, a liberal representative claims. However,

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80 In 2010 MONUC was renamed MONUSCO.
81 SSG (Särskilda skyddsgruppen) & FJS (Fallskärmarsjägarsskolan).
82 The Swedish investigation arrived at the conclusion that torture had occurred; yet the French investigation could not confirm it (Engdahl, 2010: 522).
83 Also evident in debates on MONUC, see e.g. 2002/03: 92, Wigström, fp, anf. 125; 2002/03: 92, Sabuni, fp, anf. 127.
when Sweden decided to take the lead and send a force to Bunia, more and more states have now shown interest (2002/03: 121, Sabuni, fp, anf. 130).

THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE

When the one, and as it turns out only, debate that explicitly deals with Operation Artemis (rather than MONUC) takes place on 12 June 2003, the decision to deploy Swedish Special Forces to Bunia has already been taken. As the issue is urgent, the question has been examined quickly. In the debate in June, it sounds like a contribution to Operation Artemis is the only available option, yet the decision has been difficult nonetheless. To participate is not depicted as a given choice; still, many statements explain how contributing to Operation Artemis is a matter of course. As a Social Democrat puts it: ‘It is a dangerous mission, but passivity is not an option’⁸⁴ (2002/03: 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 125).

In terms of justification, the representatives argue that Sweden must demonstrate loyalty and take responsibility (2002/03: 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 125; 2002/03: 121, Erlandsson, c, anf. 128), that Sweden has to lead the way and also show support to the people on the African continent (2002/03: 121, Wigström, fp, 124), and that it is important to demonstrate Sweden’s resolve to improve the EU’s credibility in terms of peace-promoting operations (2002/03: 121, Sundell, m, anf. 126). Operation Artemis cannot, in itself, bring peace to Congo – no one seems to suggest that – but it can nonetheless have a catalytic effect on the will to help (2002/03: 121, Sabuni, fp, anf. 130). All in all, the peace-enforcement operation in Bunia appears essential and of great necessity. No one opposes the decision to deploy Sweden’s Special Forces to Congo and no one questions that Swedish soldiers should serve in a peace-enforcement operation. The justifications for getting involved seem to suggest that ‘solidarity’ actually requires the use of force; hence the alternative of not participating is ruled out.

In the opinion of the Centre Party and myself, human rights, democracy and peace-enforcement go together. It is not possible to split these elements.⁸⁵ (2002/03: 121, Erlandsson, c, anf. 128)

Nonetheless, the decision to take part does not appear as an easy decision. Above all, it is the words used to describe the mission that convey some form of critical reflection. Almost like a mantra, the members of parliament keep repeating how dangerous and difficult the mission will be. ‘The mission is very difficult and very

⁸⁴ In Swedish: ‘Det är ett farligt uppdrag men passivitet är inget alternativ.’
⁸⁵ In Swedish: ‘Enligt min och Centerpartiets uppfattning hör mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati och fredsförmågan sammanfogade uppgift ihop. Det går inte att dela på dessa elementen.’
dangerous’, one liberal representative declares (2002/03: 121, Wigström, fp, anf 124), while a conservative representative refers to the mission as ‘complicated and risky’ (2002/03: 121, Sundell, m, anf. 126). A Social Democrat even states that Operation Artemis is perhaps ‘the most difficult mission in forty years’ (2002/03: 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 135). These terms – dangerous, difficult, complicated, risky – generally seem to be a rewriting of violent; basically, what the representatives seem to imply is that the mission in Bunia will likely become very violent. Thus, danger and difficulty is certainly being foregrounded, while the violent element as such is backgrounded.

What the mission means for Swedish policy on the use of force – whether it should be considered a policy shift and signifies a new attitude towards combat involvement – is never brought up or debated. For possibly being the most difficult mission in forty years, remarkably little is said about the practical problems and political implications related to it. Operation Artemis simply appears as a continuation of MONUC, almost as a natural transition that just must be. As evident in the government bill on the Swedish military contribution to the mission in Congo (2002/03: 143, p. 13), the crisis in Bunia is described as a ‘strained peace process’, which essentially situates the Swedish Special Forces within an ongoing peace project rather than in the midst of an armed conflict. The rapid reaction force will be in Bunia to assist the peace process, it is said (see e.g. 2002/03: 121, Wigström, fp, anf. 124; 2002/03: 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 135). Assisting the peace process naturally bears different connotations than to partake in war, or engage in combat. However, with regard to in/visibility, one gets a sense of the difficulties that may arise:

The mission is very difficult and very dangerous. The unstable and unpredictable military situation suggests that there is a real risk of Swedish soldiers getting engaged in direct fighting.

The EU force will be in place only until 1 September.88

(2002/03: 121, Wigström, fp, anf. 124)

Swedish soldiers may be killed in their contribution for peace. They may also be forced to defend themselves by opening fire against armed militia groups that might include child soldiers. Their mission is difficult and dangerous, and that is why we are sending the best ones we have.

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86 In Swedish: ‘Uppdraget är mycket svårt och mycket farligt’ / ‘komplicerat och riskfyllt’ / ‘den kanske svåraste insatsen på fyrtio år.’
87 Other, similar, phrases being used are the following: ‘dangerous mission’ (2002/03: 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 135); ‘difficult mission’ (2002/03: 121, Sabuni, fp, anf. 130); ‘difficult and dangerous mission’ (2002/03: 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 135). ‘grave and dangerous mission’ (2002/03: 121, Wigström, fp, anf. 135). In Swedish: farligt, svårt, allvarligt.
88 In Swedish: ‘Uppdraget är mycket svårt och mycket farligt. Det instabila och oförutsägbara militära läget innebär att risken är reell att de svenska soldaterna blir engagerade i direkta stridigheter.’ / EU-styrkan kommer att vara på plats endast till den 1 september.’
I am convinced that the so-called Special Protection Group [SSG] will do all in its power to solve this task in the best possible way.\(^8\)

(2002/03; 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 125)

Evidently, there seem to be concerns related to the mission, serious concerns; in the (few) remarks on what is to come, the violent element of peace-enforcement is brought to light. Hence, the violent element is present in the debates. Yet, although critical situations and ‘problems’ related to the use of force are briefly described, they are not elaborated upon, never given much space, or (from what it seems) much thought; they are formulated more like short notifications or forewarnings. As the quotes above illustrate, sentences that bring up the ‘problems’ related to the use of force are, in a literal sense, not followed up by any further reflection, problematisation or even justification. The issue of violence is quickly dropped, leading neither to explanations nor to further debate. Summarising the quotes above, it may sound like the following: The Swedish soldiers will get involved in fighting – (but) they will only be there for a short while and The soldiers will likely fight child soldiers – (but) they will do their best. In terms of de/naturalisation, the violent element of Operation Artemis – as it is represented – just has to be; politically, it is just a matter of being prepared for what (inevitably) will come.

I say yet again: this military operation involves risks.\(^9\)

(2002/03; 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 125)

As the mission is dangerous and difficult, the decision to participate is, in turn, described as grave and difficult.\(^8\) Most members of parliament choose to accentuate that the decision is difficult, yet most of them fail to elaborate on why it is such a difficult decision to take. As they are unified in the decision to participate, there is, it seems, simply no reason for a more thorough discussion on the possible implications of the military engagement or what the engagement means for the Swedish policy on the use of force. As the debate unfolds, to emphasise the difficulty of the decision comes across more as an ‘excuse’ not to do even more (which is what the Liberal Party calls for) rather than as a way to problematise the transition from peacekeeping (MONUC) to peace-enforcement (Operation Artemis).

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\(^8\) In Swedish: ‘Svenska soldater kan komma att förolyckas i sin insats för freden. De kan också komma att tvängas försvara sig genom att öppna eld mot bevåpnade milisgrupper som kan innehålla barnsoldater. Deras uppdrag är svårt och farligt, och det är därför som vi sänder de bästa vi har. / Jag är övertygad om att den så kallade särskilda skyddsgruppen kommer att göra allt som står i dess makt att lösa denna uppgift på bästa möjliga sätt.’

\(^9\) In Swedish: ‘Jag säger än en gång: Denna militära operation har risker.’

\(^8\) Examples of terms being used: ‘difficult’ decision (Ahlin, s, anf. 125; Runegrund, kd, anf. 135); ‘grave decision’ (Hamilton, fp, anf. 136; Ohly, v, anf. 139); Wigström, fp, anf. 140) and ‘difficult and grave decision’ (Ohly, v, anf. 136; Ahlin, s, anf. 139).
Although most representatives never clarify it, it is obvious that the decision to participate is difficult since the mission is considered dangerous. The primary reason for concern seems to be that the lives of the Swedish soldiers are jeopardised. Some members of parliament explicitly refer to the dangers and risks the decision will mean for the soldiers sent to Congo (2002/03: 121, Hamilton, fp, anf. 131; 2002/03: 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 125) and point out that lives ultimately can be lost (2002/03: 121, Erlandsson, c, anf. 128). There are question marks concerning the risks, one conservative representative states (2002/03: 121, Sundell, m, anf. 126). Generally, the risk of being exposed to violence is brought up repeatedly, by many members of parliament; that the mission is ‘complicated’, ‘risky’ and ‘dangerous’ generally seems to suggest that Swedish soldiers could be killed in action. Yet, the terms ‘risky’ and ‘dangerous’ essentially communicate that the use of force is a one-way practice; whereas the risk of being exposed to violence is foregrounded, the fact that Swedish troops will likely engage in battle is less discussed.

As the issue of being exposed to violence becomes the prime concern, the issue of using force is generally backgrounded, removed out of sight. The dilemma of letting Swedish soldiers fight and possibly kill forcibly recruited child soldiers in Congo perhaps speaks for itself. Yet, the risk of getting involved in fighting and being forced to open fire is a fundamental aspect of peace-enforcement, as a practice and policy. So, these images – of Swedish soldiers (possibly) killing child soldiers – demonstrate the implications of shifting from practices of peacekeeping to peace-enforcement, of shifting from MONUC to Operation Artemis. Although it is clear that Operation Artemis means peace-enforcement – the term peace-enforcement is used frequently – the shifting mandate and practice is not politically contested or problematised. Generally, the turn to peace-enforcement is backgrounded, rarely brought to light, and not articulated and debated as a change of direction or a choice.

Although some statements acknowledge that Swedish soldiers will perform violence and not merely be subjected to violence, these remarks are repeatedly formulated as forewarnings of what is to come rather than articulated as a political problem, or as something exceptional and new. The Swedish military units are never depicted as a conflict party; only rarely is it acknowledged that the Special Forces most certainly will become involved and take an active part in combat. A key term here, as in many of the other cases examined in part II of this book, is that Swedish troops will be ‘forced’ into situations involving violence. To repeatedly emphasise that troops will be ‘forced’ into combat generally makes the use of force appear

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97 After Operation Artemis has been completed, the Head of the Special Unit (SSG) affirms that the Swedish soldiers never had to fire against child soldiers, as the child soldiers typically withdrew (Aftonbladet.se, 2003).
uncontroversial, a natural aspect of any given peace mission; ‘being forced’ essentially signifies that whatever is going on in terms of violence it is out of one’s own sphere of influence, and hence out of one’s own sphere of responsibility. Essentially, the use of force is then – as it appears – not a choice and decision. The representation of the opponents active in Congo, as irrational and unpredictable, influenced by drugs etcetera, further reinforces the notion that the likely incidents of fighting are out of the control of Swedish decision makers (and in turn the soldiers).

It is a difficult and dangerous mission. Soldiers may come to lose their lives, and they can get into situations in which they will be forced to open fire against militia groups that include child soldiers.

I am proud that we in this decision have a unified parliament.\(^3\)

\((2002/03: 121, \text{Ahlin, s, anf. r}^{37})\)

The mission is complicated and risky. This means that the force that we are sending may get involved in direct fighting with guerrilla units that behave irrationally and unpredictably. Gangs, child soldiers, often influenced by drugs, that is the image of reality that has been presented to the committee. All things considered, it is an exceptionally difficult assignment with great risks for the boys and girls that we are sending down there. /.../ It is a strength, albeit self-evident, that all parties unite behind the forthcoming operation given the troublesome situation that may arise.\(^9\)

\((2002/03: 121, \text{Sundell, m, anf. r}^{26})\)

Overall, the risk of violence is recognised but does not become a point of debate. Instead, consensus is repeatedly foregrounded, both as a source of justification and as a signifier for Swedish political culture. Even the representative of the Left Party, which often comes to represent a critical voice, accentuates and even dedicates his entire statements to the importance of consensus \((2002/03: 121, \text{Ohly, v, anf. r}^{32/r}^{34/r}^{36})\). The report of the Joint Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee also states: ‘There has also on other occasions been consensus among the parliamentary parties regarding the support for the Swedish missions. This political consensus is a strength for Sweden as an international actor and strengthens the credibility of our

\(^9\) In Swedish: ‘Det är ett svårt och farligt uppdrag. Soldater kan förolyckas, och de kan hamna i situationer där de blir tvungna att öppna eld mot mäsgrupper som innehåller barnsoldater. / Jag är stolt över att vi i detta beslut har en enig riksdag /.../’


Consensus is further depicted as crucial in cases of ‘difficult and sad news’\(^6\) (2002/03: 121, Tingsgård, s, anf. 129), or if the operation would lead to ‘tragedies or unpleasant things’\(^7\) (2002/03: 121, Ohly, v, anf. 132). The insistence on consensus is salient in many parliamentary debates on a number of Swedish military contributions (see e.g. the next chapter on ISAF). On a general level, the rhetoric of consensus-building could in and by itself be considered to naturalise the current state of affairs. Essentially, it discourages dissent and contestation, by signalling that there is no room for, no need for, problematisation; to emphasise and uphold consensus as a political virtue reinforces the notion that there are no other options than the one being proposed. As evident in the debate on Operation Artemis, the lack of contestation also means that the dilemmas, which peace-enforcement and the use of force inevitably involve, are obscured and left out of view.

**NARRATIVE STRUCTURATION: IN/VISIBILITY, DIS/IDENTIFICATION & DE/NATURALISATION**

The establishment of Operation Artemis signifies a rapid (yet temporal) shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement in Congo. That the soldiers would engage in fighting was expected from the very outset; what the mandate of peace-enforcement suggests is that the troops will use force for purposes other than mere self-defence, and that Operation Artemis will deviate from the practices of MONUC, which the troops will be there to support. Even so, there is in the parliamentary debate a distinct lack of problematisation over the mission’s mandate of peace-enforcement and the increased capacity to use force, most likely due to the lack of contestation. However, the lack of problematisation is noteworthy, not least since the Social Democratic representative identifies the Special Armed Forces’ mission in Congo as ‘one of the biggest and most important decisions in perhaps forty years’\(^8\) (2002/03: 121, Ahlin, s, anf. 137). Moreover, the compact consensus quite clearly stands in the way for critical reflection and debate; without any dissent, the Swedish soldiers’ involvement in combat does not appear as either sensational or something that needs to be justified. Consensus thus conceals, one can say, the dilemma and exceptionality of letting soldiers engage in warfare.

Although the mission is described as dangerous and risky, which somehow is to acknowledge the shifting circumstances, the debates are primarily focusing on the

\(^5\) In Swedish: ‘Även vid tidigare tillfällen /…/ har det funnits en samsyn bland riksdagens partier till stöd för de svenska insatserna. Denna politiska enighet är en styrka för Sverige som internationell aktör och stärker trovärdigheten i vår utrikes- och säkerhetspolitik.’

\(^6\) In Swedish: ‘svåra och tråkiga nyheter’

\(^7\) In Swedish: ‘tragedier eller tråkigheter’

\(^8\) In Swedish: ‘ett av de största och viktigaste besluten på kanske fyrtio år’
issue of being exposed to violence rather than the increased possibility to perform violence. Hence, in terms of in/visibility, the shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement could be considered obscured, as the violent dimension of peace-enforcement not is foregrounded. The violent element is present in the sense that some members of parliament mention the combat situations that might occur. Yet, the dilemma, which the partaking in such situations inevitably represent, is not addressed and dealt with; instead, the combat situations that are likely to occur are rather presented in a descriptive way, as to prepare for what is to come. These remarks leave, as it were, little mark. On a side note, one can notice that the Congo experience in the 1960s is never mentioned.

In short, the violent element may be present in the narratives yet rendered a natural aspect of military intervention; violence is not articulated, considered and debated as a choice, a decision, which bears consequences in terms of policy and practice, but as something that just has to be, or something that just will come. That Swedish troops will get involved in violence is simply a fact – Operation Artemis is risky and dangerous, but so it must be. Ultimately, it appears as if Sweden is left with no alternatives. Yet, at the same time, ‘taking the lead’ is articulated as a choice, which foregrounds the dimension of agency. In terms of dis/identification, Sweden is differentiated from ‘passivity’; that way, peace-enforcement comes to signify determination and a good deed. Taking part in peace-enforcement thus also appears as the natural direction to take. All in all, whether the change of practice – the sudden turn to peace-enforcement – is consistent with the Swedish policy on the use of force and Sweden’s role in the international use of force is never elaborated or debated. The engagement in Operation Artemis is not even represented as a change of direction, as a turn to peace-enforcement; instead, it is portrayed as a natural continuation.
ISAF: Afghanistan 2002-2014

Sweden contributed with military troops to the international military operation in Afghanistan, ISAF, between 2002 and 2014. This military engagement proved to be one of the biggest and most violent engagements that Sweden had ever experienced in the context of peace operations abroad. What initially constituted a small military contribution of primarily symbolic value evolved into a significant and substantial military undertaking, all in all resulting in the death of five Swedish soldiers. The question of ISAF is first introduced for public discussion in the Swedish parliament on 18 January 2002. As the intervention in Afghanistan was based on a UN mandate in accordance with Chapter VII, the members of parliament know from the outset that ISAF will take the form of a peace-enforcement operation and may come to include the use of force exceeding the principle of self-defence (2001/02: 54).

In the first parliamentary debate, which is noticeably short, all parliamentary parties including the Left agree to the proposed Swedish military contribution after, inter alia, pointing to the lack of other options to secure humanitarian aid to Afghanistan (2001/02: 54, Johannesson, v, anf. 3), the high expectation on Sweden to contribute more to peace-promoting operations (2001/02: 54, Lennmarker, m, anf. 2), and that the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence finds it to be a logical move for Sweden, in line with Swedish foreign and security policy and tradition (2001/02: 54, Ahlén, s, anf. 1). The parliament thus unanimously authorises the government to make a troop available for a ‘multinational security force’ in Afghanistan. More specifically, the parliament authorises a contingent including, at the most, 45 people, which will support the Afghan authorities with the security arrangements in the Kabul area.

During the summer of 2002 the Swedish military contribution is transformed from a Special Units mission to a more regular international peace mission focusing on civil-military cooperation (Agrell, 2013: 97/98). Routine patrolling and civil-military...
activities characterise the Swedish military presence in the Kabul area up until 2004-2005, when the mission is relocated to the north of Afghanistan (Agrell, 2013: 97). In early 2004 the Swedish contingent is downsized from 45 people to 16 and the number of tasks is reduced; the government now for the first time explicitly clarifies that the tasks delegated to the Swedes must not involve any active participation in armed actions (Agrell, 2013: 116). However, this limited involvement in ISAF will not last for long; already in April 2004, the government suggests that the Swedish contingent should be increased to 112 people, with the possibility to expand it to up to 150 people, and that the responsibilities yet again should include field operations, this time not exclusively around Kabul but also in the north of Afghanistan (Agrell, 2013: 118/119). As the ISAF mission now expanded to include the whole territory of Afghanistan, Sweden came to deploy personnel to Mazar-e-Sharif in the north, there serving under British command.

After a year of deliberations with the Armed Forces, the government issues a proposal on 27 October 2005 suggesting that the Swedish contingent to ISAF could be expanded to up to 375 people and that Sweden would take over the responsibility of the PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) in Mazar-e-Sharif as the British would relocate to the southern part of the country (Agrell, 2013: 126-127). Eventually, Sweden took over the responsibility of the PRT Mazar-e-Sharif on 15 March 2006. Taking the role of a Lead Nation and taking responsibility for the northern provinces of Afghanistan was indeed a major commitment for Sweden; the Swedish engagement in ISAF now shifted from one of symbolic character to one of military and political significance. As many times before, Sweden, however, managed to avoid a high-risk area, whereas other states such as Canada and Denmark had actively aspired to station their forces in Afghanistan’s more violent regions, the southern and eastern areas (Agrell, 2013: 128). However, the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated gradually and the war against the Taliban eventually also affected the areas in the north and the Swedish area of responsibility. The Swedish troop size also increased gradually throughout the mission, and reached a peak in 2009 (Angstrom & Noreen, 2017: 42). At the most, Sweden had about 500 soldiers in Afghanistan (Holmberg & Hallenberg, 2017b: 8). From 2010, when the transition process began, the security responsibility shifted from ISAF to Afghan authorities (Noreen et al, 2017: 153). In 2012, PRT Mazar-e-Sharif transformed into a Transition Support Team (TST), which meant a shift from military to civilian control [Noreen & Angstrom, 2015: 292]. Finally, in 2014, the Swedish base – Camp Northern Lights – was handed over to the Afghan authorities.
THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE

In/distinction

All throughout the parliamentary debates on ISAF between 2002 and around 2010, when the exit strategy is agreed, the most salient theme and issue of debate is unquestionably the distinction and potential confusion between the US troops\textsuperscript{104}, i.e. the OEF\textsuperscript{105}, and the ISAF troops. In terms of dis/identification, the US war in Afghanistan and their troops on the ground in many respects serve as the Others, which the Swedish military engagement continuously is contrasted against. As most of the statements, also by those being critical, centre on the US troops in the region, their use of force and whether the ISAF troops are drawn into their war practices or not, the peace-enforcing mandate of the ISAF operation itself is largely left undebated and often becomes a non-issue. In other words, with regard to in/visibility and de/naturalisation, there is in general terms considerably more talk on what the ‘Others’ do than what the Swedish Armed Forces are actually doing in Afghanistan.

As the question of whether the OEF and ISAF are actually operating independently (with distinct and separate mandates and areas of responsibility) comes to dominate the parliamentary debates, Swedish policy on the use of force and the activities on the ground tend to become marginalised issues in the public talks. In contrast to ‘the US war’, the practice of peace-enforcement thus remains unproblematised. As an implication of this (lack of) focus, and as a dominant narrative theme in itself, Sweden tends to be differentiated from the US and practices of war, while the US in turn – alone – comes to represent warfare. By repeatedly emphasising the distinction between OEF and ISAF, the violent element of ISAF generally appears unexceptional and less violent; hence, the heightened visibility of the practices of the US troops generally serves to invisibilise the war-like dimension of peace-enforcement. In what follows, this particular aspect of the debates will be elaborated on further, chronologically.

In early 2002, in the first public discussion on the Swedish contribution to the so-called multinational security force, most representatives choose to abstain from commenting on US actions in Afghanistan. However, already at this early stage, the debate is marked by a certain concern regarding the military and political context in which the mission will be carried out (2001/02: 54). A Social Democratic representative, for instance, accentuates that the US’s bomb raids and their violations

\textsuperscript{104} Supported by a coalition of Allies in Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan (OEF-A).

\textsuperscript{105} OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom) is the official name of the military operation known as the War on Terrorism, initiated by the invasion of Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks. The US war in Afghanistan lasted from 2001 to 2013 and came to be called OEF-A. In this chapter, OEF-A will be referred to as simply OEF as this is the acronym used in the parliamentary debates.
of international law in the treatment of prisoners of war, as well as the fact that the British are a warring party in Afghanistan while at the same time leading ISAF, are circumstances that attest to the significance of Swedish national caveats\textsuperscript{a}\textsuperscript{b} (2001/02: 54, Wegestål, s, anf. 5).

Already during the second and third rounds of debate on ISAF, also in 2002, the issue of in/distinction becomes a prominent subject. At this point, the need to clarify that the OEF and ISAF are indeed different operations seems to be of great importance; now the representatives give the impression that the distinction between the two operations is obvious and indisputable. That ISAF is utterly different from OEF is emphasised repeatedly. As one representative clarifies: ISAF is a completely separate operation and only coordinates its mission with the US coalition to avoid interference in each other’s spheres of responsibility (2001/02: 123, Ekholln, s, anf. 2). Another representative stresses that ISAF by no means should be confused with the US’s ongoing war in the country; it has already been clearly stated that ISAF in no way is subordinated to US central command (2001/02: 123, Ohly, v, anf. 3). A third representative claims that the mission of ISAF surely differs from the objectives of the OEF (2001/02: 123, Viklund, kd, anf. 4\textsuperscript{c}). From the Left-Green opposition in particular, which throughout the years criticises the US invasion in Afghanistan and the subsequent war on terrorism, the US actions are explicitly referred to as ‘pure warfare’ (2002/03: 37, Hedström, mp, anf. 186) or as an ‘outrageous war’ (2003/04: 121, Åström, v, anf. 125).

As time passes, and a clearer picture of the ‘reality’ on the ground seems to emerge, the association between ISAF and OEF is increasingly foregrounded, especially by the Left-Green opposition. Whereas the right-wing and centre opposition consider the exchange of information between OEF and ISAF as a given necessity – even though they still endorse a distinction between the two (e.g. 2002/03: 37, Wålivaara, kd, anf. 176) – the Left makes clear that its support for the Swedish engagement is conditioned upon a clear separation (2002/03: 37, Jöhannesson, v, anf. 177). As a Green Party representative explains: how else will the Afghans be able to differentiate between enemy and friends? (2002/03: 37, Hedström, mp, anf. 186).

My other comment is very important for us the Greens and for many true friends of peace. It is incredibly important that it is made clear in texts, for instance in reports, in government bills, in statements issued by the Armed Forces and

\textsuperscript{a} Meaning the restrictions placed on the use of Swedish contingents operating as part of ISAF.

\textsuperscript{b} Yet, Wegestål (s), accentuates that the Committee report, which the Parliament’s decision builds on, has de-emphasised the US’s and UK’s bombing of Afghanistan. While the government bill stresses that the mission of the international security force will be separated from OEF, it opens up for coordination between the two, which seems contradictory (2001/02: 123, Wegestål, s, anf. 6).
generally speaking in all public communication, that the difference is distinct between the UN forces on the one hand and the unjustifiable anti-terrorist war actions still staged by the US in Afghanistan on the other.\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Min andra kommentar är mycket viktig för oss miljöpartister och för många verkliga fredsvänner. Det är oerhört noga att det väldigt tydligt framgår i texten, att det inte fanns några osynliga insatser av våld – alltså strid. Men som tur är har de här trupperna inte varit utsatta för beskjutning eller behövt vara i strid.’} \footnote{In Swedish: ‘Den internationella säkerhetsstyrkan är inte ett i Afghanistankriget stridande förband eller del av sådant förband. Detta är också inte helt klarlagt i betänkandet. De uppgifter som har förekommit om att svensk trupp i Afghanistan deltar i striderna är således felaktiga, vilket var mycket viktigt för oss att klaröra.’} \footnote{In Swedish: ‘Fru talman! Jag noterade att Berit Jóhannesson i början av sitt anförande var glad över att kunna konstatera att de trupper som från Sveriges sida satsar på ISAF inte har varit i strid och inte är stridande förband. Jag tror att Berit Jóhannesson och jag har olika uppfattningar. Övriga partier i utskottet var väl ganska eniga med Folkpartiet i beslutsförfattning, och att det är lätt att se att det här ISAF-mandatet är ett mandat under kapitel VII, det vill säga fredsträffande åtgärder. FN-stadgan ger rätt att använda våld – alltså strid. Men som tur är har de här trupperna inte varit utsatta för beskjutning eller behövt vara i strid.’}

At this point in time, the parliamentary debates mostly deal with general and symbolic questions regarding force deployment. One exchange of replies – one of a few that actually, and explicitly, touch upon the issue of the Swedish military’s use of force – is summarised below. What this exchange of replies illustrates, among other things, is how ISAF is continuously differentiated from the OEF. The concern seems to be that the peace-enforcing mandate will actually be fully utilised, and that Swedish soldiers may come to be associated with warfare or be ‘mistaken’ for combat soldiers. In terms of dis/identification and in/visibility, these quotes are illustrative of how the distinction between ISAF and OEF serves to make the practices of peace-enforcement appear less violent and thus less problematic than warfare.

The international security force is not a combat force or part of such a force in the Afghan war. This has now also been confirmed in the report. The information that Swedish troops in Afghanistan have taken part in combat is thus incorrect, which was very important for us to clarify.\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Den internationella säkerhetsstyrkan är inte ett i Afghanistankriget stridande förband eller del av sådant förband. Detta är också inte helt klarlagt i betänkandet. De uppgifter som har förekommit om att svensk trupp i Afghanistan deltar i striderna är således felaktiga, vilket var mycket viktigt för oss att klaröra.’}

Madam President! I noticed that Berit Jóhannesson in the beginning of her statement was pleased to ascertain that the troops that Sweden has sent to ISAF have not been in combat and do not represent combat forces. I think that Berit Jóhannesson and I have different opinions. Surely, the other parties in the Committee pretty much share the Liberal Party’s assessment that the mandate of ISAF surely is a Chapter VII mandate, which means peace-enforcing measures. The UN Charter authorises a right to use force – in other words combat. But luckily, these troops have not been under fire or needed to engage in combat.\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Fru talman! Jag noterade att Berit Jóhannesson i början av sitt anförande var glad över att kunna konstatera att de trupper som från Sveriges sida satsar på ISAF inte har varit i strid och inte är stridande förband. Jag tror att Berit Jóhannesson och jag har olika uppfattningar. Övriga partier i utskottet var väl ganska eniga med Folkpartiet i beslutsförfattning, och att det är lätt att se att det här ISAF-mandatet är ett mandat under kapitel VII, det vill säga fredsträffande åtgärder. FN-stadgan ger rätt att använda våld – alltså strid. Men som tur är har de här trupperna inte varit utsatta för beskjutning eller behövt vara i strid.’}
Madam President! This is about two different things. This is a Chapter VII mission. So, it is about peace-enforcement. You have within the scope of such a mission the right to use force if you are attacked; so, the UN force has such an authority. That is one thing, and we have accepted that. Another thing is to be a combat force in the Afghan war. What I referred to is a statement that was actually made in a TV show, where a leading Liberal representative claimed that our troops were part of the fight against al-Qaida. I think it is very important to distinguish between these things.

(2002/03: 37, Jóhannesson, v, anf. 179)

It has never by any Liberal representative been claimed that we have sent troops to Afghanistan for the reason mentioned. However, when it comes to talk about these troops being in action, I want to say that it is a fact that they are prepared for combat. But luckily, they have never needed to be engaged in combat.

(2002/03: 37, Nilsson Wigström, fp, anf. 180)

Madam President! It is good that Cecilia Nilsson Wigström and I agree that it has not been the case that one fights, so to say, on the US side in this context – that one in other words takes part in the fight against al-Qaida – but that one is part of the UN force that has a Chapter VII mandate backing it up. It is very good that we agree on that.

(2002/03: 37, Jóhannesson, v, anf. 181)

Two years into the Swedish military engagement in Afghanistan, the Left Party withdraws its support for the contribution as it is envisioned by the government (2003/04: 121, Åström, v, anf. 125). An expected merging of the OEF and ISAF is projected as the main reason; when ISAF is now about to expand its area of responsibility beyond the capital of Kabul, the risk of becoming associated with the US troops, which are engaged in an outright war, is simply too big. As a spokesperson for the Left asks: Swedish troops will likely become dependent upon the coalition for fire support and air support, and how will the two operations then be distinguishable?

(2003/04: 121, Åström, v, anf. 125). The Greens ask themselves the same kinds of questions, although they support the government bill. One representative asks: How shall ordinary Afghans differentiate between their old

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87 In Swedish: ‘Det har alltid av någon folkpartist hävdats att vi har skickat trupper till Afghanistan av nämnda anledning. När det däremot gäller talet om att de här trupperna är i strid vill jag säga att det är ett faktum att de är stridseredda. Men som tur är har de aldrig behövt vara med i strid.’

invaders and those who have now been invited by President Karzai? How are we to inform people ‘who is the enemy, who is a friend, who is evil, and who is good?’\(^4\) (2003/04: 121, Hedström, mp, anf. 139). Yet, however troubling these issues may be, the Greens suggest that the right conclusion nevertheless is to send troops that are backed up by a UN mandate. From the right-wing opposition on the other hand, it is claimed that the so-called ‘leftist hate’ of the US is so strong that it appears more important to make sure that the two operations are not cooperating than to contribute to the ‘UN force’ and actually help the people of Afghanistan (2003/04: 121, Björling, m, anf. 129).\(^5\) For the right-wing opposition, international ‘responsibility’ is thus superior to the risk of ISAF and OEF being coordinated. As they claim: it is the warlords that are the real danger to Afghanistan, not the US troops (2003/04: 121, Wigström, fp, anf. 140).

By the end of 2005, it is the possible and by some much-feared merging of ISAF and OEF that is the complete focus of the parliamentary debates (2005/06: 45). At this point in time, the Swedish contribution has been expanded substantially and Sweden has experienced its first loss of life, as Jesper Lindblom has been killed and some of his colleagues injured\(^6\) in an attack carried out only two weeks earlier. The level of violent confrontation seems to have increased and the Swedish soldiers seem to find themselves in a much more hostile environment. Now the parliament is debating an expansion of Sweden’s military contribution, as Sweden is about to take command of a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Mazar-e-Sharif (2005/06: 45, Forslund, s, anf. 69).

The question of indistinction is not a peripheral issue in a broader political debate on the Swedish contribution, this is the question that dominates the debates up until the exit strategy has been agreed in late 2010. The political contestation around ISAF very much centres around the issue of whether OEF and ISAF are truly separate, and hence whether Sweden is or is not linked to practices of armed conflict, war, and violations of human rights, all of which the US comes to represent. One can note that every articulation of dissent is motivated by the alleged merging of international troops in Afghanistan; in turn, every articulation of consent in some way needs to confront the allegations put forward by the Left and some representatives of the Greens. Also the Social Democrats, who at this point in time are still in government, accentuate the importance of keeping the two operations apart: OEF wages a war on terrorism, they state, while ISAF is there to build and

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\(^4\) In Swedish: ‘vem som är fiende, vem som är vän, vem som är ond och vem som är god’

\(^5\) See also e.g. 2010/11: 9, Björklund, fp, anf. 100 and 2011: 56, Bildt, m, anf. 25.

\(^6\) Tomas Bergqvist dies from his injuries a few days after the debate.
uphold security. Thus, they have different mandates and they are in Afghanistan on separate missions (2005/06: 45, Forslund, s, anf. 69/104). The Conservatives likewise ascertain that the mandates differ – it is obvious, they claim; yet the cooperation that already exists between the two operations needs to be further developed (2005/06: 45, Carlsson, m, anf. 78). The Liberals further insists that these kinds of debates are pointless, as the warlords, the Taliban, and the terrorists, do not care about the difference between the operations anyways. If Sweden is not present in Afghanistan, who will be there instead, and who will implement resolution 1325\textsuperscript{207} (2005/06: 45, Widman, fp, anf. 79).

The new government bill on an expansion of the military contribution to ISAF seems to divide the parliamentarians representing the Greens. Ångström (mp, anf. 93), who supports the government’s proposal, rejects the allegations that OEF and ISAF are merging and claims that such statements and misleading information are motivated by anti-Americanism. Although the US bears responsibility for severe breaches of human rights, a withdrawal from Afghanistan would not signify solidarity or peacefulness but rather the opposite, he claims. However, to keep the leadership of ISAF separated from that of the OEF is articulated as an ultimatum; the day these two mission serve under the same operational leadership, the support from the Greens will be withdrawn (2005/06: 45, Ångström, mp, anf. 94/96; see also 2005/06: 45, Hedström, mp, anf. 99). In late 2005 (2005/06: 45), the majority of the Green Party representatives conclude that ISAF is needed in Afghanistan despite the risk of ISAF being coordinated with the OEF.\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{quote}
We hope and presuppose that there are no hidden agendas or obscured motives. But I can willingly admit that I doubt it /.../ ISAF is not and must not be terrorist hunters, not point their weapons against civilians, not be a cover-up for the needs of the American OEF or legitimate their presence.\textsuperscript{39}
\end{quote}

(2005/06: 45, Hedström, mp, anf. 99)

As in previous debates, the Left continues to bring to attention and problematise what is claimed to be an ongoing merging of US and Swedish troops; in practice, the two military missions are claimed to be fully coordinated already (2005/06: 45, \textsuperscript{39} 2005/06: 45, Hedström, mp, anf. 99).

\textsuperscript{207} On women, peace and security, with the ambition to include a ‘gender perspective’ in all peace building work.

\textsuperscript{38} Yet, Fridolin (mp, anf. 101) on his part argues for an expanded aid programme instead of expanding the military contribution. As he claims: it is humanitarian work that Sweden has a long tradition of in Afghanistan. To be perceived as a warring party in Afghanistan, he states, would undermine Sweden’s possibilities to support Afghanistan with humanitarian aid. That the military operation in Afghanistan is sanctioned by the UN is therefore not a strong enough argument for contributing to ISAF. He rather describes the Swedish contribution as linked to the war on terrorism and that it likely contributes to the undermining of human rights (2005/06: 45, Fridolin, mp, anf. 101).

\textsuperscript{39} In Swedish: ‘Vi hoppas och förutsätter därmed att det inte finns några dolda agendor eller mörkade motiv. Men jag ska villigt erkänna att jag tvekar /.../ ISAF är inte och får inte bli terroriststrategie, inte rikta sina vapen mot civila, inte vara en täckmantel för amerikanska OEF:s behov eller legitimeras deras närvaro.’
Åström, v, anf. 68/70). In terms of the use of force and the combat of terrorism in Afghanistan, it is not the activity itself that is depicted as problematic, but rather who Sweden aligns itself with and on what grounds (e.g. 2005/06: 45, Åström, v, anf. 68). At this point in time, the Left Party in fact advocates that the UN should take over the responsibility for the whole of Afghanistan; the Left would in that case be prepared to support a Swedish contribution (2005/06: 45, Åström, v, and. 72). It is thus the actors involved that are rendered problematic, not the use of force – the practice – as such. To use force largely appears as a given.

In the years following Sweden’s take-over of PRT Mazar-e-Sharif in 2006, and once the Swedish contribution has shifted from one of primarily symbolic value to one of military significance, the talk of in/distinction continues to be a salient feature of the debates on ISAF. Those critical of the current form of the Swedish military engagement keep emphasising the ongoing merging of OEF and ISAF (e.g. 2006/07: 81, Linde, v, anf. 49; 2006/07: 116, Linde, v, anf. 255/260), whereas those supporting the Swedish contribution emphasise the separation between the two operations and their mandates, areas of responsibility and objectives (e.g. 2006/07: 16, Bildt, m, anf. 1; 2006/07: 81, Odenberg, m, anf. 48). The Minister for Foreign Affairs admits that ISAF (as a whole) has taken over the main responsibility for the OEF’s former area of responsibility – that is, the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan – yet ISAF has not taken over OEF’s mandate; the two are still separate missions with separate mandates and essentially separate management structures. However, as the two operate within the same areas there is a need to co-ordinate and exchange information (2006/07, 16, Bildt, m, anf. i). The Minister for Defence further accentuates the distinct mandates and separate chains of command (2006/07: 81, Odenberg, m, anf. 48), and another conservative representative stresses that no American troops are active in Sweden’s area of responsibility (2006/07: 116, Jernbeck, m, anf. 266). Others, who also are positive to the Swedish contribution, emphasise that the OEF and ISAF are acting separately and should continue to act separately, as their tasks differ (see e.g. 2006/07: 116, Danielsson, c, anf. 273; 2006/07: 117, Lindestam, s, anf. 160). Yet, the Social Democrats acknowledge the risk that ISAF and OEF might become coordinated, and emphasise that OEF’s way of conducting warfare spills over to the other international forces as well (2008/09: 52, Ahlin, s, anf. 174).

Yet, he points out that the Americans are fighting a good cause.
As noted earlier, the Left-Green opposition generally emphasises that the objective of ISAF has been undermined by the presence of other international actors in the area, that is: the warring actors. As one representative puts it: the risk of a further merging of ISAF and OEF is that ISAF will become something completely different from what is was intended to be, and be forced to adopt a warrior approach (2006/07: 116, Rådberg, mp, anf. 263/265). Another representative notes that ISAF to an ever-greater extent has taken over the main responsibility for the security situation in Afghanistan, which means that the Taliban and other opponents of the regime will now face ISAF rather than OEF (2006/07: 16, Johnson, v, anf. 2). As the security situation deteriorates, the mandate will not likely stay the same, the Left suggests; when OEF reduces its troops and the ISAF operation expands, ISAF will probably become the main opponent of the Taliban and the warlords in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{123} ISAF will reasonably fail if it adopts the (failed) military strategy of OEF (2006/07: 16, Johnson, v, anf. 5; 2006/07: 81, Linde, v, anf. 47; 2006/07: 116, Linde, v, anf. 255).\textsuperscript{124} Again, it is the actors rather than the practice that stand in focus. Given the heightened visibility of actors and the practices of others, the practice of peace-enforcement is backgrounded; while the actors and (the actual or possible) alignments are problematised, peace-enforcement in itself (which below is termed peacekeeping) appear unnoteworthy and natural.

This [the failure to reconstruct infrastructure, democratic institutions, public trust and civil society] is a result primarily of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF, which conducts a war against terrorism and the Taliban guerrilla in the southern and eastern parts of the country, while the UN and NATO at the same time seek to conduct peacekeeping operations in the northern part. /…/ First and foremost, we consider the threat towards Swedish personnel to be a consequence of the fact that it is very difficult to conduct peacekeeping operations when the US is conducting a war in the country.\textsuperscript{125}
I think, for my part, that ISAF will not be better off if Sweden leaves the ISAF mission. I think, to the contrary, that it is important that we – with our values and our ideals – are part of that mission and make our mark.⁶⁶

(2006/07: n6, Forslund, s, anf. z61)

Although the representatives who support the Swedish contribution at times accuse the ‘counter narrative’ of being anti-American, the general narrative clearly also differentiates the Swedish contribution from the American one, and ultimately differentiates Sweden from war. Whereas the US comes to represent war and violence – regardless of its agenda being legitimate or not – the general representation, reflected in all parliamentary statements that endorse the Swedish contribution, is that Swedish practices should be, and indeed are, fundamentally different from those of the US. A Social Democratic representative, for instance – as demonstrated below – reflects on the local people’s positive view of ISAF, and how the Afghans indeed can distinguish between ISAF and OEF. A conservative representative in turn emphasises that Sweden serves as a good example, even for the Americans. Thus, one can note that the differentiation between the US and Sweden serves to justify a Swedish military involvement; as the US becomes the Other – ‘the warriors’ – the Swedish troops seem to be vital, not least as a counterweight to the US war. Ultimately, the demarcation of identities seems to enable the practice of peace-enforcement, as peace-enforcement here appears to stand in contrast to warfare. In other words: although the US troops might represent a destructive form of intervention, the Swedish soldiers indeed signify a positive one, a more peaceful one. As has been noted previously, this demarcation of identities makes invisible the war-like dimension of peace-enforcement and renders peace-enforcement unproblematic and unnoteworthy in light of the US’s warfare.

So, how do they really view us when we’re there? Most reply that Sweden is okay. Other countries are also okay, Germany, for example. However, people say that OEF sort of has the finger on the trigger.⁶⁷

(2006/07: n7, Lindestam, s, anf. t60)

In Afghanistan, many say that the Swedish mission in the four provinces is one of the best. There are even those who say that it is the best.⁶⁸

(2008/09: 52, Lennmarker, m, anf. t69)

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⁶⁶ In Swedish: ‘Jag tror för min del att ISAF inte blir bättre av att Sverige lämnar ISAF-insatsen. Jag tror tvärtom att det är viktigt att vi med våra värdeingar och våra ideal är med i den insatsen och sätter vår prägel på den.’


⁶⁸ In Swedish: ‘I Afghanistan finns det många som säger att den svenska insatsen i de fyra provinserna är en av de bästa. Det finns till och med de som säger att det är den bästa.’
We need to reduce the loss of civilian lives, which are partly caused, perhaps a smaller amount yet still, by for example air strikes. It is an important lesson to say that it is better to move forward on a path where one has soldiers on the ground, who can work through peace-promoting, and who are not in combat, as in the four provinces where the Swedish soldiers operate. That is an important lesson. That is probably why some say that Sweden is one of the better, even the best in the country, I heard an American say, to see how this should be done.\textsuperscript{179}

\textsuperscript{179} In Swedish: 'Vi måste få ned de civila förlusterna, som ju delvis förorsakas, kanske en mindre del men dock, av flyganfället till exempel. Det är en viktig lärdom att säga att det är bättre att gå fram på en väg där man kanske har soldater på marken som kan verka fredsframgående och som inte är i strid, som i de fyra provinser där svenska soldater finns. Det är en viktig lärdom. Det är väl därför som en del säger att Sverige är ett av de bättre, eller det bästa, på väg där man kanske har soldater på marken som verkar fredsframgående och som inte är i strid, som i de fyra provinser där svenska soldater finns.

During the most critical years of Sweden’s engagement in ISAF, when the level of violence increases drastically and Swedish soldiers more and more often find themselves in combat situations, the question of in/distinction between the US troops and ISAF troops remains a salient feature, and now it clearly serves as the main argument for withdrawing troops (2008/o9: 52; 2009/10: 32). Only on paper has there a distinction between OEF and ISAF, one Left Party representative claims (2009/10: 32, Linde, v, anf. 176), while another stresses that the difference between the two is becoming increasingly abstract (2010/11: 35, Sjöstedt, v, anf. 43). In addition, those who endorse the right-wing government’s proposal on an ‘exit strategy’\textsuperscript{175} keep referring to the differentiation between the OEF and ISAF:

\textsuperscript{175} Which has been formulated in agreement with the Social Democrats and the Green Party (2010/11: 35).

In the report from the Joint Committee regarding the engagement in Afghanistan, the Committee has approved the Green Party’s proposal that the ISAF forces should be separated from OEF. This is a very important signal as the roles are so different. ISAF is in essence a mission for peace and security in Afghanistan and is based on the UN resolution 1386, which was issued by UN’s Security Council on 20 December 2001. Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF, is an operation that was launched after the attacks against USA on 11 September 2001 as part of the US war against terrorism.\textsuperscript{176}


(2008/09: 52, Lennmarker, m, anf. 173)

(2010/11: 35, Rådberg, mp, anf. 9)
So far, I haven’t heard anyone talk about OEF, but there is another force, which has a completely different mission. Now I see that Peter Rådberg has talked about it. We shall not be confused with that one. ISAF has a truly special mission and should continue with that. These two missions should be kept apart.\(^{26}\) \((2006/07: 35, \text{Lindestam, s, anf. 30})\)

In terms of political contestation and representations of peace-enforcement and violence, it is interesting to note that those representing a critical position vis-a-vis the government’s policies – some of whom advocate a withdrawal of Swedish troops from Afghanistan – largely strengthen rather than challenge the narrative of a Swedish peace-loving identity. The intense debate on the blurred distinction between US troops and ISAF troops arguably serves to uphold a certain image of Sweden: a Sweden which fundamentally represents something different than the US’s warmongering foreign policy. The OEF, which is led by the US, comes to represent the hunting down of Taliban operatives, (unintentional) killings of civilians, human rights violations, and the escalation of conflict (2006/07: 166, Linde, v, anf. 267; 2006/07: 116, Rådberg, mp, anf. 263).\(^{133}\) However, ISAF – in which Swedish soldiers serve – comes to represent something quite different; frequently, ‘the US-led warfare’ is contrasted against ‘the UN-sanctioned ISAF force’ (e.g. 2006/07: 116, Rådberg, mp, anf. 256). Rather than focusing the debates on the actual mandate and activities of the ISAF forces, and thus the Swedish soldiers – which generally would serve to make visible and possibly encourage problematisation – it is primarily the US activities that are foregrounded and at the centre of debate. From ‘critical’ representatives, ISAF and more specifically Sweden is depicted as reluctant to use violence, yet drawn or forced into belligerent operations (see e.g. 2006/07: 116, Rådberg, mp, anf. 256), or the presence of American troops is said to affect the Swedish presence and the opportunity to conduct peace-supporting activities (see e.g. 2006/07: 116, Linde, v, anf. 269). The war-like dimension of peace-enforcement is thus obscured, and the use of force is not articulated as essentially a choice, which comes with a responsibility.

Our cooperation with the OEF forces associates us with this [sense of military occupation among the Afghans]. The best thing would have been if the US troops had withdrawn and we had been able to act in a peaceful manner and fight the Taliban. Then they wouldn’t have had this argument: Look, we are occupied by

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\(^{26}\) In Swedish: ‘Jag har hittills inte hört någon prata om OEF, men det finns alltså en annan styrka som har ett helt annat uppdrag. Nu ser jag att Peter Rådberg har pratat om den. Vi ska inte sammanblandas med den. ISAF har ett alldeles speciellt uppdrag och ska fortsätta med det. De här två insatserna ska hållas isär.’

\(^{133}\) See also 2009/10: 32, Ahlin, s, anf. 171.
the US, now the Americans are trying to destroy our country. Instead they would have said: The UN is here and they try to protect us.\[^{134}\]

\[^{134}\] In Swedish: ‘Vårt samarbete med OEF-styrkorna gör att vi också förknippas med det här. Det lästa hade varit om USA-trupperna hade dragit sig tillbaka och vi hade kunnat agera på ett fredligt sätt och kunnat bekämpa talibanerna. Då hade de inte kunnat ha det här argumentet: Titta nu, vi är ockuperade av USA, nu försöker amerikanerna förstöra vårt land. Det hade istället betat att FN är här och försöker skydda oss.’

Generally, the debates differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ practices of violence. Both the general and counter narrative – when representatives talk either of ISAF’s independence or how interlinked the mandates truly have become – ultimately reinforce the conception of Sweden as essentially peaceful and, most interestingly, the idea of peace-enforcement as a peaceful practice. Here, the leftish opposition clearly brings forward a reservation: if only the Americans had not been there. The insistence to repeatedly differentiate between the Swedish troops and the US troops not only makes the US troops look particularly bad, it ultimately, and most importantly, serves to make Sweden look a lot better (than the US). By many, Sweden is delineated as a role model, which generally represents a particularly successful approach (see e.g. 2009/10: 32, Ahlin, s, anf. 171; 2009/10: 32, Tolgforss, m, anf. 204).

Overall, what the debates thus do is to continuously uphold and maintain, first and foremost, the idea of ISAF being fundamentally different from the US operation – at least it is meant to be different – but also the idea that Swedish soldiers are different from the soldiers of other states. Sweden is differentiated from atrocities of war and violence, but also from passivity and disloyalty – as evident in the last quote presented below.

Our Swedish soldiers make up a little more than a half per cent of the total international operation. We have seen how the international operation and soldiers from other countries during the last years have committed many, large-scale and gross crimes against the human rights in Afghanistan. […] Why are you so quiet when it comes to the American soldiers’ violations on the human rights in Afghanistan?\[^{135}\]

\[^{135}\] In Swedish: ‘Våra svenska soldater utgör en dryg halv procent av den totala internationella insatsen. Vi har sett hur den internationella insatsen och soldater från andra länder under de gångna åren har begått många, omfattande och grova brott mot de mänskliga rättigheterna i Afghanistan. […] Varför är ni så tysta när det kommer till amerikanska soldaters övergrepp mot de mänskliga rättigheterna i Afghanistan?’

Even though the Swedish troops are not involved [in the killing of civilians] everyone is judged by the same standards.\[^{136}\]

\[^{136}\] In Swedish: ‘Även om de svenska trupperna inte är inblandade dras alla över en kam.’

(2010/11: 35, Linde, v, anf. 15)

(2010/11: 35, Ceballos, mp, anf. 31)
When I visited one of the OMLT-teams that operated in our PRT, they said: Will you, the Swedes, do as the others when you’re out [on patrol] with us? Will you act as bystanders and just watch, or will you take part? The answer from the Swedish troops came as a surprise: Of course we will take part. Of course we will go with you and support you. That is an important signal: that we dare to be present, give all and go through with the training of the Afghan security forces.\(^{17}\)

(2010/1: 35, Lundgren, c, anf. 19)

After 2009, a year of intensified fighting and combat involvement, it is not the Swedish soldiers’ role in combat operations that dominates the parliamentary debates. Rather the opposite: as has been mentioned earlier, it is the *actors of war* who are defined as the problem rather than the *practice of violence*. Hence, again, it is the actors rather than the practice that are brought to light and problematised. As a result, the use of force, as a policy and as a practice, largely remains unproblematised; the violence, in which Sweden takes part, is made invisible through the focus on other actors. It is important to note that this is a general observation when taking into account all statements reflected in the parliamentary debates on ISAF. Overall, it is not the violence in Afghanistan *per se* that tends to ‘disappear’ (as a reality and ‘problem’) in the parliamentary discussions, but the violent element of the *practice of peace-enforcement*, hence the violent element of the Swedish mission. By continuously depicting – and criticising – the US as the actor of war, one is in turn obscuring the violent practices inevitably associated with peace-enforcement, and hence, in this case, Sweden.

I share the view that there is something taking place, which we could characterize as war, in many parts of Afghanistan, especially the American warfare Operation Enduring Freedom, which we have criticised.\(^{18}\)

(2009/10: 32, Ahlin, s, anf. 175)

There are three aspects that must function well in order for this operation to achieve its objective. The first is that the military operation, which Sweden is part of, focuses on protecting civilian Afghans, not as the American-led operation in

\(^{17}\) In Swedish: "När jag besökte ett av de OMLT-team som fanns i vårt PRT sade man: Kommer ni svenskar att göra som de andra om ni är med oss ute? Kommer ni att ställa er vid sidan om och titta på eller kommer ni att delta? Svaret från de svenska trupperna förvånade: Det är självklart att vi ska delta. Det är självklart att vi ska följa med och stötta. Det är en viktig signal om att våga vara närvarande, satsa och fullfölja uppflyggnaden av afghanska säkerhetsstyrkor."

\(^{18}\) In Swedish: "Jag delar uppfattningen att det i många delar av Afghanistan pågår någonting som vi skulle kunna karakterisera som krig, särskilt den amerikanska krigföringen Operation Enduring Freedom som vi har kritiserat."
Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, has done and which has also been the case in other areas of Afghanistan, where one hunts down the Taliban.\(^\text{15}\)

\((2009/10: 32, \text{Ahlin, s, anf. 174})\)

Evidently, the debates differentiate between different sorts of military engagements, and ultimately uphold an image of the ISAF operation as being the opposite of war, ultimately serving as a counterweight to the US war, representing the use of legitimate force and impartiality. With regard to dis/identification, the violent element is thus displaced to other actors, as well as the idea of agency and responsibility. As will be further discussed in the subsequent section, the parliamentary debates oftentimes keep silent on and leave unproblematised the issue of violence related to ISAF. This goes for much of the period under scrutiny, except perhaps during the last years, when the Left Party quite forcefully keeps insisting that the Swedish soldiers are taking part in a war, on the side of the Americans.

For one, the [ISAF] mission has left its peace-promoting mandate and has now become a warring part in the ongoing conflict /.../\(^\text{16}\)

\((2009/10: 32, \text{Linde, v, anf. 179})\)

**War-talk?**

In the debates on the Swedish military engagement in Afghanistan, Sweden and the ISAF troops are not only differentiated from the US, they are continuously linked to the UN. This is particularly striking during the first years of intervention. Although the UN indeed sanctions the intervention in Afghanistan, it is as a military operation, officially a NATO-led force from August 2003,\(^\text{17}\) a fact rarely mentioned in the parliamentary debates at least during the first half of the intervention. Instead, when debating the Swedish contribution, the parliamentarians are both before and after August 2003 consistently and repeatedly emphasising the Afghanistan troops’ affiliation to the UN. This is especially manifested in the terms that are being used to describe the military operation that Sweden is part of. The parliamentarians, for instance, usually\(^\text{18}\) refer to *the international UN mission* \((2001/02: 123, \text{Ångström, mp},\)

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\(^{15}\) In Swedish: ‘Det är tre delar som måste fungera för att den här insatsen ska nå sitt syfte. Det ena är att de militära insatser som Sverige är med i ska riktas till att skydda civila afghaner, inte som den amerikansklädda operationen i Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, har gjort och som också skett på andra områden i Afghanistan där man jagat Talibaner.’

\(^{16}\) In Swedish: ‘Dels har insatsen lämnat sitt fredsförande uppdrag och blivit en krigförande part i den pågående konflikten /.../’

\(^{17}\) NATO takes the lead over ISAF in August 2003. Up until then ISAF had been a multinational mission. ISAF was NATO’s first ‘out of area operation’, that is: the first operation outside Europe (\text{Ångström, 2013: 109/165; Roosberg \\& Weibull, 2014: 13/35}).

\(^{18}\) Other terms being used are: *UN’s security force* \((2001/02: 123, \text{Ekholm, s, anf. 9}, the UN operation \((2001/02: 123, \text{Ohly, v, anf. 3}), ISAF, in other words the UN force \((2002/03: 37, \text{Johannesson, v, anf. 177}), the UN presence in Afghanistan
anf. 5; 2005/06: 45, Ångström, mp, anf. 92/96, or the UN-led mission (2004/05: 51, Hagberg, s, anf. 47), or the UN force (2001/02: 123, Ohly, v, anf. 3; 2002/03: 37, Jóhannesson, v, anf. 179/181/185). Interestingly, it is especially in the debates following the death of a Swedish soldier in late 2005 that these references to the UN become striking; it is indeed a matter of repetition, which possibly indicates that the UN at this time appears as a more credible source of justification than NATO when Swedish lives are lost for so-called universal values. As one representative states: ‘a Swedish UN soldier has died’ (2005/06: 45, Erlandsson, c, anf. 91). That is to say, it is not a Swedish soldier that has died, but a Swedish UN soldier. Moreover, in an attempt to counter the popular protest against the war in Afghanistan, which evidently takes place outside the parliamentary building at the time of the debate, a Green Party representative consistently fills his statement with UN-references without mentioning NATO even once (2005/06: 45, Ångström, mp, anf. 92). Generally, in terms of what is made seen and known, it is the connection to the UN that comes into view.

By establishing a link between the Swedish contribution and the UN, while at the same time concealing the association with NATO, the representatives paradoxically differentiate Sweden from NATO although the ISAF operation from August 2003 is actually NATO-led. In fact, ISAF had never been UN-led in any operational or strategic sense (Agrell, 2013). Presumably, it is when death strikes that the peace-enforcing character of the intervention becomes explicit and comprehensible, and narratives and framings that make sense of and justify Sweden’s role are especially required. Hence, the references to UN could thus be understood as an attempt to give the military engagement legitimacy, at a particular point in time when peace-enforcement is revealed as a violent practice.

‘UN’ indeed carries specific connotations. Besides linking Sweden’s engagement to a Swedish tradition of UN engagements and past sacrifices, and thereby undermining any representation of the Afghanistan mission as an exceptional and new type of engagement, the usage of ‘UN’ as an epithet opens up for imaginations of peacekeeping, impartiality and, as discussed in previous chapters, defensive violence. The emphasis on the UN thus serves to invisibilise the war-like dimension of ISAF and naturalise Sweden’s engagement in violence, as the military undertaking


\[^{14}\] 2003/04: 121, Björling, m, anf. 139; 2003/06: 35, Ångström, mp, anf. 96; 2003/06: 35, Hedström, mp, anf. 99.

\[^{15}\] ISAF is, however, occasionally recognised as a NATO-led force (see 2004/06: 51, Carlsson, m, anf. 7; 2004/06: 51, Wigström, fp, anf. 5; 2005/06: 35, Åström, v, anf. 68 – and in response to the Left’s claims: 2005/06: 35, Hedström, mp, anf. 99).
essentially doesn’t appear as anything new or exceptional, as a break from normal routines, or as an issue of major political significance.

However, with time, NATO’s command over ISAF is of course mentioned more and more often, as when representatives refer to the military contribution as ‘the NATO-led force’. Yet the close connection to UN is still continuously emphasised. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, for instance, explicates that the Swedish soldiers serve ‘on the UN’s order and under the NATO-flag’ (2009/10: 76, Bildt, m, anf. 3). In another example from 2009, the Minister for Defence stresses – in response to critical comments – that ‘[o]ne [party] is opposed and wants to abandon the international, UN-mandated, solidarity’ (2009/10: 32, Tolgfors, m, anf. 204). A prominent Social Democrat further refers to the international operation as ‘UN-mandated but NATO-led’ (2009/10: 76, Ahlin, m, anf. 6) and explains how proud the members of parliament are of the men and women who work in Afghanistan ‘in the service of the UN’ (2009/10: 32, Ahlin, m, anf. 171).

In terms of talk on the policy on the use of force and the practice of violence, there is rarely any references to or discussions on explicit events or developments. In other words, the violent element is seldom brought to light and articulated as a concrete – as opposed to abstract – feature of military intervention. Yet, some events on the ground bring to the fore the question of being or not being part of a war. For instance, the interpellation debate in March 2007 (2006/07: 81) and the parliamentary debate in May 2007 (2006/07: 17), dealing with the events in Boka in 2006, is the first time the parliamentary debates truly touch upon the question of engaging in combat. At this point in time, Sweden has already been in Afghanistan for five years. Although two Swedish soldiers have already been killed in action (in 2005), it is now that the debates truly begin to bring up the mandate of Swedish soldiers. Now, the peace-enforcing character of the mandate and the war-like situations that Swedish soldiers (increasingly) find themselves in becomes the principal focus. Even though the representatives dispute whether events such as Boka could be defined as ‘attack operations’, the Minister for Defence recognises that this is the first time Swedish troops have been involved ‘in this type of combat operations’ (2006/07: 81, Odenberg, m, anf. 46). Now, should these events be considered isolated incidents or illustrative of the new conditions, that is the question:

/.../ Do you share the description of the events in Boka, that Sweden now takes part in a war in Afghanistan, which to a large extent is a result of the fact that

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1\ In Swedish: ’Ett är emot och vill överge den internationella, FN-mandaterade solidariteten’.
ISAF has more and more taken over the warfare that OEF earlier conducted? Indeed, Sweden was involved in the events in Boka.\(^{146}\)

\(\text{(2006/07: 117, Rådberg, mp, anf. 155)}\)

\(\ldots\) No, I don’t think that we are part of a war. One is there to support the Afghan police, who took the lead in this whole intervention. That a shootout then occurred because the person who eventually died and his companions started to open fire against Swedish troops does not make the whole thing a war.\(^{146}\)

\(\text{(2006/07: 117, Widman, fp, anf. 156)}\)

\(\ldots\) If Sweden is part of an event in a village in Afghanistan where thousands of shots are fired and a person dies, if Sweden is part of that event, can one come closer to war than that? Where should the line be drawn between taking part in a war and not? Shall Sweden extricate itself and say: We did not take part. We stood a bit at the sideline. It was the Americans that shot.\(^{148}\)

\(\text{(2006/07: 117, Rådberg, mp, anf. 157)}\)

With regards to war, I don’t really see the point. I think that it is very important that we in this chamber learn to differentiate between that which is in line with international law, in other words military interventions based on a UN Security Council decision, and other forms of warfare, which are consequently against international law.\(^{149}\)

\(\text{(2006/07: 117, Widman, fp, anf. 158)}\)

At this point in time, it is generally recognised that something has changed. In the parliamentary debate in May 2007, the question of a more permissive mandate in Afghanistan is debated more explicitly, and the shifting mandate is acknowledged both by the opposition as well as the government parties.\(^{146}\) As a representative of the Conservative Party, now in government, explains: ‘From the beginning ISAF’s tasks were solely peacekeeping. But as the unrest in the country has increased, the operations have also come to include combat tasks.’\(^{150}\)

\(\text{(2006/07: 116, Jernbeck, m, anf. 262)}\)

In Swedish: ‘Delar du beskrivningen av händelsen i Boka, att Sverige numera deltar i ett krig i Afghanistan som till stor del beror på att ISAF har tagit över alltmer den krigsföring som tidigare OEF bedrivit? For Sverige var ju med i den händelsen i Boka.’\(^{146}\)

In Swedish: ‘Nej, jag anser inte att man är det. Man var där för att stödja den afghanska polisen som var de som gick i fronten för hela det här ingripandet. Att det sedan kom till en skottlossning till följd av att den person som sedermera kom att avlida och hans kumpaner började öppna eld mot svensk trupp gör inte det hela till ett krig.’\(^{148}\)

In Swedish: ‘Om Sverige är med i en händelse i en by i Afghanistan där tusentals skott avlossas och en människa dör, om Sverige är med i den händelsen, kan man komma närmare krig än det? Var går gränsen för när man deltar i ett krig eller inte? Ska Sverige hela tiden frigöra sig och säga: Vi var inte med. Vi stod litegrann vid sidan om. Det var amerikanerna som sköt.’\(^{150}\)

In Swedish: ‘När det gäller krig så förstör jag inte riktigt poängen. Jag tror att det är väldigt viktigt att vi i den här kamratten lär oss skilja på det som är i överensstämmande med folkrätten, det vill säga militära ingripenden som baserar sig på ett beslut av FN:s säkerhetsråd, och annan form av krigföring som då följaktligen är folkrättsvridig.’\(^{150}\)

In Swedish: ‘Till en början var dessa uppgifter enbart fredsbevarande. Men allt efter detorligheterna i landet har tilltagit har insatserna även kommit att inkludera stridsuppgifter.’\(^{150}\)
either Sweden is part of the war in Afghanistan, or Sweden acts to reverse the mandate of ISAF to what it initially was – a *peace* force (2006/07: 117, Rådberg, mp, anf. 155).

The question of being or not being at war remains a striking theme from this point onwards, primarily on the initiative of the Left Party. As the Left Party opposes the Swedish contribution to Afghanistan, it certainly introduces a critical and alternative narrative to the debates. That Sweden *de facto* is at war is something the Left Party keeps repeating all throughout the intervention. Yet, that Sweden is involved in war is far from an uncontested claim. The violence might be escalating, a majority of parliament acknowledges, but war? No, we are there to win peace (see e.g. 2010/11: 10, Forssell, m, anf. 306; 2010/11: 35, Bildt, m, anf. 25; 2012/13: 46, Widegren, m, anf. 158).

As Widman (fp) already made clear in 2007, war is unlawful whereas peace-enforcement is not (anf. 158, 2006/07: 117). After years of resisting to define the undertakings in Afghanistan a war engagement, the Social Democrats suddenly define the events unfolding in Afghanistan as war once the negotiations with the government on an exit strategy have been completed (see e.g. 2010/11: 34, Juholt, s, anf. Anf. 61; 2010/11: 9, Sahlin, s, anf. 19). A year earlier it certainly sounded quite different; as they say, before and after:

I usually criticise the Americans when they make statements. Can USA win the war in Afghanistan? We are not at war. This is something that we are in together with the Afghan people.\(^{25}\)

\[(2009/10: 32, Ahlin, s, anf. 173)\]

These soldiers are at war 24 hours a day for the peace we enjoy every day. The Swedish Armed Forces are in that sense at war /…/\(^{25}\)

\[(2010/11: 34, Juholt, s, anf. 61)\]

The Left Party’s rhetoric, by all means, situates Sweden in an ongoing war. It depicts the experiences in Afghanistan as something essentially different from any previous experience of military intervention and thereby challenges, as it were, the business-as-usual representation of the military undertaking in Afghanistan. However, the idea that Sweden now is ‘at war for the first time in 200 years’ – which the Left Party repeatedly puts forward – arguably reinforces the conception of a peaceful Sweden and a peaceful Swedish history (see e.g. 2009/10: 32, Linde, v, anf. 172; 2010/11:35,

\(^{25}\) In Swedish: ‘Jag brukar kritisera amerikanarna när de uttalar sig. Kan USA vinna kriget i Afghanistan? Vi är inte i krig. Detta är någonting som vi är med i tillsammans med det afghanska folket.’

\(^{26}\) In Swedish: ‘Dessa soldater är i krig 24 timmar om dygnet för den fred vi njuter av varje dag. Den svenska försvarsmakten är på så sätt i krig /…/’
Linde, v, anf. 2). In terms of selective visibilities, such a statement could be said to cover over the policy-shift that has been taking place ever since the 1990s. It also excludes from the narrative on the Swedish use of force, events such as those in Congo in the 1960s. Instead, as in early 2012, the Left refers to the ‘peacekeeping blue berets’ in rather nostalgic terms; the ‘blue berets’ feels long gone, a representative says, now that Swedish troops take part in war (2011/12: 78, Linde, v, anf. 20).

Although the years 2009 and 2010 prove to be the most violent period of the whole engagement in Afghanistan, the parliamentary debates around this time are evidently characterised by a certain reluctance to explicitly use the terminology of war, and to talk about the violent events or the engagement in combat. It is mostly the red-green opposition that mentions the ongoing violence in Afghanistan, in which Swedish soldiers take part; Sweden has transformed from a peace-promoting to a warring party in the conflict, the Left Party argues (2009/10: 32, Linde, v, anf. 172), while the Green Party brings attention to the ‘collateral damage’ of the ISAF mission and how the Swedish troops are drawn deeper and deeper into war (2009/10: 32, Rådberg, mp, anf. 177, 2009/10: 76, Rådberg, mp, anf. 36). In late 2010, the both parties insist that the ISAF soldiers also are engaged in killings – hence, it is not just the resistance movement that uses force – and that the ISAF soldiers in Afghanistan indeed have been at war ever since 2001 (2010/11: 35, Linde, v, anf. 2/26, 2010/11: 35, Ohly, v, anf. 32, 2010/11: 35, Rådberg, mp, anf. 9). In contrast to the rhetoric of the Greens and the Left, it is noteworthy how the government abstains from explicitly mentioning the violent element of the peace-enforcing practices in Afghanistan, as when the soon-to-be Minister for Defence describes the recent year. Instead of mentioning the combat, the fighting, and increased levels of violence, the terms ‘formative’ and ‘turbulent’ come to define the latest developments:

The last year has likely been the most formative and turbulent during the last decade, both for the ISAF mission overall and for the Swedish contribution to this mission. What has affected us the most at home is of course the tragic loss of three Swedish soldiers, which we deeply regret. At the same time, it is not until now, a decade after the mission was launched, that all aspects come together and can be fully effective.

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53 Cf. 2010/11: 35, Bildt, m, anf. 25, when the fighting in Congo in the 1960s is mentioned.
54 However, there are a few exceptions, for instance when one Christian Democrat talks of ‘direct combat contact’ and notes that the number of incidents has increased during 2009 and 2010. Not for the purpose of problematisation, however (2010/11: 33, Oscarsson, kd, anf. 24).
55 In Swedish: "Det gångna året har sannolikt varit det mest formativa och turbulenta under det senaste årtiondets, både för ISAF-insatsen i stort och för det svenska bidraget till denna insats. Det som har påverkat oss här hemma..."
The government parties never truly bring to light or problematise the new and more violent conditions on the ground, except for the sake of justifying an expansion of the contingent or a larger allocation of resources to military equipment (see e.g. 2009/10: 32, Enström, m, anf. 178; 2010/11: 35, Widman, fp, anf. 14 2010/11: 35, Oscarsson, kd, anf. 24). Rather than talking explicitly about the fighting unfolding in Afghanistan, the representatives generally talk about the *risks* in Afghanistan. As will become evident in part III, the talk of risk is also very much salient in the TV coverage (2008-2010) of the Swedish contribution to ISAF (see page 209). Many representatives recognise and emphasise that the mission in Afghanistan has indeed proven to be ‘difficult’, ‘dangerous’ and ‘risky’ (see e.g. 2006/07: 16, Widman, fp, anf. 3; 2006/07: 116, Forslund, s, anf. 257; 2006/07: 116, Widman, fp, anf. 276). When the Minister for Foreign Affairs, for instance, talks about the latest developments on the ground, he notes that the last weeks have been a ‘reminder of the great risks’ (2009/10: 76, Bildt, m, anf. 1). When another conservative representative mentions the latest events and the Swedish soldiers being killed in action, he refers to it as ‘examples of the risks’ (2009/10: 76, Holm, m, anf. 38). Essentially, one could also have thought of the events unfolding in Afghanistan and the death of Swedish soldiers as a reminder that peace-enforcement is a war-like practice, which often comes to include combat operations.

Here, ‘risk’ generally comes to represent everything that is problematic with the military engagement. However, the risks are not what separate peace-enforcement from peacekeeping, it is the authorisation to use force beyond self-defence. Hence, in terms of selective visibilities and frames of intelligibility, the most important observation is that the focus on risk and danger increase the awareness that one’s own soldiers could be *killed*, yet excludes from the debates the other potentially controversial aspect of fighting, that is: that one’s own soldiers *kill*. While focusing on ‘risks’ rather than ‘the use of force’, these articulations emphasise exposure to violence rather than the performance of violence. What is made seen and known is the exposure – which, when one finds oneself in a war zone, is out of one’s control. Generally, the lack of problematisation and the talk of risks serve to naturalise the practice of peace-enforcement and the use of force. Risks are inevitably always already *there*; risks are – one may say – an unavoidable aspect of military work, whereas the use of force essentially is an active decision, which comes with a responsibility. By foregrounding risk and backgrounds the *act* of violence, one is

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mest är naturligtvis den tragiska förlusten av tre svenska soldater, vilket vi djupt beklagar. Samtidigt är det först nu, ett årtionde efter att insatsen påbörjades, som alla instrumenten börjar komma på plats och kan ge full effekt.’

24 Cont. 2006/07: 117, Lindestam, s, anf. 160; 2009/10: 32, Lindestam, s, anf 217; 2010/11: 46, Widman, fp, anf. 18
arguably undermining a representation of the events unfolding in Afghanistan as a 
break with previous practices and ideals. The emphasis on risk turns the debates into 
talk of one’s own potential losses, leaving aside the consequences of the use of force 
at large, and hence obscures the violent transition to peace-enforcement. Quite 
evidently, all military operations before ISAF have also been ‘risky’; military 
operations always are. Overall, a focus on risk thus reduces the ‘problem’ of peace-
enforcement to a question of protecting the lives of one’s own.

If the situation has become more dangerous, how can that be an argument to end 
the military engagement?345

(2009/10: 32, Tolgfors, m, anf. 204)

Tradition of solidarity and history of consensus

Two other striking features of the narratives outlined in the parliamentary debates on 
ISAF are the ideas that, first, the military engagement in ISAF is part of a Swedish 
tradition, and second, that parliamentary consensus is of utmost importance for – 
above all – the soldiers serving on the ground. Both these narrative features could be 
considered to serve to naturalise the use of force, as could some of the rhetoric 
outlined above. Reference to Swedish tradition is a common feature of debates on 
military interventions overall, as has been demonstrated in previous chapters, and so 
is the general call for consensus. However, in the case of ISAF in Afghanistan, which 
will prove to be one of the most violent engagements in Swedish modern history, the 
talk of tradition and consensus could be thought of as particularly problematic, as the 
involvement in ISAF in fact appears – not least in the counter narratives – as a break 
with old routines and practices. Yet, tradition as a concept includes the notion of 
continuity, and ultimately suggests that the engagement in ISAF is merely a natural 
continuation of previous military undertakings and commitments. In short, if the 
mission is part of the Swedish tradition, it seems natural to stay in Afghanistan; the 
engagement in ISAF just has to continue. In the general narrative, it is not the ISAF 
engagement itself and the policy on the use of force that is depicted as a break with 
tradition, but a withdrawal (see e.g. 2009/10: 32, Tolgfors, m, anf. 206; 2009/10: 32, 
Lundgren, c, anf. 191).

To withdraw [from Afghanistan] is a complete break with a long Swedish 
tradition of international solidarity.348

(2009/10: 32, Tolgfors, m, anf. 206)

345 In Swedish: ‘Om situationen har blivit farligare, hur kan det vara argument för att avsluta den militära närvaron?’
346 In Swedish: ‘Att lämna är ett totalt brott mot en lång svensk tradition av internationell solidaritet.’
In these statements, the term tradition is used in reference to the UN, to acts of international solidarity and to the ‘export’ of peace and security (see e.g. 2006/07: 117, Lindgren, kd, anf. 159; 2007/08: 35, Karlsson, s, anf. 1; 2007/08: 35, Tolgfors, m, anf. 24). References to these ‘traditions’ insinuate that ISAF is no different from the past interventions that Sweden has been engaged in, and thus emphasise continuity rather than discontinuity. Essentially, these references divert attention from what is characteristic of peace-enforcement as a practice – that is: the mandate of extensive use of force; what is foregrounded are characteristics that seem to be common for all peace missions, such as ‘the UN’, ‘solidarity’, and ‘security’. The ISAF engagement is portrayed as a continuation; what is backgrounded, rendered invisible, is thus the increased use of force, the war-like dimension, and the exceptionality of a Swedish engagement in such violent undertakings.

To reach consensus – or broad support – on issues related to security is also articulated as a Swedish tradition (e.g. 2011/12: 46, Enström, m, anf. 8; 2011/12: 46, Bildt, m, anf. 21). The call for consensus is repeated throughout the intervention, yet is intensified in 2010, when debates on an international exit strategy begin to take shape. However, already early on, the idea of consensus comes with certain consequences. For instance, to be critical of the military engagement is depicted as a betrayal of the soldiers stationed in Afghanistan, who risk their lives for the sake of Sweden and world peace (see e.g. 2003/04: 121, Björling, m, anf. 131; 2003/04: 121, Runegrund, kd, anf. 135; 2003/06: 45, Erlandsson, c, anf. 91). To be critical is further described as an act of disloyalty, a break with solidarity (e.g. 2003/04: 121, Wigström, fp, anf. 132), or as a reflection of hostility towards the US (e.g. 2003/04: 121, Västerteg, c, anf. 138; 2006/07: 117, Widman, fp, anf. 156; 2006/07: 117, Lindgren, kd, anf. 159).

Most importantly, consensus is upheld as crucial for the soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, as they need to have the Swedish people’s unanimous support (see e.g. 2001/02: 123, Landerholm, m, anf. 1; 2001/02: 123, Ekholm, s, anf. 2; 2002/03: 37, Lemnarker, m, anf. 187).

Eventually, at the end of 2009 – a year of increased violence and combat involvement – the Minister for Defence explains that a broad support in parliament for the Swedish soldiers is absolutely necessary, as the soldiers now experience situations of combat (2009/10: 32, Tolgforg, m, anf. 204). These kinds of statements reoccur. A conservative representative, for instance, states that the parliament must not let the soldiers down; they need broad support (2009/10: 76, Holm, m, anf. 38).

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159 In Swedish: ‘skarpa situationer’.
Others emphasise that it is crucial to demonstrate to the public that the operation is greatly supported (2009/10: 32, Enström, m, anf. 190), that the members of parliament must not create an impression of disagreement (2009/10: 32, Ahlin, s, anf. 187), or that there has been too much focus on what is not working in Afghanistan (2009/10: 32, Widman, fp, anf. 203). Once the government has negotiated and put forward an exit strategy – in agreement with the Social Democrats and the Greens – the representatives express their content with the broad consensus, as it is what the soldiers need (e.g. 2010/11: 9, Sahlin, s, anf. 1; 2010/11: 9, Reinfeldt, m, anf. 26; 2010/11: 35, Enström, m, anf. 3).60

All in all, this general call for consensus arguably restricts the possibility of debate, of disagreement, on the use of force generally but also on what the engagement in combat means for the notion of a Swedish Self in international military affairs. The use of force is not acknowledged as a dilemma, a political concern, but rather dealt with as an it-is-what-it-is kind of thing. That criticism is silenced on behalf of the soldiers, as is the case, naturally has implications for the possibility of contestation and problematisation. As a case in point, one can bring up an interpellation debate between the Minister for Defence and the Left Party in early 2011; here, the question of loyalty is striking. The Minister for Defence argues that the Left purely and simply wants to raise factualism and mistrust concerning the Swedish mission (2010/11: 53, Tolgfors, m, anf. 11). While the Left attempts to problematise the role of Swedish troops, and insists on raising questions concerning Sweden’s cooperation with what they call US ‘death squads’, the Minister mainly focuses on the Left’s lack of condemnation against the ‘extremists’ in Afghanistan. ‘We have never accused the Swedish troops of committing any abuse’,61 the Left representative has to assert (2010/11: 53, Sjöstedt, v, anf. 12).

Time to exit, time to reflect?

In the annual debate on extending the contribution to ISAF in December 2010, the six-party agreement on an exit strategy is presented (2010/11: 35).62 Evidently, the

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60 Cont. 2010/11: 35, Ahlin, s, anf. 6; 2010/11: 35, Lundgren, c, anf. 35; 2011/12: 36, Enström, m, anf. 8; 2011/12: 36, Bildt, m, anf. 31; 2012/13: 36, Widegren, m, anf. 58; 2012/13: 36, Carlsson, m, anf. 175.

61 In Swedish: ‘Vi har aldrig anklagat den svenska truppen för att begå några övergrepp.’

62 The exit strategies presented by the government from late 2010 onwards are supported by a broad majority of the political parties in parliament, yet the exit plans are continuously criticised by the Left Party, which questions whether the intention truly is to leave Afghanistan. They stress, among other things, that the troops have been expanded throughout the year 2011, instead of reduced (2011/12: 36, Linde, v, anf. 9). In 2010, a new party – the nationalist right-wing Sweden Democrats – has won seats in parliament. They repeatedly argue that Sweden should focus on its territorial defence. The conflict narrative they present delineates Afghanistan as an ethnically divided country, and ISAF should focus on keeping the warring parties (i.e. the ethnic groups) apart – peacekeeping, as they call it. They continuously emphasise that Sweden lacks vested interest, in contrast to other states involved in international intervention (e.g. 2011/12: 36, Jansson, sd, anf. 1; 2012/13: 36, Jansson, sd, anf. 55).
agreement is presented in the wake of the international talks on exit strategies. The government has now reached an agreement with the Social Democrats and the Green Party on a time plan for withdrawing. This is the first time the year 2014 is mentioned, first as an ambition, later – in 2013 – as a definite end-point (2013/4: 47).\(^65\) Parliament agrees on a gradual reduction of troops up until 2014.\(^66\) From 2010 onwards, the parliamentary debates mostly concern, first, ISAF’s level of success, and second, the question of whether the exit strategy really includes any true ambition of actually leaving Afghanistan and/or withdrawing Swedish troops from combat involvement.

Overall, the debates after December 2010 mainly concern questions on when and how to withdraw the Swedish troops; as expected, it is the terms of the withdrawal that predominates the debates. Yet, as the intervention now is about to come to an end, it is rather noteworthy that the use of force as such – what, as it were, came to be – is not foregrounded. The debates rarely include any (re)considerations or problematisation on the practices of peace-enforcement as such, the escalation of violence, the involvement in combat. Still, as so often, there are exceptions. For instance, the Green Party notes that the mentorship programmes have come to mean involvement in combat operations (2011/12: 46, Rådberg, mp, anf. 13). The Left Party, on its part, generally critiques the involvement in war, and claims that Swedish lives have been jeopardised, for no good (2011/12: 78, Linde, v, anf. 20).

Those in favour of the government’s yearly propositions emphasise the gradual and ongoing transition from combat forces to supporting forces, and eventually to training forces\(^67\) (e.g. 2011/12: 46, Enström, m, anf. 8; 2011/12: 46, Bildt, m, anf. 21; 2012/13: 46, Widegren, m, anf. 158).\(^68\) In other words, most accounts suggest that the combat days are over, yet bring to light that fighting (previously) has occurred. Only the Green Party mentions that ‘supporting’ in fact has implied a greater involvement in combat, as Swedish soldiers have been out on patrol with the Afghan army (2013/4: 47, Ceballos, mp, anf. 184). The Left similarly suggests that ‘training’ likely will mean taking part in armed conflict (2012/13: 46, Linde, v, anf. 166). Given the government’s previous reluctance to make visible the violent element of peace-enforcement, the recurring talk of how ‘combat forces’ is now gradually shifted to ‘supporting forces’ or ‘training forces’ is rather noteworthy; in terms of in/visibility, the right-wing government and the Social Democrats now repeatedly emphasise that

\(^{65}\) However, it is suggested that Swedish troops will remain in Afghanistan, also after 2014, within the framework of the Resolute Support Mission (RSM).

\(^{66}\) For specific details on the (shifting) time plans, the reduction of soldiers and so forth, see 2010/11: 35, 2011/12: 46; 2012/13: 46; 2013/14: 47.

\(^{67}\) In Swedish: stridande, stödjande, utbildande.

Swedish soldiers from now on will no longer take part in combat. Hence, not until the intervention is more or less over, does it become perfectly clear what kind of role the Swedish troops have fulfilled in Afghanistan.

Although the combat role of Swedish soldiers indeed is highlighted, neither the government nor the Social Democrats problematise what the Swedish involvement in Afghanistan generally came to be and/or the decisions that were taken back then. Not even now, when an exit strategy has been formulated. There are very few examples of government representatives who even ‘think back’. There is one example though; in late 2011, a liberal representative refers to the Swedish soldiers that have been killed and the importance of ‘remembering’. The mission in Afghanistan, like Congo in the 1960s, was difficult and risky, he states; it must be remembered [2011/12: 46, Widman, fp, anf. 18]. However, quite remarkably, in no way does his statement problematise Sweden’s engagement in combat. Generally, such lack of critical reflection serves to naturalise the use of force; the events that have unfolded in Afghanistan just appear to have happened, without direction or politically guided decisions.

In terms of themes being foregrounded, the debates mainly concern general questions on whether military means can create conditions for peace, whether it has meant any improvements for the Afghan people, if progress has been made, and whether the possible improvements have been reached thanks to, or in despite of, the international forces (see 2011/12: 46; 2011/12: 49, anf. 117-120; 2011/12: 78, anf. 19-20; 2012/13: 46; 2013/14: 47). Often, government representatives point to the achievements; they contrast the figures from before 2001 with current figures on the level of democracy, human rights protection and the number of girls going to school. The Left Party, on its part, emphasises the lack of achievement, the lack of progress. In this sense, parliament now begins to form and negotiate the narrative on the ISAF mission; the representatives are essentially debating ISAF’s legacy. Yet, this continuous and dominating focus on the outcomes of ISAF suggests that the use of force is justified as long as it serves its purpose, as long as it lives up to its promises. Although the sceptics (most prominently the Left) point to alternative courses of action, that things could have been different, that the involvement in war was a mistake, the focus on outcomes – whether ISAF signifies a success or a failure – dominates to such an extent that the debates hardly relate at all to the principal issue of using force. All in all, the use of force does not appear as a dilemma in itself, but simply as an accomplishment or a disappointment. Hence, peace-enforcement, as a practice, and as a policy, is neither challenged nor defended. Peace-enforcement can – so it appears – only be disputed if it proves a failure in terms of practical achievements and effects.
Throughout the Swedish engagement in ISAF, up until the very final years, the most dominant narrative theme that relates to the issue of force is clearly the question of in/distinction – whether the OEF and ISAF are distinct or inseparable in practice. This focus takes over and dominates the debates to such an extent that the practices associated with Sweden’s own military contribution largely disappear and is left undeclared and unproblematized. As during previous interventions, the ISAF debates outline and distinguish between different forms of violent actions; the US, alone, comes to signify offensive violence, whereas Sweden and ISAF in turn are linked to the tradition of peacekeeping and defensive violence (although the term is never used explicitly).

In terms of dis/identification, one may say that the US becomes the significant Other; in turn, with regard to in/visibility, the war-like dimension of peace-enforcement is largely removed out of sight or slips from view. Whereas the US intervention in Afghanistan is defined as warfare, Sweden is essentially differentiated from war; the debates construct an image of Sweden as the opposite of the US, which suggests that the violent practices of ISAF essentially are peaceful. This demarcation of identities and the idea of ‘non-warfare’ are possible given the lack of critical reflection on peace-enforcement as a practice and policy. The debates generally convey that if it weren’t for the US, ISAF (and Sweden) would be able to act peacefully; hence, peace-enforcement does not come across as a dilemma in itself, only the cooperation with other actors involved. As actors rather than practice generally stand in focus, it is the US that comes to represent ‘the problem’, not the practice of peace-enforcement as such. Dissent is indeed present, yet – as the empirical presentation has illustrated – it is the actors involved rather than the practice of using force that becomes the issue of debate. Within the framework of these debates, the use of force is thus displaced to Others; hence, violence – as such – does not appear as a Swedish ‘problem’, dilemma or responsibility. Given the heightened visibility of the US war, the violence associated with the Swedish engagement is also rendered less visible.

By presenting Sweden as a peaceful actor (as opposed to a warring part), and by obstructing discussion on Sweden’s involvement, the Swedish identity appears undisrupted; most members of parliament portray the involvement in ISAF not as a deviation from previous policies and practices but in line with previous experiences and commitments. In terms of de/naturalisation and in/visibility, peace-enforcement is thus depicted as a routine rather than something extraordinary; as in previous chapters, ‘continuity’ is a persistent narrative theme. The many references to
tradition and to the UN convey the idea that ISAF is just another peacekeeping operation, similar to those of the past, nothing particularly new; it involves risk and danger, to be sure, but still it represents something more familiar than an experience of war. This idea is not challenged by the talk of [increased] risks, rather the opposite, as the risk of being exposed to violence is a risk anyone who is stationed in a war-zone is subjected to. Rather, what is ‘new’ is the continuously increasing involvement in combat and the inflicting of injury on others.

Generally, the debates are characterised by a reluctance to acknowledge, discuss and problematise the [new] conditions on the ground, the hostile milieu and the combat incidents. The use of force is thus naturalised as part of the expected. Although the engagement in ISAF proves to be one of the most violent engagements that Sweden has ever been involved in, the debates on ISAF do not, so to speak, open up for reflexive questions of who we are, what we do and what it means. Because of the majority’s disinclination to acknowledge that the ISAF engagement has come to mean *partaking in war*, along with the efforts to discredit any such narrative framings, the debates could be said to prevent or discourage problematisation of Sweden’s (greater) engagement in peace-enforcement.
Between April and October 2011, the Swedish Armed Forces participated in the international intervention OUP (Operation Unified Protector) in Libya. The intervention was NATO-led and sanctioned by the UN’s Security Council. OUP represented a peace-enforcement operation, in line with Chapter VII in the UN Charter. The main objectives of OUP were to enforce an arms embargo, establish a no-fly zone and protect the civilian population. The Swedish contribution included at first eight, later five, Jas 39 Gripen fighter jets, reconnaissance and support resources, personnel for information operations, and one C-130 Hercules for mid-air refuelling. The deployment of Swedish Gripen fighter jets was certainly no foregone conclusion; not since the operation in Congo in the 1960s had Swedish combat aircraft been involved in an armed conflict. The formal request for a Swedish contribution was issued on 29 March. By 1 April parliament reached the decision that Sweden should participate in OUP. In less than 24 hours after the decision had been taken, the first Swedish units landed at the NATO-base Sigonella on Sicily (e.g. Doeser, 2016; Egnell, 2016).

Following an agreement between the government and the opposition parties, Swedish participation was restricted, excluding any attacks by Swedish fighter jets on ground targets (Doeser, 2016; Lindvall & Forsman, 2012; Lödén, 2012; Holst & Fink, 2014: 84). Up until 26 June, the Swedish unit was only to defend the no-fly zone through ‘defensive counter air’ operations and ‘tactical air reconnaissance’ (Egnell, 2016: 179). Yet, from 26 June onwards, its tasks were expanded to include enforcement of the arms embargo and the protection of civilians. After negotiations between the government and the opposition, the number of fighter jets was reduced to five. During the course of OUP, the Swedish reconnaissance missions, and the photos provided, ‘proved highly useful’ (Egnell, 2016: 180). In retrospect, 68 per cent of Swedes approved the intervention in Libya, which represent the highest approval rates among the EU states that were polled at the time (Engelbrekt & Wagnsson, 2014: 9; see also Egnell, 2016: 176).

THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE
A great majority of the parliamentary parties initially endorse a Swedish involvement in the OUP. Yet, with time, the debates on the operation in Libya come to be characterised by political contestation and shifting conflict narratives. During the
first round of debates, taking place on 1 April 2011, all parliamentary parties except the right-wing nationalist Sweden Democrats\(^5\) approve the basic proposition of a Swedish contribution to the OUP. At this point in time, the red-green opposition\(^5\) has succeeded in reaching an agreement with the right-wing government declaring that Swedish troops will not be involved in air-to-ground attacks. On 17 June 2011, when the time has come to debate an extension of the operation, the Left Party decides to oppose a continued military involvement. The purpose of the campaign has shifted, they argue, from the protection of civilians to waging war against Gaddafi himself (2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 2). During the last parliamentary debate taking place on 21 September 2011, during which a second extension is to be approved, the Green Party also decides to oppose a continuation of the Swedish contribution. It now argues, among other things, that the objective of the military operation has already been achieved\(^7\) (2011/12: 5, Celballos, mp, anf. 1). The Social Democrats are now the only party left of the red-green opposition that supports an extended Swedish involvement in OUP; it adheres to its position on the legitimacy of the Swedish military contribution and approves the last extension, given that the reservation concerning the use of force still holds. The government parties, on the other hand, are sceptical of the negotiated reservation declaring that Swedish troops shall not take part in attacks on ground targets. Instead, they suggest that Sweden shall contribute to the operation without any restrictions. The sitting government thus advocates a more robust Swedish mandate in terms of using force, while the red-green opposition endorses a more restricted mandate.

Throughout the debates, the UN decision to protect civilians in Libya is depicted as a historical decision; for the first time the responsibility to protect doctrine seems to gather true international support (2010/11: 8t, Malm, fp, anf. 12; see also 2010/11: 8t, Ahlin, s, anf. 2; 2010/11: 8t, Celballos, mp, anf. 4).\(^6\) Given the context of the Arab spring, the intervention is generally perceived as a historical moment and as an opportunity to make up for political mistakes made by the European Union in the past. Not only has Sweden and Europe in general been involved in questionable agreements with the Gaddafi regime as well as other authoritarian regimes in North Africa, the international community has also been unable to stop massacres in the

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\(^5\) The Sweden Democrats advocate an altogether humanitarian approach to the Libya crisis (2010/11: n8, Jansson, sd, anf. 1).

\(^7\) Including the Social Democrats, the Left Party and the Green Party.

\(^6\) Gadaffi has been removed from power and the threat against civilians has thus been reduced considerably. Norway has, for instance, withdrawn its jet fighters.

\(^7\) Cont. 2010/11: 8t, Widman, fp, anf. 6; 2010/11: 8t, Lundgren, c, anf. 7; 2010/11: n8, Lundgren, c, anf. 23; 2010/11: n8, Härstedt, s, anf. 34.
Most members of parliament depict Sweden as a duty-bound nation, continuously loyal to the UN and its decisions. To respond to requests issued by the UN comes across as a deeply embedded characteristic of the Swedish national identity; hence, it would be ‘rather un-Swedish’ not to interfere in this case (2010/11: 81, Ahlin, s, anf. 8).175

Sweden is prepared to take its responsibility and to contribute, and is now in fact first in line to do so (e.g. 2010/11: 81, Ahlin, s, anf. 2; 2010/11: 81, Lindestam, s, anf. 1126; 2010/11: 81, Malm, fp, anf. 12).177 All in all, it is a ‘natural’ decision to assist the UN in its endeavour to protect civilians in Libya; a phrase repeated by many is that it is a Swedish tradition or a matter of course (2010/11: 81, Ahlin, s, anf. 2; Widegren, m, anf. 3; Bildt, m, anf. 10).178

In light of the issues I previously referred to, it would be strange for Sweden to say no. This debate and this decision do not need to be about much more than that. One can distance oneself from the resolution 1973, but that would be a clear break with a deeply rooted and longstanding Swedish tradition.79

(2010/11: 88, Bildt, m, anf. 35)

When the UN calls, we come forward. We have always done that, and will continue to do so.80

(2010/11: 88, Enström, m, anf. 3)

The continuous references to a so-called Swedish tradition81 could reasonably be considered a naturalising move, in the sense that it essentially makes the deployment of jet fighters appear conventional and as simply part of what has previously been considered accepted. By incorporating the Swedish military contribution to OUP into a narrative of Swedish history and national character, the practice of force is ultimately reduced to a question of ‘business as usual’. Any deviation from the narrative that enables a contribution is described as ‘un-Swedish’, against the true character of Sweden. Such statements, in turn, reasonably conceal the fact that things can be different, that the use of force essentially is a dilemma. Through the emphasis on continuity, the engagement in OUP is portrayed as the latest in a long

175 Cont. Hästdt, s, anf. 34; 2010/11: 5; Malm, fp, anf. 14; see also 2010/11: 5; Ceballos, mp, anf. 15; 2010/11: 5; Lindel, v, anf. 24.
176 Note that there is a clerical error in the protocol: it says that address number 11 (anf. 11) is made by Carl Bildt (m), but it is in fact made by Åsa Lindestam (s).
177 Cont. 2010/11: 81; Widegren, m, anf. 7; 2010/11: 81; Landgren, c, anf. 7; 2010/11: 88; Pethrus, kd, anf. 54.
178 Cont. 2010/11: 81; Widegren, m, anf. 7; 2010/11: 81; Danielsson, c, anf. 13; 2010/11: 88; Enström, m, anf. 3; 2010/11: 88; Widman, fp, anf. 18; 2010/11: 5; Landgren, c, anf. 89.
180 In Swedish: ‘När FN kallar ställer vi upp. Det har vi alltid gjort, och det ska vi fortsätta göra.’
181 Also noted by Doeser (2010: 387).
line of UN engagements, which ultimately makes the decision to participate seem less of a ‘big deal’, policy-wise. Another common feature, alongside the rhetoric of tradition, is the idea that the UN resolutions in themselves are a sufficient justification for contributing with military means [e.g. 2010/11: 118, Ahlin, s, anf. 8; 2010/11: 118, Pethrus, kd, anf. 24]. To merely focus on the fact that ‘the UN calls’ makes the use of force appear as a routine and a question of loyalty rather than an issue of national decision-making and responsibility. When decisions on the use of force, and the responsibility that follows, are ascribed to the UN, a domestic policy debate simply seem less vital or relevant.

In terms of representations of violence and the processes of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification, how representatives describe Sweden’s involvement is of particular interest. The term peace-enforcement is never used\(^{89}\); yet, at the same time, the character of the intervention perhaps speaks for itself – as OUP indeed resembles war as we have come to know it. Most importantly, the debates reflect a discursive contestation between, on the one hand, an attempt to separate the Swedish mandate and actions from the intervention as a whole and, on the other, the insistence to emphasise the supporting function of the Swedish military involvement. Those being critical of either the negotiated restriction or the intervention as a whole emphasise that Sweden’s involvement essentially enables the bomb raids carried out by other states. Those advocating the negotiated restriction of the use of force instead initially disregard this issue. In the narratives of the red-green opposition, the link between Sweden’s ‘non-violent’ involvement and the bombing of ground targets is initially obscured and the partaking in violence is thus rendered invisible. Whether the Swedish contribution is separated from or indeed part of the bomb raids remains an issue of debate throughout the intervention. As will become clear, the debates very much revolve around the question of how the Swedish undertaking ought to be described.

In contrast to many Swedish parliamentary debates on peace-enforcement, it is – this time – primarily the Swedish contribution that stands in focus; it is the Swedish contribution that comes into view and it is generally the technical details and the tasks that Swedish soldiers will perform that are foregrounded. However, this focus largely gives the impression that Sweden acts alone, and is only responsible for its own military undertakings. Given the representation of the Swedish military undertaking as essentially ‘non-violent’, the contribution to OUP appears unexceptional and unproblematic. As the debates focus on the Swedish contribution,

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\(^{89}\) Except for a few references to Chapter VII (2010/11: 81, Lundgren, c, anf. 7; 2010/11: 118, Lundgren, c, anf. 23).
the overall picture is sometimes lost in the narratives reflected in the parliamentary debates.

We say that the planes will not be allowed to attack ground targets. Let me explain why I think it is appropriate that we have such a reservation in this mission. I think each and everyone understands what a blunt instrument it is to act as air force. If something incorrect happens it will have enormous consequences /.../ I think it is smarter for Sweden to stand firmly within the UN mandate and not jeopardise it.83

(2010/11: 81, Ahlin, s, anf. 2)

Therefore, I think that it was good that we, the Social Democrats, pushed through the requirement not to carry out campaigns against ground targets. That means that no one can question our contribution from an international law perspective, but still we’re doing something that is needed and necessary in Libya.84

(2010/11: 118, Ahlin, s, anf. 8)

Here, as an example, the Social Democratic spokesperson defends the Swedish reservation and restriction of the use of force by emphasising the risks associated with airborne attacks. That Sweden nonetheless is involved in a military intervention that includes airborne attacks is, however, excluded from the representation of Sweden’s involvement. Essentially, this communicates that what Sweden does somehow is differentiated from what they, or the others, do. In other words, peace-enforcement, as a practice, is not represented as a package deal. As the representatives argue for ‘non-violence’ – i.e. for no airborne attacks – the violent element of OUP as a whole is removed out of sight. It is emphasised that Sweden’s actions are different from those of other states involved, which essentially makes it appear as if Sweden is detached from the violent practices of OUP, as if Sweden takes no (real) part in the international use of force.

However, the depiction of Sweden’s involvement as separate from the intervention as a whole is contested and problematised by certain members of parliament. The Sweden Democrats, for instance, clearly make visible the violent element of OUP and Sweden’s active part in the use of force. Essentially, they emphasise that it is impossible to differentiate the Swedish military contribution from the bomb raids.


84 In Swedish: ‘Därför tror jag att det var bra att vi socialdemokrater drev kravet på att inte göra insatser mot markmål. Det betyder att vi gör en insats som ingen kan ifrågasätta från ett folkrättsligt perspektiv, men vi gör ändå en insats som är behov och nödvändig i Libya.’
The committee’s proposal, which we, the Sweden Democrats, have opposed, rests on the notion that Sweden can take part in NATO’s mission without being responsible for the ground attacks. We think that this approach is impossible. NATO’s mission represents a whole in which we will be included.\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Utskottets förslag, som vi sverigedemokrater har reserverat oss mot, vilar på föreställningen att Sverige kan delta i Natos insats utan att göras ansvarig för markangreppen. Vi anser att detta synsätt är omöjligt. Natos insats är en helhet vari vi kommer att ingå.’}

\((2010/11: 81, Jansson, sd, anf. 1)\)

We discuss details of the mission instead of the whole picture. If we are unsure whether the campaign is right, we show it by participating a little less than others. For example, we fly in Libyan air space, but we do not combat the ground targets that we could combat. In my view it is the wrong way to show uncertainty. We are part of the campaign. We are an indistinguishable part of the NATO-led campaign. If one fights in a campaign and obeys the tactical command of the campaign one is completely ‘in’, regardless of the instructions. Whether it is Swedish or Norwegian combat planes that combat ground targets does not matter. The responsibility is shared.\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Är vi osäkra på om kampanjen är rätt visar vi det genom att delta lite mindre än andra. Exempelvis flyger vi i Libyens luftrum, men vi bekämpar inte de markmål vi skulle kunna bekämpa. Enligt min mening är det fel sätt att visa osäkerhet. Vi är med i kampanjen. Vi är en oskiljbar del av den Natoledda kampanjen. Strider man i en kampanj och lyder under kampanjenstridsledning är man helt med, oavsett instruktioner. Om det är svenskt eller norskt stridsflyg som bekämpar markmål är ointressant. Ansvaret är detsamma.’}

\((2010/11: 118, Jansson, sd, anf. 1)\)

In contrast to the red-green opposition, the government parties all advocate a more permissive Swedish mandate in terms of using force\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Cont. 2010/11: 8t, Malm, fp, anf. 12; 2010/11: 8t, Danielsson, c, anf. r3.’} Even if they accept the negotiated restrictions, they generally point to the necessity of being involved in the ground attacks. For instance, the Minister for Foreign Affairs emphasises that the government supports ‘this part’ of the joint military operation (meaning: the ground assaults), even if Sweden will not be involved in its implementation\footnote{A Swedish jet fighter.}.\footnote{\(\text{2010/11: 8t, Bildt, m, anf. 10.}\)} The government thereby publically justifies the use of force that the OUP as a whole represents and links the Swedish contribution to NATO’s operations.

If a Gripen plane\footnote{\(\text{A Swedish jet fighter.}\)} for example discovers Gaddafi’s tanks right outside for example Benghazi just about to start shelling and attack the city and the civilian population, then the Gripen will not be allowed to take actions to avert this. The threat against the civilian population should instead be reported, and other nations’ combat planes may quickly be called in to prevent the attack against the civilian population. It still feels a bit strange. Sweden accepts the UN resolution, we participate with combat planes in NATOs mission, and we accept that tanks attacking cities are fought down to protect the civilian population. But combat
planes other than the Swedish should implement that protection.\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Om ett Gripenplan exempelvis upptäcker Gaddafis stridsvagnar alldeles utanför till exempel Benghazi i färd med att påbörja beskjutning och attacker mot staden och civilbefolkningen, då får inte Gripen ingripa för att avvärja detta. Istället ska hotet mot civilbefolkningen rapporteras, och andra länder stridsflygplan får snabbt tillkallas för att förhindra attacker mot civilbefolkningen. Det käns ändå lite konstigt. Sverige accepterar FN:s resolution, vi deltar med stridsflygplan i Natos insats, och vi accepterar att stridsvagnar i attack mot städer bekämpas för att civilbefolkningen ska skyddas. Men andra stridsflygplan än de svenska ska utföra det skyddet.’}

(2010/11: 81, Danielsson, c, anf. 13)

In June and September 2011, a continued involvement is being justified primarily by pointing to the success that OUP has proven to be and the great benefits of the Swedish contribution (2010/11: 118, Enström, m, anf. 3; 2010/11: 118, Widman, fp, anf. 18).\footnote{Cont. 2010/11: 5, Widgren, m, anf. 12; 2011/12: 5, Pethrus, kd, anf. 28.} Many members of parliament stress that it is a requested and thus a substantial contribution, as if being requested in itself would mean legitimate (2010/11: 118, Ahlin, s, anf. 8; 2010/11: 118, Ceballos, mp, anf. 13).\footnote{Cont. 2010/11: 118, Bildt, m, anf. 35; 2010/11: 118, Hultqvist, s, anf. 33.} The technical capacity, i.e. the Swedish reconnaissance ability, is especially emphasised; it is an exclusive asset, many suggest (2010/11: 118, Enström, m, anf. 3; 2010/11: 118, Ahlin, s, anf. 8).\footnote{Cont. 2010/11: 118, Bildt, m, anf. 35; 2010/11: 118, Hultqvist, s, anf. 33.}

In the debates in June and September, on the government’s proposed extension of the Swedish involvement in OUP, the opposition parties gradually shift their positions and rhetoric. The link between the Swedish commitment and the bomb raids is now foregrounded and ultimately becomes a subject of debate (e.g. 2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 14/28).\footnote{Cont. 2010/11: 118, Bildt, m, anf. 35; 2010/11: 118, Hultqvist, s, anf. 33.} The articulation of dissent hence generally makes visible the association between the Swedish involvement and the extensive use of force deployed by other allies. The military operation that has upheld the no-fly zone is already terminated and is now being replaced by a reconnaissance mission, which – as argued – makes it a new type of intervention altogether. Hence, the Swedish reconnaissance planes will now provide the intelligence required to hit ground targets, which suggests that Sweden could indirectly contribute to the death of civilians (2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 2). As the Left notes: others will evidently use Sweden’s intelligence, but for what purpose? No one knows (2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 28).

NATO has asked Sweden to conduct reconnaissance so they can use our information to carry out bomb attacks against ground targets.\footnote{Cont. 2010/11: 118, Bildt, m, anf. 35; 2010/11: 118, Hultqvist, s, anf. 33.}


Our Swedish contribution is essential for NATO in order to carry out ground

\footnote{The Swedish Democrats also repeatedly come back to the question of association and continue to emphasise the joint responsibility that OUP signifies (e.g. 2011/12: 5, Jansson, sd, anf. 9).}

\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Nato har bett Sverige att bedriva spaning för att de ska kunna använda vår information för att bedriva bombanfall mot markmål.’}
During the second debate on the OUP, the Left Party is the first party of the red-green opposition to withdraw its support for the military contribution, mainly referring to the shifting character of the mission. Now, they repeatedly refer to the intervention as direct war, and thereby make visible and foreground not only the violent element and the offensive character of the NATO-led operation, but also Sweden’s role in these practices (2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 9/4/9/26). The Social Democrats likewise acknowledge that the operation has shifted, and emphasise that it is a new type of intervention (2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 9/4/9/26). Yet, the Social Democrats stress that the Swedish unit’s new role is requested and much needed; the shifting focus from the no-fly zone to reconnaissance opens up for a broader Swedish contribution to the international mission in Libya and, as one representative stresses, ‘we shall not go there and make a half-hearted contribution’ (2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 9/4/9/26).

At this stage, in June 2011, the Social Democrats as well as the Green Party support an extension of the Swedish military involvement in OUP. Although the objective of the Swedish military force might have shifted, the idea of ‘acting alone’, acting separately, is still salient. With a continuous focus on Sweden’s own particular military contribution, many statements convey the image of Sweden’s mission as detached from the mission of others. In contrast to the Left Party, the Green Party thereto focuses on the humanitarian benefits of a continued mission rather than the link between the reconnaissance mission and the bomb raids. We are capable, we are needed, and we are doing good, seems to be the message.

What Sweden now has been asked is to assist with reconnaissance, and according to the information we have received, the Swedish planes have good reconnaissance ability. By removing the restrictions in the previous mission, except the restriction of not shelling ground targets, which still remains, the Swedish planes can also keep other things under surveillance and help to implement other parts of the resolutions. The task of the Swedish planes is to reconnoitre – not to shell, other than of course in self-defence. /.../ That would provide good help to UNHCR in their work to find out where people in need are even when they happen to be at sea.\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Vår svenska insats blir en förutsättning för att Nato ska kunna bedriva markanfall.’}

\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Vi ska inte åka iväg och göra några halvdana insatser.’}

\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Det som Sverige nu fått en fråga om att bistå med är spaning, och enligt de uppgifter vi har fått har de svenska planen god spaningsförmåga. Genom att ta bort begränsningarna i det tidigare uppdraget, förutom begränsningen att inte beskjuta markmål som kvarstår, kan de svenska planen också spana efter annat och bidra till att genomföra andra delar av resolutionerna. De svenska planens uppgift är att spana - inte skjuta, annat än i självförsvar förstås. /.../ Det skulle kunna ge god hjälp till UNHCR i deras arbete att få veta var människor i nöd...’}
Initially, the Green Party portrays Sweden’s reconnaissance mission as a mission not primarily serving to assist NATO in the air-to-ground raids; the mission is rather linked to humanitarian objectives and the [indeed] non-violent undertaking of identifying refugees at risk on the Mediterranean Sea. Generally, this is a fairly persistent feature of the general narrative: that the military undertaking is merely part of a humanitarian package, almost a side issue (e.g. 2010/11: 81, Bildt, m, anf. 10). As a few representatives point out: Sweden is a humanitarian ‘superpower’ [e.g. 2011/12: 5, Ceballos, mp, anf. 1; 2011/12: 5, Widegren, m, anf. 9]). With a focus on Sweden’s great humanitarian efforts, which run alongside the military efforts, the violent element appears as only a small part of a larger, grand strategy of humanitarian assistance (see e.g. 2010/11: 118, Hultqvist, 3; 2010/11: 118, Härstedt, s, anf. 34). By mainly emphasising the humanitarian benefits of the Swedish military undertaking, the violent element is arguably obscured, as the war making that OUP could be said to represent tends to disappear from the narrative on the Swedish use of force. This notion of OUP is further reinforced by the rhetoric of protection-not-war during the initial phase (e.g. 2010/11: 81, Linde, v, anf. 8; 2010/11: 81, Pethrus, kd, anf. 9). This representation not only renders violence less visible, it also serves to naturalise the use of force, as the violent element is depicted as part of a humanitarian effort, and hence a feature that just ‘comes with’ and thus simply has to be.

During the third debate on OUP, when also the Green Party chooses to oppose a continuation, they too problematise the association between the Swedish mission and the NATO bombings, almost implying that the Swedish Armed Forces have been deceived. As it turned out, the Swedish Armed Forces have never actually reconnoitred the sea off the Libyan coast. The Greens now also point to the supporting role of the Swedish contribution, and how the information gathered by Swedish scouting planes has led to direct operations, when – so to say – ending up ‘in the wrong hands’:

According to the Armed Forces, the Swedish planes have accounted for a very large part of the intelligence that later has led to direct operations. Even though the Swedish planes report to NATO, who claims that they as an organisation do not go beyond the mandate, it is hard to believe that the information never ends up in the wrong hands and is used in those operations stretching and going

\[\text{befunner sig även när de råkar vara på havet.}^{198}\]

\[^{198}\] However, the representative of the Greens uses this phrase when later advocating a termination of the Swedish military contribution.

\[^{199}\] Which later – at least from the Left Party – is replaced by a rhetoric of this-is-war-not-protection (2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 9/26).
In the debates throughout the intervention, the problem of others acting beyond the UN mandate is a narrative theme of increasing significance. Many point to and acknowledge this dilemma, especially the sceptics. Early on, the Left Party emphasises how crucial it is never to act beyond the mandate, while nonetheless acknowledging that there is a risk that others will. Some states have interests other than the protection of civilians, they claim (2010/11: 81, Linde, v, anf. 8). Later on, the Left Party argues that the UN resolution in fact has been used as an excuse to target Gaddafi and enforce a regime change, whereas the protection of civilians has been left aside (2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 2). The Sweden Democrats likewise indicate that whereas Sweden has had the right motivations for engaging in the Libya intervention, the Americans might have had other motives (2011/12: 5, Jansson, sd, anf. 2). Also the spokespersons for the Social Democrats and the Greens, while they still support an extension, admit that there are ‘others’ who operate within a grey zone, potentially acting beyond the UN mandate (2010/11: 118, Ahlin, s, anf. 12; 2010/11: 118, Ceballos, mp, anf. 13). However, as a representative of the Greens adds, it is the responsibility of NATO to take good care of the intelligence that Sweden provides (2010/11: 118, Ceballos, mp, anf. 17).

Those critical of the intervention claim that there are indeed other countries that operate outside of the UN mandate, which in the longer term jeopardises the possibilities of carrying through further resolutions based on the responsibility to protect doctrine (2010/11: 118, Linde, v, anf. 6; 2011/12: 5, Ceballos, mp, anf. 1/5). The government parties, on the other hand, for the most part, never really confront these claims, except when emphasising that Sweden indeed operates within the mandate (e.g. 2011/12: 5, Widegren, m, anf. 13). The claims are further dismissed as mere excuses not to intervene in the internal affairs of other states (2010/11: 118, Enström, m, anf. 7). The so-called mission creep and its potential problems are thus left aside by the government and never acknowledged as an issue.

Generally, one can say that this narrative theme – the mistrust and blaming of other states involved in OUP – reinforces the conception of the Swedish military engagement as essentially different from that of others. In a sense, the large focus on international law and the mission creep differentiates Sweden from what ultimately...
comes to represent the violent element of the mission: the air raids on Gaddafi and his regime. Whereas the initial debates primarily focused on the Swedish contribution as such, the focus eventually shifts from oneself to others. While the ‘Americans’, ‘NATO’, or simply ‘the others’ come to serve as the Others, Sweden appears less violent, more peaceful. Thus, in terms of dis/identification and in/visibility, Sweden’s role slips from view and the violent element is displaced to others.

The involvement in OUP never spurs a debate on Swedish policy on the use of force as such or on the involvement in peace-enforcement; the criticism and debates essentially centre on the developments on the ground. By mainly focusing on how other states have gone beyond the mandate, the use of force merely becomes a problem in terms of non-compliance and in relation to the war-proneness among other states. Sweden is thereby delineated as faultless, yet in no position to influence what others are taking on. Rather than acknowledging, problematising or justifying the use of force as such, and – for that matter – the shift towards a larger engagement in peace-enforcement operations, it is primarily the actions of others that become the issue of debate. This shift of emphasis from oneself to others largely serves to naturalise the use of force, as it essentially becomes the problem of someone else.

The discontent with the OUP, which with time is growing among parts of the red-green opposition, is indeed articulated in a way that makes visible the violent element of the operation and Sweden’s involvement in its implementation. Still, the violent element essentially associated with the Swedish contribution generally disappears from the representation of the intervention put forward by – for instance – the Social Democrats, who supports a continued extension of the Swedish involvement and the restrictions of the use of force. Attention is continuously drawn to the success of the Swedish effort, and the unique technical abilities that Sweden provides. Hence, it is the technical dimension of Sweden’s involvement that is foregrounded, suggesting that the Swedish military contribution is an isolated task of a pure technical nature (see e.g. 2010/11: 118, Hultqvist, s, anf. 31; 2011/12: 5, Lindestam, s, anf. 4). This focus on technology and unique abilities is also salient in the statements of government parties (e.g. 2010/11: 118, Enström, m, anf. 3). By foregrounding the technical nature and benefits of the Swedish undertaking, the violent element associated with the Swedish contribution slips from view, and the Swedish contribution thus appears uncontroversial and devoid of ethical content. It almost appears as a remote exercise, and as a result it remains unproblematised.
Yesterday, we got to listen to and talk with Anders Fogh Rasmussen. He then said that the Swedish contribution fits perfectly. The Swedish contribution fits perfectly. That’s how it is. I also agree with what the Supreme Commander has said. Our JAS planes are amongst the best we can bring from Europe.

We in the Defence Committee had the opportunity to go down to the Sigonella base on Sicily and meet our soldiers there, our boys and girls who work there. I think that I, on behalf of us all, can confirm that we were impressed. They do a commendable job. When we met them we also met people from other countries, and we could hear that more countries indeed praise the Swedish effort. /.../ Norway has withdrawn its planes, but they have not had the same task as us. It has not only been JAS Gripen, not only aerial observations, and not only analysis of the images, but all of this put together. Overall, we have been able to supply a unique set of pictures on which we can see where things are happening in the country. We cannot only see Gaddafi loyalists and the others, but we see things are happening and that is where we make our contribution.

NARRATIVE STRUCUTURATION: IN/VISIBILITY, DIS/IDENTIFICATION & DE/NATURALISATION

The debates on OUP are essentially about how Sweden should contribute to the intervention in Libya, not whether Sweden should engage in practices of peace-enforcement in the first place. Through the discussions on how to contribute, the issue of force is brought to the fore, at least in relative terms, when compared to the debates presented previously. Nonetheless, a crucial observation is that Sweden’s own contribution is often debated as if it stands alone – as if it were separated from the military framework within which other states operate. Sure, given the decision not to engage in bombing campaigns, the Swedish contribution is not directly involved in the actual deployment of violence. However, the fact that OUP is a peace-enforcement operation, which by all means includes the use of violence, often disappears in the narratives emerging to account for the Swedish contribution, when the Swedish contribution in itself is foregrounded. As the Swedish parliament has

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202 Who at the time serves as Secretary General of NATO.


204 In Swedish: ‘Vi i försvarsutskottet hade möjlighet att åka ned till Sigonellabasen och träffa våra militärer där, våra killar och tjejer som jobbar. Jag tror att jag för oss alla kan skriva under på att vi var imponerade. De gör en beröm värd insats. När vi träffade dem träffade vi också personer från andra länder, och vi kunde höra att fler länder verkligen berömmar Sveriges insats. /.../ Norge har dragit tillbaka sina plan, men de har inte haft samma uppmärksamhet som vi. Det har inte varit bara JAS Gripen, inte varit bara flygspaning och inte varit bara analyser av bilder, utan det är det man sätter ihop tillsammans. Sammantaget har vi kunnat leverera en unik förmåga av bilder där vi kan se var det händer saker i landet. Vi kan inte bara se Gaddafi trogna och inte bara se de andra, men vi ser att det händer saker och kan lägga vårt bidrag dit.’
decided not to take an active part in air-to-ground bombings, it appears as though Sweden’s contribution is something essentially different from the actions of others. Hence, with regard to in/visibility, the Swedish efforts essentially appear to be ‘non-violent’, technological, and at times merely humanitarian. In terms of dis/identification, the debates largely reproduce a notion of Sweden as less violent than other states, as a state that simply doesn’t take part in war. Hence, the deployment of fighter jets does not appear as necessary to justify, debate or problematise as otherwise likely would have been the case. As the fighter jets are not deployed for the purpose of warfare, the military contribution is rarely problematised or articulated as something exceptional.

In terms of representation and political contestation, this is what the debates are primarily about: whether the Swedish efforts are part of or detached from the war making that OUP essentially represents. Attempts to problematise – denaturalise – the issue of force are certainly noticeable; so are reflections on whether Swedish identity and policy here are reconcilable. Yet, instead of truly justifying the use of force, the debates are dominated by a reluctance to acknowledge the Swedish engagement in violence. Although Sweden’s own military contribution is foregrounded to a greater extent than is usually the case, it is – ultimately – still the violent actions of Others that are problematised and brought to light. By linking the use of force to the Others, while differentiating Sweden from the actual deployment of violence, Sweden’s role in the use of force often slips from view, and remains unproblematised. The so-called mission creep, for instance, seems to have little to do with Sweden; others are operating in a grey zone, whereas – as it seems – Sweden does not. The ‘problem’ that OUP has turned into an outright war, which originally wasn’t the idea, is not even addressed by the sitting government.

On the one hand, the debates reflect political contestation and undecidability; the use of force is denaturalised as there appears to be alternatives, choices, different courses of action, and – in terms of identification – Sweden could, it seems, essentially represent different things. On the other hand, Sweden is largely differentiated from the use of force as such, and peace-enforcement as a practice is neither justified nor challenged. Ultimately, the image of Sweden as ‘non-violent’ dominates the narrative structuration, and hence – in regard to de/naturalisation and dis/identification – the use of force doesn’t appear to be Sweden’s problem or Sweden’s dilemma. By focusing on Sweden’s role and Sweden’s role alone, it is possible to frame the reconnaissance mission as a technical benefit and ability rather than a violent practice; thus, what is brought to light is primarily the non-violent dimension of the Swedish contribution.
Generally, the debates reinforce a notion of distance – distance from the war of Others, from violence, from the controversial aspects of OUP. Another striking feature is the talk of tradition; yet again, Sweden is depicted as a duty-bound nation, loyal to the UN, ready to take responsibility – in fact, is appears ‘un-Swedish’ not to respond to the UN’s call. This conveys a notion of continuity rather than exceptionality; although this is the first time since Congo in the 1960s that the Swedish Air Force is put into action, OUP appears as a continuation of what Sweden has already engaged in for decades. Thus, in regard to de/naturalisation, the military contribution to OUP simply appears as business as usual. While the UN request serves as the main justification for taking part, justifications for why Sweden should engage in violence and what that might mean in terms of policy is generally lacking.
REPRESENTATION AND DIS/APPEARANCE OVER TIME

Part II has examined how the violent element of peace-enforcement dis/appears in parliamentary debates dealing with Swedish military contributions. More specifically, the chapters have drawn attention to how violence is de/naturalised, rendered in/visible and concurrently how processes of dis/identification take shape. Whereas the concept of de/naturalisation refers to the movement between problematisation and naturalisation (see page 42), the concept of in/visibilisation could be defined as the movement between removing out of sight and bringing to light, slipping out of view and coming into view (see page 43). The concept of dis/identification, in turn, captures how violence is linked to or differentiated from the conception of Sweden (see page 44). To summarise and elaborate on the observations of part II, the section below will outline the patterns and continuities that could be observed over time with regard to the dis/appearance of violence in political debates; the forthcoming section will briefly elaborate on the political work of the (recurring) narrative themes in terms of reconciling policy and identity and in terms of de/politicising the issue of force.

NARRATIVE THEMES

The analysis of parliamentary debates has ultimately discerned four major narrative themes, elaborated below, which come to dominate the debates and are persistent over time. Evidently, the debates incessantly move between problematisation and naturalisation, between making visible and making invisible, and between linking and differentiating Sweden to/from the use of force. However, taken together, there is a striking tendency in parliamentary debates to, in various ways, avoid an explicit association between Sweden and the actual use of force, in other words: the practice of physical violence. The general conclusion is that the violent element all too often ‘disappears’ from the narratives on peace-enforcement, as a reality and/or as a dilemma, and/or as ‘our’ reality and dilemma. As the story generally goes: Look at the Others! – What we do is not real violence – There’s nothing (particular) to see here – Let’s move on.

The argument here is that the narrative themes listed below ultimately serve to naturalise and/or invisibilise the violent element of the Swedish contribution, and/or differentiate Sweden from the use of force. Hence, the themes capture how violence – in Der Derian’s words – is kept out of sight, out of mind. The empirical observations may feed into various narrative themes, and the narrative themes themselves obviously feed into each other. Ultimately, the four themes demonstrate how the processes of naturalisation, making invisible and disidentification interweave and often reinforce each other in the Swedish case.
Look at the Others: Displacing the violent element

The practice of shifting the discursive emphasis from oneself to others, and from one’s own practices to the practices of others, is a common feature of the narratives articulated in parliamentary debates to account for Sweden’s involvement in peace-enforcement. Some articulations can certainly be understood to displace the violent element to other instances or actors engaged in the intervention. Either the violent practices as such are ascribed to other actors, or the actual responsibility for the use of force. In that way, the practice of violence is differentiated from Sweden and excluded from conceptions of Self. When largely excluded from self-representation, and when essentially associated with someone or something else, it appears as if the practice falls outside of one’s own area of responsibility or decision-making, and that the use of force does not need to be debated and politically defended. The use of force is, in short, obscured as a political dilemma, for Sweden. In terms of what is made seen and known, the displacement of violence serves to render Sweden’s involvement in violence invisible, and the violent element disappears from the representation of Swedish military undertakings. Essentially, the political work of displacing violence is threefold; Sweden is differentiated from the practice of violence, the violent element of the Swedish military undertaking is rendered invisible, and the violent element is naturalised as it disappears as a Swedish problem and responsibility.

The displacement of violence as such (as in practice) or the displacement of responsibility for violence (as in agency) is especially salient in the debates on ONUC in Congo – when the UN actions are repeatedly and continuously distinguished from Sweden – or in the case of UNPROFOR in Bosnia and ISAF in Afghanistan – when NATO or the US troops come to signify offensive violence and warfare and the Swedish involvement in turn comes to represent the opposite. In the debates on ISAF, for instance, the repeated emphasis placed on the distinction between the US and ISAF serves to invisibilise the violent practices in which the Swedish soldiers are involved. By associating itself with UN rather than NATO, Sweden is in turn linked to peacekeeping practices and defensive violence as opposed to warfare and the taking of sides.

During the debates on the OUP in Libya, the political disputes very much relate to the role of the Swedish contribution in the military intervention in general. Although a great majority of the parliamentary parties initially support a Swedish military contribution to the OUP, the forthcoming debates are characterised by an increasing discontent related to the use of force. The debates essentially represent a discursive contestation over the meaning of the Swedish engagement and the articulation of
alternative narratives is – more than anything else – making visible the association between the Swedish ‘non-violent’ contribution and the bombing, which represents the violent element of the intervention. However, as has been demonstrated, the debates are still dominated by a narrative that essentially displaces and hence obscures the violent dimension of the Swedish contribution, by portraying the Swedish actions as separated from the peace-enforcement operation at large.

The concluding debate on UNPROFOR is characterised by a similar articulation. Sweden will take no part in the so-called ‘attack operations’, it is claimed. The military activities of Sweden are thus depicted as separate from the mandate guiding the new IFOR mission, and hence less violent than the activities of others. The few articulations of dissent that could be identified in the UNPROFOR debates in general are related to NATO and any potential collaboration between Sweden and NATO. In short, violence is visibilised and problematised primarily in relation to something external from the Self.

Generally, the focus on actors rather than practice is a recurring feature in the narratives emerging to account for Swedish military involvements. This focus could be considered a result of the displacement of violence, yet it could also be considered to reinforce such displacement in the first place. Here, the debates on ISAF and OUP represent the most illustrative examples. With an emphasis on actors, and thus identity, rather than the practice of peace-enforcement as such, the re/negotiations on the use of force are centred on acceptable players rather than acceptable actions, actions which ‘we’ would be part of. One can say that the focus on actors thus makes the practice of violence slip from view. Another feature that also serves to separate Sweden from the actual practice of peace-enforcement, and which feeds into the theme of displacement, is the shifting of emphasis from the use of force to the issue of being exposed and subjected to violence. Sweden is thus primarily rendered a victim rather than an agent, and the (potential) act of killing is backgrounded and removed out of sight. Subsequently, when the issue of being subjected to violence comes to dominate the debates – and ultimately comes to represent the ‘violent element’ of peace-enforcement – violence appears as a natural and unavoidable aspect of ‘peacework’, as the risk of being exposed is always already there and unrelated to agency.

- It’s not real violence: Redefining or undefining the violent element

The narratives articulated in the parliamentary debates demonstrate a tendency to in various ways differentiate between different forms of violence, which ultimately moves Sweden out of ‘war’ or ‘fighting’. Not only is the violent element displaced to other
actors, as noted above; Sweden’s own partaking in violence is also often redefined. Overall, these redefinitions serve to further differentiate Sweden from the practice of force. In terms of dis/identification, the focus is removed to Others, while the actual descriptions of Sweden’s use of force serve to distance Sweden from the notion of ‘war’. Ultimately, these redefinitions serve to invisibilise the violent element of Sweden’s contributions, as the use of force is removed out of sight. These redefinitions furthermore naturalise the use of force or the practice of peace-enforcement, as violence comes to appear as no real violence and thus no real problem.

A recurring feature is the portrayal of violence as either defensive or offensive, ‘good’ or ‘bad’; Sweden is often linked to defensive and ‘good’ violence, peacekeeping practices, whereas offensive and ‘bad’ violence often are ascribed to others. In the case of UNPROFOR, for instance, the continuous differentiation between so-called defensive violence (which Sweden comes to be associated with) and offensive violence (associated with the conflict parties and other intervening actors), in a sense obscures the violent element of peace-enforcement as a practice and reproduces an image of Sweden as distanced from those violent practices that the parliament actually seeks to promote. The debates aim to justify a Swedish involvement in practices reaching beyond peacekeeping, yet nevertheless links Sweden to the use of defensive violence.

The notion of defensive vis-a-vis offensive violence is also recurring in a few of the other cases. During ONUC, for instance, the work of the battalion is continuously depicted as ‘police work’, which signifies a more defensive type of involvement than, let’s say, to ‘partake in war’. To insist that the soldiers have patrol and police tasks, even when they engage in heavy fighting, is arguably to redefine the violent element; ultimately, the actual character of the events unfolding on the ground slips from view. The debates on ISAF, which are completely dominated by the efforts to distinguish ‘us’ from the US, likewise advance a notion of good versus bad violence, as in peacekeeping versus war. The Swedish engagement is, for instance, linked to the UN rather than NATO. Peace-enforcement, as a practice, is thus redefined, and comes to represent a peaceful rather than a violent practice. Furthermore, during OUP in Libya, peace-enforcement is occasionally rendered a technical exercise rather than a violent practice.

Generally, the representation of combat involvement as defensive violence makes

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205 See Scarry (1987) on redescribing or omitting violence (injuring) altogether.
206 Cf. Gregory (2014), on how bombing is rendered ‘an abstract, purely technical exercise for those who execute it’ (p. 41).
the involvement in peace-enforcement correspond with conceptions of Self as peace-loving and warless. Peace-enforcement appears as a practice in line with previous military undertakings and routines. The rhetoric of ‘we’re waging peace, not war’ further plays into this notion of engaging in ‘non-violent’ violence. In line with the logic of displacement, the redefinitions of violence thus conceal the violent element of peace-enforcement. Moreover, in the case of UNPROFOR, for instance, the discussion regarding the mandate is generally so vague that the violent element could be considered obscured, since the mandate itself is never clarified or specified. A distinct lack of definition, one can argue, thus also serves to make the use of force invisible. When the mandate is described in such vague terms it could be considered undefined; violence thus becomes an abstract phenomenon rather than a concrete reality, as it is unclear what really is, or will be.

- Nothing (particular) to see here: Negating disruption and the exceptional

Another striking feature of the parliamentary debates over time is the attempts to – in different ways – make the use of force appear to be in line with previous practices and in line with history. Being in line with history implies being in line with Swedish identity. Overall, many different narrative fragments could be said to advance a notion of continuity. Generally, a depiction of peace-enforcement as ‘business as usual’ could be said to naturalise the issue of force, as violence beyond self-defence is depicted as routine, normal, and ordinary, but could also be said to render violence invisible, as the shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement is obscured. In terms of dis/identification, the theme of continuity could also serve to differentiate Sweden from the use of force, as it reinforces the notion that Sweden (and the Swedish soldier) is still a peacekeeper.

The most obvious example of a narrative fragment feeding into the notion of continuity and ‘business as usual’ is the recurring talk of tradition. Referring to tradition generally obscures the transition, or transitions, from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement, as it conveys that all practices with an ambition of making peace essentially are one and the same. It thus blurs the distinction between keeping peace and enforcing peace and downplays the particularity and exceptionality of engaging in fighting and combat. The transition from UNPROFOR to IFOR is a noteworthy example, where the UNPROFOR – with its ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement – at first is depicted as something exceptional. Then, when replaced by IFOR, and the mandate is specified (this time, it is peace-enforcement), the military undertakings in Bosnia are portrayed as a continuation of previous routines, as more of the same rather than anything particularly new. New practices and routines are ‘masquerading’
as old, one can say, and the policy reorientation is concealed.

The ‘tradition’ rhetoric is also noticeable during the ISAF and OUP debates, when the violent undertakings are framed as UN loyalty, peacekeeping, or international solidarity. Essentially, these articulations all reinforce a sense of continuity and the idea of a non-violent history persisting into the present. The debate on Operation Artemis, in turn, might well describe exceptional circumstances, yet the debate overall reflects a ‘business as usual’ kind of outlook, implying that nothing particularly problematic or sensational is about to take place. This is largely a consequence of the compact consensus, which will be discussed under the next heading.

To make the exceptional look routine is generally a persistent feature in the parliamentary debates and ultimately a naturalising move, and an act of making invisible. To not acknowledge the particular in the peace-enforcement engagements, and how they deviate from ‘traditional’ peacekeeping missions, is a way to conceal the violent element of intervention. With regard to invisibility, to not acknowledge the particular makes the use of force appear as an abstract phenomenon rather than a concrete reality, with real consequences; ultimately, it makes the military undertakings appear as more of the same. The continuous focus on actors rather than practice further reinforces the notion of all being the same; by focusing elsewhere or on someone else, the shift in policy and practice simply slips from view. Moreover, articulating the risk of being subjected to violence as a problem while not acknowledging the act of violence as a problem, further plays into the notion of continuity, as risk signifies the standard of any military undertaking more than it signals disruption. The act of violence, on the other hand, is what distinguishes peace-enforcement from peacekeeping.

Let’s move on: Diminishing the ‘problem’ of violence

Generally, failing to deal with the issue of force as a dilemma or a problem is a persistent feature of the parliamentary debates on peace-enforcement. While this ‘noisy silence’ could be considered a narrative theme in itself, the three above-mentioned themes quite clearly serve to strengthen this aspect of the debates. For instance, as elaborated earlier, the process of disidentification could serve to reduce the use of force to a ‘no choice’ and thus a non-dilemma; if the practice of violence and the responsibility for violence is displaced to other actors, the ‘content’ and thus the ‘problem’ of the Swedish contributions are obscured. Fundamentally, to ‘leave out’ the tricky questions essentially associated with the use of force and the deployment of armed forces could ultimately be considered to both naturalise the
violent element, and to remove it out of sight, as violence is reduced to a necessary and self-evident element of ‘peacework’, nothing to observe.

The debates on Operation Artemis could serve as an illustrative example of how the dilemma of violence is avoided: the violent element is acknowledged and described, in a sense made visible – as in Swedish soldiers will likely battle child soldiers in Congo – yet never truly defended or challenged. It is, in other words, not addressed and dealt with as a problem; evidently, there is a difference between describing and problematising. Accordingly, the shift from MONUC (peacekeeping) to Operation Artemis (peace-enforcement) is not delineated as a particularly big deal, but as a matter of course. The debates on Operation Artemis completely lack any sign of political disagreement; the consensus seems to be unanimous. Consensus generally, or the call for consensus, do not open up for critical reflection; quite evidently, violence as a dilemma disappears as consensus prevails, and what is left is violence as a matter of fact. When the parties agree on the legitimacy of the operation, the ‘tricky questions’ are obscured and the practice of dispatching military troops to conflict zones simply appears as a routinised procedure, an ordinary and natural part of Swedish security policy.

Besides the frequent call for consensus – which generally signals that there is no need to discuss or that it is hardly the right time to discuss – the use of force is often and repeatedly depicted as the only alternative, indeed the only choice. When, for instance, ‘passivity’ comes to signify Otherness, violence is often articulated as the obvious solution, the given choice. Such articulations could of course in and of themselves be said to naturalise the use of force, as the scope for political choice is reduced by the emphasis on necessity, permanence and immobility. As ‘business as usual’, the practice of violence appears apolitical, simply a necessary risk or a necessary evil. At the shift from UNPROFOR to IFOR, for instance, peace-enforcement becomes the only alternative, a natural decision, and the use of force appears, in contrast to earlier, as a given. During OUP, Sweden’s loyalty to the UN is claimed to be indisputable, and to question the engagement is simply described as ‘un-Swedish’. The rhetoric of ‘tradition’ and ‘when the UN calls, we come’ is a persistent feature in the justification for military engagement; ultimately, such rhetoric makes the dilemmas associated with engaging, or not engaging, seem less significant.

As has been noted, most debates fail to recognise peace-enforcement as a policy and continuous practice; instead they make the use of force appear as a temporal

\[\text{Cf. Zizek’s (2008) reflections on the ‘fake sense of urgency’ of today – ‘[t]here is no time to reflect: we have to act now’ (p. 6).}\]
response or incident. One can, in other words, note that the Swedish policy on the use of force is rarely discussed in parliamentary debates as a policy or as a policy open for revision. The debates on ISAF are illustrative: there is rarely any talk, much less problematisation, of the combat or fighting unfolding on the ground, which in fact involve Swedish soldiers. The violence is essentially depicted as an exemption rather than an inherent part of peace-enforcement. When the combat or fighting is brought to light, it is in discussions on whether Sweden is or is not at war. However, conceptualisations of war are contestable (as in: we are at war/we are not at war), whereas the use of force is undeniable; the discussions on whether or not Sweden takes part in war hence, paradoxically, redirects attention from the violent element and ‘content’ of the Swedish presence in Afghanistan. Put differently, the conceptual discussion of being or not being at war backgrounds the dilemma of engaging in violence.

During ONUC in Congo, the events unfolding seem to have even less to do with policy; they are just incidents that few could have envisioned, or mistakes for which no one is to blame (except possibly the UN). Here, the insistence to point out actors as il/legalitmate rather than to question or defend the legitimacy of the practice of using force as such, reinforces this notion of peace-enforcement as a non-policy. The failure to deal with violence as a dilemma, a political problem, which is part of policy, generally serves to naturalise the issue of force. Furthermore, it could also be considered to invisibilise the violent element of peace-enforcement, as violence is not recognised as something that always already is.

DE/STABILISING AND DE/POLITICISING

The narrative themes outlined above in various ways serve to naturalise and invisibilise the violent element of peace-enforcement, and differentiate Sweden from the use of force. So, what is the political work of these disappearances, when violence disappears as a reality, a dilemma and as our reality and dilemma? What do these discursive processes reflect and do?

As argued, the dis/appearances of violence, and specifically the processes of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification, are crucial to explore if seeking to examine and understand how public narratives on peace-enforcement serve to de/stabilise the link between identity and policy (on the use of force) and ultimately de/politicise violence. As one can note, what generally ‘happens’ in the parliamentary debates is, first, that the link between identity and policy is continuously adjusted, and furthermore, that the issue of using force – in parallel – is continuously removed from the political processes of contestation and constitution.
As war(like) engagements are seemingly at odds with Sweden’s deeply embedded national self-image as a peace-loving state, it is it seems – in the Swedish case – through the processes of denaturalisation, invisibilisation and disidentification that policy and identity come to appear reconcilable. The disappearances of violence – as a reality, dilemma, and our reality and dilemma – are very much part of, and essential to, the ‘fitting story’, which makes the engagement in peace-enforcement look, perhaps even feel, acceptable. Thus, the narrative themes outlined above ultimately serve to make possible what basically appears impossible; that is, undisturbed identification with non-violence whilst engaging in violence beyond self-defence.

In short, naturalisation, invisibilisation and disidentification serve to conceal the (apparent) imbalance and incoherence between policy and identity. In the Swedish case, adjustments and modifications of either the representation of identity or of policy and practice make the use of force pass unnoticed. Consider, for instance, the themes of displacing or redefining violence; by leaving out the violent element when speaking about one’s own military involvement, it is possible to uphold a conception of Self linked to anything but violence, a Self essentially distanced from the violent practices associated with war and armed conflict. Thus, by concealing the violent element as such or by differentiating it from the Swedish self-representation, the narrative and rhetorical moves identified in the empirical material could be understood to maintain a seemingly coherent link between Swedish identity and policy. When violence is depicted as a practice and/or problem belonging to someone else, violence does not even appear to be part of the Swedish policy, which makes any perceived incoherence irrelevant. As a doing, the continuous reconciling of identity and policy thus generally prevent critical reflection and (re)consideration, as peace-enforcement comes to appear as in line with Swedish identity.

The political work of the disappearances of violence is moreover that they serve to depoliticise the use of force; the issue of using force is removed from the political processes of contestation and constitution when violence ‘disappears’ in public discourse. If violence disappears as a reality, a dilemma, as ‘our’ reality and dilemma, there is not much left – it seems – to reflect on and contest. Consider, for instance, the displacement of violence, the lack of definition and clarification, and how violence is articulated as the only choice; such doings ultimately serve to depoliticise the use of force. The act of violence, and the shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement, is moved from the realm of the political to the social, if – for instance – the fact that ‘the UN calls’ makes the use of force appear indisputable and unnecessary to debate or contest. The decision to engage in peace-enforcement is thus made technical; military contributions just appear to be part of what is normally
done and public contestation is thus prevented from arising. The scope for political choice and agency is circumscribed. Violence is also moved from the realm of the political to the social if not made intelligible or articulated as the practice and problem of someone else; essentially, if nothing there is, nothing there is to contest. If violence is articulated as no real violence or if the use of force essentially is represented as the concern of someone else, the use of force bears no immediate political relevance – for Sweden.

Taken together, the analysis of the dis/appearance of violence as a reality and dilemma, as ‘our’ reality and dilemma, tells us something about the conditions of possibility for truly reflecting on the issue of force in the public sphere, and hence for identifying with new possibilities. How violence dis/appears in Swedish parliamentary debates affects the possibility for considering the use of force in political and democratic ways ‘at home’. How violence dis/appears shapes the ‘gap’ between here and there – between the society ‘at home’ and the practices of violence it authorises abroad. Clearly, it would be an overstatement to suggest that the use of force is completely depoliticised, removed from the sphere of the political altogether. As has been demonstrated, the use of force is occasionally contested and consensus does not always prevail. Similarly, it would be an overstatement to suggest that the link between policy and identity is kept stable throughout the debates. Evidently, specific circumstances and events sometimes disrupt the notion of Self. However, in terms of continuity, and given the disappearances of violence that have been disclosed, the social dimension of intervention is often and continuously foregrounded in the debates. As contestation on the use of force as such rarely arises and/or is actively prevented from arising, the debates oppose, as Wood (2015: 3) puts it, the scope for political choice and agency. Essentially, de/politicisation is about encouraging or discouraging contestation and a (self)reflective debate on one’s own engagement in violent practices, to enable or disenable (re)consideration and envisioning of alternatives.

On a more concrete level, the summary of narrative themes demonstrates how naturalising moves, selective visibilities and processes of differentiation interweave; it demonstrates how the concepts of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification are all relevant in order to capture the dis/appearances of violence in Swedish public discourse, and how they play into the de/politicisation of violence and the reconciling of identity and policy. As part III of the book now turns to specific moments of disruption and the representations of violence in public service media, the discussion on how violence dis/appears will continue; part III will elaborate further on the role of in/visibility in processes of de/naturalisation and
dis/identification, and the role of de/naturalisation and dis/identification in acts of in/visibilisation, and whether the representation of violence in public service media opens up for or delimits the possibility for public reflection and (re)consideration.
PART III: POLICY AND IDENTITY UN/DISTURBED

The only certainty in war is uncertainty; quite often, things do not turn out as one expected or wished for. And it is above all the element of fighting that generates this unavoidable insecurity and undecidability' (Barkawi & Brighton, 2011a: 138). As has been elaborated in the introduction, war and violence are inherently social events, and experiences of war and violence generate reconfigurations of social identities, regimes of truth and political orders. War and violence are thus generative and productive forces, though deeply destructive. As Barkawi and Brighton (2011a) suggest, ‘fighting marks the disruption of this wider order and the people and other entities which populate it, the unmaking and remaking of certainties, of meaning, of – potentially – the very coordinates of social and political life’ (p. 136).

The engagement in violence, in fighting, could open up for a redefining of ‘certainties’ and a reformation of ‘fixed’ identity. Part II concentrated on parliamentary debates and re/negotiations concerning Swedish military contributions to operations of peace-enforcement or operations including ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement. While the parliamentary debates give insight into how policy takes shape and how violence is represented over time, these debates are not related to nor focus on specific events. At certain times, when the unforeseen or the exceptional occurs, the question of using force and the notion of identity is brought to the fore, suddenly perceived as more relevant than at other times; at those times, when the unanticipated happens, actors could be forced to take decisions or reflect on things in a more uncertain terrain. In the case of Sweden specifically, the eruption or escalation of fighting may challenge ‘reality’ as we know it; when peace-enforcement suddenly reveals itself as a violent practice, sedimented routines are potentially threatened and established conceptions of Self are potentially unsettled. As will become clear, the lack of force could also be disruptive, even for a ‘peace-loving’ state.

Part III will take a close look at specific events, which seem impossible to immediately integrate into the horizon of expectation, and explore how the ‘unexpected’ is explained and conveyed to the broader public. These events, or episodes, are interesting as they potentially open up for reflection and

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1 As already noted, this notion of war’s ontology has been challenged (see page 10). Cf., e.g., Baudrillard’s discussion on the Gulf War and the lack of confrontation and the predictability of the confrontations that occurred (Patton, 1995: 17-18; ‘No accidents occurred in this war, everything unfolded according to programmatic order, in the absence of passional disorder. Nothing occurred which would have metamorphosed events into a duel’ (Baudrillard, 1995: 73). See also, e.g., Nordin & Öberg (2015).
(re)consideration, perhaps even a change of thought and a change of policy. Following the ontological backdrop outlined in part I, part III will be dedicated to in-depth explorations of what here will be considered potentially dislocatory experiences related to the policy on the use of force, and examine how the narrative responses articulated in public service broadcasters approach the issue of violence. The chapters will examine the dis/appearances of violence and the continuous movement between making visible and making invisible, between problematisation and naturalisation, and between linking and differentiating Sweden to/from the use of force. In TV and radio broadcasts, the question of in/visibility and ‘noisy silences’ is central; what the audience – the general public – actually gets to see or hear, feel and understand, and identify with, here becomes even more clear. By looking closer at specific events or episodes, one gets an idea of how political discourses play out, are reinforced, or reconsidered, when doing nothing or carrying on initially does not appear as an option. How is violence represented when it becomes a ‘reality’, when the question of force needs to be confronted?

Part III consists of three case studies: Congo 1961-1962, Bosnia 1995, and Afghanistan 2008-2010. Each chapter is structured as follows: a description of the specific period will briefly be discussed together with a short elaboration on why the specific period could be considered a disruption of sedimented routines and expectations. Then, the analysis of the stories told and the representation of violence in public service media will be presented, followed by a brief summary of the main observations. At the end of part III, the main observations from all three chapters will be brought together and discussed in terms of dis/continuities over time. The concluding chapter will also elaborate on how the representations of violence in public service media de/stabilise the link between identity and policy, and how they serve to de/politicise the issue of using force.

* Compared to parliamentary debates (part II).
A while later, I lay – as a loader – on a termite stack about 3 m high, with 4354. Below me, on the side of the termite stack, is 4356, holding my legs so I won’t slide down. At the foot of the stack is another comrade whose whole body is shaking. I shot two explosive shells. The first against a house, which collapsed. I put another shot into the top of a tree, so the burst hit the ground. I don’t remember it myself, but 4356 says that the whole tree explodes in a sheet of fire. Those who fired at us turned quiet. As we lay by the termite stack we were fired at the whole time.

Eventually we reached a bakery. There we dried our clothes by the hot stoves and ate the bread that was there. Delicious.3

(From a soldier’s diary, dated December 16, 1961)4

In September and December 1961, the daily life of the Swedish battalion in Congo is marked by combat and war-like so-called ‘intermezzos’. This is not the first time the Swedish battalion is forced into fighting during the ONUC mission; when the Swedish soldiers were attacked by Baluba warriors during the winter of 1960-61, Swedish regular forces engaged in combat for the first time in 146 years (Tullberg, 2012: 109). However, the events during the autumn of 1961 are something quite different; never before has the UN been engaged in such heavy fighting. Clashes break out first in September, and later, in December, the fighting becomes even bloodier (Goldmann, 1966, p. 147-148). Of the 19 Swedish soldiers who lost their lives during the ONUC mission between 1960 and 1964, five are killed in action in September and December of 1961. Besides those killed or wounded, 15 are taken hostage by the Katanga gendarmerie; 11 of them are held captive for over a month and finally released in mid-January 1962.

Over 1,100 Swedish soldiers serve in Congo during the second half of 1961 (Tullberg, 2012: 92). Throughout the autumn, Swedish soldiers are involved in many war-like incidents as part of the UN ground forces. As the situation escalates, the UN additionally requests Sweden to deploy jet fighters, a request which Sweden quickly accepts. Apart from contributing with ground forces, Swedish personnel now also

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4 From Folke Bernadotte Academy’s (FBA) collection of soldier diaries in their online ‘Peace archive’ (Decemberstriderna i Kongo 1961).

5 Mainly between September 13 and September 20, and December 5 and December 18 (Tullberg, 2013: 53; Gothenburg University, 1963).
assume a major role in the UN Air Force operation in Katanga; by November 1961, Sweden has more airmen in Congo than any other nation (SR 19611117, Journalen).

As part of the psychological warfare, the Katanga authorities launch a propaganda campaign directed against the UN troops, spreading allegations against the UN on local radio and through flyers. Yet, the propaganda campaign is not only aimed at local fighters and residents but also at foreign states and international news agencies (Sköld, 1994: 228). Some governments and press raise severe criticism towards the UN actions and the Swedish soldiers (Tullberg, 2012: 158). As a result of the allegations directed towards the Swedish UN soldiers, the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Östen Undén, sends a letter to the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, which is published on 25 January 1962. In the letter he officially addresses the accusations of cruelty and brutality (Utrikesfrågor, 1962). By all means, an extraordinary intervention by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, which suggests extraordinary circumstances, something far beyond the usual:

There is also a third group of criticisms directed against Sweden. It refers to the steps taken by the commander of the Swedish battalion or parts of the battalion. It has been stated that the Swedish soldiers have been guilty of violence against civilians, and that they – with mortars – have shelled the hospital in Katanga. It has been said that the military means used by the Swedish troops have been unnecessary heavy and not motivated by the troops’ assignments.6

(Utrikesfrågor, 1962)

According to Tullberg (2012: 226-227), scepticism towards UN actions is also reflected within the Swedish press around this time, especially in conservative newspapers. Yet, according to a study conducted in 1963 by the Department of political science at Gothenburg University 7, the Swedish press, to a greater extent, publishes unfavourable material on UN actions during September 1961 than it does during December 1961 (Gothenburg University, 1963: iv). Tullberg (2012: 227) further claims that the growing opposition and media coverage are never able to truly challenge Swedish consensus on the engagement in ONUC, partly due to the operational success in December (Tullberg, 2012: 227). However, as he points out, the media coverage in 1961 ultimately leads to a ‘suspicion’ in Sweden that something is or was ‘shady’ with the engagement in Congo (p. 157-158). And as he further suggests: ‘the

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6 In Swedish: ‘Återstår så en tredje grupp av kritik, som riktats mot Sverige. Den hänför sig till de åtgärder, som vidtagits av chefen för den svenska bataljonen eller av vissa medlemmar av denna. Man har påstått, att de svenska soldaterna skulle ha gjort sig skyldiga till våldshandlingar mot civilbefolkningen och att de med granatkastare beskjutit sjukhus i Katanga. Man har sagt, att de militära medel, som de svenska trupperna använt sig av, skulle ha varit oönligt kraftiga och icke motiverats av truppernas uppgifter.’

7 Commissioned by the National Psychological Defence Planning Committee.
media debate in the autumn of 1961 and throughout 1962 about the legitimacy of the UN course of action was left unresolved’ (p. 287).

To what extent is the legitimacy of the UN actions, and Sweden’s participation therein, debated at the time of intervention? How is the abrupt transition from peacekeeping to fighting represented and debated in public service radio? Did the events on the ground spur new identifications and/or a re-evaluation of Sweden’s engagement in UN peacekeeping? This chapter concentrates on the period between September 1961 and January 1962, to scrutinise and problematise how the ‘the Congo crisis’ was conveyed to the Swedish public, whilst the fighting unfolded, and whilst Swedish soldiers were both killed and involved in the killing of others. It will do so by critically engaging with the narratives emerging in radio broadcasts and reports. Dislocation is the key term here; still the concepts of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification will – of course – guide the empirical analysis.

To get an idea of what the Swedish public – at the time – could imagine and contemplate, it is arguably decisive to explore the narration in Swedish Radio, as it represented the most wide-reaching media channel in Sweden in the early 1960s. There is no doubt that the so-called Congo crisis and the Swedish soldiers’ involvement in fighting was a big event in Sweden; it clearly represented a disruption of the sedimented practice of peacekeeping and a break with the expected, as the empirical analysis will demonstrate. The allegations from foreign states, which the involvement further led to, reasonably also reinforced the notion of disruption. ONUC was, at the time, not defined as an operation of peace-enforcement, and the decision to partake cannot in itself be considered a shift in policy or part of such a shift. Yet, the violent interactions signified a break with normal routines and practices.

DISLOCATION OR DISTRESS? September 1961 – Spring of 1962

It is early September 1961 and a Major in the Swedish battalion in Congo gives Swedish Radio a report on the current state of affairs. ‘Yes, today it’s very calm, and the weather is brilliant’, says the Major; the Swedish battalion is doing fine and they’re all in a good mood (SR 19610908, Journalen). At this point in time, Sweden has had troops in Congo for a little over a year; the 12th battalion has been stationed in Elisabethville since June 1961, and the 11th battalion arrived at Leopoldville in August as reinforcement (e.g. Sköld, 1994: 116). After ONUC and the Swedish

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8 Yet, the empirical material also includes a few radio reports from February, March and May 1962.
9 In the Swedish Radio digital archive, ‘the Congo crisis’ is repeatedly used as a title.
10 In Swedish: ‘Ja, idag är det mycket lugnt. Och det är strålande väder.’
battalion were given the order to arrest the ‘white officers’ in the Katanga gendarmerie on 28 August, the situation has, according to the radio presenter, been ‘tense and dramatic’ but relatively peaceful. Today, things are calm and the battalion is doing fine; however, in a few days time, the situation will change drastically. From the correspondent’s report to Swedish Radio in the early days of September one can sense that something is about to happen. The report suggests that the ‘final battle’ is approaching; the local Katanga radio has launched a systematic agitation campaign directed against the UN forces and there is therefore a risk that new disputes or fights will break out. Still, the UN is confident that it has enough troops to prevent any heavy clashes (SR 19610908, Journalen).

The mission to ‘throw out’ all white officers from Katanga will soon prove to be more difficult than expected. When Swedish Radio broadcasts its next report, seven days later, Swedish soldiers have already been involved in heavy fighting for three days, and two Swedish soldiers have been killed in action (SR 19610915, Eko). In an interview with Swedish Radio, a Major General at the Army Staff instantly admits that the police tasks have now turned into military tasks. The news presenter claims that there are reports which suggest that panic has broken out among Swedish troops, yet the Major General is quick to deny such ‘allegations’; during the fighting yesterday, Swedish troops have acted calmly and cool-headed, and there is still a good spirit among the soldiers, he insists. The fact that soldiers have been killed is not discussed in the report or the interview (SR 19610915, Eko).

The reporter attempts to explain the current situation in Katanga and Congo. According to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the recent UN actions corresponds to the UN resolution from 21 February, when the Security Council authorised the troops to – in case of emergency – use violence to enforce a ceasefire. This signifies a shift, the reporter emphasises, as the troops prior to that were permitted to use violence only in self-defence (SR 19610915, Eko). As a consequence, combat broke out once the foreign officers – the ‘white officers’ – opened fire against the UN troops, which in turn had to return fire to defend themselves and carry out their mission.

Radio presenter: What yesterday appeared as a possible development, now seems to be confirmed as a horrible reality. The UN forces, which came to Congo to create peace, have been forced to start war.” (SR 19610915, Eko)

*By 20 September, two Swedish soldiers have been killed, two have been seriously wounded, another five lightly wounded and 16 soldiers have been reported to be in shock (Tullberg, 2012: 153).*

*In Swedish: ‘Det som man igår började ana som en möjlig utveckling tycks idag få bekräftelse som en fruktansvärd realitet. FN-styrkorna, som kommit till Kongo för att skapa fred, har tvingats börja fora krig.’*
The message in Swedish Radio is clear: the peacekeeping in Congo has now turned into war. The situation is described as deeply serious and severe; it is depicted as a crisis, almost as a shock. What will happen next? For how long will this go on? No one could possibly know, and it all seems confusing. The information is scarce, and while the Swedish government-affirms that the UN acts in line with the UN resolution, the correspondent reporting from the UN headquarters in New York suggests that it has been revealed that the UN command in Congo has acted beyond the orders of the General Secretary. The office of the General Secretary has, however, denied these claims (SR 19610915, Eko). In the next few days the situation cools down, yet heavy fighting erupts again in December.

The most significant observation from the radio broadcasts these very first days of fighting, and generally all throughout the period between September 1961 and January 1962, is the acknowledgement that the Swedish soldiers now find themselves in war. Not just as bystanders and observers, but as an actual party. This is what most descriptions of the battlefield suggest (e.g. SR 19610920, Journalen; SR 19611001, Att vara FN-soldat; SR 19611204, Eko). In terms of visibility, there is – in other words – certainly no concealment of the violent character of the UN’s or the Swedish battalion’s undertakings in Katanga. At times, the emphasis on the use of force is even moving beyond clarity, as when the New York correspondent in a short paragraph on the discussions at the UN headquarters continuously repeats and emphasises the word violence: ‘the UN must resort to violence’, ‘there was talk of violence’, ‘authorised to use violence’, ‘ready to use violence’. All this talk of violence’, he finally concludes, ‘in other words: the deployment of the UN force in direct military conflicts, and to possibly let them go on the offence, has brought about a lively discussion at the UN headquarters’ (SR 19611204, Eko).

Although this particular report is from early December, it becomes clear as early as September that the use of force is part of a new strategy. It is generally conveyed to the public that the UN practices in Congo – given the events on the ground – have shifted (e.g. SR 19610915, Eko; SR 19610925, Utsikt; SR 19611001, Att vara FN-soldat). According to most accounts, there has been a transition from peacework to warfare. This shift is emphasised repeatedly, both in news reports and in interviews with soldiers, and – from what it seems – it has been unexpected and taken people by surprise (e.g. SR 19610925, Utsikt; SR 19620327, Eko). The situation in Congo is

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13 Same in written press, according to previous research (e.g. Tullberg, 2012: 121).
15 In Swedish: ‘FN måste tillgripa våld’ / ‘talades det om våld’ / ‘auktoriserade att använda våld’ / ‘redo att tillgripa våld’.
16 In Swedish: ‘Allt detta tal om våld, det vill säga insättande av FN-styrkan i direkta militära stridigheter, och eventuellt låta den gå till offensiv, har föranlett en livlig diskussion i FN-högkvarteret’.

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depicted as utterly new and unique; the fact that Swedish soldiers are suddenly killed in action in a UN mission is a significant and even ground-breaking event. The Swedish soldiers have taken on a new role; to serve in war rather than to fulfil patrol and police tasks. With regard to invisibilisation and de/naturalisation, the combat in Congo is initially brought to light and considered exceptional. Furthermore, in relation to dis/identification, although the decision to embark on a new strategy is the UN’s, it doesn’t seem obvious that their decisions are unrelated to Sweden; it certainly seems as if Sweden now engages in war.

Radio presenter: It may have come as a shock to most of you when we suddenly discovered that Swedish soldiers have been in combat. We had almost began to view the UN engagement as a relatively risk free undertaking, or at least hoped that it wouldn’t be associated with much greater risks than could be considered normal for military duty. We had become used to the idea that when the volunteers of peace are put to work, it is to uphold peace and calm and not to take up arms. But recent times have given us other lessons. The soldier of peace has for a few days been forced to wage war.5

Father of soldier: He wrote home himself, saying it sure wasn’t the idea to go down there to be at war, that there was going to be a war. Here’s complete war, he wrote. And that was not the idea; he was going there to maintain order, they were coming there as guards… [that’s what] he wrote.6

However, there are also alternative representations of the Swedish military undertaking in Congo, which make the use of force appear in a different light. Whereas Swedish Radio never hesitates to use war terminology when describing the events and developments in Congo, the official representatives are sometimes more careful with the labels. It is reported that the Chief of ONUC, the Swede Sture Linnér, has stressed that words such as ‘attack’ and ‘strike’ aren’t relevant in this context, and that the UN plans no offensives (SR 19611211, Eko). Colonel Waern, who serves as brigade commander in South Katanga, is in turn careful to emphasise that the UN forces and the Swedish battalions have never ‘sought battle’, that the ambition always will be to avoid bloodshed. He hopes that it all, as soon as possible,
will return to peaceful and normal conditions (SR 19611223, Eko). Similarly, to portray the fighting in Congo as *incidents* rather than part of a larger strategy is also a noticeable feature of some interviews with official representatives. After the war-like activities in September, the Chief of ONUC for instance refers to the fighting as ‘the Katanga episode’, that hopefully will be no more than an episode (SR 19611002, Eko). A Colonel at the Army Staff further insists that the main part of the battalion’s assignments is still patrol duty, although there is fighting in some specific areas (SR 19610925, Utsikt). In the spring of 1962, the acting chief for the Swedish aviation group in Congo refers to the ‘short time’ of fighting (SR 19620327, Eko). These statements could be understood as attempts to counter the very critical illustrations of the Swedish battalion in foreign press, but also as attempts to form the Swedish public’s imagination of the military undertakings in Katanga, and to counterbalance the radio’s general representation of Sweden as more or less *at war*.

In terms of visibility, however, it becomes clear in most statements by official representatives that the military engagement in Congo signifies the use of violence. No one denies that the UN uses force. For instance, the acting chief for the Swedish aviation group in Congo, who is being interviewed repeatedly on Swedish Radio, often recounts when, how and what the Swedish jet fighters have attacked in order to assist the ground forces (SR 19611206, Eko; SR 19611208, Eko). The quotes below are first from an interview right after the political decision to send jet fighters to Congo has been taken, and the other from when the fighting has finally cooled off. All in all, it is made clear that the Swedish jet fighters in Congo will *be*, respectively have *been*, used in warfare.

*Radio host:* What’ll be most difficult with this assignment?
*Acting chief for the Swedish aviation group in Congo:* […] Perhaps what will be *most* difficult is to act in a fully *correct* way, to not use one’s weapons unnecessarily, and to neither fail to use them when *necessary*. In other words: to act with *finesse.*

(SR 19610920, Journalen)

*Radio host:* Concerning this collaboration with the ground forces, it has at times been suggested in newspapers at home that the civilian population is being exposed to shelling.
*Acting chief for the Swedish aviation group in Congo:* Yeah… unfortunately it can’t be avoided in… in *war.*

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20 In Swedish: ‘Vad blir det svåraste i den här uppgiften?’ / ‘Kanske det *alters* svåraste ändå blir att uppträda på ett fullt *korekt* sätt, att man inte använder sina vapen i onödan, och att man inte heller försummar att använda dem när de *behövs*, alltså en *finess* i *uppförandet.*’

21 In Swedish: ‘Vid denna samverkan med marktrupper så har det ibland här hemma i tidningarna kommit fram uppgifter som tyder på att civilbefolkningen blir utsatt för beskjutning’ / ‘Jaa… det kan tyvärr inte undvikas i… *i krig.*’
A significant observation from the radio broadcastings and the reports on the Swedish involvement in the Katanga war is that they are dominated by military voices. Only twice is a political representative being interviewed on Swedish Radio regarding the military undertakings in Katanga. Both these interviews are with the Minister for Defence (SR 19610920, Eko; SR 19610925, Utsikt). Given that almost every news report includes updates from the Army Staff or the Swedish battalion in Congo, and that individual soldiers are being interviewed repeatedly, the radio almost seems to serve as the military’s platform. During the most critical periods, the radio listeners get to take part in what is happening on the ground on an almost day-to-day basis. Yet, with a focus on the daily routines and the military perspective of the involvement, the radio reports are dominated by the ‘reporting back’ and generally lack any broader perspective on the meaning and implications of Sweden’s involvement in Katanga. As it is presented in Swedish Radio, the operation in Congo predominantly appears as a military concern, and less as an issue with significant political relevance. The engagement in Congo is of course acknowledged to be of great importance on an international level, and many reports cover the discussions at the UN headquarters. However, in terms of policy-relevance on a national level, the reports very rarely touch upon questions of Swedish decision-making.

The fact that the radio reports are dominated by military voices has the effect that the events in Congo are dealt with in a matter-of-fact way. Violence becomes a matter of fact, not a choice, as in: there has been a shift in strategy, the troops are now at war, the fighting happened and we have managed. Hence, the use of force, however uncomfortable, is not necessarily delineated as a dilemma but as something inevitable, something that just is or was. With regard to de/naturalisation, the use of force in Congo appears less as a political decision and problem, and more as a natural outcome of military affairs. What the engagement in violence and not least in war could come to mean for Sweden in a broader sense are consequently the types of question that disappear.

Radio host: Were you prepared for the danger that awaited you, when you left?

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22 There are a few exceptions, as when the news refers to the meeting of the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs. The news presenter expects that the Council will stick to the current policy, but that the Swedish UN representatives will be ordered to proclaim that the Congo troops shall not be assigned more than they can possibly follow through (SR 19611205, Eko). On the following day, the news announces that the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the UN has emphasised to the UN Secretary that the actions in Congo must be in line with the UN resolutions (SR 19611206, Journalen).
Yet, with the military and soldier perspective dominating the radio broadcasts, it is striking how close one gets to the violence on the ground. The radio listeners reasonably get an idea of what the implications of deploying military force could be, mainly for the Swedish soldiers, but also for other UN forces and for those they fight against. A reporter once proclaims that casualties among the gendarmerie must be ‘horrible’ (SR 19610920, Journalen). At one point, a reporter pressures the Minister for Defence regarding the number of casualties caused by the Swedish troops, yet the Minister can’t answer the questions (SR 19610925, Utsikt). Although the Swedish losses are considered ‘remarkably small’ given the circumstances (SR 19610925, Utsikt; SR 19611217, Eko), other UN battalions, from Ireland, India and Ghana for instance, have been affected as well. By November 1961, 97 UN soldiers have been reported killed, ‘only’ seven of them have been Swedish. The troops from Ghana, with the largest number of casualties – 43 – have by November already been withdrawn (SR 19611117, Journalen).

Apart from the reports on the number of fatalities, the violent element of the intervention is present in other respects as well. A general observation from the whole period of September and December 1961 is that the radio presenters are describing the military operations in great detail (e.g. SR 19610915, Eko; SR 19611204, Eko; SR 19611205, Eko). They describe in length the latest events on the ground: how the troops have advanced, how and for what reason fighting has occurred, when, where and how Swedish soldiers have been engaged in fighting, what the UN soldiers have attacked, what kind of weapons and gear the UN forces have utilised, and so on. Also the soldiers that are being interviewed describe in depth what they have experienced on the battlefield (e.g. SR 19610901, Att vara FN-soldat; SR 19611207, Eko; SR 19611220, Hem från Kongo). They are being asked about their experiences from the episodes of fighting, and often they describe from beginning to end the most critical moments during their stationing in Congo. The soldiers describe their experiences in a calm and straightforward way, although many of their testimonies are dramatic and disturbing. The first quote below is an individual account of the

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Cont: SR 19611206, Eko; SR 19611207, Eko; SR 19611216, Eko.
clashes in Elisabethville in September; the second exemplifies a description of the fighting in December over Camp Massart, the camp of the gendarmerie.

Soldier: Initially, we had good protection thanks to factory buildings and termite stacks and such things, it went well, but then we got into a field where there was no protection, and there we were attacked with heavy fire. And there, one of my comrades was killed. But we couldn’t do anything at that point except move forward, we had to reach the target. We got to about 150 metres from the storage; we got in position and opened fire. And we probably caused great damage on the storage buildings. I don’t think there was much left inside of whatever was there. Initially, the opposition was strong, and via radio we got the message to retreat 300 metres one by one to where we could take cover in a trench. And from there, we opened fire against the gendarmerie and held them down while a stretcher team went out to get our [fallen] comrade.\textsuperscript{55}

Radio reporter: What happened when you went on the offensive… and among other things stormed Camp Massart?

Soldier: /…/ well, then we moved on, once we had crossed the stream we were perhaps 300 metres from the main gate, where we were supposed to make the big attack. And we got about… 200 metres from the main gate, and yet again we were exposed to heavy fire and had to take cover, lie down, we were in a pit, there we lay still for a good many hours, before we could continue forward. And… we were being fired at from both sides but we made it without losses, oddly enough.\textsuperscript{56}

With the military perspective and soldier stories, the ‘reality’ on the ground is made visible and the use of force generally comes to light as a task and concern of the Swedish soldiers; the radio reports clarify under what circumstances the soldiers are operating and that the Swedish participation in ONUC indeed involves combat, destruction and ultimately death. The listeners get in-depth information not just on specific events, but also on logistics and armaments. Reporters, for instance, explain what kinds of artillery the ground forces are employing, and list the heavy weapons that the Swedish Armed Forces are flying down to reinforce the Swedish battalion.

\textsuperscript{55} In Swedish: ‘I början hade vi bra skydd av fabriksbyggnad och termitsstavar och så, det gick bra, men sen skulle vi ut på ett fält där det fanns dåligt skydd och där blev vi beskjutna av rätt så kraftig eld. Och där stupade en av mina kamrater. Men vi kunde inte göra någonting då utan fortsatte fortsätta, vi var tvungrna att komma fram. Vi kom fram ungefär 150 meter från förrådet där vi gick i ställning och öppnade eld. Och vi gjorde nog rätt stor skadegörelse på forrådsbyggnaderna, jag tror inte det fanns mycket kvar helit utav vad som kunde finnas där. Motståndet var först starkt och per radio fick vi meddelande att en och en ansatsvis ta oss tillbaka 300 meter där vi hade skydd av ett dika, och därifrån öppnade vi eld mot gendarmerna och höll ned dem medan ett bår-lag utgick för att hämta vårt kamrat.’

\textsuperscript{56} In Swedish: ‘Hur gick det till när ni gick till angrepp… och bland annat stormade Camp Massart?’ / ‘ja sen fortsatte vi, när vi hade kommit över bärken så var vi cirka, kan de ha vart, 300 meter från själva huvudingången där vi skulle sätta in stora stören. Och vi kom en… 300 meter ifrån huvudingången så blev vi återigen utsatta för kraftig eld och fick lov att ta skydd, lägga oss ner, vi låg i en grop, där vi låg stilla i bra många timmar, innan vi kunde fortsätta framåt igen. Och… vi hade eld på oss ifrån bägge sidor men vi klarade oss utan förhuster, konstigt nog.’

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An army staff official further clarifies the (far-reaching) capability of the jet fighters, with their missiles and cannons (SR 19611117, Journalen). This not only has the effect that the operation in Congo appears as principally a military concern, the radio listeners are reasonably also drowned in detail. The stories told about and from the battlefield give an extraordinary view of the events, and generally open up for imagining what war is like (for the Swedish soldiers), yet the radio gives dominance to extended and continuous description, rarely reflection. In short, the extended details redirect focus from the ‘bigger picture’ and the use of force is (re)presented as detached from decision making; consequently, the overwhelming details serve to make the use of force appear as something that just unfolds, as a natural part of military affairs.

In terms of dis/identification and selective visibilities, the descriptions of what Swedish soldiers have done and experienced often conclude that they have done a good job. The representation of Swedish soldiers and their conduct is clear and consistent on the Swedish Radio throughout the period from September 1961 into 1962. Without any exception, the Swedish soldiers are continuously portrayed as professional, calm, cool-headed, friendly, and indeed very capable, truly the ultimate peace soldiers (SR 19610925, Eko; SR 19610925, Utsikt; SR 19611001, Att vara FN-soldat). For instance, in September, battalion commander Waern confirms that the Swedish soldiers have acted exemplarily during the heavy fighting (SR 19610916, Eko). Another battalion commander, Major Mide, stresses that the soldiers are neat and polite; they behave in a friendly manner yet they are also great combat soldiers. He adds that other battalion commanders from other countries have seen the Swedish soldiers in action and expressed their admiration, and even nominated some of them as candidates for bravery decorations (SR 19611001, Att vara FN-soldat). The soldiers thereto seem to be of great value to the UN operations at large, and they are portrayed as having played a key role in successful missions (e.g. SR 19611001, Att vara FN-soldat; SR 19611216, Eko).

Radio host: It has already been said – by many – that the Swedish soldiers have good armament, manage their training very well and that their discipline has never failed. They have completed their assignments with honour. No more need be said about this, but we will let the soldiers tell for themselves.  

(SR 19611001, Att vara FN-soldat)
How the Swedish soldiers are generally portrayed on Swedish Radio needs to be understood in relation to media responses in the foreign press, as well as in parts of the Swedish press (Utrikesfrågor, 1962; Tullberg, 2012: t38/t68, Ekfeldt Nyman, 1999: 52). The allegations against the Swedish soldiers that have been expressed in the foreign press are very rarely addressed on Swedish Radio yet, in light of such criticism, the praise of the Swedish soldiers could be understood as an attempt to confirm that the allegations of brutality are groundless and that the Swedish soldiers essentially still are and behave as peace soldiers. The praise could thus be considered to serve as a narrative response to the shock of ‘being at war’.

Although the allegations are rarely brought up, it is often emphasised that the Swedish soldiers are in a vulnerable position in Congo. They are depicted as innocent and inexperienced (but capable), now faced with the cruel reality of the world (e.g. SR 1961001, Att vara FN-soldat). Many radio reports bring up the soldiers’ exposure to animosity (e.g. SR 19610908, Journalen; SR 19611220, Eko; SR 19611220, Hem från Kongo). In a show exclusively dealing with the experiences of the homecoming soldiers, the radio reporter frequently asks how the soldiers react to hostility. One example is the question ‘As a UN soldier, you have been hated by Belgians and the whites in Elisabethville, how does something like that feel?’ The soldier confirms that it feels terrible. ‘They don’t shy away from anything’, he adds, and then goes on to specify: in cafés people are refusing to serve the Swedes, people are trying to run them over in the street, and even seemingly friendly elders have revealed their whereabouts to the gendarmerie (SR 19611220, Hem från Kongo). As a radio listener one gets the impression that the Swedish UN soldiers cannot trust the locals down in Congo. And besides the everyday harassment, the Swedes are also experiencing something truly worse: they are being killed.

Soldier: Eh… Hallström, he shouted, he… eh… almost instantly collapsed. At the same time he screamed ‘Gunnar I’m dying, I’m dying’. And simultaneously he fell forward against the steering wheel… eh, luckily he pressed… his foot on the accelerator.³¹

(SR 19611207, Eko)

This quote is from an interview with Captain Gunnar Carlstrand, one of the Swedish soldiers who survived an armed attack directed against himself and two of his colleagues while driving their jeep around Elisabethville. He now explains for the

³⁰ In Swedish: ‘… som FN-soldat har ni varit hatad utan belgare och de vita i Elisabethville, hur känns sånt?’
³¹ In Swedish: ‘de skyr ingenting.’
³² In Swedish: ‘Ehm… Hallström, han ropade, han eh föll nästan omedelbart ihop. Han skrek samtidigt ”Gunnar jag dör, jag dör”. Och samtidigt så föll han framåt ratten… eh, som tur var samtidigt så holl han eh… loten på gaspedalen intryckt.’
Swedish public how Private Hallström died, how he himself survived, and how Belgian civilians refused to assist him when he reached out for help. When he, for instance, asked a white woman to call an ambulance, she spat on the ground and said ‘You – the UN – has come here, now you have yourself to blame’. Captain Carlstrand, who gives this account, was injured in the attack, yet explains to the reporter that he is determined to go back to Congo once he has recovered from the injuries. Not for revenge, he firmly emphasises, but to create order (SR 19611207, Eko). The story of Captain Carlstrand reinforces the notion that Swedes are under attack and that they are treated badly, even though they are in Congo simply to do good. These kinds of stories from the battlefield, often told by the Swedish soldiers themselves, are not only dramatic and emotional, they reasonably give the radio listeners a sensation of being close to the scene, close to the hostilities. One can, as a radio listener, easily empathise with the feeling of being under threat.

In terms of dis/identification, the stories from the battlefield also create a sense of being close to ‘the boys’. Although the military and the political representative(s) interviewed on radio emphasise (as in the parliamentary debates) that the Swedish soldiers are under UN command and that they are UN soldiers once they leave for Congo (e.g. SR 19610925, Eko; SR 19610925, Utsikt), the radio broadcasts certainly reinforce the notion of ‘our boys’. Whereas the analysis of parliamentary debates in part II argues that the violent element is displaced to the UN, it is clear from the radio broadcastings that the soldiers in Congo indeed are Sweden’s soldiers – they are UN Swedes. What they get involved in thus concerns the Swedish public; their engagement in combat thus appears as our dilemma and ‘problem’.

The broadcastings generally demonstrate and express concern for the Swedish men, and often focus on how the Swedish battalion is doing and feeling. Overall, the concern and general worry for the Swedish soldiers characterise many reports on the situation in Congo. A radio show in late September, for instance, which deals with the shift from peacwork to warfare with a somewhat critical perspective, begins with a report of the feelings of uncertainty and distress among the soldiers’ relatives back in Sweden (SR 19610925, Utsikt). They sent their loved ones away, unaware of the dangers that awaited them, and the reporter is now eager to know how parents, wives and children have reacted to the eruption of heavy fighting.

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See Skoog’s (2018) analysis of the radio reports (of Audrey Russell) during the Second World War: ‘In mediating and representing war, radio created a more personal, intimate, and emotional experience. Listening and hearing, as well as seeing (for the listener albeit imaginatively) produced not only a sense of intimacy but also presence’ (p. 89).
Father of soldier: And as they were there in the jungle, it was anxious, and as I was working night shifts my wife called me, and... it was stressful, I can tell you that, these moments were truly terrible.\textsuperscript{33}
\[SR\,19610925,\,Utsikt\]

This initial exposé of feelings sets the frame for the rest of the show, and when the representative of the Army Staff and the Minister for Defence are later being interviewed, the reporter focuses on the authorities’ responsibility for the Swedish men (and their relatives). Have they been adequately armed and trained to protect themselves? Were they accurately informed once they signed up for duty? The shift from peacework to warfare is thus predominantly debated in light of the feelings of distress; in other words, the shift appears significant not so much due to the change of practice as such but due to the questions it raises regarding the soldiers’ wellbeing, our soldiers’ wellbeing. How the Swedish men are doing generally seems superior to discussions on whether the UN operations, and the Swedish decision to partake, should be considered just or correct in a more general sense. Again, the ‘bigger picture’ falls out of the story.\textsuperscript{34}

In terms of focus on distress and the notion of ‘our boys’, it is often emphasised in the reports from military representatives that the Swedish soldiers are doing fine, even at times when their comrades have just been killed in action (e.g. \textit{SR\,19610915, Eko}; \textit{SR\,19610916, Journalen}; \textit{SR\,19611208, Eko}). In early December, for instance, which is a period characterised by the heaviest fighting any UN forces (at the time) have ever experienced, the obvious priority is to assure the Swedish public that the soldiers are all right:

\textit{Chief of the ONUC, Sture Linnér:} The spirit in the battalion is very good. As we sit here and talk, I’ve gotten a telegram, which reads as follows: ‘All’s fine in the Swedish battalion... especially after Thursday’s peas and pork, and \textit{crisp bread}.’\textsuperscript{35}

Quite soothing words, I think.\textsuperscript{36}
\[SR\,19611208,\,Eko\]

This particular news report is later concluded by – again – the words of the Chief of the ONUC, who wants to comfort the soldiers’ relatives back in Sweden: ‘Just tell them they are in good spirits and the atmosphere is good, yeah, no panic in any

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item In Swedish: ‘Och då när de låg i djungeln där så var det ju \\n\textit{nervöst}, och frugan hon ringde ju mig genom att jag arbetare om nätterna och... så det var oroligt, det var det faktiskt kan jag tala om, det var hemska stunder.’
\item Which evidently has to do with the ‘media logic’ and the dramatisation, simplification and personalisation of news.
\item ‘Peas and pork’ refers to the traditional Swedish dish \textit{pea soup}, which usually is served on Thursdays. Crisp bread is also typically Swedish (and Finnish).
\item In Swedish: ‘Och stämningen i bataljonen är mycket god. Jag får just när vi just sitter och talar in ett telegram här så vitt jag kan ordagrant citera: ”Bara prima liv i svenska bataljonen... speciellt efter torsdagens ärtor och fläsk, och knäckebröd.” Det låter ganska lugnande tycker jag.’
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The care for the Swedish soldiers seems to be not only a concern for the relatives, but for the nation at large (e.g. SR 19610925, Utsikt). Whether or not the returning soldiers from the 12th battalion will make it back to Sweden in time for Christmas, for instance, almost turns into a serial story (SR 19611218, Eko; SR 19611220, Hem från Kongo; SR 19611223, Eko). One can generally assume that the notion of ‘our boys’, the sensation of being close to the scene, the numerous reports of Swedes being ‘hated’, together with the praise, foster a sense of national togetherness among the radio listeners; what is happening in Congo fundamentally seems to concern the whole population.

Radio host: The Minister for Defence will tonight give a special address to the Swedes who serve UN in Congo. It will be broadcast by the Swedish Radio’s international programme in the broadcast aimed for Africa at 19.15 (SR 19610920, Eko). When the heavy fighting cools off in mid-December, the focus and worry shift to the Swedish soldiers who have been held captive by the gendarmerie ever since the early days of December. Once their peers from the 12th battalion have been transported back to Sweden right before Christmas (they made it back in time!) the reports on Congo are almost all about the Swedes held hostage. The continuous focus on the Swedish prisoners reinforces the notion that the ‘war’ in Congo, or should one say nightmare, is by no means over. During the Christmas period, four more soldiers are arrested, but they are luckily released after only one night in captivity (SR 19611204, Eko; SR 19611218, Eko; SR 19611219, Eko). In early January, while n men are still in captivity, a radio show is broadcast, which exclusively deals with the experiences of the four released men (SR 19620110, Fånge hos Tshombe). In depth they describe the hostage taking and their brief reunion with the other n captured soldiers. A truly happy reunion, from what it seems. Aside from the meeting with the rest of the Swedes, they describe horrendous scenes: how they have been chased by a mob, got their shirts ripped off, and been told that they are about to be killed. One of the soldiers describes his first impression.

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37 In Swedish: ‘Säg dem bara att de är vid gott mod och stämningen är bra alltså, det är ingen panik på någon kant där.’
38 In Swedish: ‘Försvarsministern sänder en speciell hälsning till svenskarna i FN-tjänst i Kongo ikväll. Det förmedlas av Sveriges radios utlandsprogram i den sändning som är riktad till Afrika klockan 19.15.’
39 Cont. Eko; SR 19611223, Eko; SR 19611227, Journalen; SR 19611228, Eko; SR 19620110, Journalen; SR 19620110, Fånge hos Tshombe; SR 19620115, Journalen; SR 19620117, Eko; SR 19620118, Journalen.
of the place where the other 11 were imprisoned as ‘something out of a bad American adventure movie’. Another soldier describes a bizarre incident when the prison governor comes in, drunk and aggressive, to curse the Swedish prisoners for letting the Red Cross bring back with them a box of whisky from the Christmas delivery. After they, one by one, have told their stories to the Swedish Radio audience, they all agree that they had been scared up until the very moment they were released the morning after.

At this time, what is foregrounded in the radio reports is – quite naturally – the threat against the Swedish soldiers in Congo; in terms of what is made ‘seen’ and known, it is predominantly the soldiers’ vulnerability that comes to light. Hence, when the rest of the hostages are released about a week later, the sense of relief is striking in the radio broadcasts. An official communiqué states that the Swedish battalion is ‘overjoyed’ to announce that the Swedish hostages are free and in good health (SR 19620115, Journalen). Colonel Waern is further reported to have commended the soldiers for their ‘good conduct’ during their confinement (SR 1962017, Eko). A few of the freed soldiers are also interviewed by Swedish Radio over telephone, and they take the opportunity to thank their relatives as well as the Swedish government and the Swedish people for their efforts to get them released (SR 1962018, Journalen).

When the prisoners finally arrive at Bromma airport in Stockholm, Sweden, a few days later, the biggest news show on Swedish Radio – Ekot – reports live from the official welcome ceremony in an extended special report (SR 1962021, Eko). Evidently, the homecoming is a big event. As a radio listener one gets to feel – and share – the thrill and excitement; one can hear the noise of the engines as the plane is about to land, one can hear the laughter and howls of joy among the soldiers’ relatives, and the reporter describes every minor detail of the ceremony.42 ‘Now they come!’ the reporter suddenly shouts, and one can hear how the drums start beating. ‘Oh, it’s looks cold, yeah?’ the reporter continues to shout, and the surrounding relatives scream ‘Yes!’ in return. It is well below zero degrees, and the reporter describes how the Swedish men exit the plane in their blue berets and summer uniforms and how their noses turn red. ‘One could have hoped that someone would have sent a weather report to the troops, but this has obviously not been the case’40.

40 In Swedish: ‘nånting ur en dålig amerikansk äventyrsfilm’.
41 Cf. Skoog (2018) on the sensory experience of listening to radio, and how the listener is made to feel as if present (p. 95-96).
42 In Swedish: ‘Det hade väl hoppats att man skulle sända nån väderleksbulletin till kontingenten, men så har alltså inte skett.’
the reporter adds. He further observes that the relatives are getting impatient; the ceremony seems to drag on.

*Army commander:* Soldiers! I welcome you home! On my own behalf, on behalf of the army, and I believe on behalf of the whole population! You know that when I said goodbye to you I emphasised that this could come to mean severe hardships, but I didn’t expect you to encounter this kind of fate! However, you have shown that Swedish soldiers can deal even with the great hardships of captivity, and you have returned with your honour intact. For this, we are pleased and we are proud.⁵³

(SR 19620121, Eko)

*Radio reporter:* Yeah, really beautiful family scenes play out here, indeed. Peter may be 13-14 years old, wearing a nice new fur hat that he got for Christmas. He jumps into his father’s arms and keeps still, for almost half a minute. Daddy is calm, and the tears are pouring down Peter’s cheeks.⁵⁴

(SR 19620121, Eko)

This live special from Bromma airport seems to mark the end of a traumatic and stressful period; again, the joy and relief is striking. The broadcast further communicates and bolsters a sense of pride, not least with the speech of the Army commander and the succeeding ceremony during which the soldiers are getting gold watches with the release date inscribed. Even though Swedish soldiers will be stationed in Congo for another year and a half, it seems as if ‘our boys’ are finally home, that they made it. Ironically, the live report finally ends with an interview with a soldier who is already determined to go back to Congo the next week. The reporter is clearly taken by surprise. But the soldier explains that he already has experienced the fighting, been kept hostage, and now hopes for a more enjoyable time in Congo (SR 19620121, Eko). For the radio listeners it reasonably must seem as if the war now finally is over. As it appears, the soldiers fighting in Congo have been ‘our’ soldiers, and the fighting has – in that sense – been ‘our’ practice and problem, but it is ‘our’ practice and problem no more.

Throughout the period between September 1961 and January 1962 there is no sign that the political and military leadership is critically rethinking the Swedish military involvement in ONUC. In September, the Minister for Defence appears on radio

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⁵³ In Swedish: ‘Soldater! Jag hälsar er välkomna hem! För min egen räkning, för arméns räkning, och jag tror för hela folkets räkning! Ni vet att när jag tog farväl av er så framhöll jag att det här kunde bli allvarliga påfrestningar, men jag tänkte mig inte att ni skulle råka ut för ett sånt här öde! Ni har emellertid visat att även fångenskapens stora påfrestningar står svenska soldater ryggen för och ni har återkommit här med äran i behåll. Det är vi glada över och stolta över.’

⁵⁴ In Swedish: ‘Ja det är verkligt tjusiga familjescener som utspeglar sig här, det är det. Peter kan väl vara en 13-14 år, med en alldeles fin ny julkläpp-pälsmössa på sig, han hoppa upp i pappas famn och ligger alldeles stilla där, en halvminut nästan, pappa är samlad, och tårarna strömmar nedför Peters kinder.’
twice, both times to confirm that the Swedish position hasn’t changed (SR 19610920, Eko; SR 19610925, Utsikt; see also SR 19610915, Eko). In December, the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs is reported to announce that a withdrawal now, during the ongoing fighting, is utterly unthinkable (SR 19611211, Eko). The principle of UN loyalty is repeatedly foregrounded as a source of justification, both in the statements of the Minister for Defence and in interviews with military representatives. The Minister for Defence insists that Sweden will fulfil its promises (SR 19610920, Eko), and the acting chief for the Swedish aviation group stresses that the UN cause is righteous (SR 19610920, Journalen). Although the acting chief wishes that the jet fighters’ weaponry would never come to be used, it is essential to support the UN, he declares. No one that is being interviewed on radio hopes for violence, of course; violence has been forced upon the Swedish troops. A Colonel at the Army Staff claims that the Swedish authorities would intervene if the liaison officers stationed in Congo would evaluate that the Swedish troops are utilised for missions that conflict with the UN Charter, and this hasn’t been the case (SR 19610925, Utsikt). Given the lack of political voices reflected on Swedish Radio, the words of the battalion commander Waern, who is being interviewed on his return to Sweden in May 1962, seem to sum up the official standpoint. The UN has made mistakes, he says, that is unavoidable, but the UN has always had the best intentions and done its best; his faith in the UN, he explains, is therefore preserved (SR 19620512, Journalen).

The words of battalion commander Waern are illustrative not only of the official standpoint, but also of how the Congo crisis is dealt with in Swedish Radio at large. As depicted in radio, the autumn of 1961 indeed signifies a crisis, which gives grounds for concern. Hence, the broadcastings communicate a sense of astonishment, yet hardly a rethinking of Swedish identity or the engagement in violent practices as such. In other words, the radio broadcastings could not be said to signify a challenge or a critical reconsideration. Although the experiences in Congo certainly aren’t portrayed as business as usual, they appear as a matter of fact, an uncomfortable and distressing matter of fact – this happened and we made it. In terms of de/naturalisation, the sense of astonishment essentially triggers a discussion on questions such as what is happening and how does it feel to be at war rather than why are we at war, should we be at war, and what does it mean for us to be at war. ONUC simply doesn’t come across as a choice, where there is room for the public to reflect and potentially dispute. Generally, practice rather than policy is the focus of the radio reports and debates, that is: the events, the experiences, and the practical details. The radio is thus preoccupied with questions of what the operation in Congo means for the boys, rather than what it means for Sweden in a broader sense.
When the soldiers from the 12th battalion are able to return to Sweden in December 1961 and late January 1962 (though many of them signed up for another six months in Congo) and the 14th battalion is relocated to another and less challenging area in Congo in early spring of 1962, it seems as if Sweden has finally left the troubles behind (e.g. SR 19620204, Eko). The feeling of relief, which manifests on Swedish Radio around this time, seems to foster a sense of moving on. As if: Yes, the fighting happened, but it was a one-time thing – it is now once again a distant phenomenon, associated with the past. The interview with battalion commander Waern on his return to Sweden in May 1962 could serve to illustrate this sentiment. He explains to the radio reporter that the work in Congo has been burdensome. The reporter asks what he will do next; ‘rest, dig in the garden, perhaps sit in an arbour’ is the answer. In reply, while quietly giggling, the reporter cheers ‘have a nice time!’ (SR 19620512, Journalen).

CONCLUDING REMARKS
This chapter has sought to demonstrate how the abrupt transition from peacekeeping to a war-like engagement was represented and debated on Swedish Radio whilst the fighting unfolded in Katanga, Congo, during the autumn of 1961. The shift from ‘peacework’ to ‘warfare’ signified a disruption of sedimented routines, of the expected – a disruption of Sweden’s participation in UN peacekeeping. The events in Congo clearly had to be made intelligible, and throughout this specific period of time, narrative responses take shape on Swedish Radio. How are the disruption and war-like activities represented? What is foregrounded, and in turn backgrounded? What do the narrative responses on radio do in terms of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification?

The eruption of violence, and the violent confrontations involving UN and Swedish troops, are generally acknowledged to represent a shift in strategy and a change of practice. It is evident that the events unfolding in Congo are unique, especially for the Swedish troops; the eruption of violence has meant that the Swedish battalion represents a conflict party rather than a neutral observer, which clearly deviates from previous experiences and common expectations. Hence, Swedish Radio makes visible and zooms in on the violent element of intervention: the strategy, the weaponry, the fighting, the hostility, and the deaths. As a radio listener one indeed gets close to the hostilities on the ground. The overflow of details, the many stories of the battlefield, and the updates on whether the Swedish soldiers will make it back to Sweden or not, almost develop into an action-movie narrative, in which the Swedish soldiers come to represent the good guys in a hostile
environment. As a radio listener, one is almost absorbed into the narrative; the violence seems so close that it no longer appears to be out of the ordinary. As in an action-movie, there are only few remarks on the lives (lost) of the opponents. The so-called gendarmerie is clearly depicted as the Other, a threatening Other; in terms of what is made ‘seen’ and known, it is the threat towards the Swedish soldiers that is continuously foregrounded – more so than the violence they themselves carry out.

Although the radio narratives clearly define the ongoing fighting in Congo as warfare, the Swedish soldiers are not depicted as warriors but as the ultimate peace soldiers – they are still acting as peacekeepers, it seems. Hence, the shift in circumstances and practice doesn’t seem to call for a reconsideration of identity, that Sweden should re-examine its ‘policy’ on the use of force. Even though warfare now seems to be the cruel reality, the soldiers are not really there to fight – they have been forced into fighting. And while the battalion commanders praise the Swedish soldiers for their professionalism and combat capabilities, the soldiers themselves never suggest that they came to Congo to engage in violence; instead they describe their fears, their vulnerability and their steady conviction to do good.

The eruption of violence is thus generally depicted as a surprise, which had to be managed by the Swedish peacekeepers. The framing of the fighting as episodes of an operation essentially characterised by peacekeeping – further reinforces this notion of temporality; the episodes of fighting are incidents rather than indicative of the intervention at large, nor in any sense a reflection of Swedish incentives. The use of force is, in other words, an isolated part of the intervention – an accident, so to speak – with a marked beginning but also (from what it seems at the time) with a marked ending, something that is possible to leave behind. One can further note that the radio reports never mention the fighting between the Swedish battalion and the Balubas during the train escorts in the winter of 1960/1961. By failing to situate the use of force in a larger sequence of events and policy decisions, the here-and-now perspective enhances the idea of violence as a one-time thing, essentially of no immediate political significance.

Moreover, and along these lines, the use of force is generally reduced to an inescapable reality, a matter of fact, and ultimately an apolitical issue. It seems as if Sweden is devoid of agency and responsibility. The fighting is, given the dominance of ‘military voices’, delineated as mainly a military concern rather than an issue related to national decision making. There simply doesn’t seem to be much to debate, problematise or reflect upon, apart from the soldiers’ wellbeing and the armed forces’

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8 Cf. Lucaites and Simons (2017) on how ‘excessive information can overwhelm the capacity to establish meaning through the telling of stories’ (p. 12).
responsibility towards their relatives. The sense of being close to the scene, and close to ‘our boys’, means that the issue of force, the taking part in violence, appears as merely a (military) matter of course and generally disappears as a (political) dilemma. One may say that the use of force is linked to the Swedish soldiers, yet differentiated from national decision making; generally, the use of force is depicted as a natural and circumstantial outcome of military affairs.

Hence, one can argue that there is a certain process of naturalisation of violence at play here. However, this could be considered a paradox, given how ‘visible’ the violent element of the ONUC mission is in the Swedish Radio reports, and how much of a disruption the sudden engagement in combat seems to be. Violence is ‘visible’ (to a certain extent) yet naturalised. The violence is there, and it is acknowledged as a Swedish activity and concern – it seems close rather than distant; yet it fails to reveal itself as a dilemma and a choice. The violence comes into view, but – again – the violence is the responsibility of the UN and not Sweden; ultimately, it is the gendarmerie that has forced Sweden into fighting.

The dramatic depictions of the events in Congo incite feelings of worry and pride for the Swedish soldiers, but they fail to put the use of force into a political perspective. All in all, the empirical observations suggest that the narratives formed and conveyed on Swedish Radio, which constitutes the most far-reaching media channel in Sweden at the time, present the Congo experience as distressing, disturbing and even shocking. However, through for instance the description of Swedish soldiers as the ultimate peace soldiers, the use of force simply appears as an unfortunate situation – something that just happened and had to be handled. Ultimately, the events in Congo are made comprehensible, logical and seemingly reconcilable with Swedish identity. Although the violence in Congo comes into view, and is acknowledged as something that the Swedish soldiers indeed take part in, it comes into view in a way that makes the use of force appear natural and out of Sweden’s control.
The bang deafened my ears for a second and I thought I was dead. Then my senses came back and I realised I was alive. I looked in to the APC Commanders place. The APC was now filled with thick yellow-brown smoke. I saw Thomas Persson’s knees just weaken, and he sank down on his seat. Then I thought he was dead, but then I screamed to him “Thomas, Thomas...” he turned around and looked at me. He was all black in his face and his eyes were filled with tears, constantly blinking. Then he screamed back “I’m OK, I’m OK”. After that he turned forward again and screamed to the driver “Get us the hell out of here, get us back in cover”.

At that point everybody in the APC was screaming in panic. We cleared out that nobody was hurt and then we heard the driver scream “She doesn’t work, the cooling system is destroyed, we don’t get anywhere, shit, roll baby, roll bitch, come on” totally in panic.

At this point everybody in the back of the APC got quiet, lowering their heads waiting for the next hit. Waiting for death.6


As this witness testimony clearly illustrates, the Swedish soldiers serving under the UN flag in Bosnia between 1993 and 1995 were indeed experiencing violence. Of course they were: they found themselves in the midst of a civil war. Here the Swedish soldiers have been attacked by the Bosnian Serbs while out on a reconnaissance mission near the town of Ribnica on 22 February 1994 and one of the soldiers caught in the firefight is giving his account of the event. While most of the witness reports from the incident in Ribnica are terse and stripped of sensory details, this testimony presents a vivid account of the concrete experiences of violence. The violence in Bosnia was indeed a concrete phenomenon, and a lived experience for many of the Swedish UN soldiers on the ground. Yet, besides being subjected to violence, the Swedish soldiers were also performing and engaging in violence, and were authorised to use force beyond strict self-defence. At the end of the intervention in Bosnia, the blurry distinction between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement became manifest, and the question of violence and self-identification was brought to a head. What kind of violence could Sweden engage in? And what should the Swedish soldiers represent?

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6 Original in English.
7 The Military Police Report was written after an incident where five Swedish UN soldiers were injured in an attack by Bosnian Serbian troops near the town of Ribnica on 22 February 1994.
Sweden contributes with troops to the peacekeeping operation UNPROFOR between 1993 and 1995. In December 1995 UNPROFOR is replaced by a NATO-led operation called IFOR, which is based on a mandate of peace-enforcement. Now Sweden takes the decision to let Swedish soldiers for the first time engage fully in a peace-enforcing operation and serve under NATO command in the context of a real combat mission. By the time NATO takes over the lead of the operation in Bosnia, the Swedish battalion BAo5 changes its name from NORDBAT 2 to SWEBAT. The soldiers of NORDBAT 2 now have to take off their blue UN berets, the vehicles are repainted and an IFOR badge replaces the old UN badge. Yet, this transition from UNPROFOR to IFOR signifies more than just a change of clothes and logos; it arguably represents a shift in the policy on the use of force as well as a more general alteration of Swedish foreign policy. The transition could simply be considered a starting point for Sweden’s official engagement in peace-enforcing operations, and hence constitutes a key moment in the evolving tendency to accept involvement in violent interventions. As has often been said, it is indeed quite ironic that a force primarily based on a peacekeeping mandate is put into action during a full-scale civil war in Bosnia, whereas a peace-enforcing mission is introduced once a peace agreement already has been signed. However, as the chapter on the parliamentary debates has shown, the mandate governing UNPROFOR included so-called ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement. In 1993, the troops were already allowed to use force, not only in self-defence but also to protect the civilian population of Bosnia. Still, the transition from serving under UN to now serve under NATO, and to suddenly accept military involvement in an operation with the explicit purpose of peace-enforcement, is certainly a key event in Swedish political history, although it has not been regarded as an especially dramatic episode for the Swedish Armed Forces themselves (e.g. Agrell, 2013).\footnote{Paradoxically, in its actual, operational performance, the IFOR mission much more resembled a peacekeeping operation than its predecessor UNPROFOR (Agrell, 2013: 50). However, given the primary interest in policy rather than practice, this is not of great relevance for this empirical analysis, as no one at this point in time knew what was to come in Bosnia once the peace agreement had been signed.} The purpose of this chapter is to explore how this shift in the policy on the use of force was publicly negotiated, discussed and depicted. In order to do just that, the idea is to analyse the representation of violence in public service broadcasting (SVT), taking as a starting point the massacre in Srebrenica in July 1995 when the UN clearly failed its promise to protect civilians and the so-called safe zones. The events in Srebrenica indeed signified a crisis for the international community and it spurred a massive international debate on the passivity of the UN. Together with the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the massacre in Srebrenica can be considered a moment of dislocation during which the pluralist
discourse of sovereignty and non-interference, which up until then had governed the activities of the international community, was disrupted (e.g. Håkansson, 2011: 78/83). As partly a result of this disruption, the international community later adopted the responsibility to protect doctrine in 2005. Although the establishment of IFOR was a major event for the international community at large, it was presumably an especially momentous event for Sweden; as Sweden at this point had not officially been in a war for almost 200 years, and identified itself with neutrality norms and peace-lovingness (e.g. Agius: 2011), the acceptance to engage in activities of peace-enforcement indicates an identification with new forms of violent practices.

The events in Srebrenica and the Swedish debate that followed was indeed a political moment in the sense that it reactivated public contestation and to a certain degree enabled a public debate on the norms and identities underpinning the practice of peacekeeping (cf. Glynos & Howarth, 2007: 14). It thereto opened up for a renegotiation of the Swedish conception of Self and policy on the use of force. In this sense Srebrenica could be considered a dislocatory event or experience, as it signifies a moment of undecidability, when things are open for change and when choices need to be made within a more uncertain discursive terrain. As a key event with significant implications, Srebrenica could be considered one of those moments when the ‘official policy-identity constellation’ is being disturbed and re/negotiations are activated (Hansen, 2006: 32). The TV coverage on Sweden’s military engagement in Bosnia between July and December 1995 is here considered to reflect various narrative responses that make sense of the dislocatory experience that Srebrenica signifies.

The empirical analysis of narrative responses and the representation of violence in TV will attempt to shed light on the processes of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification. Given the shift from UNPROFOR to IFOR, from peacekeeping 2.0 to peace-enforcement, the chapter will problematise whether Sweden’s role in violent practices is reinterpreted and renegotiated, and whether violent practices are recognised and legitimised in new ways. To take a closer look at the narrative responses could ultimately reveal how adjustments to recreate stability between policy and identity take shape, when a shift in policy appears necessary. The empirical analysis will not present any causal explanations for Sweden’s shift in policy or study how the shift in policy is brought about; the ambition is rather to examine and problematise the representation of violence at this particular point in time, when current practices appeared insufficient.
RESPONDING TO DISLOCATION: July - December 1995

An interview with the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lena Hjelm-Wallén, broadcasted on the evening news on 15 July 1995, clearly reflects how the events in Bosnia in early July constitutes a dislocatory experience, especially regarding the policy on the use of force. A few days earlier the Bosnian Serbs had seized the town of Srebrenica even though the town was one of the UN protected safe zones. In a few days’ time Hjelm-Wallén will represent Sweden in a foreign ministers meeting in the EU, discussing if the states contributing to UNPROFOR should withdraw from Bosnia or get tougher vis-à-vis the Bosnian Serbs. The interview is filmed in a green garden, presumably the garden of the minister’s own country house, right in what appears to be a Swedish summer idyll. This peaceful setting, which can be considered a typical representation of Sweden in mid-July, come across as the ultimate contrast to the situation in Bosnia, which the reporter is there to discuss.

Reporter: But the main question is: there are safe zones that obviously are not protected, should they be protected?

Minister for Foreign Affairs: Yes, of course they should be protected.

Reporter: Also by using force?

Minister for Foreign Affairs: Yes, that is part of the UN troops’ mandate, that they may use force.

Reporter: But they don’t...

Minister for Foreign Affairs: No [sigh] ... I also think that one now has reached a new phase when one has to be tougher and that is already within the mandate, they can do that, but it can also be that one has to re-examine the current mandate and see if one can put more force behind the words.

.../

Reporter: In Srebrenica, the Bosnian Serbs came with less than 1,000 men, that ought to have been quite easily managed but they wandered right in and went right through.

Minister for Foreign Affairs: Yes, and I think that was to many’s surprise, that it then was relatively easy for them to carry out that operation and now it is important that the safe zones that are left... that the UN can act more forcefully.

Reporter: They’re shooting at Zepa right now!?

Minister for Foreign Affairs: Yes, and there the situation is as it is, the UN doesn’t have any time to do much more there right now but then we have Gorazde, Sarajevo, Bihac, Tuzla and it is very important that one there gets a more forceful performance.  

* In Swedish: ‘Men huvudfrågan är, det finns skyddade zoner som uppenbarligen inte är skyddade, ska de skyddas?’ / ‘Ja, det är klart de ska skyddas’ / ‘Också med våld?’ / ‘Ja, FN-trupperna har det inom sitt mandat att de får ta till våld’ / ‘Men de gör ju inte det...’ / ‘Nej [suck] ... Jag tycker också att man nu kommer till en ny fas när man måste ta i hårdare och det ligger inom mandatet, de kan göra det, men det kan också vara så att man måste ompröva mandatet och se om man kan sätta in större kraft bakom orden’ / ‘I Srebrenica kom bosniensererna med mindre än 1000 man, det skulle ju ha kunnat klara av ganska lätt men de vandrade rätt in och gick iväg igenom’ / ‘Ja och jag tror det var till många förvåning, att det var då så relativt enkelt för dem att vidta den operationen och nu är det viktigt att de
The state of affairs, as it is portrayed in the news, seems chaotic and deeply disturbing. The interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs is embedded in a series of broadcast reports displaying the demonstrations in Stockholm, Sweden, against the passivity of the UN and the Swedish government, how more and more states and individuals are requesting that the UN now should deploy units ready for combat, how 300,000 refugees have sought protection at the Tuzla airbase where the Swedish battalion is stationed, and how a rapid reaction force has been put together by a few other European states. The general picture is that a new military strategy is urgent and essential. Right before the interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the leader of the Liberal Party announces that she calls for a Swedish engagement in a war against the perpetrators on the Balkans, whereas the Swedish Chief of Staff in Bosnia affirms that many Swedish soldiers, although not trained for offensive operations, wish to take a more active part in such operations (SVT 19950715, Rapport 19.30). Overall, the sense conveyed by the news reports on this evening in July is that ‘enough is enough’ and that things have to change. For instance, in his depiction of the general critique directed towards the UN and the Swedish government, the reporter chooses to explicitly highlight the violent element and its resolving force: ‘fight back against the Serbs, with military means, protect the safe zones with weapons, that is what people say today’\textsuperscript{50} (SVT 19950715, Rapport 19.30). Generally, this series of news reports on the evening of 15 July 1995 could be considered the starting point of a public debate on the use of force, which ultimately leads up to the political decision in late November to let a Swedish battalion operate without national caveats in the newly established NATO-led peace-enforcement operation called IFOR.

The TV news constructs narratives to account for the current events in Bosnia and make sense of and give meaning to the Swedish military presence there. The Swedish battalion has at this point been in Bosnia for almost two years, but it is evident that the events in early July trigger a re-evaluation of the military intervention and what the Swedish soldiers should stand for. During these days in mid-July, the UN’s actions in Bosnia are depicted as a complete failure and the UN itself appears to be on the verge of a complete breakdown due to its inability to uphold authority and a firm and coherent policy regarding the war in Bosnia. The reports from Bosnia on 16 July begin with a feature on how professional soldiers back in Sweden react to the UN’s passivity in Bosnia. A colonel claims that the Serbian artillery could easily skyddade zonerna som finns kvar... att FN där kan uppträda mera kraftfullt!’ / ‘De skjuter på Zepa nu!’ / ‘Ja, och där är det naturligtvis läget som det är, där hinner inte FN göra särskilt mycket just nu men sen har vi Gorazde, Sarajevo, Bihac, Tuzla och det är väldigt viktigt att man där får ett kraftfullare uppträdande.’

\textsuperscript{50} In Swedish: ‘Slå tillbaka mot serberna, militärt, skydda de skyddade zonerna med vapen, det är vad man säger idag’

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destroyed by air forces. ‘They haven’t even tried’ to protect the safe zones, the reporter states, while the colonel continues with; ‘it seems as if they don’t want to’ (SVT 19950716, Rapport 19.30). Here, the UN’s military activities in Bosnia are portrayed as being beyond hope. The troops are deployed in a way that makes them unable to protect the safe zones, it is argued. They are not armed to protect even themselves, and Dutch soldiers have been arrested by the Bosnian Serbs without even trying to shoot back. Several nations that contribute to UNPROFOR now also threaten to withdraw their troops, and the entire military enterprise in Bosnia seems to be rocked to its foundations. Evidently, in these reports and in this initial phase, non-violence is clearly problematised, denaturalised; the main problem in Bosnia appears to be the European states’ lack of combativeness.

It is within this narrative framework that the role of Swedish UN soldiers in Bosnia is brought to attention. A political dispute has emerged, the news anchor states, regarding whether Swedish soldiers should be part of combat units. In the news report that follows, moving images are demonstrating how fully-equipped Swedish UN soldiers are pushing back a crowd of civilians. Half way into the reporter’s comment, which is presented below, the scene changes to one portraying UN soldiers who practice shooting on a training field. As these images serve to reinforce the text read by the reporter, they presumably attempt to demonstrate a discrepancy between the sort of work that the Swedish battalion actually does, which here resembles the work of a police force, and the tasks generally associated with the military profession. In terms of selective visibilities, it is the non-violent character of the military undertakings that comes into view.

Reporter: This is as close to battle as they get, our over 1,000 UN soldiers in Bosnia. To facilitate the humanitarian aid, that is the main task. But they are soldiers, there to protect civilians. So why won’t they do their job and become more offensive?5

(SVT 19950716, Rapport 19.30)

While indicating that the Swedish battalion does not perform the duties of a protective military force, the narrative outlined in the news report leaves an impression that the Armed Forces is defined by incapability and uselessness. If the Swedish army cannot put up a fight against their opponents in Bosnia, does it mean that they also cannot protect Sweden? If they do not even have the adequate armament, why is the Swedish battalion in Bosnia in the first place? These are a few

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5 In Swedish: ‘Närmare strid än såhär kommer de inte idag, våra drygt 1000 FN-soldater i Bosnien. Att underlätta den humanitära hjälpen är huvuduppgiften. Men de är ju soldater, till för att försvara civila. Så varför gör de då inte sitt jobb och blir mer offensiva?’
of the questions that the reporter asks the head of SWEDINT\(^\text{52}\), who is responsible for the training of Swedish UN soldiers. The head of SWEDINT replies that they can protect themselves and the humanitarian activities, and they can indeed protect Tuzla from a Serbian attack, but it would result in a massacre and ‘a lot of dead people’.

While showing moving images of UN soldiers wearing shirts with short sleeves, who relax on the top of the UN tanks, sitting back with their legs up, the news reporter concludes:

> The UN troops could probably get a little tougher, the colonel admits, but he still has trouble understanding the politicians who demand a tougher response against the Bosnian Serbs.\(^\text{23}\)

(SVT 19950716, Rapport 19.30)

In terms of dis/identification, the Swedish soldiers are here linked to passivity and inaction, and the images of Swedish soldiers ‘doing nothing’ essentially seem to disrupt the conception of Swedishness and the notion of what to expect. Generally, the news report insinuates that military activities should be characterised by the act of combat, rather than relaxation or facilitation of humanitarian aid. Willingness to fight is now delineated as the ultimate sign of credibility, and it is precisely combativeness that the Swedish Armed Forces at this point seem to lack. After all, the Swedish soldiers are in fact the best-equipped UN battalion active in Bosnia, armed with missiles, mortars and army tanks (SVT 19950716, Rapport 19.30). What the news report essentially communicates is that there is a gap between the role of the military and the Armed Forces’ actual performance. Rather than fulfilling their military duties as combat soldiers, the Swedish battalion has been confined to humanitarian work only.

However, while the reporter continuously attempts to problematise the non-use of force and inaction characterising the work of the Swedish battalion, official representatives are in turn framing the issue of force and violence as a logistical or practical problem. The head of SWEDINT, who here speaks for the Armed Forces, and the leader of the Christian Democrats, who is the only politician interviewed in the programme, both point to the fact that the Swedish soldiers are not trained for combat and that they have been recruited on other grounds. One can note that rather than acknowledging the use of force as an issue of principle, it is the practical constraints that are foregrounded, which make the political questions and

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\(^{52}\) The Swedish Armed Forces International Centre.

\(^{23}\) In Swedish: ‘Lite tuffare skulle nog FN-trupperna kunna vara medger översten men har ändå svårt att förstå de politiker som kräver hårdare tag.’
considerations regarding the use of force seem less relevant. The non-use of force is a non-choice, it appears.

In the week following the reports on the fall of Srebrenica and the attacks on Zepa, two news reports relating to the Swedish battalion and the use of force are broadcasted on public service television (SVT 19950718, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 19950720, Rapport 19.30). What these two reports have in common is the focus on individual Swedish soldiers and their reactions to the events in Bosnia. Now, the testimonies of those directly involved in the military activities in Bosnia – the men on the ground – serve as a contrast to the statements of politicians and official army representatives. The two soldiers generally do not agree with the statements made by politicians regarding the soldiers’ lack of training or lack of armament. Overall, the news reports construct an image of the decision makers as distrustful and unwilling to let the soldiers do their job.

*News anchor:* Neither the negotiator Carl Bildt nor Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson consider the Swedish soldiers to be sufficiently trained to take part in combat. But some of the soldiers still consider themselves ready. (SVT 19950720, Rapport 19.30)

*Reporter:* But the Prime Minister does not think that Swedish UN soldiers have the capability that is required and seems to trust that David and his colleagues are capable of neither defence combat nor offensives to liberate the enclaves. (SVT 19950720, Rapport 19.30)

In the news reports on these individual soldiers and their interpretations of the current events, the soldiers are portrayed as potential heroes, restrained and held back by the decision makers in Sweden and the UN. In contrast to the depictions of the military performance in Bosnia more generally, the individual soldiers are portrayed as capable, courageous, and willing to engage in combat and protect civilians. Of course they are capable of fighting, that is what they are trained to do:

*Reporter:* He has been a Swedish UN soldier in former Yugoslavia longer than anyone else. He has helped women and children escape snipers, and seen people being slaughtered. Now he is forced to only watch as the world lets Srebrenica and the other protected zones fall into the Serbians’ hands.

*Soldier:* It feels rather awful.

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54 Leader of the Conservative Party, who at the time serves as the European Union’s Special Envoy to the Former Yugoslavia.
55 Leader of the Social Democratic Party.
56 In Swedish: ‘Vare sig medlaren Carl Bildt eller statsministern Ingvar Carlsson anser att svenska soldater har tillräckligt med träning för att delta i strider. Men en del av soldaterna anser sig själva ändå redo.’
57 David is a Captain in the Swedish Armed Forces, soon to be deployed.
58 In Swedish: ‘Men statsministern anser inte att svenska FN-soldater har den kompetens som krävs och tycks lita på att David och hans kollegor är kapabla vare sig till försvarstrider eller offensiver för att rädda enklaverna.’
Reporter: In what way?
Soldier: That you have the will, you have the mandate, you have the capability, but you are not allowed.59

Reporter: Captain David Lindmark from L1 in Kungsängen is one of the officers who will lead the soldiers in the next Swedish UN battalion and he does not hesitate to be part of combat units.

Military expert: I think they very well could manage to hit back properly and defend their own positions. They are not trained to fight in larger formations, but they can certainly engage in battle and we should not forget that these are highly skilled soldiers.

Reporter: Aren’t you scared?
Captain David Lindmark: No, I wouldn’t say that I am.60

In these reports, the soldiers position themselves as potential warriors or true soldiers rather than merely soldiers; they are not only institutionally attached to the military but they are both willing and able to kill and risk sacrificing their lives in combat (see Henriksen, 2007). The element of fighting is here clearly delineated as the essential part of a soldier’s work, yet the Swedish soldiers have now been reduced to actors of non-violence. Throughout the summer of 1995, a continuous theme in the news stories broadcasted on television is the great frustration that characterises everyday life at the Swedish military camp in Tuzla. Generally, the soldiers wish they could do more for the Bosnian people, but due to decisions made by ‘outside’ actors they have been forced into inactivity, the reports suggest. Either it is the UN, the Bosnian authorities, or the battalion commanders that have circumscribed the scope for action (e.g. SVT 19950802, Rapport 19.30; SVT 19950825, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 19950829, Kvällsöppet; SVT 19950901, Mittnytt). To illustrate and reinforce this sense of frustration, moving images show how Danish army tanks are driving round and round in circles inside the camp – forbidden to leave the camp area, or how soldiers lined up in two rows are throwing their machine guns back and forth between each other, followed by pictures of a UN soldier petting a cat (SVT 19950825, Aktuellt 21.00). Interestingly, although these narrative responses that accentuate the sense of

59 In Swedish: ‘Han har varit svensk FN-soldat i förra Jugoslavien längre än någon annan. Han har hjälpt kvinnor och barn under krypsyttar, och sett människor slaktas. Nu tvingas han se på när omvärlden låter Srebrenica och de andra fredade zonerna falla i serbarnas händer. / ’Det känns ju rätt förjävligt.’ / ’På vilket sätt då?’ / ’Just det här att man har viljan, man har manadet, man har förnyan men du får inte.’

60 In Swedish: ‘Kapten David Lindmark från L1 Kungsängen är ett av de befäl som leder soldaterna i nästa svenska FN-bataljon och han tvekar inte att delta i stridande förband.’ / ’/ Jag tror att de mycket väl skulle klara att bita ifrån sig ordentligt och försvara sina egna positioner. De är inte utbildade att slåss i större enheter men visst kan de föra strid och vi ska inte gömma att det här är högkvalificerade soldater.’ / ’/ Är du inte rädd?’ / ’Nej, det vill jag inte påstå.’
frustration problematises the inaction characterising the work of the UN in Bosnia, the use of force is rarely discussed as an issue of principle; the focus is solely on what the soldiers are capable of doing. Instead of introducing the question of whether an extensive use of force is right or coherent with the Swedish identity and foreign policy, it is the question of practical feasibility that is foregrounded.

As mentioned earlier, on 16 July, only a few days after the Serbians have seized the town of Srebrenica, the evening news announces that a political dispute has emerged regarding the Swedish soldiers’ potential future involvement in combat units (SVT 19950716, Rapport 19.30). Although the coverage on this political debate is intensified late into the autumn of 1995, when the government decision is approaching, the question of whether Swedish soldiers could engage in combat and be involved in offensive operations is brought up occasionally in news reports throughout the whole period between July and December. On a number of occasions, the Liberal Party, which calls for a more robust Swedish military engagement, attempts to initiate a discussion on the use of force and what Sweden should be prepared to do. Yet, the immediate reactions from other political representatives often obstruct their initiatives, as they dismiss the question and refer to the UN. The Swedish battalion is under UN command and the mandate is an issue for the UN to decide, they claim (19950802, Rapport 19.30). Agency and responsibility is, in short, displaced to the UN.

Yet, in a short news report broadcasted about a week later, this reaction from political representatives is challenged by a scholar who stresses that the alternatives are not as clear-cut as some would like them to appear. The work of the Swedish battalion is not governed by some sort of faceless UN, he asserts, and the alternatives are thus not ‘complete sissyiness or an armoured division rolling’61 (19950811, Aktuell 21.00). All in all, this particular news report gives the impression that the Swedish government and the armed forces have shifted their view on the role of the Swedish battalion. Whereas they previously acknowledged the ‘elements’ of peace-enforcement included in the mandate, they now seek to give the impression that the Swedish battalion serves as a traditional peacekeeping force (19950811, Aktuell 21.00).

Up until the government decision is announced on 30 November, it is primarily the Minister for Defence that represents the government in televised evening news and talk shows. Together with army representatives, who frequently appear on television debating the issue, the Minister for Defence generally argues for a cautious position and advocates that the Swedish soldiers should be kept out of combat units (SVT 19950811, Aktuell 21.00; SVT 19950829, Kvällsöppet). In a talk show broadcasted at the end of summer, both the Minister for Defence and an army

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61 In Swedish: ‘fullständig mesighet eller pansardivision på rull.”
representative insist that Swedish soldiers are more suitable for peacekeeping. Peacekeeping is what the soldiers are trained for and it is in the capacity of peacekeepers that Swedish soldiers have shown great results. Although combat activities may be necessary in Bosnia, it is not something that Swedish soldiers should engage in, yet there are still important tasks that they could perform [SVT 19950829, Kvällsöppet]. The army representative, a lieutenant colonel, also emphasises the value of peacekeeping practices; he argues that the Swedish battalion has contributed enormously and been able to make the Tuzla area quiet and calm thanks to the de-escalating techniques that the Swedish soldiers have proven to be very good at. Sweden is, he argues, in fact among the leading states within peacekeeping as a result of 40 years of experience. Although Swedish soldiers indeed would manage to engage in combat after extended training, the UN expects Sweden to contribute to peacekeeping rather than anything else. Thus, it is through the improvement of the concept of peacekeeping that one can save lives, he claims [SVT 19950829, Kvällsöppet]. That the current mandate, according to which the Swedish battalion is operating, is in fact a peacekeeping mandate with ‘elements’ of peace enforcement, goes unrecognised throughout the statements made by the Minister for Defence or the army representative. Sweden is thus linked to the practice of peacekeeping, while the fact that Swedish soldiers have already engaged in violence slips from view.

In the talk show, the issue of debate is whether the UN should retaliate against the Bosnian Serbs and also whether Sweden should engage in such attacks. The host continuously pushes the Minister for Defence to respond to questions that insinuate that Sweden does not do enough. Are English and French lives less valuable than Swedish lives? Are Swedes better at negotiating than engaging in battle? In relation to the other responses and perspectives reflected in the talk show, the position of the Minister for Defence and army representatives appears reactionary. Other debaters call for a robust intervention from the UN and suggest that Sweden could and should take the lead. As the liberal debater Per Svensson stresses: there is no peace to keep. Such statements arguably make the practice of peacekeeping seem hopelessly out of date. And the practice is not only associated with ‘not doing enough’ but with a passive and gutless position. As noted also in previous chapters, passivity generally comes to signify Otherness.

*Debater, Per Svensson: I think, for example, that Sweden should have accepted the request to take Srebrenica. I think it is a little strange that the Swedish battalion, which everyone here says is perhaps the most well-trained, or the most well-managed battalion, and is the best equipped of almost all UN battalions down
there, actually is operating in the calmest of all the so-called safe zones, which Tuzla actually is. That is not so just because they are there, but it is in itself the calmest area. Why then do we not take on the really difficult tasks?

(SVT 19950829, Kvällsöppet)

During September there are no reports in public service broadcasting on the Swedish battalion and its use of force mandate, but in October the issue is reintroduced. Although the Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson and the negotiator Carl Bildt were portrayed during summer as minimising the Swedish soldiers’ ability to engage in combat, the news in early October reports that the two now are willing to let Swedish soldiers engage in combat or peace-enforcement activities (19951007, Aktuellt 21.00). The argument articulated by the Prime Minister suggests that a new military framework would not bring about any major changes for the Swedish battalion:

Prime Minister: I mean, it has not been safe so far. I think 30 or 40 French UN soldiers actually have been killed. So, even with the current mandate there have been risks, even if we from the Swedish side have been fortunate enough to avoid any loss of life.

(19951007, Aktuellt 21.00)

By accentuating that the situation in Bosnia has been dangerous for the battalion all along, the statement made by the Prime Minister gives the impression that what is to come is nothing particularly new. In that sense this sort of political response, which – as we will see – also reappears later into the autumn, works to conceal the dislocatory experience by redefining the previous narrative framework. If nothing all of a sudden appears to change in any substantial sense, there seem to be no need for a more profound discussion on the Swedish policy. By thereto framing the issue as a question of risk for the Swedish soldiers, the news report also diverts focus from the changing conduct of soldiers and the increased use of force. If the policy shift merely becomes a question of whether the Swedish soldiers will be more threatened, the dilemma of performing violence falls out of the public political conversation. In terms of in/visibility and de/naturalisation, the rhetoric of ‘nothing new’ makes the shifting mandate slip from view and peace-enforcement comes to appear as business as usual, and thus more or less a non-issue.

62 In Swedish: ‘Jag tycker att Sverige exempelvis borde ha tackat ja till förfrågan att ta Srebrenica. Jag tycker att det är lite konstigt att den svenska bataljonen som ju alla säger här kanske är den mest välvildade, eller den bästa skötta bataljonerna, är bäst utrustade nästan av alla FN-bataljoner där nere, faktiskt befinner sig i det lugnaste av de så kallade safe zones som Tuzla faktiskt är. Det är ju inte bara därför att de är där utan det är i sig det lugnaste området. Varför tar vi inte då de riktigt svåra uppgifterna?’

In this particular news report from 7 October 1995, the issue of contributing to a new, reformed military operation is defined as a delicate issue for primarily one reason: the connection to NATO. In early October, all news coverage on the Swedish military engagement in Bosnia focuses on the collaboration with NATO (1995\text{10}07, Aktuellt 21.00; 1995\text{10}08, Aktuellt 18.00; 1995\text{10}11, Rapport 19.30). In contrast to Carl Bildt and Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, the Minister for Defence is described to be hesitant about letting Swedes serve under NATO command. To let Swedish soldiers engage in combat is also, according to him, ‘out of the question’. The Swedish soldiers’ duties should be of humanitarian character, as in the case of combat there is a risk that the UN or NATO turns into a warring party in the war (1995\text{10}08, Aktuellt 18.00). Yet, the question of contributing to IFOR predominantly becomes a question of whether or not Sweden should collaborate with NATO; the substantial implications of a shifting mandate are thus generally obscured. While NATO, as an actor, is foregrounded, the practice of peace-enforcement is removed out of sight. And instead of initiating a debate on the question of an increased use of force, the focus on NATO rather opens up for the kind of response articulated by mediator and leader for the Conservative Party Carl Bildt in October and later by defence politician Anders Björk in November, who both refer to the Minister for Defence’s reluctance to let Swedish soldiers engage in combat as a manifestation of a deep-rooted irrational fear of NATO\(^{64}\) (1995\text{10}08, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 1995\text{11}28, Aktuellt 21.00). Overall, this focus on NATO and the references to NATO-phobia avert a more comprehensive representation of the changing conditions for Swedish soldiers in Bosnia.

*Reporter:* Do you think that it is a sensitive question for the Swedish people?

*Leader of the Conservative Party/Mediator in Bosnia:* No, I actually don’t think so. There may be some who suffer from old NATO-phobia, but I don’t think that is something anyone involved in a serious analysis of the Bosnian problem or European security policy have been affected by.\(^{65}\)

A news report broadcasted on 11 October summarises what the government and the opposition have finally agreed upon: ‘Sweden will participate with troops in Bosnia once a peace agreement has been settled’, the reporter states (1995\text{10}11, Rapport 19.30). It is now the Minister for Foreign Affairs who seems to represent the government, stating to the press that the natural thing to do is now to serve under

\(^{64}\) Swedish terms: ‘Nato-fobi’ and ‘Nato-noja’.

\(^{65}\) In Swedish: ‘Tror du att det är en känslig fråga för svenska folket?’ / ‘Nej, det tror jag faktiskt inte. Det finns väl kanske en och annan som lider av gammal Nato-fobi va men det tror jag inte att någon som sysslar med en seriös analys av det bosniska problemet eller europeisk säkerhetspolitik har drabbats av.’
NATO command in Bosnia. The representatives from the opposition neither seem to have any concerns regarding a Swedish involvement in a NATO-led operation. The Minister for Defence on the other hand is here depicted as a troublemaker, who in contrast to the Minister for Foreign Affairs has difficulties in getting through to the opposition. The reporter makes references to the Minister for Defence, but Thage G. Peterson himself is not given the opportunity to speak out. Thus, the most prominent public sceptic of a shifting Swedish policy on the use of force is quickly depicted as a deviant; from what it seems, the Minister for Defence stands alone. This impression is further reinforced by the fact that the interviews with politicians who endorse a Swedish cooperation with NATO in Bosnia are followed up by the reporter’s description of Sweden’s current involvement in the NATO-led joint military exercise in Denmark. Hence, as Sweden appears to be deeply involved in NATO activities already, the news report serves to make Swedish cooperation with NATO in Bosnia seem normal and inevitable. Now, with regard to selective visibilities, the NATO activities are hardly depicted as violent enterprises. The excerpt below and the news report overall gives the impression that Sweden indeed can cooperate with NATO and still uphold its peacekeeping identity, an identity that army representatives clearly have accentuated previously (e.g. SVT 19950829, Kvällsöppet). In short, peacekeeping and NATO cooperation appear combinable.

Reporter: A Swedish Hercules plane has dropped cargo to people in need, and the Air Force has participated with two rescue helicopters. However, the government said no when the Armed Forces wanted to send a twoship of Viggen jet fighters to the exercise. The explanation was: ‘Combat airplanes cannot solve peacekeeping missions.’

After this news report is broadcasted it takes over a month until public service television brings up the question of force and the Swedish involvement in IFOR again. It is not until 22 November that a debate on the mandate begins to take shape, and TV reports now attempt to address the difference between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement (19951122, Gomorron Sverige; 19951122, Rapport 19.30). In breakfast TV, a colonel explains that the role of the UN troops per definition were peacekeeping, yet verging on peace-enforcement. As from now, regular war units will be deployed – NATO units – which will be supplemented by former UN troops, among them the Swedish battalion. One of the lessons learned, the colonel says, is

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66 In Swedish: ‘Ett svenskt Hercules-plan har fällt en last till hjälpbehövande, och flygvapnet har deltagit med två räddningshelikoptrar. Däremot blev det nej från regeringen när Försvarsmakten ville skicka en Rote 2 jakt-Viggenplan till övningen. Motivering var att stridsflyg inte kan lösja fredsbevarande uppgifter.’
probably that one has to be sufficiently armed, and the international troops are now armed to the teeth; they have to act firmly but still gently without losing respect, and for that they need strength (19951122, Gomorron Sverige). As a reporter clarifies in the evening news: it now depends on NATO if the fragile peace plan should stand any change of success. But NATO troops will have the right to shoot back, and it is now enough if the troops feel threatened (19951122, Rapport 19.30). Given these statements, it seems as if the IFOR mandate has been settled. However, the role of the Swedish battalion is yet to be specified.

One of the most well reported events during the period between July and December is the Minister for Defence’s visit to the NORDBAT camp in Bosnia in late November. In relation to the policy on the use of force and the question of a possible reorientation, the reports on this visit and the debates following it is of particular interest. It is a decisive moment as it activates a public discussion on the use of force and what Swedish soldiers should represent. If the TV audience a few days earlier got the impression that Sweden will take part in a massive military intervention operating alongside NATO war units, the reports on the Minister’s visit to the Swedish battalion reveals that Swedish soldiers will not take part in any offensive operations once they serve under NATO command (19951124, Rapport 19.30; 19951125, Aktuellt 18.00). The Swedish soldiers are, as the Minister for Defence repeatedly argues, neither armed nor trained to engage in attacks (SVT 19951124, Rapport 19.30, SVT 19951125, Aktuellt 18.00; SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 21.00). Once again, it is the practical constraints of the Swedish military involvement that are emphasised; hence, the (non)use of force doesn’t appear as an issue of principle, but as a matter of resources and experience.

While appearing on breakfast TV, high-ranking military representatives are expressing a similar understanding of the current situation as that of the Minister for Defence (SVT 19951129, Gomorron Sverige). The capability to take part in combat operations has not been requested, they claim; no state will accept the number of casualties involved in armed attacks of the kind that certain politicians are now calling for. Yet, not taking part in offensive operations does not mean that the battalion will not practice violence, they insist, but the extreme use of force people are now talking about is unthinkable within this context. This in turn means that the ‘restriction’ of the Swedish battalion in practice will be shared by all the other states; ground troops, such as the Swedish battalion, will for tactical reasons not be utilised for combat operations. The new thing about the new military framework is simply that the military commander will have a broader set of military capabilities at his disposal (SVT 19951129, Gomorron Sverige).
The overall message conveyed by the high-ranking military representatives is – yet again – that very little in fact will change for the Swedish battalion in Bosnia. Given the increased military resources, and thus the extended support system, it will be possible for the Swedish battalion to basically solve their new tasks in the same manner as they solve their current ones, namely in a peacekeeping kind of way. However, the day after the military representatives appear on breakfast TV, the government decision on the Swedish contribution to IFOR is announced. It is now proclaimed that the Swedish battalion will serve under NATO command *without* any national caveats, meaning that the Swedish soldiers will have no formal ‘restrictions’. The Minister for Defence, who has continuously been depicted as a sceptic of a revised policy on the use of force, is now reported to have lost the political battle (SVT 19951130, Rapport 19.30).

Throughout the autumn, the TV audience has clearly received mixed messages on what the future rules of engagement for the Swedish battalion will actually include. Now, the blame for any confusion regarding the mandate is put on the Minister for Defence, Thage G Peterson, who from the onset has opposed the idea of Swedish soldiers getting involved in combat. Now, in late November, Peterson yet again becomes depicted as a deviant; the evening news emphasises how the Minister for Defence is ‘more or less alone’ in his convictions regarding the role of the Swedish soldiers, and suggests that he has been side-lined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 18.00; SVT 19951130, Rapport 19.30). Interestingly, the news reporting gives the impression that it is only the Minister for Defence that advocates that Swedish soldiers should not engage in offensive operations. This representation is further reinforced by moving images of him wearing the blue UN helmet, looking unhappy, or images of him acting clumsy when tipping over a microphone during a press briefing (SVT 19951130, Rapport 19.30). These are images portraying a man who has lost the political dispute on whether Swedish soldiers should take part in military offensives. Once the government’s decision has been made public, ascertaining that the Swedish soldiers should act under the same regulations as the other states involved in IFOR, the general message being communicated by the evenings news is that the minister did not really knew what he was talking about when arguing that the Swedish soldiers were not prepared for offensive operations.

Throughout the period from July to December, the Swedish soldiers are continuously, by everyone appearing on TV, praised for their work and achievements in Bosnia. They are, hardly surprisingly, continuously upheld by the military representatives and the politicians (e.g. SVT 19950829, Kvällsöppet; SVT 19950901,
The Swedish soldiers appear to have a unique set of skills, which is often foregrounded; they are firm but also humble, and they are willing to fight but they also have patience and prefer to negotiate (e.g. Minister for Defence, SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 21.00; Minister for Foreign Affairs, SVT 19951130, Rapport 19.30). It is this dual identity of Swedish soldiers that is often accentuated, and it is an identity that corresponds to the image of traditional peacekeepers but also to the general expectations put on soldiers who are supposed to act in line with an ambition of peace-enforcement. The narrative framework that has already been outlined – with representations of the UN as nothing but passive and the other nations’ soldiers as reluctant to fight back – gives a particular meaning to the remarks made about Swedish soldiers’ willingness to ‘hit back’.

_Reported:_ The Nordic UN battalion has since it was deployed during the autumn of 1993 attracted attention far beyond the Swedish borders. The battalion has received recognition for its forceful conduct – this is the battalion that shoots back – and for its efforts to help the refugees in the Tuzla area.

(SVT 19950825, Aktuellt 21.00)

_Reported:_ NORDBAT has a good reputation in Bosnia: well trained, calm but not cowardly, hitting back when it’s necessary.

(SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 21.00)

_Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces:_ It is a unit that has been under almost constant fire. One that has acted very, very robustly in combat situations, continuously, over a long period of time, and one that has received exceptionally high acclaim from my foreign military colleagues for its way of conduct.

(SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 18.00)

Through the depictions of the Swedish soldiers and their abilities, a certain appreciation of violence seems to emerge and dominate the debates and TV coverage. In terms of dis/identification, it is the ability and will to use violence and act aggressively that are articulated as the ideal that the Swedish soldiers should live up to. At times they are portrayed as lacking these qualities, while some defend them by acknowledging their track record of firm conduct and combat experience. Violence thus suddenly also becomes the norm for the Swedish peace soldiers, and the question – it seems – is whether they can live up to it or not.

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67 Cont. SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 18.00; SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT, 19951129, Gomorron Sverige.


69 In Swedish: ‘NORDBAT har gott rykte i Bosnien: välutbildade, lugna men inte fega, bitter ifrån när det behövs.’

70 In Swedish: ‘Det är ett förband som varit utsatt för nästan konstant eldgivning. Man har uppträtt mycket, mycket handlande i stridsituationer, kontinuerligt över lång tid, och man har fått ett utomordentligt högt omdöme utan mina utländska militära kollegor för sitt sätt att uppträda.’
One of the most striking terms introduced in late November to describe and make sense of the Swedish soldiers’ position in Bosnia and the role they will serve in the future is the term *velour*. Interestingly, it is used regularly during the last days of November, prior to the government’s decision to contribute with a Swedish battalion to IFOR without any national caveats. The Supreme Commander’s affirmation in the evening news that the Swedish soldiers indeed are no *velour-soldiers* could be considered a discursive attempt to restore the Swedish soldiers’ honour in a public political debate that has framed the battalion as disqualified for combat. *My men have indeed been in combat* is apparently the message that the Supreme Commander repeatedly tries to convey (SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 18.00; SVT 19951129, Gomorron Sverige).

*Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces:* It [the debate] gives the impression that we have had and still have a unit down in Bosnia that needs to be wrapped up in cotton wool. Or some sort of velour military unit. The reality has been and still is quite another.  

(SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 18.00)

*Reporter:* The equipment is of NATO standard and is adequate for direct fighting, officers and soldiers say. Last Friday the Minister for Defence, Thage G Peterson, visited NORDBAT but Tango Golf Papa as he is called here is not much esteemed right now. ‘We don’t want to be perceived as velour-boys’ the soldiers say. But the Minister for Defence is right on one point: a mandate of peace-enforcement requires further training.  

(SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 21.00)

*News anchor:* The Swedish battalion, which will be under NATO command in Bosnia, will not have any restrictions. This means that Sweden will not dispatch any *velour-soldiers* after all.  

(SVT 19951130, Rapport 19.30)

The military representative’s affirmation that the Swedish soldiers indeed are no velour-soldiers arguably fosters a notion of violence as constitutive of respectable soldier-work. *Velour-soldiers* or *velour-boys* clearly connote soft soldiers or weak boys, not ready for the true challenges of military activities. These statements are articulated as a response to the public depiction of the Swedish battalion as

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20 In Swedish: ‘Den ger intryck av att vi har haft och har ett förband nere i Bosnien som behöver vara inbäddat i bomull. Eller nån sorts velour-militärihet. Verkligheten har ju varit och är en helt annan.’  
22 In Swedish: ‘Den svenska bataljonen som ställs under NATO-befäl i Bosnien kommer inte få några restriktioner. Det blir inga velour-soldater som Sverige skickar alltså.’
incapable, yet still reinforce the predominating sentiment characterising the debates on TV, namely that ability and willingness to use force are superior qualities. ‘Velour’ seems to signify an Otherness ‘within’, something perhaps associated with the Swedish past. It is striking that public service broadcasting puts a premium on robustness and violence, and that the news reports in that way make the increased use of force appear as a given. In short, the gendered language describing the troops differentiates Sweden from passivity and weakness, and generally serves to naturalise the transition to peace-enforcement.\footnote{In terms of dis/identification, these articulations relate to historical conceptions of Swedish national identity. In short, with the talk of velour boys, the ‘gendered ambivalence’ (Åse, 2016: 120) of the ‘neutral soldier’ and the paradox of the neutral position – that one exclusively acts in defence yet at the same time must demonstrate military muscle and masculinity – here manifests itself in a striking manner. See, for instance, Kronsell’s (2012) discussion on the specific ‘neutral soldier’ masculinity and how the ‘neutral soldier’ was imagined as a defender of the nation – ‘strong and armed’ – but passive in relation to external military relations (p. 28-29). See also Åse’s (2006) discussion on the Soviet submarine incident in 1981 and how it signified ‘a crisis for the ideal of the neutral soldier, who had failed to deliver the strong masculinity and national protection invested in him and his position’ (p. 130).}

The idea that situations characterised by violence, danger and risk are honourable is also reproduced through the depictions of the Minister for Defence – the deviant – and through his own responses to the critical questions on the use of force. For instance, on 28 November, the evening news is painting a picture of the current state of affairs in the political debate on the use of force and the issue of serving under NATO command. As noted earlier, defence politicians from the opposition accuse the Minister for Defence of suffering from an irrational fear of NATO (‘Nato-noja’) and letting other nations sacrifice lives for peace in Bosnia (SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 21.00). When asked whether it in fact is himself that conveys the idea that the Swedes constitute a velour troop, the Minister for Defence attempts to enhance the status of the Swedish soldiers by emphasising that Swedish military undertakings in Bosnia have been and will also henceforth be perilous and risky, and he rejects any attempt to understate the work of the Swedish soldiers (SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 21.00). The main message conveyed by the Minister for Defence is that the fact that the Swedish soldiers not are trained for all-out offensive operations in Bosnia does not mean that their undertakings are risk-free or secondary. Once again, he predominantly accentuates the practical constraints, which prevent a Swedish engagement in attack operations. Thus, the issue of using force, or rather not using force, doesn’t appear as an issue of principle but as a matter of resources and experience.

In terms of dis/identification, the Swedish soldiers are generally linked to a willingness to fight and the capacity to engage in combat, but they are also linked to non-violence. Interestingly, it is the dual identity of Swedish soldiers – and the assertions that Swedish soldiers have shown great robustness in the past but that they prefer to negotiate – that in part lends legitimacy to the decision made on 30
November to let the Swedish battalion serve under NATO command in line with a mandate of peace-enforcement. In the news on 30 November, a reporter explains that the government’s proposition marks an end to the debate on the use of force, while illustrations show how the helmet on a soldier switches from a blue UN helmet to one with camouflage colours. The face of the illustrated soldier, which is also painted with camouflage, looks right into the camera with a grave expression on his face, as if facing a potential enemy. These pictures are followed by moving images of fully-equipped soldiers and army tanks, and a sequence displaying how machine guns are being handed over to soldiers. Although the images that are shown indicate that the Swedish UN soldiers will transform into proper combat soldiers without any specific organisational affiliation, the reporter stresses that the activities of the battalion are expected to be more or less the same as they have been during UNPROFOR (SVT 19951130, Rapport 19.30). Clearly, such a statement appears contradictory given the new mandate and how the transformation is generally depicted; as the news has already stressed, Sweden won’t dispatch velour-soldiers ‘after all’. The reporter’s summary is followed up by an extract from an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who yet again accentuates both the dual identity of Swedish soldiers and the ‘business as usual’ character of the forthcoming Swedish engagement in IFOR.

Minister for Foreign Affairs: I mean, the Swedish soldiers have already today, as NORDBAT, shown that they can hit back if it’s necessary. But the good thing about Swedish soldiers is that you negotiate first, you don’t start with the use of... of... of force, but you negotiate first. But those you negotiate with shall know that our soldiers have the right to hit back.25

(SVT 19951130, Rapport 19.30)

As the Swedish soldiers have already been involved in violent conduct, and been praised for it, the new military framework generally does not appear to bring anything new, but rather more of the same. Instead of discussing the mandate as such with the public, and what the mandate means for the level of violence deployed, the decision makers who appear in the news in these last days of November emphasise that the future duties of the battalion will be quite similar to the previous ones (e.g. SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 19951130, Rapport 19.30). By also accentuating the peacekeeping character of the Swedish soldiers’ identity, the shift to a more permissive mandate in terms of using force does not appear as a significant change. Hence, whereas the violent element of UNPROFOR previously slipped from view, it

25 In Swedish: ‘Alltså redan idag, som NORDBAT, så har ju de svenska soldaterna visat att de kan slå tillbaka om det behövs. Men det fina med svenska soldater det är att man förhandlar först, man börjar inte med bruket av... av... av våld, utan man förhandlar först. Men de man förhandlar med ska veta att våra soldater har rätt att slå tillbaka.’
is now brought to the fore to accentuate that nothing will really change and that the turn to peace-enforcement is a natural transition. The representation of the shift from UNPROFOR to IFOR as ‘nothing new’ thus serves to render the (increased) use of force invisible and make it appear unnoteworthy.

On 1 December, when it has become clear that the Swedish soldiers indeed will serve under NATO command, under the same conditions as every other nation, the evening news broadcasts a report on the reactions of the Swedish soldiers in Bosnia. Now the soldiers appear to be hesitant about serving under NATO command; above all, it is the attitude of the US soldiers and NATO’s military strategy that worries the Swedish soldiers. The report begins with pictures of an observation tower surrounded by fog. Inside the tower we find a Swedish UN soldier who has been on watch all night, and he looks relaxed. This is what he thinks peacekeeping missions should be all about, the reporter says; he doesn’t really want to attack targets that have been identified by NATO. Yet, to sit and wait, and to observe, which at this point is the daily routine of Swedish soldiers, will, it appears, most likely be replaced by a less humble practice.

Soldier: They [NATO] will for example not sit for half an hour, two-three hours, at a checkpoint and wait humbly, we think... I think. Instead, they will likely force the checkpoint. Too much macho, too little modesty.25

(19951201, Rapport 19.30)

The reporter claims that with the new military framework, the risks for the Swedish soldiers will increase; without the blue UN helmets and the white coloured wagons, they could easily be mistaken for someone else. Swedes dressed in all green could be mistaken for American NATO soldiers, or even for any of the former warring parties in Bosnia. Another soldier being interviewed seems positive overall to the changes for the Swedish battalion, but as he says: it depends on the attitude of the US soldiers (19951201, Rapport 19.30). What the news report generally seems to communicate is that once the link to UN is weakened, the uniqueness of the Swedish soldiers’ identity could be undermined. The Swedish soldiers are differentiated from other troops, especially the US soldiers, while the already established conception of Self is reproduced: the Swedish soldiers could indeed act firmly, but they negotiate first (see Minister for Defence, SVT 19951128, Aktuellt 21.00; Former battalion commander, SVT 19951129, Gomorron Sverige). As a Swedish soldier puts it in a news report as early as September: ‘you are not here to become Rambo or to go out...

25 In Swedish: ‘De kommer till exempel inte sitta en halvtimme, två-tre timmar, vid en checkpoint och ödmjukt vänta, tror vi... tror jag. Utan de kommer väl troligtvis forcera den här checkpointen. För mycket macho, för lite ödmjukhet.’
and wage war or something like that. If so, you can apply for the Foreign Legion or something else.”

(SVT 19950901, Mittnytt)

*Former battalion commander:* Me, when I talk to some Serbian commanders and ask ‘why do you talk to me when you don’t talk to the Brits or Frenchmen?’, ‘Well you’re Swedish’ they said. And we are not burdened with past history, empire and all of that.

(19951113, Gomorron Sverige)

Now, in December, when a Swedish engagement in peace-enforcement is about to become real, it is not the Swedish soldiers’ combat skills or will to fight that is emphasised but the Swedish peacekeeping identity. The unique and dual identity of the Swedish soldiers has been accentuated throughout the period between July and December, and as it seems, the Swedish soldiers evidently have a very particular role to play in military engagements abroad, as an agent of mediation and humanitarianism. This conception of Self, which arguably corresponds with Sweden’s neutrality norms, could here be said to naturalise an involvement in violent military practices.

*Soldier:* Yes, I signed [the contract] today at 12.

*Reporter:* Why?

*Soldier:* At first I was hesitant, because the major part of my work time is dedicated to humanitarian help and it will be less of that during IFOR. But at the same time, if I go home I can’t provide any humanitarian help at all. It’s just wait and see.

(SVT 19951218 Aktuellt 21.00)

Ultimately, during the start-up of IFOR, it is the peaceful character of the Swedish military undertaking that comes into view. As the soldiers’ peacekeeping identity appears to be ‘intact’, the engagement in peace-enforcement essentially appears as ‘more of the same’ and thus generally as no big deal and a non-dilemma. Still, at the same time, the new military operation is, throughout December, depicted as a historical event and as an adventure (SVT 19951215, Rapport 19.30; SVT 19951218, Aktuellt 21.00). As a reporter explains: ‘The Yanks are coming’ – once again, just as in 1917 and 1942 (SVT 19951214, Rapport 19.30); and a lieutenant being interviewed

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77 In Swedish: ‘Man är inte här nere för att bli nån Rambo eller ut och kriga eller nåt sånt där, då kan man ju söka Främlingslegionen eller nåt annat.’

78 In Swedish: ‘Jag, när jag pratar med några serbiska befälhavare och frågar “varför pratar ni med mig när ni inte pratar med britter och fransmän”, “ja du är ju svensk” sa de. Och vi är inte belastade av gammal historik, stormaktstid och allt det här.’

79 In Swedish: ‘Ja jag skrev på idag klockan 12’ / ‘Varför?’ / ’I början var jag tvetsam för huvuddelen av min arbetstid går ju åt att sylsa med humanitär hjälp och det kommer bli mindre i IFOR, men samtidigt, om jag äker hem kommer jag ju inte göra någon som helst humanitär hjälp, utan det är att vänta och se helt enkelt.’
reveals that some of his colleagues may find it ‘cool’ that the ‘Amis’ are arriving (SVT 19951218, Aktuellt 21.00). Right before Christmas, on the day when NATO officially takes over the responsibility for the peace operation in Bosnia, a reporter notes that everything the UN was lacking is now in place. At NORDBAT in Tuzla, the reporter informs us, the UN soldiers now switch their uniform headgear and transform into Swedish NATO soldiers. And, as he points out, the IFOR force is ‘impressive’ – heavy artillery, tanks and 60,000 highly trained soldiers (SVT 19951220, Rapport 23.00). It all appears quite simple. The NATO operation is a test, the evening news proclaims; if it works, then a new security policy has been born (SVT 19951220 Rapport 19.30).

CONCLUDING REMARKS
In this chapter, the events in Srebrenica in July 1995 have been conceptualised as a moment of dislocation, when the failure of UN and its peacekeeping practices called for some sort of discursive and political response. The empirical analysis above has sought to identify and delineate the narrative themes salient in the reporting of the Swedish military engagement in Bosnia in public service television between July and December 1995. More than anything, the analysis has called attention to the representation of violence. How is the failure in Bosnia, and eventually the shift to peace-enforcement, made intelligible? What is foregrounded, and in turn backgrounded? What do the narrative responses in TV do in terms of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification?

In TV, the immediate period after Srebrenica is dominated by the problematisation of ‘non-violence’ and the call to ‘get tougher’. In terms of narrative structuration and selective visibilities, the violence that the Swedish soldiers engaged in prior to the Srebrenica massacre initially slips from view; instead, the Swedish military contribution is often linked to passivity and inaction. The dominating narrative framework generally advances a representation of the Swedish soldiers as legitimate participants in combat operations. Through different representations and narrative formations, the broadcasted material works to make an increase in the use of force seem necessary, self-evident and inevitable.

For instance, those who are critical towards a shifting Swedish policy are, at times and by some, portrayed as deviant, nonconforming and passé. By representing what eventually appears to be the ‘only’ opponent to a Swedish engagement in peace-enforcement as a reactionary, the broadcastings serve to make the increased use of force appear as a given. Occasionally, a turn to more violent means is also made to appear inevitable through gendered language, which links (what seems to be) non-
violence to passivity, ‘sissyness’ and weak boys. The break with old routines is here given meaning through, among other things, the concept of velour-soldiers or velour-boys, which makes ‘the peacekeeper’ appear as an identity construction associated with the past yet unsuitable for the future. Peacekeeping is here depicted as an outdated practice and a naïve ambition; true military challenges require true combat soldiers, and so on. In terms of dis/identification, a striking element in the narrative responses is the attempt to link the Swedish soldiers to attributes such as firm conduct, a willingness to hit back and combat competence.

Paradoxically, however, the peacekeeping identity of the Swedish soldiers is continuously foregrounded; this is arguably part of a narrative of uniqueness, which Nabers (2015: 153) recognises as significant in the formation of a sense of a national identity. As noted above, the Swedish soldiers are first linked to, then differentiated from ‘passivity’; still, they are repeatedly linked to peacekeeping practices and what one may call ‘a peacekeeping identity’. This is for instance notable when the soldiers’ negotiating skills are being foregrounded or in early December when the Swedish soldiers attempt to differentiate themselves from their new US colleagues.

Throughout the period between July and December 1995, one can generally note that identification with new forms of practices take shape while the actual policy shift at times is concealed. Whereas the violent element of UNPROFOR initially slips from view, it is eventually brought (back) to light when the debate on taking part in so-called ‘attack operations’ takes off; a military contribution to IFOR is now articulated as a continuation of previous practices and routines rather than a break with the peacekeeping tradition. Essentially, the reorientation from peacekeeping (‘in essence’) to peace-enforcement is obscured as continuity rather than change finally comes to represent the shift from UNPROFOR to IFOR. When the peacekeeping identity of the Swedish soldiers appears to be intact, while the future military assignments are said to resemble the previous ones, the revision of the policy on the use of force is concealed. Here, the accentuation of the soldiers’ peacekeeping identity serves to make IFOR, the engagement in peace-enforcement, and the new NATO command appear as ‘no big deal’, just more of the same. Concurrently, the violent element of peace-enforcement (as a practice and policy) and the violence that might ensue is removed out of sight and rendered invisible.

The empirical analysis has been presented more or less chronologically, yet it is difficult to talk of a linear process; the analysis rather illustrates a variety of narrative responses and a continuous re/negotiation of conceptions of Self and legitimate violence. Although one can notice a tendency to associate the increased use of force with honourable conduct, all articulations do not ascribe the Swedish soldiers a
combat identity. Evidently, certain articulations attempt to shed light on the potential imbalance between a new policy on the use of force and the Swedish conception of Self. The Minister for Defence, for one, defends the practices of peacekeeping although he predominantly refers to the practical constraints that will apparently prevent Sweden from engaging in combat operations. When the debate is focused on the practical issues – such as the soldiers’ lack of training, their terms of contract or the NATO command – the space for political contestation is reduced to questions of whether or not these claims are accurate. The focus on capability and feasibility prevents rather than initiates a public discussion on the increased use of force as such and as an issue of principle. Yet, taken together, to ‘get tougher’ is articulated as a moral duty. In terms of narrative responses to a moment of dislocation, one can thus see glimpses of a new subject emerging in the material, a Sweden more associated with the use of force, a Sweden at the confrontation line. Yet, this is not a unanimous picture; different understandings of ‘Swedishness’ are seemingly competing for domination. Nevertheless, all in all, the TV coverage generally seems to reflect a search for a kind of non-warrior identity that can still engage in fighting.
THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE: Afghanistan 2008-2010

KABOOM! A thunderstorm!? It must be a thunderstorm!
- COVER! Someone shouts.
  Shit, I’m in Afghanistan! It must be the shell thrower they briefed us about before we left. Shit! I’m stuck in a goddamn mosquito net! Damnit, soon grenade number two will hit. Damnit, I’m going to die now, wrapped up in a goddamn fishing net.80

  (From a soldier’s blog, experiences from the summer of 2011)81

I was right next to the medical staff when they loaded Kenneth into the helicopter. I thought I should thank Kenneth, for coming with the others to help us, and offer some words of ‘get well’. But I changed my mind as I saw that he wasn’t receptive to words like that. Maybe I should have, anyway…
  Beret off…
  Rest in peace, Soldier.82

  (From a soldier’s blog, October 20, 2010)83

When the violent confrontations between Swedish troops and their Afghan opponents increase dramatically between 2008 and 2010, it seems to come as a surprise. Not to those well informed perhaps, but in the TV news, which has the broader public as its audience. The Swedish soldiers have been attacked! They shoot back! And today, they have been attacked again! These reports sound alarming, and would probably not reach the headlines if the events now unfolding in Afghanistan were conceived as part of the everyday routines of the Swedish troops, in line with common expectation. The attention given the combat situations in Afghanistan seems to have the potential of politicising the issue of force; in a sense, one can say that the practice of peace-enforcement reveals itself as a violent practice in and through the news reports on combat incidents. The question is: what happens in public discourse when the violent element of peace-enforcement becomes manifest and impossible to overlook?

In late 2008, Swedish troops have already been in Afghanistan for more than six years. While first constituting a minor contribution of primarily symbolic value,
Sweden takes over the role as Lead Nation in 2006 and assumes responsibility for the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Mazar-e-Sharif in the northern part of Afghanistan. Here, the Swedish soldiers are based on Camp Northern Lights together with Finnish troops. Throughout the years, the number of Swedish soldiers deployed to Afghanistan is expanding. In late 2008 there are 365 Swedish soldiers on the ground. By the end of 2010, the Swedish unit has expanded to about 500. The mandate of ISAF is from the very beginning based on Chapter VII in the UN Charter, which means that the troops are authorised to use force beyond self-defence. In other words, they are authorised to use force to enforce peace. However, in 2010, after a few years of intensified conflict, an international exit strategy is about to take shape, initiated by the so-called London conference and Kabul conference. Four years later, ISAF is about to end its combat operations in Afghanistan and on 26 June 2014, Camp Northern Lights is finally handed over to the Afghan authorities. At the turn of the year 2014-2015 the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) is introduced in ISAF’s place, including only training, advising, and assistance to the local Afghan security forces and police.

This chapter concentrates on the period between 2008 and 2010, when Swedish involvement in combat and war-like activities is intensified and the violent element of peace-enforcement, as a result, becomes visible to the broader public. From the end of 2008 onwards, especially during the late spring and summer of 2009, reports on Swedish soldiers getting involved in combat are frequent in public broadcasting. Swedish soldiers are getting attacked more and more often, the reporters keep repeating; some are getting seriously wounded, and in November 2009, an Afghan translator dies in an explosion targeting the Swedish soldiers. In the summer of 2009, Swedish soldiers are – as the news reports declare – for the first time being responsible for the death of Afghan militiamen. They shoot back when attacked, and they kill. They get involved in direct shootouts, which last for hours. Occasionally, war is now the term being used to describe what Swedish soldiers are experiencing in Afghanistan. In February 2010, two Swedish officers are killed in a shootout, and in October the same year, another Swedish soldier is killed in an explosion. That the violence, as it were, is coming closer somehow seems like an understatement.

News anchor: Tonight, for the second night in a row, Swedish soldiers got involved in a shootout in Afghanistan. About 10 soldiers were out on an operation outside of Mazar-e-Sharif as they came under fire. The Swedes returned fire and then managed to leave the scene. According to the Armed

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84 Apart from the three soldiers killed in action in 2010, another two soldiers had already been killed in 2005.
Forces none of them are injured. *Yesterday* night Swedish soldiers were, together with Afghan police, involved in *another* shootout in the area.\(^5\)

*News anchor:* And, just a moment ago, reports came in that the Swedish-Finnish force in Northern Afghanistan *yet again* has been fired at. The fight lasted for about 40 minutes but *no one* is reported injured. The fire attack is, according to the Armed Forces, the forth during the past two weeks.\(^6\)

*News anchor:* The Swedish troops in Afghanistan are involved in *more and more* shootouts. The Swedish Afghanistan soldiers have been involved in *combat* more than 20 times, since only Midsummer.\(^7\)

During the two years covered by the empirical material of this chapter, the deteriorating security situation in northern Afghanistan seems to trigger a re-evaluation of Sweden’s engagement in Afghanistan. The link between identity and policy seem to be difficult to reconcile; these war-like activities simply do not seem coherent with prevalent self-representation, or with the idea of bringing peace to the Afghan people. Although the news often forms contradictory narratives on the practice of violence and the role of Swedish soldiers, the empirical material as a whole suggests that the events unfolding during this two-year period are conceived as exceptional, uncomfortable, diverging from the public perception of what the Swedish mission in Afghanistan was or ought to be about. As they are described in the TV news, the incidents involving Swedish troops simply appear to deviate from the normal procedures of peace missions. Many things seem to be at stake: first and foremost the lives of Swedish soldiers of course, but also the reputation of Sweden,\(^8\) and perhaps even the practice of peace-enforcement itself. In that sense, the ‘reality’ on the ground, which becomes ‘known’ through the TV reports, appears to signify a disruption of prevalent discourse. When unforeseen things are happening, the seemingly new situation, and the increasing level of violence, need to be made intelligible. In short, this chapter aims to examine the narratives formed in public

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\(^{5}\) In Swedish: ‘För andra natten i rad var svenska soldater inblandade i skottväxling i Afghanistan i natt. Det var när ett tiotal soldater var på uppdrag utanför Mazar-e-Sharif som de blev beskjutna. Svenskarna besvarade elden och tog sig sen därifrån. Enligt Försvaret har ingen av dem skadats. I går natt var svenska soldater tillsammans med afghanska polis inblandad i en annan skottlossning i området.’

\(^{6}\) In Swedish: ‘Och för en stund sen kom uppgifter om att den svensk-finska styrkan i norra Afghanistan åter har beskjutits. Striden pågick i cirka 40 minuter men ingen uppges ha skadats. Eldöverfallet är enligt Försvaret det fjärde under de senaste två veckorna.’

\(^{7}\) In Swedish: ‘Den svenska truppen i Afghanistan är inblandad i *allt* fleer skottstrider. Bara sen i midsomras har svenska Afghanistan-soldater varit inblandade i *strid* mer än *so* gånger.’

\(^{8}\) See e.g. Bildt (m) on how Sweden will be perceived as untrustworthy if withdrawing (SVT 20100827, Aktuellt 21.00) or Ohly (v) on how Swedish soldiers no longer are seen as advocates of peace (SVT 20080827, Aktuellt 21.00).
service broadcasting between 2008 and 2010, to unveil how the war-like activities in northern Afghanistan are represented. Specifically, it will look at the dis/appearances of violence in terms of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification. Given that the 2008-2010 period is understood as a (potentially) dislocatory experience, the chapter specifically seeks to critically reflect on the political work of narratives in terms of fostering new ways of making sense of violent practices and Sweden’s role therein.

THE DISLOCATION THAT WASN’T? November 2008 – November 2010

*Woman ’in the street’: I mean, spontaneously, I think ‘What are we doing there? Once upon a time we were neutral.’ Then I think: ‘Are we there to fight or is it some form of peacekeeping?* 89

(SVT 20100118, Aktuellt 21.00)

This quote is from a news story in January 2010, filmed in Sälen, a well-known ski resort in Sweden. Annually, around this time of the year, Sälen hosts the biggest national conference on issues of national defence, and just outside of the conference venue, the reporter is asking people at random, people ‘in the street’, if they think that Swedish soldiers should be in Afghanistan. Images show people skiing, surrounded by a beautiful snow-covered landscape. As the reporter suggests: the difference between Sweden and Afghanistan just couldn’t be greater. Here, Sweden, a country of peace (and snow), and there, Afghanistan, a country of war. The people being interviewed are Swedes on holiday, and the woman sharing her thoughts on the Swedish military presence in Afghanistan is not really a woman in the street, she is a woman on a ski slope. Distant from the ski slope, inside the conference venue, politicians and others are debating whether Swedish soldiers should stay in Afghanistan or be withdrawn (SVT 20100118, Aktuellt 21.00). Up until September 2009, the Left Party has been the only party that doesn’t support the Swedish military contribution to ISAF. Yet, from September 2009 onwards, the Green Party is also endorsing a withdrawal within the near future (SVT 20090929, Rapport 19.30/Aktuellt 21.00).

The questions expressed by the woman on the ski slope could be said to reflect the narratives and, one could say, confusion that also generally characterise the TV coverage on the Swedish mission in Afghanistan between 2008 and 2010. In fact, a lot of the debates and statements expressed on TV at this time have to do with the actual

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89 In Swedish: ’Alltså spontant så tycker jag det känns som att ”Vad gör vi där? En gång i tiden var vi neutrala”. Så tänker jag ”Är vi där och krigar eller är det nånt form av fredsbevarande?”’
definition of what the Swedish soldiers are doing in Afghanistan. As an example: while the Prime Minister and other representatives of the government choose to speak of solidarity and serving as a guarantor for democracy and peace, the leader of the Left Party keeps insisting that Sweden is part of a war in Afghanistan. These different narratives, reinforced by, on the one hand, images of Swedish soldiers peacefully engaging with the Afghan population and, on the other, reports of increased violence and war-like activities, generally convey a contradictive impression, where the undertakings in Afghanistan largely remain undefined. Yet, although the question of defining the mission in Afghanistan very much pervades the different representations displayed on TV, the mandate as such, that is, the peace-enforcement, is rarely spoken about or debated.

TV presenter: Very short, Sweden is there to keep a peace, and is confronted with more attacks than earlier, how should one understand that?

(SVT 2009m15, Agenda)

Throughout the period between 2008 and 2010, when reports on the escalation of violent confrontations are frequent, public service broadcasting and its interviewees keep referring to the ISAF mission as peacekeeping. Not once do the TV presenters, reporters or interviewees use the term peace-enforcement. The following are examples of the phrasings being used: UN’s peacekeeping force (SVT 20090720, Aktuellt 21.00), peacekeeping mission under NATO’s command (SVT 20090720, Aktuellt 21.00), the Swedish peacekeeping force (SVT 20090726, Rapport 09.00), a kind of peacekeeping task/peacekeepers (SVT 2009m12, Gomorron Sverige 07.15), the peacekeeping mission (SVT 2009m15, Agenda), the UN mission (SVT 20100208, Rapport 19.30), and UN-based peace operations such as Afghanistan (SVT 20100118, Rapport 19.30). Similar to the ISAF debates in parliament and the parliamentarians’ talk of UN rather than NATO (see page 122), the references to peacekeeping in public service broadcasting could be considered a way to make sense of the increased level of violence in Afghanistan by linking it to previous engagements and already established practices. Although the term peacekeeping does not really seem to correspond with the reports on combat confrontation, it appears as a term that helps to put the Afghanistan activities into a context that people can relate to and accept. As if: War? No thanks. Peacekeeping? Okay. Essentially, the label of ‘peacekeeping’ serves to render the violent element of ISAF invisible; it also serves to naturalise the combat in Afghanistan, as the violent practices are linked to the familiar, and thus don’t appear as anything new.

* In Swedish: 'Kort bara, Sverige är ju där för att bevara en fred, och möts med mer attacker än tidigare, hur ska man förstå det?'
Between the end of 2008 and 2010 overall, there is a striking discrepancy between the images that are shown of Swedish soldiers in Afghanistan and what the news anchors and reporters are actually reporting. Almost all moving images representing Swedish soldiers in Afghanistan are images of soldiers hanging around the camp, sitting relaxed on army tanks, quietly patrolling the streets, spread out, without their helmets on. The moving images shown generally give the impression of an eventless life on the ground, where the Swedish soldiers exclusively engage peacefully with the Afghan population. With these images shown on screen, it is difficult to truly comprehend what is actually reported: an increased level of attacks, shootouts, combat situations. When the news describes how Swedes are being attacked, and getting involved in combat, the images shown rarely illustrate these stories. The images in and of themselves create a sense of continuity rather than disruption, whereas the reporting in contrast suggests that things are no longer calm, no longer about peacekeeping and patrolling, or shaking hands and talking to locals. This is a general observation in relation to the narratives formed on TV, yet this discrepancy is also striking in particular news stories.

Two examples can serve to illustrate the discrepancy between text and image. First, when the news explains how two Swedish officers have been shot dead while out on a patrolling mission, the images display Swedish soldiers shaking hands with an Afghan man, Swedish soldiers being served tea by what appears to be Afghan policemen, and Swedish soldiers – only wearing caps – who engage in a seemingly friendly conversation with Afghan men out in the snowy weather. Although the reporter describes death and hostility, the images here reflect an atmosphere of hospitality and peace (SVT 20100208, Rapport 19.30). Another example is a news feature on the medal ceremony for FS17 on their return from Afghanistan. The images display soldiers walking around at the Swedish camp, soldiers sitting relaxed on the top of a tank and soldiers pottering around a battlewagon. This sequence suddenly switches to moving images displaying how the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces gives a medal to a chair bound soldier and pats him on the shoulder. As these images are shown, the reporter explains how it was the will to help the local population that led the man – now in wheelchair – to Afghanistan. In terms of images illustrating the reality of the Swedish presence in Afghanistan, there is a gap between the going to Afghanistan and the ending up in a wheelchair (SVT 20091230, Rapport 19.30). Ultimately, these two news stories can serve as examples of what is

91 Cf. the US context (see Adelman and Kozol, 2017; Guittet and Zevnik, 2015: 196), where the political work of ‘banal images’ might be different; in the Swedish context, these ‘banal’ images of everyday life illustrate the expected, and do not necessarily serve to displace the common narrative of ‘war’.

92 This particular soldier was injured by an explosive charge.
often missing in the visual narratives, that is: the combat element. Overall, then, one may say that violence is rendered visible through the reports, yet at the same time rendered invisible through the visual representation.

Throughout the years under scrutiny here, images of anything commonly associated with war and violence – weapons being fired, night vision cameras, soldiers in sniper-positions and so on – are mostly illustrating the descriptions of events or developments related to US troops (e.g. SVT 20090720, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20090814, Aktuell 21.00; SVT 20101101, Rapport 19.30). Events related to Swedish troops, regardless of what kind of incident being reported, are illustrated by more ‘peaceful’ images. These images could include, as noted previously, soldiers in laidback positions, soldiers resting, walking around, quietly patrolling the muddy streets, shaking hands with local Afghan boys. Since being broadcast repeatedly, the images of Swedish soldiers shaking hands with Afghan boys almost appear as the symbol of the Swedish military undertaking as portrayed in public service broadcasting93 (see e.g. SVT 20081106, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20081113, Aktuell 21.00; SVT 20081117, Aktuell 21.00).94

In general, the US troops come to signify war and war making, and rightly so of course: the US has been waging a military campaign against the Taliban and al-Qaeda ever since 2001. However, a critical observation here is that, in contrast to the representation of the US troops, the Swedish troops are differentiated from war practices, both through the emphasis on their geographical position – with the showing of maps95 etcetera – and through the depictions of their work and routines. Through images as well as talk, the broadcastings convey an impression of distance. Being distant from the US troops, geographically as well as in spirit, seems to suggest that one also is distant from practices of war. This differentiation between US and Swedish troops is evident, for instance, in a news story in July 2009, when a sequence of images, which first illustrate the ongoing war in the southern part of Afghanistan – with pictures of what one can associate with ‘real’ combat soldiers – suddenly switches to pictures of a seemingly calm and peaceful, almost empty, Swedish army camp (SVT 20090720, Aktuell 21.00; see also SVT 20101101, Rapport 19.30). Given the reporter’s voiceover, the images come to illustrate the difference

93 These images could be army footage or SVT’s own, it’s often impossible to determine. Yet, all the same, the images bear relevance in terms of the war’s ‘seenness’: as noted many times already, how the Swedish engagement in Afghanistan is portrayed on TV reasonably has wide implications for how the broader public understands the military undertaking and what the events in Afghanistan possibly could mean for Sweden. The images, by which the military tasks in Afghanistan are depicted, serve to create particular identifications and conceptions of reality.
94 Cont. SVT 20090410, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20100128, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20100207, Aktuell 21.00; SVT 20100208, Aktuell 21.00; SVT 20100211, Rapport 19.30
95 As e.g. Campbell (1998: 78-79) has pointed out: maps are no passive descriptions of the world, but are in themselves representations that produce reality. See also Opondo & Shapiro (2012) and Gregory (2000: 267).
between war (as in the south) and Sweden’s area of responsibility (the north), a previously calm area, which now suffers from spill-over effects. In terms of dis/identification, the representation of the ‘US war’ comes to serve as a contrast and essentially a representation of the Other.

The tendency to highlight the distinction between the US practices and the practices of ISAF and Sweden is noticeable throughout the period under scrutiny. At one point, the leader of the Green Party discusses the death of civilians and the growing opposition against the foreign troops in Afghanistan, claiming that the Afghan population ‘has severe difficulties seeing the difference between the American war and the other, which is under UN mandate’.

Minister for Defence: It’s not war in our part of Afghanistan.

(SVT 20081113, Aktuellt 21.00)

TV presenter: United States are at war in Afghanistan, but Swedish troops along with many others are there on a peacekeeping mission. Is there a peace to keep today would you say?

(SVT 20091115, Agenda)

All in all, the US comes to represent war and violence, whereas the Swedish troops generally are differentiated from war practices. In the event of combat and death, Sweden is rather linked to practices of peace and solidarity, or the Swedish role in the military undertaking in Afghanistan is de-emphasised, backgrounded. As when the Minister for Foreign Affairs responds to questions regarding the government’s decision to let the Swedish soldiers stay in Afghanistan. At this particular point in time, in October 2010, a fifth Swedish soldier has just been killed in action.

Reporter: But where is the limit? How many need to die before one begins to question the Swedish mission?

Minister for Foreign Affairs: Well, it isn’t a Swedish mission. This is a Swedish-Finnish unit, which is part of, I think there are 47 nations, which now have responded to UN’s request – to be there and help.

(SVT 20101017, Rapport 19.30)

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96 In Swedish: ‘Man har väldigt svårt att se skillnad på det amerikanska kriget och det andra som finns under FN-mandat.’

97 In Swedish: ‘Det är inte krig i vår del av Afghanistan.’

98 Original in English. From an interview with an American former Captain in the Marine Corps.

On 16 September 2009, after a summer of intense fighting, the evening news are running a feature on the Minister for Defence’s brief visit to the Swedish troops in Afghanistan. After the TV audience has been informed of the deteriorating security situation and that more Swedish soldiers might be sent to Afghanistan, the reporter interviews a Swedish army chief in Saripol, one of the four regions in which Swedish troops are present. Two scenes are, respectively, introducing and closing the interview with the army chief, an interview in which he describes the current security situation and the Swedish soldiers’ very professional conduct. First, the TV audience gets to see footage of a Swedish soldier who cheerfully shouts into a bag store – ‘Assalamu alaikum!’ – after which an Afghan official comes out to greet him. In the forthcoming scene, a different Swedish soldier talks to a group of Afghan boys surrounding him: ‘We are from Sweden! You know, Europe?’ (SVT 20090916, Rapport 19.30). These images summarise and illustrate two narrative themes salient in the public service broadcasting between the end of 2008 and 2010, the time during which the Swedish troops are suddenly getting more and more involved in combat confrontation. The images convey, first, that the Swedish troops indeed are very good at engaging with the local population, they are welcomed, and second, that the Swedish troops are very different from – well, again – the American troops. In contrast to the ‘warring’ Americans, ‘those under UN mandate’ seem to be particularly good at engaging peacefully with the local population. In regard to this particular issue, the representation of activities in Afghanistan seems to suggest that Sweden, in fact, is better than the rest. For instance, in response to the death of two Swedish officers in February 2010, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces explains how the approach and conduct of the Swedish soldiers make them especially vulnerable. The Swedish units truly engage with the local civilians, and now, they have evidently paid the ultimate price for it.

*Emphasis on the Swedish soldiers’ exceptionally good relationship with the local population is a common feature of the news stories on Afghanistan (see e.g. SVT 20090814; Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20090916, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20100208, Aktuellt 21.00). One soldier, who at the time of the interview is back in Sweden after being*

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In Swedish: ‘Det som svenska förband under väldigt lång tid har gjort sig kända för, att vara riktigt duktiga, det är att uppträda med och bland folket. Det vill säga precis det som vi gör nu.’
seriously injured in an explosion, gives an image of his experience of mixing with Afghans: ‘From the beginning you see bombs and the Taliban everywhere, but it passes and eventually it doesn’t feel unsafe at all. People live there and they wave and are happy when you arrive, so you feel pretty safe’\(^{104}\) (SVT 20091230, Rapport 19.30). Another soldier describes the interpersonal encounters with the locals, and the moments when you realise that you have things in common: ‘you may share a cup of tea or when you play football together. You play and shake hands’\(^{107}\) (20100211, Rapport 19.30). From time to time, images portray Swedes as almost being one with the local population, as in the news story of the Swedish Prime Minister’s visit to the troops in Afghanistan in early 2009 (SVT 20090120, Rapport 19.30). The Prime Minister doesn’t wear any military attributes but a shirt, pullover and suit jacket. While images are showing the Prime Minister surrounded by Afghan locals, the reporter states: ‘Fredrik Reinfeldt, who chooses to be among poor people in Afghanistan on the same day as the US president is inaugurated’\(^{103}\). The Prime Minister seems to be mixing freely with the local Afghan population. The images illustrate how he drinks tea with the village elder, fully surrounded by young Afghan boys. People are laughing and smiling. Later, once he has returned to Sweden, the Prime Minister will say in a live interview on morning TV that they, the Afghans that he met, were in a ‘remarkably good mood’,\(^{104}\) despite the poverty and unemployment (SVT 20090121, Gomorron Sverige 07.15). As in this news story, the general image of the Swedish presence in Afghanistan is that the soldiers get on well with the locals, that they are exceptionally respectful towards their hosts (see e.g. SVT 20090814, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20090916, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20100208, Aktuell 21.00). In terms of selective visibilities, this representation creates an image of peace, even in light of reports of increased attacks and combat. It is the peaceful encounters and the mutual respect that is foregrounded, rather than the hostility and the fighting.\(^{105}\)

\textit{News anchor:} Now we can see some images here, well, it looks rather peaceful?

\textit{Reporter in studio:} Here, we were out walking with Swedes and Afghans who patrolled and it was very peaceful. And, at times, one can see on the images of the Swedes here that they have no helmets on, they have their regular caps on, they shake hands with people, it looks very calm. And that is part of the new

\(^{104}\) In Swedish: ‘Från början ser man ju bomber och talibaner överallt, men det går över och sen känns det inte farligt alls. Folk bor ju där och de vinkar och är glada när man kommer, så man känns sig ganska trygg.’

\(^{107}\) In Swedish: ‘… man kanske delar en kopp te eller när man spelar fotboll tillsammans. Man leker och skakar hand.’

\(^{103}\) In Swedish: ‘Fredrik Reinfeldt, som väljer att vara bland fattiga i Afghanistan samma dag som USA:s nya president installeras.’

\(^{105}\) Cf. Hellman’s (2016: 53-54) exploration of military blogs and Swedish soldiers’ representations of the Afghanistan war (between 2010-2012). She notes that the soldiers often highlight the assistance to civilians rather than the war-like aspects of ISAF.
American strategy, that of the new General McChrystal, to win the hearts and minds of the Afghans. They have to show they're humane, they have to walk around among people. Less air bombings and more of this kind of work.

News anchor: But does the Afghan population like for example the Swedish soldiers?

Reporter in studio: I think they do. My impression after travelling around in Afghanistan a few weeks now is that the Swedes... the Afghans that we talked with spoke very well of the Swedes. One can say that.  

Reporter: But... very happy children, who you shake hands and talk with, does it say that much about the actual situation?

Soldier: Yeah, one can think that that's a small thing but I think, in comparison with others, there are other areas where the children are not at all as positive and where people look away and withdraw. So, after all, I think that's a good indicator of the atmosphere.

Although many news stories give the impression of peace and emphasise the Swedish soldiers’ peaceful conduct, the violence is present, of course, all along; the situation almost seems to get worse and worse by the minute. Although much of what is portrayed gives an impression of continuity rather than disruption, which could be considered a response to the dislocatory experience of combat confrontation that serves to conceal the violent element, the increased level of violence certainly does not go by unnoticed. Everyone who appears on TV during the period under scrutiny agrees on the fact that the security situation has become worse. Yet, for instance, to counter the impression of chaos, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces finds it necessary to emphasise the continuity and repetitiveness of the Swedish soldiers’ work in Afghanistan, although he recognises that the past year has shown a drastic security deterioration.

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\(^{106}\) In Swedish: 'Nu ser vi bilder här, det ser ju ganska fridfullt ut' / 'Här var vi ute och gick med svenskar och afghaner som patrullerade och det var väldigt fridfullt och man ser på bilderna av svenskarne här ibland att de har inga hjälmar på sig, de har sina vanliga mössor på sig, de skakar hand med folk, det ser väldigt lugnt ut. Och det här är ju en del av den här amerikanska strategin, den nya general McChrystals, to win the hearts and minds, att vinna hjärtan och förtoorden hos afghanerna. De måste visa sig humana, de måste gå ut bland folk. Mindre flygbombningar och mer sänt här arbete.' / 'Men gillar den afghanska befolkningen, gillar de t.ex. de svenska soldaterna?' / 'Det tror jag att de gör. Min uppfattning efter att ha rest runt i Afghanistan i några veckor nu är att svenskarne, afghanerna som vi talade med talade vidalt väl om svenskarne. Det kan man säga.'

\(^{107}\) In Swedish: 'Men... jätteglada barn som ni skakar hand med och pratar med, säger det så mycket om själva läget egentligen?' / 'Ja, man kan tycka att det är en liten grej men jag tror att i jämförelse med andra, det finns andra områden där barnen inte alls är lika positiva och där folk tittar bort och drar sig undan. Så jag tycker ändå att det är en bra indikator ändå på hur stämningen är.'
Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces: Well, no, the conditions right now are the ones we have experienced and worked in for – well – six to eight months. The unit that was there before the one that is down there now has basically had the same conditions over the summer, they are the same.\textsuperscript{108} (SVT 20100207, Agenda)

With regard to de/naturalisation, the constant reporting of every incident involving Swedish soldiers suggests and signals that the fact that Swedish troops are involved in combat \textit{is} a big deal. This is especially striking in July 2009, when the Swedish soldiers are for the first time reported to have been forced to kill their adversaries in Afghanistan. Now, after three months without any news being reported, the experiences of Swedish soldiers in Afghanistan suddenly reach the headlines; that the Swedish soldiers are actually involved in the \textit{killing} of those attacking them turns into breaking news. The events in July 2009 are reported to have been the most serious combat situations involving the Swedes so far (SVT 20090724, Rapport 19.30).

\textit{Reporter (to a Colonel, Swedish force):} Several times you have mentioned that you are proud, still three people have been killed, what do you think of that?\textsuperscript{109} (SVT 20090724, Rapport 19.30)

\textit{Reporter:} So, when you return their fire, do you shoot to kill?
\textit{Soldier:} We shoot to defend our own lives on that spot.
\textit{Reporter:} With full knowledge that that can lead to you shooting someone to death?
\textit{Soldier:} Yes... Not one of us has come down here to shoot another human being to death, but in that situation, when it’s a question of life and death, then the decision isn’t \textit{that} hard.\textsuperscript{110} (SVT 20090729, Rapport 19.30)

The end of July by all accounts seems to be a dramatic period for the soldiers on Camp Northern Lights; they repeatedly get involved in combat after being attacked, and they are forced to kill three Afghan opponents at one point and then, at a later point, another three (SVT 20090724, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20090724, Aktuellt 21.00;)

\textsuperscript{108} In Swedish: 'Nej, alltså, miljön just nu är den som vi har upplevt och arbetat i, i ja, 6-8 månader. Förbandet som var före de som är nere har egentligen haft samma miljö över sommaren, det är samma.'

\textsuperscript{109} In Swedish: 'Du har nämnt flera gånger att ni är stolta, men ändå 3 människor som har dödats, hur ser du på det?'

\textsuperscript{110} In Swedish: 'När ni bevarar dera eld då, skjuter ni för att döda? / Vi skjuter för att försvara våra egna liv på den platsen / Med full vetskap om att det kan leda till att du kan skjuta ihjäl någon? / Ja... Det finns ingen av oss som äkt ner hit för att skjuta ihjäl någon annan människa, men i den situationen när det handlar om eget liv då, då är inte valet så svårt.'
Interestingly, that the soldiers would actually kill comes across as a surprise in public service broadcasting; whilst earlier they have been *returning fire*, they are now *killing*, which appears as a new situation or change of practice. That the soldiers appear to carry on like before – that they keep doing ‘their job’, even after what has happened – also seems worthy of attention (see SVT 20090729, Rapport 19.30). It seems as if *returning fire* matches what one can expect from a so-called peacekeeping mission, whereas *killing when attacked* for some reason is a different story. Evidently, it is the seemingly ‘offensive’ aspect of the latest events that stimulates interest, as the killings are portrayed as diverging from the usual routine, that of ‘defensive’ violence. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, the *definition* of what Swedish soldiers are doing in Afghanistan is often at the centre of debate; whether certain practices should be named offensive or defensive is generally a recurring aspect of many debates on Swedish military engagements. Nevertheless, in terms of de/naturalisation, through the reports on the fatal incidents, the issue of force is brought to light as something exceptional, something deviating from the ‘usual’, something to consider.

However, an interesting observation from the reporting of these incidents is that the question of killing is made a matter of feelings rather than acknowledged as, and considered, a policy-related issue. The feelings of individual soldiers and mental processes related to the act of killing and involvement in combat is of course newsworthy, yet here the fatal violence, which is depicted as a break with old routines rather than a normality, comes to appear as an isolated and local problem rather than a national and collective problem. Thus, in terms of de/naturalisation and dis/identification, the use of force appears as a dilemma for the soldiers rather than for Sweden at large. Instead of raising questions regarding the increased use of force and combat confrontation to policy-makers, the question of killing principally comes up in connection to news stories on individual soldiers, in interviews with people who experienced these violent situations. For instance, a reporter describes the Swedish soldiers that have been involved as ‘affected and troubled’\(^\text{112}\) by the events. The group has now talked the matter through, it is reported, and individual soldiers have been offered counselling (SVT 20090729, Gomorron Sverige 07.15). In another news story, the Swedish Chief of Staff confirms that nobody that has been involved in combat comes out unaffected, although these particular incidents haven’t affected the unit to any major extent (SVT 20090729, Rapport 19.30).


\(^{112}\) In Swedish: ‘tagna och omskakade’.
Although the Swedish forces act according to their instructions, when things do not turn out as expected, it is primarily the individual soldiers that are put in focus, not the policy-makers. Hence, the soldiers themselves have to answer for the practice of violence, and by extension the mandate itself. The interviews and soldier portraits ultimately convey that the engagement in combat is an individual concern and a result of local decisions, as opposed to a national and common concern and an issue of political decision making. In short, the use of force appears as an individual dilemma, rather than a political.\footnote{Cf. Toros and Mavelli (2014) on the narrative of individual blame and the language of individual pathology in American public discourse, which ultimately represent a strategy of depoliticisation.} At one point, however, a TV presenter attempts to initiate a political discussion by asking the Minister for Defence about the ‘new’ policy on the use of force, and what the government thinks of Sweden’s greater involvement in ground attacks. Yet, the Minister for Defence talks instead about the particular incidents, which he categorises as self-defence, and the practicalities of the military undertaking (SVT 20090729, Gomorrn Sverige 07.15).

The question of killing returns in early December 2009, when the units that were involved in the war-like situations in the past summer are awarded medals on their return to Sweden. Once again, the issue of feelings becomes the focal point:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Reporter:} But what does Bo Ekstrand, the priest, say: What can he say to the soldier that has just killed another human being?

\textit{Bo Ekstrand:} There is not that much to say, I use to say like this: You have two of these \{pointing to ears\} and one of this \{pointing to mouth\}. That means: Listen and be there and help them handle the feelings that arise.

\textit{Reporter:} Now, when you got this medal, you said that you have helped to make a better world, is that how you feel?

\textit{Bo Ekstrand:} Yes, that’s how I feel. Because, I myself have been around and talked to the local Afghan population, been out with different humanitarian agencies, humanitarian organisations, and it has been confirmed that it is just like that.\footnote{In Swedish: ‘Men vad säger prästen Bo Ekstrand, vad kan han säga till den soldat som just dödat en annan människa’? / ‘Finns inte så mått att säga, jag brukar säga så här: Man har två såna och en sån, d.v.s. lyssna och finnas med och hjälpa dem ta hand om de känslorna som kommer’ / ‘Nu när ni fick den här medaljen så sa ni att ni har hjälp till och göra en bättre värld, känner du så?’ / ‘Ja, det känner jag. Därför att, jag har ju nämligen själv vart ute och pratat med den afghanska lokalbefolkningen, varit ute med olika humanitära verksamheter, humanitära organisationer, och vi har fått bekräftelse på press just det’}.
\end{quote}

(SVT 20091203, Aktuellt 21.00)

Here, a priest is being interviewed on how to take care of soldiers who have taken part in violence. The taking care of soldiers is a recurring feature in the news coverage on the violent events in Afghanistan. In interviews and news stories, there is
often talk about the traumatic experiences of engaging in violence, and the crisis support that the Armed Forces facilitate (see e.g. SVT 20090729, Gomorrón Sverige; SVT 20091122, Gomorrón Sverige; SVT 20091123, Gomorrón Sverige). The escalation of violence and the engagement in combat are thus often linked to psychological issues. The wellbeing of Swedish soldiers is of course of utmost importance and highly relevant for the public, yet the therapeutic angle could be said to divert attention from the political dimension of the practice of violence. When violence only comes to signify personal trauma, and is being made relevant merely because of the potential traumatic after-effects, the news tends to revolve around questions on what to do with certain individuals rather than the meaning and larger implications of Sweden’s policy on the use of force. This general impression is further reinforced by the many TV portraits of individual soldiers. It is the soldiers that come into view rather than the practice itself and the policy as such; hence, the use of force is rendered ‘natural’, as violence doesn’t appear to be a political decision, but something that just is. Violence appears as something that the soldiers themselves or the Armed Forces literally just have to deal with.

*Man in news intro:* First, I thought of myself... ‘Gosh, am I to die here? In this valley? In this shitty valley? Like, for what purpose?’ But then, at the same time, it took a few seconds, and it was not consciously or anything, then it was: ‘Yeah, why else have we come here?’

*News anchor:* Mm, yes, this week Swedish soldiers are returning home from Afghanistan. And they have experienced more serious incidents than any other unit before them. That’s why these soldiers are in greater need of help.

(SVT 20091123, Aktuellt 21.00)

The therapeutic angle is clearly part of a more general interest and emphasis on the feelings and emotions among the soldiers, which is salient throughout the period between 2008 and 2010 (see e.g. SVT 20091122, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20091123, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20091124, Gomorrón Sverige; SVT 20100107, Rapport 19.30).

*It could also be considered to reproduce the narrative of a caring nation* (see e.g. Jobs, 2015: 230-50). Cf. also McSorley’s (2012: 52-53) discussion on how war is rendered a ‘visceral first-person experience’ and ‘an emotional experience’ through e.g. intimate and therapeutic questions raised to soldiers in talking-heads interviews.

*The evening news begins with a clip from an interview with a man who is clearly a former soldier. However, at a later stage it becomes clear that this man is a veteran from the UNPROFOR mission in Bosnia, not the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.*

The TV reporters and presenters seem eager to cover the soldiers’ reactions to certain events, general feelings about going to Afghanistan in the first place, and the feelings that arise concerning the engagement in violence. These questions come up in basically every interview with individual soldiers. Furthermore, the TV reporters and presenters often appear to test the soldiers’ moral convictions with questions such as Don’t you want to stay in safe Sweden? You are not considering dropping out? or How do your kids take this? In that sense, the news stories often centre on individual willpower rather than collective and national responsibilities and (re)considerations (see e.g. SVT 2009112, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20100208, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20100208, Aktuellt 21.00).

Reporter: The incident yesterday with injured Swedish soldiers causes concern but no one is hesitant of going [to Afghanistan].

(SVT 2009112, Rapport 19.30)

The focus on feelings as well as individual morale is striking in a news feature in October 2009, which portrays the soldiers that are preparing to go to Afghanistan on the next mission (SVT 20091023, Aktuellt 21.00). In this particular news feature it becomes clear to all viewers that something has changed in Afghanistan; the Swedish soldiers are now preparing for war rather than peacekeeping, the reporter explains. The soldiers in the feature are introduced as Sweden’s new combat soldiers and then two soldiers all dressed up in camouflage uniforms are looking straight into the camera and present themselves, their age and military affiliation. The feature’s dramatic introduction – with references to the war and combat situations that await these soldiers – is not followed up by any political reflections or questions concerning the mandate, for example with those in charge. Instead, the introduction leads to the question ‘What does your family say about you going?’ to which the individual soldier needs to respond.

Through these news stories and the particular focus on feelings, the ‘Swedish soldier’ is depicted as an individual, as sensitive, as someone’s loved one. While this, of course, is a rather sympathetic representation of people that have been sent out on a seemingly deadly mission in the name of the state, the emphasis on feelings seems to marginalise the more principal discussions that could follow from news stories.

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Footnotes:

120 This is, of course, part of the ‘media logic’ and the dramatisation, simplification and personalisation of news.
121 In Swedish: ‘Incidenten igår med skadade svenska soldater beror men ingen tvekar att åka.’
122 In Swedish: ‘frontsoldater’.
123 Cf. Welland’s (2017) discussion on the ‘intimate portrayal of British soldiers’ and the ‘personalizing and familiarizing frame’ (p. 10).

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reports of combat and intensive fighting. The combat situations and attacks that the soldiers have been experiencing are often described in-depth, yet merely for descriptive purposes, rarely for the purpose of reflecting on or problematising the present situation. One can argue that the therapeutic theme as well as the recurring exploration of feelings ultimately turn the political questions related to war-like activities into personal and emotional concerns; the use of force is ‘displaced’ to the soldiers themselves. Hence, in terms of de/naturalisation and dis/identification, the use of force does not appear as Sweden’s decision and responsibility, but as the Swedish soldiers’ decision and responsibility. When the news zooms in on the soldiers, and pushes the audience to identify with the soldiers and their suffering, worries or convictions, the ‘bigger picture’ slips from view.\(^{124}\)

At the same time, however, one can also think of the insistence to discuss the feelings of soldiers as essentially a politicising move, in the sense that it could serve to make visible the conditions on the ground, potentially denaturalise the violent element of intervention, and ‘force’ the audience to acknowledge that Sweden indeed engages in violence. It could provide a (more) accurate picture of the ‘realities’ on the ground, and could signal that practices of violence should be taken seriously. Nevertheless, to mostly deal with the question of force in single portraits of soldiers could be suggested to conceal the political dimension of the (seemingly new) policy on the use of force, with Swedish soldiers now taking on a combat role. One can say that the news stories in that sense come too close to the violent practices as such; consequently, violence as a policy and as a Swedish choice is removed out of sight.

To communicate that the situation in Afghanistan is getting worse, the TV coverage often enumerates how many attacks and shootouts have occurred. At times, illustrative maps display Afghanistan with symbols of explosions. The number of attacks and shootouts seem to increase constantly. Especially from November 2009 and onwards, the TV news is repeatedly using descriptions and phrases such as ‘more and more attacks’, ‘more often fired at’ or ‘increasingly unpeaceful’\(^{125}\). This gives the impression that the security situation in which the Swedish soldiers find themselves is not only deteriorating, but is deteriorating very fast. However, although the war-like situation and Sweden’s involvement in combat is depicted as a problem, the TV reports rarely explicate why it constitutes a problem; a more general discussion on policy and identity is seldom initiated. Instead, practical concerns often

\(^{124}\) Cf. McSorley (2012) on how geopolitical context may disappear and the deployment of state violence appear as ‘a defensive and inevitable act’ (p. 55), or Gregory (2015) on how images may ‘camouflage the wider problems’ that have enabled violence in the first place (p. 189). Cf. also Oliver’s (2007) discussion on how ‘the combination of proximity and real-time reporting work to isolate a particular space and time, extract it from its context, and present it as immediate, part of the eternal present of television, thereby evacuating its historical meaning’ (p. 83).

\(^{125}\) In Swedish: ‘alltfler attacker’, ‘allt oftare beskjutna’, ‘alltmer oroligt’. 
come in focus. Overall, the debates frequently concern questions regarding the standard of equipment and the training of soldiers. In interviews, the soldiers themselves keep insisting on how content they are with their equipment and how confident they feel thanks to their training (SVT 20091022, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20091112, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20091113, Gomorron Sverige 06.42). Other reports insinuate that the Swedes’ military equipment is inadequate and incomplete; the troops are for instance waiting forever, it seems, for additional rescue helicopters (SVT 20090410, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20091111, Aktuellt 21.00).

To repeatedly talk about the issue of violence in terms of practical considerations and allocation of resources ultimately serves to naturalise the practice of violence as such. For example, as it is explained in one news story, the attacks – which here obviously signify an external factor, impossible to influence – have forced the Armed Forces to introduce further battle training into their training programme (SVT 20091022, Aktuellt 21.00). The engagement in violence, as it now appears, seems self-evident, as an unquestionable aspect of military intervention: the soldiers simply need to practice a bit more, and will then be able to meet the challenges on the ground. In short, the talk of equipment and training is thus part of – what one can call – a broader representation of violence as mere adaptation. The general image is that the Armed Forces and the Swedish soldiers are simply adapting to the existing security situation and the new military challenges that have arisen. The expanded combat training thus simply appears to be a result of lessons learned, which makes the use of force seem logical, necessary and inevitable (see e.g. SVT 20090814, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20090929, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20091022, Aktuellt 21.00).

Essentially, one can say that the representation of violence as adaptation makes the practice of peace-enforcement appear as a reaction rather than part of an active policy decision.

Minister for Defence: We adapt the military presence to a deteriorating security situation and take responsibility that way...

(SVT 20090814, Aktuellt 21.00)

Reporter: 42 incidents, including 25 bombs and 18 shootouts, are what the FS17 force has experienced. Not since the beginning of the 19th century, when Sweden fought its last war, have Swedish soldiers been closer to taking part in an outright war situation. The Swedish Armed Forces have been criticised for not having

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1st Cont. SVT 20091105, Agenda; SVT 20091204, Gomorron Sverige 06.42.
2nd Cont. SVT 20091112, Gomorron Sverige 07.45; SVT 20091115, Agenda.
3rd Cont. SVT 20091213, Rapport 07.00; SVT 20100208, Rapport 06.30.
4th In Swedish: 'Vi anpassar den militära närvaron till en försämrad säkerhets situation och tar ansvar på det viset... '
been prepared for this and the message at today’s press briefing was that this time, they are ready.\(^{130}\)

(SVT 20091113, Aktuellt 21.00)

The representation of violence as adaptation is also reinforced by the frequent talk of risks. If debates on the actual use of force are relatively absent, except during the summer of 2009, there is certainly a lot of talk about the threats and dangers facing the Swedish soldiers in Afghanistan. Acknowledging the risks, fearing the risks, meeting the risks, accepting the risks – these are all recurring topics in the debates on Afghanistan. Yet, while the violent incidents and shootouts are occurring abruptly – right here, right now – the risks have reasonably been there all along; they are not depicted as anything new or unexpected. As argued or insinuated in news reports and interviews, it is in fact because of the risks that Sweden has a military presence in Afghanistan in the first place (SVT 20081113, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20090729, Gomorron Sverige; SVT 20091005, Gomorron Sverige).\(^{131}\) Now, the risks that manifest themselves through the increasing level of violence and combat confrontation seem to in and of themselves serve as a justification for a continued military presence, as the usual answer to intensified risks is an expansion of the Swedish troops rather than a withdrawal (SVT 20081113, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20090929, Rapport 19.30).\(^{132}\)

One thing is worth mentioning here: when the parliamentary decision is taken in late November 2009 to increase the Swedish troops, which makes it possible for the government to double the force, this information does not even make it into the main news broadcasts at 19.30 or 21.00 (only SVT 20091119, Rapport 18.00).

The heightened visibility of risks generally makes the use of force slip from view; it also serves to naturalise the use of force, as violence – it appears – is merely a readjustment. The talk about risks moreover reinforces a sense of continuity rather than disruption; as continuity is emphasised, the notion of disruption is being marginalised. Risks are always already there, whereas the intensification of violence and combat is new. The sense of continuity is further induced by the military leadership’s declarations that one has to anticipate that things could or will get worse, that the violence has been expected and the Swedish people should have been prepared (e.g. SVT 20081113, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20091112, Gomorron Sverige 07.15).\(^{133}\) This arguably plays down – or even conceals and discredits – the experience of

\(^{130}\) In Swedish: ’33 incidenter varav 25 bomber och 18 skottlossningar har F17-styrkan varit med om. Inte sen början av 1800-talet då Sverige utkämpade sitt senaste krig har svenska soldater varit närmare att delta i en regelrätt krigssituation. Den svenska Försvarsmakten har blivit kritiserad för att inte ha haft beredskap för detta och budskapet vid dagens pressträff var att den här gången är man redo’.

\(^{131}\) Cont. SVT 20091111, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20091115, Agenda.

\(^{132}\) Cont. SVT 20090930, Gomorron Sverige; SVT 20091005, Aktuellt 21.00.

dislocation, in other words: the sense that the Swedish soldiers are now engaged in practices that were not anticipated from the beginning, and thus the possibility of thinking, being and doing something new or different. In brief, talking of ever-present risks, as in *there have always been risks or peace missions inevitably involve risks*, essentially makes the incidents now unfolding in Afghanistan, and the seemingly new policy on the use of force, appear expected and normal. When the war-like activities are portrayed as unavoidable risk taking and management, or as a natural continuation of previous engagements, what the talk of risks essentially does is to make the intensification of violence and combat appear as something that just is or has to be.

*News anchor:* The deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan means that the Swedish force is now transformed into a *battlegroup*, all for the purpose of supporting the Afghan Army. This is what the Supreme Commander says today. At the same time, he warns of Swedish losses in the future.

*Reporter:* Does Sweden as a country now have to prepare itself for human losses in Afghanistan?

*Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces:* In my opinion, Sweden should have done that long ago. Because it is, from the very beginning, part of the mission we have undertaken in Afghanistan.

*Reporter:* But do you think that Sweden is prepared for it?

*Supreme Commander:* We should actually ask the Swedish people. I’m prepared for it, but if Sweden is, I don’t know.\(^{35}\)

As noted earlier, certainly not everyone endorses the Swedish military presence in Afghanistan and the expansion of troops. Particularly the Left Party, and later also the Green Party, quite actively challenge the government’s policy. Yet, although these actors question a continued military presence in Afghanistan, they do not seem to challenge the use of force as such. In the representation of the Left’s rhetoric, for example, it appears as if the opposition is centred on *strategic* considerations rather than contradictory beliefs on the legitimacy of peace-enforcement *per se* (see e.g. SVT 20081113, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20100216, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20100827, Aktuellt 21.00).

Instead of initiating a broader discussion on the Swedish policy shift regarding the

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use of force in military interventions, what becomes the issue of debate is the here-and-now circumstances of intervention. It is not the Swedish mission, or the violent practice as such, that becomes the focal point of criticism, but the relationship to the US troops. Here, the Left’s TV appearances very much resemble their statements in parliamentary debates (see page 109). As ISAF and the Swedish troops coordinate their efforts with the US troops, the mission is illegitimate and thus doomed to failure. More than anything else, it is whom Sweden is associated with that is articulated as a matter of principle, not necessarily what Sweden does or for what purpose.

Leader of the Left Party: We shall not be part of a war that cannot be won. We shall not coordinate our actions with the warfare of the US. (SVT 20100208, Rapport 19,30/Aktuellt 21.00).

When the Green Party shifts its position on Sweden’s contribution to ISAF in September 2009, it primarily raises concern regarding the seemingly never-ending character of the Afghanistan intervention. As the leader of the Green Party phrases it in an evening newscast: ‘It can’t be that we have to stay in Afghanistan forever’ (SVT 20090929, Aktuellt 21.00). In a debate in Morning TV on the day after, he says ‘for all eternity, or for 100 years’ (SVT 20090930, Gomorron Sverige). In another debate about a month later he compares the situation in Afghanistan to that of Vietnam, as the foreign troops never seem to be able to leave (SVT 20091102, Aktuellt 21.00). Their critique directs focus to the question of whether Sweden should stay in Afghanistan or withdraw, as in soon or never, yet it does not really challenge or contradict the general narrative on the legitimacy and inevitability of military presence and the use of force, or the dominant representation of Swedish forces as do-gooders. In short, it does not offer any alternative representations of the Swedish military presence in Afghanistan, as the demand to withdraw is not linked to the violent incidents or the war-like activities involving the Swedish troops. Again, the critique does not relate to the Swedish mission or the policy on the use of force as such.

In response to this kind of demand and rhetoric, the TV presenters often ask: Is it even possible to leave Afghanistan? or Doesn’t it mean that one let the Taliban take over? (see e.g. SVT 20090929, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20090930, Gomorron Sverige; SVT 20100827, Aktuellt 21.00). Their political opponents, in turn, portray a

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135 In Swedish: ‘Vi ska inte vara med i ett krig som inte kan vinnas. Vi ska inte samordna våra insatser med USA:s krigsföring’.
136 In Swedish: ‘Det kan ju inte vara så att vi ska vara för evigt i Afghanistan’.
137 In Swedish: ‘i all evighet, eller i hundra år’.
withdrawal from Afghanistan as an act of disloyalty, which will inevitably lead to state failure, dictatorship, and Taliban rule (see e.g. SVT 20081113, Aktuellt 21.00, SVT 20090930, Gomorron Sverige; SVT 20091102, Aktuellt 21.00). The Prime Minister even claims that the critique of the leftist opposition is an expression of ‘ruthless nationalism and egoism’\(^{138}\) (SVT 20100118, Rapport 19.30). As a general observation one can note that a discussion on staying versus withdrawing does not necessarily open up for an alternative narrative and representation of violence.

Whereas certain narrative themes and fragments come to dominate the debates and representations reflected on TV, others naturally tend to disappear. On the whole, there is no real contestation on the issue of force; the use of force rather slips from view as other aspects or ‘problems’ tend to stand in focus. Reflections on what peace-enforcement means, in practice and for the so-called Swedish Self, are overshadowed by discussions concerning practicalities, military affiliations and definitions of progress. Given the rhetoric of the critics, the ‘counter narratives’ paradoxically reinforce rather than challenge the representation of the Swedish identity and military actions as peaceful. In terms of dis/identification and in/visibility, the critics continuously highlight the US activities instead of initiating a debate on ISAF’s and Sweden’s actual mandate and practices – as in what is really peace-enforcement or how did we get here. The idea that peace-enforcement is distinct and differentiated from war making is thus arguably left unchallenged (see e.g. The Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society in SVT 20090814, Aktuellt 21.00).\(^{139}\) Still, of course, on the other hand, the Left Party clearly situates Sweden in an ongoing war.

In July 2010, after nearly half a year with basically no reports on the Swedish mission in Afghanistan, it is reported that the so-called Rules of Engagement of the Swedish troops have shifted on the initiative of the Supreme Commander (SVT 20100707, Rapport 19.30). Swedish soldiers will now be authorised to use ‘lethal force’, even when not considered self-defence. ‘It was a long time ago that Sweden was at war,’ the reporter states, ‘but the question is what the Swedish mission in Afghanistan really is: an armed conflict or a war? Few politicians want to speak openly about that’\(^{140}\) (SVT 20100707, Rapport 19.30). However, some politicians are more than happy to debate the issue, and the reactions from the leftist opposition are quick. In the subsequent news broadcasts, the leaders of the Left Party as well as the Social Democrats question the new instructions. The images that illustrate and

\(^{138}\) In Swedish: ‘hånsynslös nationalism och egoism’

\(^{139}\) Cont. the Green Party Leader in SVT 20090105, Agenda & 20100202, Rapport 19.30/Aktuellt 21.00; the Left Party Leader in SVT 20100108, Aktuellt 21.00.

\(^{140}\) In Swedish: ‘Det var långt Sverige var i krig – men frågan är egentligen vad den svenska insatsen i Afghanistan är? En vapnad konflikt eller ett krig? Få politiker vill öppet tala om det.’
complement the reporter’s summaries of the new Rules of Engagement now suddenly display violence and war. That is to say, the images seem different from those that previously depicted Sweden’s military engagement.\(^9\) Here the soldiers are portrayed as an anonymous crowd, rather than a group of individuals; for instance, the camera is first zooming in on a soldier wearing a helmet and sun glasses, thereafter a line-up of Swedish soldiers are photographed from behind. Other footage depicts a soldier in the dark, shooting intensely into what appears to be an open field (SVT 20100707, Rapport 22.35). Now, the leader of the Left Party keeps repeating that Sweden is at war, while the Social Democratic leader demands to be further informed by the right-wing government.

This is the only time that the new instructions are mentioned; there is no more reporting on the Rules of Engagement. Yet, forthcoming news stories, a month later, reveal how the combat earlier in the summer was far more brutal than what was initially reported by the Armed Forces (SVT 20100825, Rapport 19.30). This is the top story this evening in August 2010 and is announced with the headline ‘It was like hell on earth’. Again, images of war depict the events described: footage from night vision cameras and images of soldiers pointing their automatic weapons into the dark. Swedish soldiers have been involved in a battle that lasted for six days, the news now reveals, and the battle thus represents the most serious confrontation that Swedish soldiers have encountered so far (SVT 20100825, Rapport 19.30). Breaking news, it seems, but these reports are not accompanied by further reflection and problematisation; they do not stir any type of debate, although Sweden, from what it seems given the visual representation, now is closer to war than it has been for a long time.

The reason for the lack of debate might be that this is a time when the search for political consensus begins to take shape and dominate the TV news. The issue of withdrawing has long been a salient feature of the news coverage, especially during the second half of 2009 and throughout 2010. Although the number of soldiers has been increasing, the debates reflected in public service broadcasting have more and more focused on when and how the foreign troops, including the Swedes, can leave Afghanistan and hand over the security responsibility to the Afghan authorities. The debates in Sweden are, of course, very much in line with the international debate on possible exit strategies. In late August 2010, the opposition parties – the Left Party, the Green Party, and the Social Democrats – announce that they have agreed on the question of Afghanistan. They now suggest that the troops should be withdrawn by

\(^9\) If nothing else, these images demonstrate that there could be different ways of portraying the Swedish military undertaking.
2013, beginning already in 2011 (SVT 20100827, Rapport 19.30). The Social Democrats has completely reversed its position, and a withdrawal from Afghanistan is now put forward as an election promise. However, the opposition looses the 2010 election, and the red-green cooperation is put on hold in late October (SVT 20101026, Rapport 19.30).

With the death of a fifth Swedish soldier, on 16 October 2010, and with two soldiers seriously injured two days later, the military situation in Afghanistan is portrayed as chaotic, and worse than ever before (SVT 20101017, Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20101027, Gomorron Sverige). The Supreme Commander is reported to be very clear on the assessment of the Armed Forces: the soldiers must stay in Afghanistan and cannot be withdrawn the next year (20101019, Rapport 19.30/Aktuellt 21.00). The Armed Forces now become, perhaps even more than before, a prominent voice in the coverage on the political debate on staying or withdrawing from Afghanistan; stay, they suggest, or even better, expand! (SVT 20101019, Rapport 19.30/Aktuellt 21.00; SVT 20101021, Aktuellt 21.00).\(^{142}\) Around the same time, in October 2010, after the general election, the opposition begins to negotiate the policy on Afghanistan with the government, and the TV news follows closely the progression of these talks. Now, all the involved politicians talk about is consensus seeking. Consensus is the expectation of the Swedish people, the Prime Minister suggests: ‘I think we all have a responsibility to show the Swedish people that we stand behind the men and women who serve the peace in Afghanistan, by showing our ability to stand together’\(^{143}\) (SVT 20101021, Rapport 19.30). On 1 November, the government and the Social Democrats together with the Green Party finally present a new agreement on the strategy of withdrawing from Afghanistan. The new strategy is to reduce the combat forces from 2012 onwards and then transform the Swedish unit into a supporting force with the prime task of training the Afghan forces. By the year 2014, the ambition is to have withdrawn all combat forces from Afghanistan. At a press conference the Prime Minister elaborates on the benefits of the new agreement:

> I think it is a tremendous strength for the men and women in foreign service that they feel that here is a wide, wider than usual, alliance in Sweden’s parliament for the important work that they perform.\(^{144}\)


\(^{143}\) In Swedish: ‘… jag tycker att vi alla har ett ansvar att inför svenska folket visa att vi står upp bakom de män och kvinnor som tjänar freden på plats i Afghanistan genom att visa förmåga till nationell samling’.

\(^{144}\) In Swedish: ‘Jag tycker det är en väldig styrka för män och kvinnor i utlandstjänst att de känner att här finns en bred, bredare än vanligt, uppställning i Sveriges riksdag för det viktiga arbete de utför.’
Interestingly, but perhaps hardly surprising, the politicians generally stress that it is primarily on behalf of the men and women in Afghanistan – the Swedish soldiers – that they have now reached this final compromise (SVT 20101021, Rapport 19.30; SVT 20101101, Rapport 19.30/Aktuellt 21.00). Politicians’ call for supporting the Swedish men and women in Afghanistan is in line with previous statements from government officials, aimed to publically promote a continued military engagement in Afghanistan. For instance, in reaction to opinion poll results in the summer of 2009, the Minister for Defence chooses to talk about the Swedish people’s solidarity with the soldiers, even though the poll reveals that no more than 42% think it is right that Sweden has combat forces in Afghanistan.

Minister for Defence: Ever since I took office, I’ve been told that there is no support for this mission among the population. But even now, in these precarious times, the Swedish people show that they stand behind the boys and girls that we have in Afghanistan, and that’s good, because right now it’s more important than ever. (SVT 20090814, Aktuellt 21.00)

As no one is opposed to the actual individuals on the ground, justifications based on soldier support are difficult to challenge. If the support for soldiers, rather than the policy on the use of force as such, becomes the focal point of public debate, the political dimension of armed intervention is arguably obscured. The public call and search for consensus, together with the suggestions that consensus seeking is for the sake of the soldiers on the ground, generally serve to background the question of deploying violence, of engaging in violence, and foreground the question of loyalty and tradition. The dilemma of using force generally disappears as an issue altogether.

The leader of the Social Democrats – and thus the leader of the opposition – argues that consensus is of utmost importance in issues related to security policy; consensus is what Social Democratic governments have always strived for, she adds (SVT...

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145 In Swedish: ‘stridande förband’.
146 In Swedish: ‘Jag har hört ända sen jag tillträdde att det fanns inget stöd bland befolkningen för den här insatsen, men även nu i utsatta tider så visar svenska folket att man står bakom de killar och tjejer som vi har i Afghanistan, och det är bra för just nu är det viktigare än nånsin.’
147 Cf. e.g. Basham (2016) on how the celebration of soldiers [both living and dead] makes it hard to question the violence they have and still are engaged in.
By emphasising the issue of consensus seeking and soldier support rather than the principles that the new agreement on the Afghanistan mission fundamentally entails or perhaps forsakes, any further considerations on what the engagement in combat means for the notion of a Swedish Self in international affairs is obstructed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has been dedicated to an episode of escalating violence, during which Swedish soldiers became involved in combat. The escalation of violence between 2008 and 2010 could be considered a potentially dislocatory experience, as the intense involvement in combat did not seem possible to immediately integrate into the horizon of [public] expectation. The violent element of peace-enforcement suddenly became manifest, and the involvement in war-like activities generally seems, at least instinctively, to have disrupted prevalent conceptions of Self and the idea of peace-promoting engagements abroad. Generally, this chapter has sought to delineate how the increased use of force was narrated in public service broadcasting, and what responses emerged in public discourse when peace-enforcement was ‘exposed’ as a violent practice. How is the drastic intensification of violent encounters made intelligible? What is foregrounded, and in turn backgrounded? What do the narrative responses do in terms of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification?

The presentation of empirical observations by no means provides a full account of all that was reported on Afghanistan between 2008 and 2010. Yet, based on the research questions, it has delineated and problematised the most salient narrative themes and critically engaged with the representation of violence. Overall, in terms of narrative responses, the TV coverage on the Swedish military engagement in Afghanistan during this two-year period is in many respects contradictory. First, the events unfolding in Afghanistan are portrayed as exceptional. At the same time, however, the Armed Forces insist they are in line with previous expectations. Second, the Swedish soldiers are depicted as essentially ‘peaceful’ yet are clearly acknowledged as taking part in war-like activities and intense combat. Third, the ISAF engagement is acknowledged as a result of political decisions; yet, the policy on the use of force is nevertheless depicted as merely a reaction – an adjustment – to external factors like the developments on the ground. The narrative structuration is, as it were, far from coherent, which has also been noticed, albeit differently, in previous research on the Swedish so-called ‘catch-all narrative’ (Angstrom & Noreen, 2017; Noreen & Angstrom, 2015).

Beyond these contradictions and the complex set of representations, some general
tendencies can still be summarised and problematised further. The involvement in combat and the ‘killing’ are depicted as exceptional, as a big deal, as something deviating from standard procedures. Yet, different narrative responses serve to undermine this notion and/or discourage any thorough reflections and discussions on the actual mandate and policy on the use of force as such. In other words, different narrative responses serve to naturalise the use of force. Oftentimes, the news coverage is characterised by description and repetition yet generally fails to articulate the use of force as an issue of principle. By repeating the news message frequently enough – Swedish soldiers are yet again in combat, Swedish soldiers are yet again in combat – the involvement in combat ultimately appears, with time, as routine and as the normal state of affairs. Repetition without critical reflection thus makes these events come across as old news, even though they evidently signify breaking news. Perhaps the violent events have actually become old news already by 2010; one can note that although the year 2010 included even more attacks and combat incidents than 2009, the reports on violent events on TV are far less by 2010. Furthermore, the empirical analysis demonstrates that many narrative features in the reporting on Afghanistan convey an impression of continuity rather than disruption. Here, one can bring forward the talk of ever-present risks, the recurring images signalling peace, and the representation of Swedish soldiers as peacekeepers rather than peace-enforcers. To emphasise continuity rather than disruption arguably serves to downplay the experience of dislocation and generally serves to render the use of force invisible. It is the increased use of force that essentially distinguishes peacekeeping from peace-enforcement, but this aspect slips from view if the two are represented as one and the same. To emphasise continuity rather than disruption could also be considered to naturalise the use of force, as the notion that these narrative features essentially reinforce is that the events unfolding in Afghanistan are not really unique and hence of no immediate political relevance. Moreover, in terms of what is made seen and known, the continuous and close focus on individual soldiers and their feelings and personal dilemmas is indeed a salient feature of the TV coverage. It is as if the news is getting too close, arguably at the expense of problematisation. Although the use of force is depicted as a big deal, it is typically rendered an individual concern rather than a national and collective dilemma and responsibility. Essentially, the use of force is displaced to the soldiers.

In terms of dis/identification, the narratives emerging in the TV coverage generally construct a certain representation of the Swedish soldiers and ultimately of Sweden, which largely resonates historical identity constructions. The soldiers are essentially peacekeepers – peacekeeping seems to ‘come naturally’ – although the attacks force...
them to act as warriors. Hence, they fight, even kill, but they are sympathetic and in no way resemble the true warriors of the US army, which here generally come to serve as a significant Other. The depiction of Swedish soldiers is consistent: they are friendly and emotional yet indeed dedicated to the military mission. Although they do not constitute ‘true’ warriors, they are highly professional, mature and well trained. Given these depictions, the TV narratives do not seem to reflect any new forms of identifications. The Swedish soldiers simply haven’t changed; again, one can notice the accentuation of continuity.

Instead of evoking a revision of the policy on the use of force as such, the events in Afghanistan are generally explained by external and situational factors: the security situation has deteriorated and the Swedish troops are thus forced into combat. Hence, generally, violence disappears as a decision and a choice. The responsibility for the policy on the use of force is not ascribed to Sweden or political decision making; violence and the use of force is just a form of adaptation, something that just has to be. That external and situational factors – in other words, the attacks – have forced Swedish soldiers to turn into combat soldiers is of course an accurate description of the conditions on the ground. Yet behind the shifting practices – which a general turn to peace-enforcement actually signifies, and the involvement in combat represents – lie political motivations and decisions. While the violent element of peace-enforcement is made visible through the sudden increase in violence, the violent element of peace-enforcement is at the same time obscured and rendered invisible through – for instance – the pictures of Swedish soldiers’ peaceful conduct. The Swedish military undertaking seems less violent than the American, at the very least. Paradoxically, yet again, when the violent element is ‘exposed’, what is foregrounded is that it has been there all along. In short, violence is thus naturalised as part of previous expectations.
Part III has examined how violence is represented and addressed in public service media, at the time of disruption – when sudden interruptions in ongoing practices need to be made intelligible. The chapters – on Congo, Bosnia and Afghanistan, respectively – have drawn attention to the representation of violence, and discussed how violence is de/naturalised and rendered in/visible, and how the use of force is linked to and/or differentiated from Sweden. To summarise and elaborate on the observations of part III, the section below will briefly outline the patterns and dis/continuities that could be observed over time with regard to the dis/appearance of violence; the forthcoming section will briefly elaborate on the political work of the media representations and responses in terms of de/stabilising the link between policy and identity, and discuss whether they serve to foreground the political dimension of the issue of force.

NARRATIVE RESPONSES

When considering the three periods of disruption altogether, one after the other, one can notice that the representation of violence varies. As expected, of course; times change, circumstances change, our ideas about ourselves and our place in the world change, what we consider tolerable changes. However, the contrasts – in terms of what one as a TV viewer or radio listener gets to ‘see’ and ‘hear’ – are noteworthy. During the heavy fighting in Congo, the events are clearly described as warfare, and the involvement in combat is made visible; the shift from peacekeeping to war is simply brought to light. In the wake of the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia, the representation of peace-enforcement alters, and its signifying feature, its violent dimension, is gradually removed out of sight; ultimately, peace-enforcement comes to appear as peacekeeping. Lastly, during the most violent period of ISAF, the violent element of the Swedish engagement in Afghanistan is in many ways concealed; most prominently, what slips from view is the fact that the use of force is part of policy, that peace-enforcement means violence. Instead, Sweden is often differentiated from practices of war. Although the fighting as such is not hidden from view, it is primarily the peaceful encounters that the audience gets to see and identify with.

In terms of dis/identification, it is striking how the Swedish troops are continuously depicted as ‘non-violent’, even when heavy fighting unfolds. When violence is anticipated and called for (as in Bosnia), there are attempts to link Sweden to combat capabilities and decisiveness, yet when peace-enforcement becomes reality, the Swedish troops are yet again depicted as true peacekeepers. When the use of force is unanticipated (as in Congo and Afghanistan), the Swedish peacekeeping
identity is foregrounded insistently. The representation of Swedish troops as competent yet friendly is clearly a recurring theme. Once they fight, they fight because they are forced to, because they have to adapt; with regard to de/naturalisation, to use force hardly appears as a decision, a political choice. Ultimately, the Swedish troops appear as peacekeepers, now operating in a ‘more violent’ setting. Hence, the ‘uniqueness’ of the Swedish troops – their ‘instinct’ to negotiate first, their peaceful engagement with the locals – does not appear to have been lost, even when they engage in war. They are the ‘same’ boys and girls, just operating in a tougher environment.

The three episodes scrutinised in part III give an idea of how the ‘story’ – or should one say ‘the fitting story’ – of Sweden’s engagement in war-like activities evolves over time; they all represent significant periods in the general shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement – Congo as a point of reference, Bosnia as a turning point, and Afghanistan as a period of culmination. In terms of representation, the violent element seems to be gradually removed to the margins, although ‘peacework’ at large is becoming increasingly violent. The use of force slips from view, as it were, even though the shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement is significant specifically due to the increased level of force that in our days has become the standard. In the most recent episode – ISAF in Afghanistan – the broadcasts even name the Swedish undertaking peacekeeping, not once or twice but consistently. That the killing becomes such a hot topic is thus hardly surprising, as the public reasonably is expecting something different than all-out combat. Whereas the reporting on Congo emphasises the disruptiveness of the outbreak of violence, the coverage on the shift from UNPROFOR to IFOR, and on ISAF, tends to foreground continuity. Ultimately, peace-enforcement is now depicted as more of the same or nothing particularly new. Thus, it is not only that peace-enforcement as a policy, so to speak, is removed out of sight; the use of force is continuously represented as inevitable and a given. Many articulations that could be considered ‘naturalising’ have been presented in the three chapters. During the crisis in Congo, for one, the violence is very rarely linked to Swedish decision making; the use of force is conveyed as a fact rather than a choice. In the last six months of ‘peacekeeping 2.0’ in Bosnia, the broadcastings open up for debating the troops’ capabilities, yet rarely delineate the use of force as such as a dilemma. As the violent element of peace-enforcement becomes manifest in Afghanistan, it is foregrounded as unavoidable, part of normal routines, an individual concern; essentially, it is differentiated from political decision making and alternatives simply seem hard to envision. The tendency to turn the issue of disruption into a matter of local concern.
and individual dilemma is especially salient in the reporting on Congo and Afghanistan, where the reports seem to prioritise ‘closeness’ at the expense of the ‘bigger picture’. Here, the violent element is ‘displaced’ to the soldiers and differentiated from Swedish policy; in other words, one can note an individualisation of responsibility. The audience thus gets to ‘see’ and ‘know’ the individual soldiers’ worries, convictions, sufferings even, while the questions of national concern and responsibility slip from view. In a sense, one gets close to the soldiers, yet distant from the practice of violence; what the (new) practices mean and how we ‘got here’ never really seem to be the issue.

DE/STABILISING AND DE/POLITICISING

Part III has been dedicated to (potentially) dislocatory experiences related to the use of force: events ‘that cannot immediately be integrated into the horizon of expectations’ and which essentially threaten ‘the sedimented routines’ (Nabers, 2014: 277). More specifically, the chapters have been dedicated to moments when the discourse of ‘peacework’ is disrupted by experiences that do not seem consistent with prevalent self-representation, moments when the link between identity and policy on the use of force, or the practice of violence, seems to be more difficult to reconcile than at other times. The preceding section has briefly summarised how the representations in public service media – also in times of disruption – serve to naturalise the use of force, render violence invisible and differentiate Sweden from the use of force. Given the general observations, how do the dis/appearances of violence in public service broadcastings de/stabilise the link between identity and policy, and how does the representation of violence in public service broadcastings serve to de/politicise the issue of using force?

With regard to the link between identity and policy, disruptive events signify moments of destabilisation. As the three chapters have demonstrated, the unexpected experiences ‘on the ground’ and the representation of those experiences have initially made the link between identity and policy seem incoherent. As in: Is Sweden now at war? Or, as in the case of Bosnia: Why isn’t Sweden at war? It is when the unexpected occurs that policy and identity suddenly appear to be at odds. And in the event of the unexpected, subjects respond. As the chapters have demonstrated, the narrative responses emerging in public service media in various ways serve to restabilise the link between identity and policy; the new experiences and the dramatic events unfolding ‘on the ground’ cause destabilisation, yet one can also note how the narrative responses that emerge serve to make the use of force appear comprehensible. On the whole, the empirical chapters reveal how the (apparent)
imbalance is adjusted between what one expected and what one gets to ‘see’, and thus how ‘stability’ partly and temporarily is recreated.

The link between policy and identity is restabilised through naturalising moves, selective visibilities and processes of differentiation. One can notice how all of the three processes manifest themselves during the three episodes scrutinised in part III. In terms of invisibilisation, violence is either removed out of sight or made to appear ‘peaceful’ or ‘defensive’. In terms of naturalisation, the fact that violence is part of policy – and thus a decision and responsibility – is either backgrounded, or violence is made to appear inevitable and as something that ‘just happened’. In terms of disidentification, the Swedish soldiers are defined as true peacekeepers, or the focus on significant Others serves to put the Swedish military undertakings in a different light. Evidently, these processes interweave and often reinforce each other. Although many voices and representations in public service media, not least during the fighting in Congo in the 1960s, make visible and denaturalise the use of force, and link the use of force to Sweden, the representation of violence generally – over time – does not seem to profoundly disrupt the Swedish notion of Self or the grand narrative on Sweden’s engagement in military peace operations. In none of the three cases does the (potentially) dislocatory experience imply ‘change’ – at least not with regard to identification. During Bosnia, which in terms of context is the odd one out, the dislocatory experience seems to enable a shift in the policy on the use of force, yet once the shift becomes manifest, peace-enforcement appears simply as more of the same. As it were: once again, everything seems to be in order. With regard to the case of Congo, on its part, one could add – to be fair – that it took almost 30 years before Sweden again engaged in anything but peacekeeping.

Essentially, the event of the unexpected is a potentially political moment, as subjects are forced or enabled to become more reflexive. The event of the unexpected thus opens up for (re)consideration and for potentially thinking, doing and identifying differently. Do the narratives formed on Swedish public service television and radio open up for critical reflection, for new ways of thinking, doing and being? Given how violence dis/appears in the broadcastings – as has already been discussed – the representation of violence in the public service media arguably prevents rather than opens up for public contestation and a public debate on the Swedish engagement in the international use of force. The representation of the violent element of peace-enforcement (or in Congo, of the incidents of war) rather serves to make the use of force comprehensible and, paradoxically, the representation of violence often makes the use of force seem to be part of the expected, part of the normal state of affairs. What dominates the media representation of violence is thus
what Glynos and Howarth (2007) termed an ideological response to dislocation; a response which ‘aims to repair and cover over the dislocatory event before it becomes the source of a new political construction’ (p. 117).
CONCLUSION: WAR AT A DISTANCE

War is of interest for the instrumental reason that it stops political and international theorists from lapsing into abstract thinking. It helps us to ‘unlearn’ ‘simplification’ and ‘to become fluent in the art and the language of “concrete” thoughts and feelings’. It encourages engaged social criticism of what is.

(Owens, 2007: 149)

There can most certainly never be a true representation of war. Waging war is, by most accounts, a bloody, horrifying, devastating experience. To ‘enforce peace’ may also – for (Swedish) soldiers – from time to time be tedious work, a boring affair; it may be a nightmare at times, perhaps exciting at other times. With all diverging kinds of meaning, how should experiences of violence, the engagement in violence, be accounted for? For most of us ‘at home’, who observe from a distance, the practice of violence – the use of force – is radically intangible; as Der Derian (2000) notes, war has always been a virtual reality, impossible to immediately take in. On that account, as we cannot know war, yet time and again come to authorise it, it is important to understand how we come to know it, and whether what we see and hear encourage or discourage ‘engaged social criticism of what is’. When the ‘wars’ we engage in are happening elsewhere – away from home turf – how we at home come to know and understand war is crucial for understanding the making possible of violence and how processes of normalisation unfold and take hold. How we come to know and understand also has democratic implications, as it affects to what extent we could be considered to partake in the decisions that are taken in our name. As ‘peacework’ is becoming increasingly violent, which the turn to peace-enforcement shows, how are war(like) operations presented and represented? What do we get to see and hear, possibly even know and feel?

HOW VIOLENCE DIS/APPEARS

The major concern of this book has been to critically consider the conditions of possibility that Swedish public narratives on peace-enforcement and their representation of violence create for public reflection and (re)consideration regarding the use of force. To expand upon this issue, the empirical chapters have examined how violence – the use of force – dis/appears in the stories told in political debates and public service media. It has uncovered how violence dis/appears as a choice and dilemma, how it dis/appears as a reality, an actuality, and how it dis/appears as our practice and problem. As part of the study, the chapters have also, in the concluding
discussions, elaborated on what the dis/appearances of violence could tell us about how the link between identity and policy is de/stabilised and how the issue of using force is de/politicised. In other words, the concluding discussions have examined how war[like] activities come to disturb the notion of Self or are made to appear consistent with common self-representation, and how the issue of using force is moved between the realm of ‘the political’ and that of ‘the social’.

The book seeks – in primarily three ways – to add to the literature on the representation of war and violence and to previous research on the Swedish experience of peacekeeping and war. The rest of this section will focus on the three contributions; it will describe and discuss the importance of looking at a (radically) different case, of advancing a conceptual framework for the study of dis/appearances, and of reading the Swedish narratives on peace-enforcement with a critical gaze and thereby telling a different kind of story. Through these three contributions, the study seeks to complement as well as complicate previous observations and conclusions regarding the representation of war and violence; therein, it seeks to add further detail to our understanding of how violence could dis/appear in public discourse and ultimately how in/visibility plays into processes of de/politicisation and normalisation.

As the analytical process has been an abductive and iterative process, truly defined by the moving back and forth between empirics and theory, the conceptual framework that has been presented is indeed a research result in its own right. The conceptual framework is based on the observations from a (radically) different case and a detailed empirical exploration, and thus adds specification to but also complicates the observations found in previous literature on the representation of war and violence. The analysis has sought to expand our understanding of how violence may dis/appear in public discourse and what the political work of in/visibility may actually be. Even though the conceptual framework represents a research result, it has at the same time opened up for a critical reading of the narratives on peace-enforcement emerging in the Swedish public discourse. As it were, the conceptual framework has proved necessary in order to shed light on how the link between identity and policy is de/stabilised over time and how the issue of using force is de/politicised in the Swedish context.

A different kind of story
Above all, this book has presented a comprehensive and systematic empirical analysis, which covers a long period of time and which includes a collection of various empirical materials. Through a critical engagement with the Swedish narratives on peace-enforcement, as they emerge in the public sphere, the book has
sought to advance a different kind of story from what we usually get to hear in public discourse as well as in previous research. In contrast to most previous research on the contemporary Swedish experience of peacekeeping and war, this book has offered a study of dis/continuities in the representation of violence over time, a study which includes a broad range of military interventions (also those which are rarely examined), and most importantly, a study of the political work of the narratives that emerge to account for military contributions to peace-enforcement. The focus of the book has been to capture how violence dis/appears in the stories we tell as we try to grasp what war\(\text{like}\) activities are and mean. The book has also shed light on what the stories we tell do – with our conceptions of reality and our conceptions of ourselves. Fundamentally, the study has exposed how the (fitting) story of Sweden’s engagement in war\(\text{like}\) activities evolves over time. All that has been said and displayed concerning the Swedish involvement in peace-enforcement has evidently not been covered in this study. Yet, the empirical material is comprehensive and many critical periods and events have been explored.

Part II has uncovered how violence is represented in Swedish parliamentary debates, during specific interventions and over time. Considered separately, the parliamentary debates on each intervention include a variety of political voices and conceptions of reality; there are often a plurality of accounts and perspectives. Yet, brought together, four narrative themes appear salient over time, all of which relate to the question of in\(\text{visibility, dis}/\text{identification, and de}/\text{naturalisation. First, the violent element is often displaced to other actors. Second, the use of force is often redefined. Third, changes in practice are often portrayed as a continuation rather than a disruption. And forth, the ‘problems’ related to the use of force are frequently swept aside and left un debated (see page 150 for more elaboration). In terms of war’s ‘seeness’ in the public sphere, the empirical observations generally suggest that the use of force largely disappears both as a reality, a dilemma and as our reality and dilemma; hence, importantly, the general shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement, and how the two practices differ, has largely been left unclarified and un debated.

Whereas part II has mainly exposed the continuities in the representation of violence over time and in the ‘normal’ processes of politics, as it were, part III has zoomed in on specific events, or episodes, and how the use of force is represented and addressed in public service media in times of disruption. The three episodes represent significant periods in the general shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement – Congo as a point of reference, Bosnia as a turning point, and Afghanistan as a period of culmination. The narrative themes identified in
parliamentary debates are salient also in the public service media material related to these (potentially) dislocatory moments. Thus, the analysis of specific events reveals how public service media reproduce and reinforce the political narratives on peace-enforcement taking shape in parliamentary debates. Yet the study in part III also brings to light how the discursive processes of invisibility, de/naturalisation and dis/identification come into play when violence cannot as easily be rendered ‘abstract’, considered a concern of someone else, or swept aside.

Although the war-like dimension is made visible during the heavy fighting in Congo during the autumn of 1961, the Swedish peacekeeping identity is foregrounded insistently. It would be an overstatement to suggest that the violence is hypervisible, yet the military doings and perspective clearly dominate the broadcasts; as a radio listener one gets so ‘close’ to the hostilities on the ground that the broader, more principal issues concerning the policy on the use of force disappear. The use of force does not appear as a Swedish (and) political choice and is not presented as a dilemma as such, although the episodes of fighting by all means seem shocking and disturbing.

In the period during which the UNPROFOR is replaced by IFOR in Bosnia in 1995, the turn to peace-enforcement is ultimately represented as nothing particularly new. Initially, the lack of force incites a call for more robust military means and ‘the peacekeeper’ is described as a ‘velour soldier’ – soft, outdated and passé. Yet when peace-enforcement eventually becomes a ‘reality’, it is nevertheless generally portrayed as peacekeeping, as more of the same. The violent element of peace-enforcement, as opposed to peacekeeping, thus slips from view. While practical concerns are continuously foregrounded, the principal issues related to the shift from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement are often backgrounded.

During the two-year period between 2008 and 2010 in Afghanistan, a period marked by escalating violence, Swedish soldiers are consistently and throughout portrayed as ‘peaceful’, even in light of reports of heavy fighting. The combat incidents are by all means represented as major events, but the use of force – specifically the act of killing – is depicted as a local concern, an individual dilemma, rather than a collective concern and responsibility. While the combat incidents are not necessarily concealed as such, it is the peaceful encounters that come into view; the fact that peace-enforcement essentially is a violent practice, and that the combat incidents therefore ought to have been expected, is hardly foregrounded.

The book has covered the period between 1960 and 2014. Although ‘peacework’ during this period has become increasingly violent, the Swedish troops still appear as peacekeepers, now just operating in a ‘more violent’ setting. The Swedish troops still
A conceptual framework

The book has brought together the (critical) literature on the representation of war and violence with poststructuralist writings on de/politicisation and identification. These bodies of literature have been crucial in order to capture how violence dis/appears in narratives on peace-enforcement and for discussing the political work of these dis/appearances. Three concepts have been advanced and combined into a conceptual framework – de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification. The conceptual framework has laid the foundation for a theoretical discussion on the dis/appearances of violence, but also served as a methodological basis. Through this conceptual framework, the book has – in terms of a methodological contribution – offered an illustration of how dis/appearances of violence in public discourse could be studied. Therein, in terms of conceptual and theory development, the conceptual framework and the empirical analysis have added specification to the various ways in which violence dis/appears and, in turn, the various ways in which violence is rendered in/visible, de/naturalised and linked to or differentiated from Self.

In similarity with Scarry’s (1987) effort to classify how the language of war either omits or redescribes the ‘content’ of war – that is: the reciprocal violence – this book has mapped how violence dis/appears in narratives on peace-enforcement. Yet, in contrast to much of the literature on how war is made seen and known, the study of this book is indeed very empirically grounded. In particular, it specifies – in an empirical sense – how the concept of in/visibility relates to and overlaps with the concepts of de/naturalisation and dis/identification. The empirical study has illustrated how in/visibility interweaves with processes of dis/identification and
de/naturalisation, and ultimately – as will be elaborated later – how in/visibility of violence plays into the discursive processes of de/stabilising the link between identity and policy and de/politicising the issue of using force. Importantly, the book has argued and revealed that the framework’s three concepts – at least in the Swedish case – all are relevant if seeking to capture how violence dis/appears in public discourse and to understand what these dis/appearances come to mean.

The study has found that in the Swedish case the processes of de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification often – but not always – unfold in conjunction and reinforce each other. It has pointed to the role of in/visibility in processes of de/naturalisation and dis/identification and, in turn, the role of de/naturalisation and dis/identification in acts of in/visibilisation. In other words, the analysis has illustrated how violence is often rendered invisible yet also naturalised or differentiated from Sweden, or is naturalised and differentiated from Sweden yet also rendered invisible. As the concluding chapter of part II has argued, violence slips from view and comes to appear ‘natural’ or the concern of someone else by the continuous focus on other actors, the redefinition of the practice of violence, the concealment of disruption, and through ‘noisy silences’ – as when the ‘problems’ related to the use of force are glossed over.

First, by continuously focusing on other actors, the violent element of the Swedish contribution is obscured and displaced to others, while the use of force doesn’t appear as a Swedish choice and problem. Consider, for instance, the idea that ‘the UN is in charge’ during ONUC in Congo (part II); such a statement essentially differentiates Sweden from responsibility and agency, renders the Swedish engagement in violence less visible, and makes the use of force appear to be out of Sweden’s control. Second, by redefining the practice of violence, Sweden is differentiated from the use of offensive violence; peace-enforcement basically comes to appear as non-violence, and is consequently reduced to a non-problem. Consider, for instance, how the concept of peacekeeping often is used to define activities of peace-enforcement, especially during the transition from UNPROFOR to IFOR in Bosnia (part II) and during times of escalating violence in Afghanistan (part III). Third, by concealing disruption and changes in practice, the (increased) use of force slips from view and appears as a continuation of previous routines, with little significance in terms of policy. Consider, for instance the talk of tradition during ISAF and OUP (part II), how the shift from MONUC to Operation Artemis in Congo is portrayed as a continuation rather than a change of direction (part II), how the shift from UNPROFOR to IFOR finally comes to be defined as ‘more of the same’ (part II & III), or how the talk of increasing risks rather than changing conduct come to
dominate the most critical period in Afghanistan (part III). Fourth, by sweeping aside the more principal problems related to the use of force, the ‘content’ of war is removed out of sight, and appears as something that just is or has to be, rather than a policy decision, which comes with a certain responsibility. Consider, for instance, the continuous talk of UN loyalty, ‘the UN calls’ or the Swedish ‘tradition’. Consider also the continuous declarations that Swedish soldiers are being forced into fighting; such declarations make the use of force as a policy slip from view, while offensive violence is differentiated from Sweden and linked to the opponents. Such a representation also naturalises offensive violence, as the use of force appears inevitable. Similarly, the focus on risk also removes the (increased) use of force out of sight, and makes (offensive) violence appear as an unavoidable aspect of military affairs.

Violence is – of course – always present in the political debates and media broadcastings; it is not necessarily that the Swedish engagement in violence is concealed as such or that the increased use of force or involvement in combat isn’t depicted as something that one could do without. Yet, as will also be elaborated later, how violence comes into view matters. In line with previous research, the empirical study has demonstrated how violence may be rendered visible but at the same time rendered invisible. For instance, although the violent events as such (at times) are brought to light, violence as a policy and our political decision may concurrently be removed out of sight; in other words, when violence is actually brought to light, it is rarely articulated and foregrounded as a policy-related dilemma or Swedish choice. As the chapter on Operation Artemis (part II) exemplifies, the violent element of the peace-enforcement operation is not concealed as such – it is in fact debated as a rather horrendous military undertaking – yet the use of force nevertheless appears as a matter of course, as something that just is or will be. Moreover, as the chapter on TV representations during Afghanistan (part III) argues, when the combat incidents are brought to light, violence is primarily represented as an individual dilemma for the Swedish soldiers on the ground. The soldiers, in turn, are depicted as true peacekeepers. Finally, during ONUC in Congo in the 1960s (parts II & III), the violent encounters are certainly spoken about and made visible, but responsibility is ascribed to the UN and/or the combat incidents are articulated as a one-time thing; the use of force is thus rendered invisible as a Swedish decision and thus as a Swedish practice.

This means that de/naturalisation, in/visibilisation and dis/identification do not necessarily unfold in conjunction and reinforce each other. Rather, one may say that when violence comes to appear as a Swedish ‘reality’ and practice, it often disappears as a choice or a problem; when peace-enforcement reveals itself as a violent activity,
it generally slips from view as a decision and responsibility. Similarly, when violence comes to appear as a problem, it often disappears as a Swedish activity or dilemma.

A (radically) different case

If taking seriously the assumption that structure and social relations are radically contingent, we need to pay regard to different kinds of contexts and different kinds of cases, set in different times. The literature on the representation of war and violence mostly builds on observations from the US or UK context, often from the post-Cold War period; previous literature (therefore) also often centres on very particular (and partly new) modes of warfare, such as ‘shock and awe’, drone warfare or targeted killings. Generally, it almost seems as if the experiences of the US and the UK have come to define the Western experience of warfare entirely. To complement this literature, the book has taken a close look at a case that is (radically) different, both in terms of collective memory, foreign policy legacy and war experience. Throughout the 20th century, Sweden has built an image of itself as a nation of peace and a nation at peace. In comparison with the cases most often explored in previous literature on the representation of war and violence, Sweden thus stands out in terms of what’s expected; whilst war is so persistently ‘present’, even hypervisible, in the US context, and no longer represents an exception but the rule, a Swedish engagement in war or combat is still an event of the unexpected. Thus, as noted earlier, Sweden is more or less a ‘most likely case’ for politicisation and dislocation once Swedish soldiers appear to engage in fighting.

The ‘unexpected’ – here: Swedish troops engaging in war(like) activities – opens up for subjects to respond and reflect; yet, even so, the violence that Sweden engages in almost seems to remain ‘unnoticed’ and forgotten. As has been demonstrated, the observation (a la Lucaites and Simons, 2017) that war and violence is already visible does not really apply to the Swedish case. The over-time analysis rather suggests that the violent element of military intervention does not become more visible with time (cf. e.g. Coker, 2012), but rather the reverse; as ‘peacework’ becomes more violent and as we come to authorise interventions increasingly similar to actions of war, the violent ‘content’ of armed peacework seems to be removed out of sight. In terms of visibility, both in regard to the parliamentary debates and public service media, one can note that the Congo experience in the early 1960s somewhat differs from the cases of the post-Cold War period. As expected perhaps. Yet, as it appears, the more (often) Sweden engages in war(like) operations, the less we get to ‘see’ of its ‘content’.

Now, the situation in the US (or the UK) is reasonably different, with

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1 For instance, as Lucaites and Simons (2017) note: the US ‘has been at war for 93 per cent of its history’ (p. 1).
representations of ‘shiny happy warfare’, an excess of war/excess of visibility or with war as a spectacle or a spectator sport (see page 14). The ‘problem’ of the Swedish context is not that war and violence is hypersvisible, or that we see too much, possibly even enjoy it, but rather that violence is all too often rendered invisible. Thus, Lucaites and Simons’ (2017) conclusion that citizens need to ‘acknowledge what they already know’, and ‘to look differently at what they already see’ (p. 11), does not necessarily have as much bearing on the Swedish context as it has on the US context. In terms of how reality is constituted through representation and acts of repetition, it is not images of spectacular bombardment – with ‘green flashes at the sound of bombing fire’ (Chouliaraki, 2007: 133) – that becomes the Swedish war experience; nor is it images of wounded soldiering bodies (Welland, 2017) or intimate and messy footage of combat from helmetcam recordings (McSorley, 2012). In the Swedish case, it is rather the peaceful encounters that become the real; it is the absence of fighting that generally becomes peace-enforcement. Although the use of force may be described and depicted, it is – if anything – the peacekeeper that is hypersvisible in Swedish public discourse; the peacekeeping subject is continuously reproduced and displayed. To paraphrase Welland (2017), it is through the peacekeeper figure that Swedish engagement in war and violence comes to be understood, not necessarily – as in the UK – through the figure of the liberal warrior. Ultimately, the heightened visibility of ‘the peacekeeper’ and the peaceful encounters render invisible the use of force as such and other war-like aspects of so-called peace interventions.

The book has complicated the notion of war’s in/visibility in Western public discourse, but also – through the conceptual framework and the empirical analysis – sought to further specify the role of in/visibility in processes of normalisation and de/politicisation. Previous literature has of course elaborated on how representations of war and violence and arrangements of visibility serve to normalise and de/politicise war engagements and make the use of force possible (e.g. Butler, 2009; Gregory, 2015; McSorley, 2012; Toros & Mavelli, 2014; Welland, 2017). As previous literature shows, visibility of combat, destruction and death is not ‘enough’ to encourage reflection and (re)consideration; visibility in itself does not necessarily spur a political debate on the use of force. On the contrary, previous observations from the US and the UK context rather seem to suggest that an ‘excess’ of images and visibility, of warring bodies or of weapons of war, may serve to normalise and depoliticise war-making.

The literature on the representation of war and the in/visibility of violence often points to how specific forms or aspects of violence are persistently ‘present’ while, for

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2 See also e.g. Strand & Berndtsson (2015: 241-243) on how ‘the peacekeeper’ is constructed as the ideal soldier in recruitment discourses in Sweden.
instance, the *victims* of war in turn are rendered invisible; these arrangements of visibility and frames of war often serve to make possible and depoliticise the engagement in war and the injuring of others. Hence, in many Western contexts, war is shown and known, although undoubtedly shown and known in very particular ways – ways that make the use of force appear inevitable, as a national sacrifice or even glorious. Yet, in terms of war’s ‘presence’ in the West and in our time, this book has in contrast to earlier accounts more specifically pointed to the discursive absence and disappearance of violence in the public narratives that emerge to account for military intervention and, as will be elaborated later, how this absence has democratic implications; it has examined the *invisibility* of state violence as such and how this – just as (*hyper*)visibility – may serve to depoliticise and ultimately, in the long run, normalise engagements in war. In the Swedish context – a (radically) different case – it becomes very clear how the invisibility of fighting but also acts of disidentification plays into the naturalisation of violence and ultimately processes of normalisation and depoliticisation. It also becomes clear how the disappearances of violence serve to recreate stability between identity and policy. To fully understand the political work of war’s *in*visibilities and the normalisation of state violence, we thus need to look more closely at how war ‘comes home’ in various contexts. In short, to make sure that current debates on the representation of war and violence do not lapse, so to speak, into generalisation and abstraction, different kinds of cases and different kinds of war-like practices should be systematically and continuously explored.

**WHEN VIOLENCE DIS/APPEARS**

The narratives on peace-enforcement that this book has examined generally reproduce the notion of Sweden as a state *not* engaged in war, a state *not* engaged in so-called offensive violence; waging war, it seems, is what *others* do. If Sweden nevertheless engages in combat, it is because it is forced upon the Swedish troops on the ground. Still, ever since the 1990s, Sweden has continuously taken part in war-like interventions; and as these so-called humanitarian interventions essentially represent ‘wars of choice’, Sweden has in an active manner *chosen* to take part. If taking seriously the empirical observations of this book, Sweden’s peacekeeping identity seems to be so deep-rooted that Swedish troops can engage in war-like activities at a distance – *over there* – without ever truly disrupting the notion of Self. Through rendering violence *less* visible, making it appear as a natural continuation of previous routines, while differentiating the violent activities from Sweden – the grand narrative of Sweden as a peace-loving state that has stayed out of war for over 200
years is made to seem credible and convincing. The argument of the book has been that the dis/appearances of violence in narratives on peace-enforcement ultimately serve to de/stabilise the link between identity and policy, and in parallel de/politicise the issue of using force. As has been demonstrated in the empirical study, naturalising moves, selective visibilities, and processes of differentiation serve to adjust the link between policy and identity and recreate stability, while these adjustments concurrently serve to remove the issue of using force from the sphere of the political to that of the social and thus keep the ‘normalised order’ of armed peacework in place. In the Swedish case, one can see how these processes manifest themselves both in times of disruption and in the continuous processes of ‘normal’ politics. These disappearances are thus part, one could say, of the continuous process of normalisation and the process of ‘forgetting’ the political dimension of peace-enforcement.

It is not, of course, that violence is rendered invisible altogether, not at all debated; violence is not, as it were, completely absent, totally ‘disappeared’ in Swedish public discourse. But how violence comes into view matters, as also previous literature has noted. The political work of visibility is obviously conditioned upon the narrative context, which provides meaning and explanation; hence, visibility can do different kinds of political work. Just as one in the Swedish case can notice that the link between identity and policy at times is disrupted and destabilised by violent events or, as in Bosnia, the lack of force, one can occasionally see that the political dimension of peace-enforcement is foregrounded in the debates and broadcatings. With the ‘over time’ perspective one can, as noted earlier, observe how the link between identity and policy is continuously destabilised and adjusted, and how the use of force is continuously moved between the realm of the social and that of the political. All cases, except perhaps Operation Artemis (part II), include articulations of dissent and debates on what the Swedish troops actually could or should engage in. The representation of the events in Bosnia in 1995, for instance, indeed opens up for new identifications to emerge and for a change of practice. The declarations that Sweden takes part in war in Afghanistan or that Swedish intelligence is linked to the bomb raids in Libya also steer the debates towards more critical questions. Most of the time, however, the articulations of critique and dissent never truly challenge the policy of peace-enforcement as such, the Swedish conception of Self, or the common ways of talking and representing. And as the chapters in part III have shown – critical moments of disruption never really seem to translate into what one may call dislocatory moments, at least not regarding the use of force.

In terms of conditions of possibility for reflection and (re)consideration at home at
the time of intervention, the assumption here is that stories are part of, as well as create, certain frames of intelligibility, frames through which we see and evaluate the practice of using force. When all we at home get to know about war are the stories told, the frames of intelligibility that such stories create or offer shape the way we see, understand and act. The representation of violence in the public narratives on peace-enforcement thus has an important function as it shapes how we come to know what we are authorising. It would be reasonable to suggest that for reflection and (re)consideration to be encouraged, violence ought to appear as a reality, a dilemma and as ‘our’ reality and dilemma. Our engagement in violent practices should thus be brought to light, problematised and linked to the notion of Self. The act of problematising the use of force and making it visible while also recognising one’s own role in violent practices, may open up for critical reflection, whereas the act of concealing the violent element of peace-enforcement and/or making it appear as the only way forward, as ‘business as usual’, as someone else’s decision and/or practice, reasonably closes down reflection and discussion on our role in war-making. When the link between identity and policy is kept stabilised and the issue of force is essentially removed from the political processes of contestation, there simply isn’t much room for a public debate on the engagement in peace-enforcement. As violence is removed out of sight, or is depicted as the concern of someone else, or as a natural aspect of military affairs, the possibility for reflection and (re)consideration is reduced; reflection on the implications of using force, what violence means for us and others, is discouraged, even opposed. Now, if violence is gradually seen as a routine, hence becoming a routine, while the ‘content’ of war and its devastating effects are becoming less perceivable, war reasonably becomes easier to wage.

However, it is not that the dis/appearances of violence explored in this book alone make violence possible. Representations of violence are always situated within broader, sometimes conflicting, conflict narratives and discourses, which make warfare and the use of force appear rational, legitimate, necessary and so forth. The narratives on peace-enforcement that here have been the object of study also encompass and reflect a broad set of ideas, values, identity constructions and discourses. As stated earlier, neither is the argument that visible violence in any way equals a politicisation of the use of force; that it, alone, opens up for political conflict, public contestation and the imagining of alternatives – of something different. Given the observations from the Swedish case, however, one may suggest that visibility reasonably could be thought of as a precondition for denaturalisation and in turn politicisation of the use of force. If violence – hypothetically – is rendered invisible altogether, the use of force has already been moved from the realm of the political – it
just doesn’t seem to be. To be considered a dilemma and a choice, violence evidently needs to come into view and be brought to light, and it needs to be brought to light as a Swedish practice and reality. As violence becomes an abstract phenomenon, unimaginable or even considered absent, essentially a practice associated with someone or something else, there just isn’t much to think about or ponder over. Hence, to withhold the fact that the ‘use of force’ means the use of force reasonably prevents public contestation from arising, which is a crucial aspect of depoliticisation. On the other hand, to communicate that peace-enforcement essentially is a violent practice, an ethical dilemma and a political decision, which possibly changes ‘who we are’, is a way to open up the scope for political choice and agency, for critical thinking. As Zehfuss (2007) notes: ‘war, with its inextricable link to death, confronts us with stark choices’ (p. 30). Therefore, we should (be able to) think about the use of force as a practice and policy. Essentially, it is a democratic necessity to talk about, recognise, and make the use of force visible, so we all – as Tester (2012) puts it – can ‘sit around it’ ‘like a table’ and ‘enter into discussion with one another about what it might mean to us’ (p. 68). Not necessarily for the purpose of rational deliberation or for reaching consensus, but for self-reflection.

OVER THERE/OVER HERE: VIOLENCE AND DEMOCRATIC IMPLICATIONS

In late 2017 a number of articles were published in the Swedish press, which questioned the Swedish government’s vagueness regarding the role of Swedish elite forces in Iraq (Gummesson, 2017a & 2017b). Evidently, what the elite forces were actually doing in Iraq was rather unknown. Yet, it is the Swedish public that ultimately has to answer for the practices that the Swedish Armed Forces engage in. The problem, as it were, of narratives on peace-enforcement is not whether they succeed in ‘selling’ war or mobilising support – which generally is the focus of the literature on strategic narratives – but whether and how they make us see, know and feel what we are authorising. Hence, making visible, problematising and recognising one’s own role in war(like) operations is a question of ‘anchoring’ the decisions on the use of force that are repeatedly taken. The ‘support’ and ‘consensus’ that the politicians so urgently call for and refer to is not real if the public is unsure or unaware of the terms of involvement. As the empirical observations from the parliamentary debates on peace-enforcement have shown, the violent element of peace-enforcement tends to slip from view and appears as ‘business as usual’ as consensus prevails. Accordingly, given the Swedish political culture of consensus-seeking, the lack of critical reflection on the use of force in public discourse is problematic; when are we, so to speak, ever to reflect on and (re)consider the shift
from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement and what the use of force means for us and others? Fundamentally, in/visibility, de/naturalisation and dis/identification concern questions of power, as it relates to the processes of seeking to delimit the field of perception and seeking to control what can be contested. The concepts of in/visibility, de/naturalisation and dis/identification expose how our use of violence ‘disappears’ from the common conception of peace-enforcement and the engagement in wars happening elsewhere. And ultimately, conceptions of peace-enforcement that essentially keep violence out of sight, out of mind, foster the reproduction of war as a social continuity. To keep violence out of sight, out of mind is quite simply part of a broader process of normalisation.

While concealment essentially may make war(like) operations possible, concealment may just as well make war(like) operations impossible. As part III has explored, once the violent ‘content’ of peace-enforcement is exposed, revealed, the notion of Self is disrupted, and the use of force hence seems ‘shocking’ and ‘impossible’ unless the link between policy and identity is ‘restabilised’. In the Swedish debate, to be or not to be at war usually seems to be the question; yet beyond these struggles over definitions, the use of force – as a policy and practice – often remains unproblematised, kept out of sight, displaced to others. Consider, for instance, the parliamentary debates on ISAF in Afghanistan, when representatives continue to dispute the label of ‘war’ but generally ‘fail’ to debate the issue of using force and the practice of peace-enforcement. It almost seems as if the policy of contributing to peace-enforcement never has been settled, discussed or examined. But, if or once the so-called peace operation, the ‘non-war’, is acknowledged as a war, becomes a war, while the use of force as such has not been accounted for, acknowledged and justified, public support for using violent means (to resolve conflicts or stop atrocities) may very well be lost. Hence, in/visibility, de/naturalisation and dis/identification have important implications for democracy, whether it be representative, participatory or radical forms of democracy that come to mind. The formation of ‘successful’ so-called strategic narratives may very well be effective in the short term, to reach consensus on specific interventions, yet narratives that conceal and essentially depoliticise the use of force could hardly be thought to foster democratic legitimacy in the long run.

That violence ‘disappears’ is not only problematic for reasons concerning democratic legitimacy; it is most certainly also a problem for those sent out on peace-enforcement missions, in the name of the state, and who eventually will return. When the so-called ‘peacekeeping soldiers’ return from war(like) operations, (perhaps) with experiences far different from what the general public can anticipate, envision or
imagine, the distance and discrepancy between here and there becomes manifest. As Henriksen (2010) has noted: an increased distance between those who fight and the public undermines the legitimacy of individual experiences of combat confrontation and the human costs that come with it. As the violent element of peace-enforcement ‘disappears’ in public discourse, there is generally a risk that the (Swedish) public may become increasingly unaware of the role of the armed forces in wars in ‘distant’ places, and the combat they occasionally get involved in ‘over there’. To borrow Henriksen’s (2010) argument, this is what essentially makes war ‘virtual’, not necessarily new technology per se.

How war ‘comes home’ – how the use of force comes to be seen and known – clearly has implications for the relationship between here and there. If violence slips from view and/or is dealt with as a concern of someone else, as something that just has to be, a ‘natural’ part of foreign affairs, we have distanced ourselves from the practices we authorise and are responsible for. And as the ‘gap’ between here and there widens, violence becomes an abstract phenomenon while its concrete consequences are likely to be kept out of mind and eventually – at worst – be considered unreal. In terms of war at a distance, it is essentially the physical distance between here and there that makes possible and makes way for invisibilisation and disidentification. As violence is happening elsewhere and far off, it is always an abstract and intangible event, which makes violence possible to render invisible, disregard and ‘forget’, and displace to others. In turn, processes of invisibilisation and disidentification but also naturalisation indeed reinforce the notion of distance between here and there, between ourselves and the practices we authorise. Although the ‘wars of choice’ indeed allow us to reflect on and (re)consider our engagement in the use of force – as it, so to speak, is up to us to decide – the ‘distant war’ still rarely materialises into a political moment. Though we choose to engage and take part, these wars continue – it seems – to represent wars truly fought at a distance.
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Militära fredsinsatser och interventioner är sedan länge ett etablerat fenomen i internationell politik. Genom historien har stater skickat trupper till områden långt från det egna territoriet i syfte att stävja pågående konflikter, bevaka fredsprocesser eller avvärja brott mot mänskligheten. Alla militära aktioner inbegriper dock våld, även om de är FN-sanktionerade och upprättas i fredens namn. Under de senaste decennierna har bruket av våld i fredsinsatser intensifierats i och med att fredsframställande insatser, snarare än fredsbevarande, blivit vanligare. Militära fredsinsatser har således alltmer kommit att likna det som vi vanligtvis brukar kategorisera som krig. När krigspraktiker och bruket av våld sker på distans, på avstånd från den egna befolkningen, alltmedan de militära fredsinsatserna i sig blir mer våldsamma, är det viktigt att systematiskt och kontinuerligt granska hur våldet representeras i offentlig diskurs. Eftersom det i grunden är den egna befolkningen, genom sina folkvalda, som sanktionerar truppernas mandat och bruket av våld blir det en viktig politisk och demokratisk fråga hur våld och krigsliknande praktiker faktiskt synliggörs och begripliggörs på hemmaplan.

Avhandlingens empiriska studie fokuserar på Sverige och analyserar representationen av våldsanvändning i svensk offentlig diskurs. Mer specifikt analyseras hur våldselementet framträder och försvinner i de narrativ som formuleras för att begripliggöra Sveriges deltagande och roll i fredsframställande insatser. Syftet med avhandlingen är dels att kartlägga hur våldet framträder och försvinner, men också att diskutera implikationerna av representationen av våld i termer av vilka möjlighetsvillkor som dessa narrativ skapar för publik och gemensam reaktion och (om)värdering. Som ett led i denna diskussion ställer avhandlingen frågor om hur våldet av/politiseras över tid och hur länken mellan identitet och policy kontinuerligt de/stabiliseras. Avhandlingen lyfter fram Sverige som en avvikande kontext och ett särpragt fall i förhållande till andra västländer; Sverige har i allra högsta grad tagit del av skiftet från fredsbevarande till fredsframställande, men framställer fortfarande sig själv som en fredsnation som inte varit i krig på över 200 år. När våldsanvändning sålunda blir en realitet och svenska soldater faktiskt hamnar i strid kan man därför förvänta sig att bruket av våld blir en politiserad fråga som diskuterar öppet samt att den egna självbilden utmanas och rubbas.

Avhandlingens studie tar avstamp i en rad poststrukturalistiska begrepp och ontologiska antaganden; de begrepp och diskussioner som blir centrala är narrativ.


Genom att kartlägga och synliggöra hur narrativen i riksdagsdebatt respektive public service-media rör sig mellan problematisering och naturalisering, synliggörande och osynliggörande, identifikation och disidentifikation avtäcker de empiriska studierna i del II och III hur våldselementet i fredsarbete har hanterats i
svensk debatt över tid. I de avslutande kapitlen i del II och III sammanfattas vilka narrativa teman och ”reaktioner” som återkommer och blir framträdande över tid. De avslutande kapitlen i del II och III diskuterar vidare vilka implikationer de narrativ som formuleras och omformuleras har i termer av av/politisering av våld och i termer av de/stabilisering av länken mellan identitet och policy. Avhandlingens sista och avslutade del argumenterar i sin tur för att våldets försvinnande i stort förhindrar publik och gemensam reflektion och (om)värdering. Våldets försvinnande blir därmed ytterst en fråga om demokratisk legitimitet. Att studera hur våldet framträder och försvinner kan också hjälpa oss att förstå hur krigspraktiker möjliggörs och hur bruket av våld i längden normaliseras.

I stort argumenterar avhandlingen för att studien bidrar till tidigare forskning om representationen av krig och våld på framförallt tre sätt. För det första kompletterar och komplicerar studien aktuella diskussioner om hur våld och krig representeras i västerländsk debatt genom att detaljstudera det svenska fallet, som i många avseenden skiljer sig från andra kontexter. För det andra utgör studien ett metodologiskt och teoretiskt bidrag i och med formulerandet av ett conceptuellt ramverk för studiet av våldets försvinnande. För det tredje kan studien ses som ett empiriskt komplement till tidigare forskning om Sveriges deltagande i militära fredsinsatser, främst genom sin kritiska och poststrukturalistiska analysram och genom att de narrativ som formuleras under fredsframtvingande insatser studeras systematiskt över tid.
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