

Defending Discourse

A poststructural feminist analysis of the 2011 to 2013
marketing campaigns of the Swedish Armed Forces

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Abstract

The field of visual analysis has become increasingly relevant to political science. The political nature of marketing campaigns and advertisements with a governmental body as sender makes for a relevant research ground. Based in poststructuralist theory, this Bachelor's thesis analyses the gender discourse in the 2011 to 2013 marketing campaigns for basic military training. The Swedish Armed Forces acts as sender using a medium that has the dual effect of both attracting potential recruits and reflecting a self-image to a general public. The poststructural perspective is combined with feminism, creating a discursive method grounded in theory. The marketing campaigns have been analyzed using the gendered dichotomy of Self and Other. The dichotomy acts as a base for deconstruction of visual expression and other texts. This analysis show how the visual representations in the marketing campaign features gendered spaces, situations and practices.

Key words: the Swedish Armed Forces, discourse analysis, poststructuralism, feminism, gender, advertisement

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Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Purpose and Presentation of the Problem.....	2
1.2	Research Questions	2
1.3	Disposition	3
2	Theory and Method	4
2.1	A Poststructural Philosophy of Science	4
2.2	Poststructural Feminism as Theoretical Framework	5
2.2.1	Gender and Gendering	6
2.2.2	Power.....	7
2.2.3	Discourse and Text.....	7
2.2.4	The Gendered Dichotomy of Self and Other	8
2.2.5	Militarism and the Private-Public Divide.....	9
2.3	Methodological Framework	10
2.3.1	Language, Deconstruction and the Gender Dichotomy	10
2.3.2	Discourse Analysis as Interpretive Method	11
2.3.3	Advertisements as Research Material	12
2.4	Reflections on Poststructural Discourse Analysis.....	13
3	Analysis.....	15
3.1	The Subtlety of Gendered Expression: Depicting Reality Through Dichotomies	15
3.2	Visuals As The Other, Text As The Rational Self.....	16
3.3	The Reality of The Self: The Struggle Of War	17
3.4	There Is Nothing Natural About Nature: The Primary Enemy	18
3.5	Politicized Bodies: the Gendered Visibility In The Female Body.....	19
3.6	Questioning The Reality Of The Other: The Insignificance Of The Private Sphere	20
4	Conclusion	23
5	References.....	24

1 Introduction

For long, politics was considered interaction in public life. With the rise of feminism as a political perspective, a contrasting view of the private as political has blurred the line between private and public. In an age where this line is blurred, other research objects become interesting. One of these politically interesting areas is advertisement. Existing in a space that is accessible both in private and public, marketing campaigns from governmental bodies engage in producing and reproducing self-image. In this study, the focus is the Swedish Armed Forces and how it, through advertisement, expresses a dual self-image to both a general public and potential recruits.

Since conscription ended the Swedish Armed Forces, SAF, has faced an organizational shift in terms of recruitment. The shift to voluntary military service during peacetime in 2010 has resulted in the SAF taking on a new role: one as an employer that actively needs to seek its workforce. The first step towards employment is basic military training, GMU. This three-month long military education is the first step towards employment, and has the dual purpose of both attracting and maintaining potential professional soldiers for service in the army, navy and other defence units (Försvarsmakten 1). One of the main outlets to attract recruits to basic military training has been extensive marketing campaigns in the years following the end of conscription, 2011-2013. Through advertisements in print, billboards, radio and video commercials a message that both aim to attract potential recruits and to position the SAF to a general public has been broadcasted. This thesis is centred to this message and the gender discourse within it.

The significance for political science to analyse these marketing campaigns lies in several aspects. They are commercial a tool, used by a governmental body. More importantly, they can be regarded as bearer of a message that is aimed to portray a constructed reality of their sender. In this way the campaigns constitute a mirrored self-image of its sender. This abstract mirroring makes the analysis of a gender discourse relevant. This view stems from a social science perspective that view language and social practice as closely knit together. This poststructural view, combined with the focus on gender that dominates this study, places the marketing campaigns at the centre of important political expression of this age. The ideals that the SAF, as both administrative governmental body and military organization, express in advertisement directed to the public are political.

1.1 Purpose and Presentation of the Problem

Militaries are historically gendered spaces, built on the separation of private and public (see Elshtain 1987). In a Swedish military context current political initiatives such as equality action plans and the ratification of UN 1325 have been put in place to counter gendered separations (Försvarsmakten 2). In this study, the analysis of the marketing campaigns of the SAF aims to interpret a more abstract gender discourse. The purpose of this study is to deconstruct gendered expressions, as part of a gender discourse, in the marketing campaigns from the SAF, produced in the years 2011-2013. Traditional scholarship has to a large extent ignored a gender perspective in military research, though feminist international relations scholarship have made strides during the post-cold war era (see eg. Enloe 2000, Kronsell 2012). A juxtaposition from traditional political science contributes to the purpose of the study. Using a discursive method is to examine power expression and production of meaning within a social realm, which challenges traditional approaches to research. Science is progress and the use of unconventional material, ie advertisement as political expression, and the progressive method of feminist poststructuralism follow this tradition. Challenging the rigid field of military studies is not only scientifically important, but also in a larger societal perspective, as part of a road towards gender equality.

1.2 Research Questions

This study revolves around the poststructural view that the marketing campaigns, when regarded as text, are an expression of language as social practice and therefore bearers of discursive meaning. The interpretation is focused to a gender perspective, with a feminist understanding of norms and ideals. The research questions are as follows:

What gendered norms, ideals and identities are constructed in the 2011 to 2013 GMU marketing campaigns from the SAF? How can this gender discourse be understood from a poststructural feminist perspective?

1.3 Disposition

The study's explicit poststructural feminist perspective has certain implications for the disposition of the study. Theory and method are intertwined and part of the same section. This is because method is built on theory, and therefore one is inseparable from the other. Theory and method are related to the research material, rather than as separate section. I have chosen to reference the context to the case, the marketing campaigns, because the material is thoroughly presented in the analysis. The final section is that of conclusion, where a discussion about the findings in the analysis and the relevancy of the case takes place.

2 Theory and Method

2.1 A Poststructural Philosophy of Science

Though a diverse perspective the poststructuralist perspective is united by relating “language, subjectivity, social organization and power” (Weedon 1987: 12). Language is at the epicentre of production of meaning. The perspective emphasizes social construction which in turn means that conventional perception of knowledge needs to be challenged because it is produced within a specific historic context. Knowledge grounds discourse and therefore impacts social practice and process (Winther Jørgensen 2002: 5-6). Language constitutes and produces power at the same time, determining social processes and practice.

Poststructuralism is both theory and method – a perspective of the social world, as well as an analytical method. This duality impacts how research is done, and has both epistemological and ontological implications. Poststructuralism is a fluid perspective that admits the subjectivity of the researcher, which means that ontological assumptions may change through time and paradigm. Ontological questions can have many answers, and uniting the perspective is this understanding of the reality concept as ambiguous and uncertain. Reality is never an objective constant and always in need of interpretation. Norms, ideals and social practices are constructed and determined by language and social relations, and constitutes what would be called reality. These constructions are fluid, constantly changing and reproduced, and contribute to the ambiguity and uncertainty. This too effect epistemological concerns and poststructuralism rejects a positivist social science (Winther Jørgensen 2002: 3-6)

Using poststructuralism as a methodological and theoretical base has certain implications. Ontologically, poststructuralism assume certain things about the social world: that it is constructed through language and that language both constitute and produce reality. The way to understand what reality constitutes within a discourse is to analyse the signs and representations that appear to be bearers of meaning. As producer of meaning, language is also social and relational. The object becomes subject, and meaningful, in relation to other objects. This adds a political layer to language as the juxtaposing of signs produces power structures in the social realm (Hansen 2006: 18-21).

An epistemological concern is the inability to define and categorize the perspective in terms of separation of theory and method. The recognition of subjectivity means that what is legitimate to say about the social world today may change in the tomorrow of a new paradigm (Hansen 2006: 23-25). It is a

consequence of the multitude in poststructural approaches, but can work as an advantage in this study due to the feminist aspiration. The progressive nature of feminism intermingles well with the adaptable perspective of poststructuralism. Feminism also objects to objective research, because it risks to ignore gendered implications in social practice (Sjoberg & Via 2010: 9-10).

Established then, is the poststructuralist juxtaposing from traditional, positivist, social science. The positivist social science tradition assumes reality as objective, tangible, and that social science can conduct research that produces objective truths that are possible to generalize to greater populations of cases, situations or political contexts. The poststructuralist epistemology objects these assumptions about a measurable, objective, social sphere (Hansen 2006: 5-10). I would like to illustrate this with a metaphor of a shipyard. Imagine society as the space of a shipyard that is filled with machines that have been delivered without instructions. Social science is then the worker responsible for creating new instructions. Every machine is unique, but after the worker has disassembled one, understood its construction and put it back to one piece, a new universal set of instructions are written. The knowledge of one unique unit is generalized to a greater population. The instruction then represents the contextual knowledge that positivist science treat as general.

The metaphor above has indeed driven the methods of positive social science to the edge. Of course, there are nuances. In practice, methods are more diverse and in tune with where possibilities to generalize lay. However, the metaphor does illustrate the core objection that poststructuralism poses: how can general 'facts' be derived from a social world filled with difference, ambiguity and uncertainty? How can the one machine, or several representations of similar, generate knowledge that is not contextual but objective? These are the questions that motivate both method and theory in this study.

2.2 Poststructural Feminism as Theoretical Framework

Like poststructuralism, feminism is a diverse theoretical tradition. The uniting core is a non-essentialist world-view adapted by scholars and others working towards gender equality. Loosely defined, feminism criticizes and scrutinizes norm-systems that separate and hierarchically places different genders and biological sexes. Merging feminism with poststructuralism makes for interpretations of visuals and texts that can deconstruct gendered expression, drawing on the poststructural understanding of structural movement in social construction (Weedon 1987: 4p). Poststructural feminism then, though diverse, is centred to a few core assumptions. It is a feminist perspective that regards identities as relational and contextual. The social position of a person's gender and biological sex changes through social setting. This intersectional approach to identity also entails that gender is socially produced. Ultimately, a person's social

position is determined by the ability to express, produce and use power within that context (Butler 1990: 3). In the text below, the key concepts of poststructural feminism are explained, in an aim to form a theoretical and methodological base for the later analysis.

2.2.1 Gender and Gendering

Defining gender is key to the development of a methodological and theoretical platform. As poststructuralist feminism emphasizes the importance of historical and contextual specificity to social structures, gender is also regarded a social construct. Poststructuralist feminism rejects the notion of a biologically bound gender. Biological sex is not a determinant for social behaviour, instead are gender roles dependent on historic and cultural circumstance (Weedon 1987: 75-76). Gender is performed, not given by birth (Butler 1990: 3). This stems from the poststructural perception of language as the constituter of knowledge and meaning. Gender is socialized behaviour that constructs social performance and ideals that reflect into roles that separate masculine and feminine attributes (Weedon 1987: 77-79).

The notion of gender performativity suggests that a person is socialized into acting in accordance with gender norms within social systems. Through socialization, individuals and groups construct and normalize cultural expectations of gender (Butler 1990: 7-9). Language and communication is crucial in this process: the dichotomy of masculine and feminine is confirmed by the use of language. Perceptions of what is considered masculine and feminine differ through time, but the determinant of what fits in each category is defined by social context. Gender is in that sense relational (Weedon 1987: 92-96). What is regarded as masculine is dependent of what is feminine, and vice versa.

The social performativity of gender can be related to intersectionality. What identity characteristics matter in positioning an individual within a discourse or social situation is contextually determined. Judith Butler describes the concept of intersectionality as “gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities” (Butler 1990: 3). This understanding of intersectionality, as related to discourses, reveals the fluid nature of identities. Whilst gender often is a primary attribute in social categorization, it interacts with many others (Kimmel 1990: 95-97). What attributes, or intersectional identity characteristics, work position an individual within a discourse, or social situation, is determined by context. The structural positioning varies through context and representations in gendered hierarchies depend not only on gender or biological sex, but define identity from many aspects. To include an intersectional perspective is to acknowledge that all genders are exposed to gendered power hierarchies. Social subordination and feminization as de-valorisation is not bound to the female sex (Peterson 2010: 17-21)

Related to gender is the process of gendering. A process that stems from the dichotomy of masculine and feminine. When gender roles are reinforced in social context, a situation becomes gendered, producing power relations that favour

masculine attributes (Weedon 1987: 19-25). When regarding gender as both an empirical and analytical category, the process of gendering illustrates how social relations rest on separation. As an empirical category, gender work to limit the social agency women, and subordinate men. Gender as analytical category then understands the cultural privileging of masculinity, that for example is evident in military organizations (Peterson & Runyan 2010: 59-64). Gendering creates a discursive climate where masculinity and stereotypic masculine attributes are valued. The act of gendering is to devalorize feminine expression (Peterson 2010: 17).

2.2.2 Power

The power dimension of social practice, as reflected in discourse, is central to poststructural feminism. The poststructural belief is that power works through discourse and discursive formations (Weedon 1987: 107-109). This is the normative and constitutive part of power. Discursive power then constructs hierarchical social structures. Though constantly changing, these social structures determine agency as expressed in making groups objects or subjects. This structural inequality, in a gender context, produces institutions, social positions and situations that systematize gendering (Gullvåg Holter 2005: 18-25).

Gender and power are in a feminist sense intertwined. The power of gender lies within a social asymmetry that produces systems where gender determine agency, both on an individual and a collective level. When gender works as an organizing principle it creates hierarchical social structures. These structures make the primary norm invisible. In a military context this is the norm of masculinity. However, this normalized invisibility needs to be constantly obtained, through the performance of gender (Butler 1990: 25-26). As the norm, the masculine discourse can remain invisible and dominant in constructing gendered ideologies. Masculinity is in constant need of re-validation to maintain this state.

2.2.3 Discourse and Text

A poststructural definition of discourse can take several forms. One is that of language patterns that dominate a specific social context. This Foucaultian definition is that this system of statements, as expressed through linguistics, is expressions of meaning and power. Crucial to this understanding is the cultural and historic specificity of the discourse. Context links language to social practice. Within discourse what can be expressed, both vocally and textually, constitutes the limits of agency. This is the power of discourse – it controls, in its invisibility, the agency of its subjects (Foucault 1982: 43-46). The discourse, in a material sense, then consists of statements that when grouped belong to the same discursive foundation. As these statements are reproduced and related to social practices, as expressed through language, this foundation shifts and changes (Foucault 1982: 106-107). Discourses are unstable and the knowledge of the

accepted discourse is what gives agency to its subjects. Truth is a social construct, but the ability to read this official, collectively, accepted knowledge is to possess power in discourse. In this context of military gender discourse, the knowledge that is reproduced relates to gender, biological sex and other intersectional attributes as expressed in the advertisements.

The understanding that discourse is language patterns that produces systems of meaning, also raises the question of where these patterns can be read. With social practice rooted in language as the restriction of where power is expressed, makes for a widened political research field. Defining discourse as a collective of linked statements does not reference where these statements are spatially placed. The poststructural text concept stretches the concept into including visuals, written text and speech (Hansen 2006: 83-87). The effect of social practice can be found in textual production outside the traditional text as expressed by pen to paper. In this context of marketing campaigns from a military organization illustrates how the expansion the concept of text can be aimed to yield new insights in gender discourse. The analysis of norm systems as expressed in formal written documents risk to only uncover a formal stand on gender equality. The advertisements can be viewed as a type of social practice, or residue of social practice expressed in visual text. This level of abstraction show how power is expressed through language and is in effect political.

2.2.4 The Gendered Dichotomy of Self and Other

The understanding of construction of identity in a social context, here advertisement, is central in interpreting discourse. A gender discourse is dominated by representations of the gender dichotomy. The power of categorical separation that dichotomies possess cannot be neglected. A dichotomy constitutes two mutually exclusive categories that work to stereotype attributes and behaviour as belonging to either one category or the binary other (Peterson & Runyan 2010: 48-50). In this study the gender dichotomy is related to the militaristic and civilian, as expressed by the dichotomy of public and private. To understand this separation one can use the dichotomy of Self and Other. The Self inhibits the attributes of the subject and the Other those of an object (Hansen 2006: 38). Both are constructs, but the power to construct lies with the Self. In this context the Self is represented by the SAF, as agent in producing and forming gender discourse. The Other takes the positions of identity that are not expressed as belonging to the Self. In the military context it is a dichotomy that is also gendered – hierarchically placing masculine ideal of strength, rationality and control above what is constructed as civilian and feminine.

The Self is the subject in discourse. It is the agent with the power to construct and form the histories, conventions and norms that constitutes discourse. The Self is not created in vacuum, but in need to relate to an Other to form. In politics this Other is the opponent the Self can juxtapose itself from. To military organizations the Other can both be the private and civilian, or the more radical other of the enemy (Hansen 2006: 38-41). The Self is in control, able insert meaning into

discursive identities for the Other as well. The process of gendering then is the limit in agency that this produces, by linking gender and intersectional attributes to social position (Butler 1990: 144-146)

In a military context, the dichotomy of Self and Other becomes gendered as it operated in a gendered social space. From a feminist standpoint, the gendered aspect of the dichotomy cannot be disregarded. The hierarchical structures that othering produces are also gendered ones. The military Self possesses attributes that are stereotypically male. With identity regarded as relational, discursive and social the actions of the Self position the Other through dichotomising (Hansen 2006: 37).

In the analysis this gendered dichotomy of Self and Other is used to analyse gender discourse. It is a dichotomic construction that is followed by several other binaries. The Self represent the masculine, rational subject of the public that is juxtaposed from the Other as the feminine, emotional object that is placed in the private. Militarism and civilian are placed opposite to each other, as are independency and dependency. Neutrality as invisibility within social context is placed opposite to the politicized, visual, body of the Other (Peterson & Runyan 2010: 52, Hansen 2006: 20). By using the dichotomy of Self and Other and the gendered subcategories, the signs of the gender discourse can be interpreted.

2.2.5 Militarism and the Private-Public Divide

Militarism as a concept relates to the notion that war is expected. With its foundation in an ideology that defines militaries as a necessity, makes violence and protection integral parts in state-building. As militarism becomes integrated in civilian life, it takes on the role of a societal norm. Militarism then goes beyond war - it operates as a norm that penetrates society, institutions and culture. It is the expectation, preparation and practice of war (Kronsell 2012: 28-30). The distinction between war-time and peace-time fades as violence against society, state and nation is expected. This fading process drives militarization of the civil sphere, and normalizes the constructed need of military protection.

Militaristic values are based on masculine ideals, with military organisations traditionally being institutions where hypermasculinity can prevail. Physical control, logic and rationality are part of the mythicized histories of war and civil protection. The historic separation of the biological sexes, as manifested by excluding women from conscription, allowed a naturalized masculine privilege to remain (Sjoberg & Via 2010: 7-9). This separation has gendered consequences today. These consequences are gendered not only in the sense that they discriminate on the basis of biological sex, but on intersectional attributes as well. An intersectional understanding of gender leads us to see how health, age and sexual orientation are attributes that impact structuring of militaries today (Peterson 2010: 26-28). What one can note is that the separation of biological sexes is a sign of a larger process of separation, as the prior discussion on the dichotomy of Self and Other demonstrated.

Drawing on militarism and gender-based separation of the military space, Jean Bethke Elshtain has formed a theory that places man as the 'Just Warrior' and woman as the 'Beautiful Soul'. This dichotomy refers to a long Western tradition of dividing men and women in public and private. The 'Just warrior' is the protector, saviour and public subject. The 'Beautiful soul' leads a private life in the domestic sphere and is dependent, supplement, to the public man (Elshtain 1993: 4-10). To Elshtain, as to poststructural feminism, this is a social construct. The relational construction of identity demands a reconstruction of the discursive separation between private and public (Elshtain 1987: 318-322). The performativity of gender rests on social expectations of this performance. Social practices determine norms, and the expectation of gender behaviours cement the stereotypic division between private and public. It cannot claim to be an objective reality, because it is a social construct.

2.3 Methodological Framework

The methodological framework is closely linked to the theory presented above. They are in fact inseparable. The dichotomy of Self and Other is one methodological base and the drawing on concepts such as power, gender text and discourse forms a methodological framework intertwined with theory. Important to note is that discourse analysis needs to be based in cultural understanding (Winther Jørgensen 2002: 186-188). I have focused on the gendered aspects of the material, because my feminist poststructural perspective allows me to focus on those aspects. This also demonstrates the ambiguity in discourse analysis; another analyst would perhaps have focused on a different aspect, reaching other results (Hansen 2006: 41-42). This shows an inability to completely read discourse, which is relevant even in this study. My interpretation is not total, but a picture of the gendered representations as they appear in this point in time.

As evident by the research question, the discourse that is analysed is the gender discourse of the marketing campaigns. The limitation of discourse in terms of material is rather natural: marketing campaigns are the limit for analysis. No other texts are analysed. Gender discourse, understood in a poststructural perspective, is a wide term but can be defined as expressions of social hierarchy that distinguishes between masculine and feminine.

2.3.1 Language, Deconstruction and the Gender Dichotomy

Poststructuralism proposes that language constructs social structures while it simultaneously limits the subjects within them. Jacques Derrida described writing as the system that comprehends language, in acting as the signifier to the signifier (Derrida 1967: 7). This abstraction implies that language as signifier, the constructor and bearer of meaning, too needs translation. How we communicate the world, is also how we understand the world. To Derrida language is embodied

into sign and signifier. Sign can be translated in to word, whereas signifier is constitutes meaning. The signifier is contextual and needs discourse to be understood. Linguistic and social meaning can be separated through signs expressed in discourse. The manifest and the latent meaning can sometimes differ. In that sense, language is struggle: the contextual nature of the signifier suggests that other elements aside from the sign are needed for the production and understanding of discursive meaning (Derrida 1973: 18-24).

The struggle of language create signs that are hierarchical and their meaning is constructed in relation with other signs within discourse. As fluid concepts, the signifiers of the sign become inherent with meaning only by being related to other concepts. The sign is more of a constant nature, expressing a lexical constant. This process of assigning meaning to the signs is complex (Derrida 1973: 25-26). Language is based in dichotomies, and in feminist theory the primary binary can be said to be the dichotomy of gender. The dichotomy illustrates the dichotomic and hierarchical significations process of signs. Dichotomies construct a perceived social reality where hierarchical categorization determines social practice. Words become meaningful in the struggle with other words, and defining masculine as what is not feminine positions the two signs in juxtaposition from each other. It reflects a language system based on oppositional thinking (Weedon 1987: 21-23, 81-82).

2.3.2 Discourse Analysis as Interpretive Method

When language is placed as a central point in constructing and perceiving reality, the expression of language in text then shows the communicative side of language. Language is communication, with a sender, and can therefore never be neutral. Long regarded as a tool in research, it can be beneficial for political science to view language and the power embedded in discursive use of language as the field for analysis (Hansen 2006: 2-7, 18). Politics is found in social practice and if language is regarded as the limitation of social agency, then this needs to be researched. In the case of this study, the representations of gender discourse in the advertisements from the SAF are deconstructed.

The discourse analysis executed in this study is grounded in the struggle of language. This struggle is also the base for the use of dichotomies to analyse processes of gendering and gendered expression. As noted in earlier theory and method, the gendered dichotomy of Self and Other can serve as a ground for understanding this. This dichotomy is used as a main framework in analysis signs and their signification. In the context of military marketing campaigns, a gender discourse may take many forms. From a post-structuralist perspective gendering is not bound by biological sex, but the hierarchal positioning of masculine above the feminine. Put in a gender context, the military Self takes the masculine position.

The poststructural discursive technique is based in language. The relevancy of signs and signifier can be linked to the concept of discursive moments. These are all expressed signs in discourse. However, certain signs are nodal points with central places in discourse (Winther Jørgensen 2002: 25-29) In the gender

discourse of this case, one nodal point is the Self. From a poststructuralist perspective the military Self is also gendered. The context of discourse cannot be disregarded, and the advertisements are part of a military social practice. I use the dichotomy of Self and Other as a primary categorization. The subcategories of masculine and feminine then follow, starting an intricate scheme that is built on dichotomies. By positioning the Self as the positive identity, a process of linking that differentiates from the negative identity of the feminine follows (Hansen 2006: 20). This gendered juxtaposition of norms are the basis for my analysis.

Another aspect of discourse analysis is the concept of intertextuality. In this study the concept is used to understand how identity is constructed through a processes of linking between the campaigns (Hansen 2006: 41-43). This process of linking builds the gender discourse. Intertextuality is abstractly defined as the referencing of one text in later text (Butler 1990: 66-67). In practice, this mean that I have searched for reoccurring themes and representations of identity in the material that reference each other. I have analysed nuances and abstract references as part of intertextual element.

The primary discourse that is analysed is the gender discourse, as related to the research question. The interpretation of the gender discourse is based in theory. As expressed above (see 2.2.4), the gendered dichotomy of Self and Other constitutes the primary tool for analysis. The Self is the sender, the SAF, as the masculine militaristic norm. The feminine is then understood as the supplement Other. This separation of masculine and feminine is then followed by several sub-dichotomies. The Self is inherently subject, rational, public and independent, with the invisible body of the norm. The Other then represent the feminine as emotional, object, peaceful, private, and dependent with a visible, politicized, body. By searching for discursive expressions of dichotomy, the binary construction and struggle of language translates into text as reflection of social practice.

2.3.3 Advertisements as Research Material

Valuing marketing campaigns in the form of advertisement as scholarly interesting for political science rest on the poststructural ideal of progressive science that originates from contexts that are historically specific. The point in time, or paradigm, contributes to what research material is relevant. Social science needs to constantly evolve with society to remain relevant. With new media and new technological ways of consuming media and message, alternate ways of analysing discourse becomes relevant. In this study the material consists of advertisements in print, billboards and film. Their political relevancy lies with their sender: the Swedish Armed Forces. The message and meaning of the advertisements makes for interesting material because it shows a gender discourse. Military studies have been a historically rigid field, and feminist analysis has contributed to uncover gendered practices that lie outside the manifest gender separation.

The written parts of the material used are in Swedish. I am a native speaker, but in translation to English I have used certain guidelines. Primary, I have used my personal cultural insight in the use of Swedish language in explaining translations of written text. By this I mean that I have translated a sentence into English by both regarding the lexical meaning of the words combined with explaining the cultural nuance that the sentence have in Swedish. This has been especially relevant when informal language use has been evident in the advertisements. Part of discourse analysis is the acceptance in uncertainty in interpretive method. In terms of translation this principle has been used to pay attention to the linguistic nuances.

The marketing campaigns were produced between 2011 and 2013. I would argue that they are in fact a single marketing campaign divided into five subsections. Though produced in separate temporal places observing the dynamic evolution of discourse makes them possible to analyse as within the same discursive context. They follow the criteria of belong to, and reproducing, similar language patterns. The manifest themes, as expressed by for example titles, evolve but continue to revolve around the same discursive foundation of an aim to construct the reality of the Self. The first sub-campaign is called “Welcome to our reality” (SAF 1 2011), followed by “Who cares” (SAF 2 2012), “That will be okay” (SAF 3 2012) and “What are you doing” (SAF 4 2013), ending with “A lot to do” (SAF 5 2013).

In this study the material is not visually presented, but explained using my words. I have chosen this technique both due to copyright issues but also with regards to my position as researcher. My interpretation rest on the poststructural view that the researcher understands research material subjectively. By explaining the imagery rather than displaying it, the reader is able to get the closest access to my train of thought. However, the material is accessible in full at the Swedish Armed Forces website (Försvarsmakten 3). On a final note, I would like to express that the campaigns are produced by a commercial advertisement agency. However, the campaigns are primarily linked to the SAF as sender. The production and the end result is accepted by the organization, and the campaigns are integrated as part of a marketing strategy from the SAF.

2.4 Reflections on Poststructural Discourse Analysis

Poststructuralism deny that political research can be objective, because it is positioned within a social context and therefore subjective. One must remember that poststructuralism is a critical research perspective that criticizes the status quo, and that theory and method intertwine. From a positivist standpoint this is an invalid standpoint. Social science can be objective, independent of the researcher’s perspective. Poststructuralism could then be accused of being a relativist perspective (Hansen 2006: 23-25). To reject that notion, I see the value in transparency in my analysis. I have again and again emphasized the poststructural perspective and its principles to make epistemological concerns

evident. The positivist and post-positivist traditions will never merge, and one must admit that they have different bases for legitimacy. The epistemological and ontological concerns of poststructuralist and positivist political science are fundamentally different, but should be regarded as equally legitimate.

Another aspect of discourse analysis is its self-proclaimed temporality. A discursive interpretation is fleeting, dependent of the moment in the context where is it produced (Hansen 2006: 10-11). This temporality, I would argue, adds to a cumulative social science. Understanding discourses and the evolution of discursive practice is crucial in understanding politics. In the context of military gender discourse, the power of the discursive method lies in the ability to uncover gendered practices as abstracted in advertisement.

The choice of feminist poststructuralism as theoretical and methodological base was chosen on the basis of the material. Another study would perhaps have focuses on the evaluating aspects of the equality work of the SAF. Then the discourse analysis could have focused on how the SAF expresses gender norms in equality documents and then analyse how those norms corresponds with the advertisements. This road was not chosen because the abstract gender dimension of the advertisements expresses something that is separate from equality work as they aim to attract recruits while simultaneously portraying a self-image.

3 Analysis

3.1 The Subtlety of Gendered Expression: Depicting Reality Through Dichotomies

The temporal aspects of the marketing campaigns of 2011 to 2013 are in this analysis fairly insignificant. A greater focus could be placed on the dynamic evolution of gender discourse and the intertextual elements that dominate this evolution. The continued vocally expressed aim from their sender is the intent to depict the reality of the SAF, the Self. The first campaign *Welcome to our reality* (SAF 1 2011) vocally expresses this aim, a theme that follows through the campaigns. This intent of reality construction is also what links the campaign and makes the advertisements possible to regard as part of the same gender discourse, rather than as separate units or discourses.

However, though the continued focus on portraying the reality of the Self, the method for this slowly shifts to dichotomising the reality of the Other, rather than on explicitly manifesting the imagined reality of the Self. Illustrating this is the linguistic shift in titles of campaigns. *Welcome to our reality* (SAF 1) is followed by *Who cares* (SAF 2 2012) and *That will be okay* (SAF 3 2012). Here the shift from focus on the 'our' to 'who' to 'someone' is significant. It is a first, simple, indicator of the evolution of reality construction. The imagery of the print and films follow the same pattern. All three focus on the ability, force and agency of the SAF, though slowly moving towards a portrayal of the inactive Other.

The discursive break from construction of the Self by portraying the actions of the Self, to constructing the Self by dichotomising an Other is evident in the campaign *What are you doing* (SAF 4 2013). The title has an ambiguous meaning in Swedish; it can both be question and statement. My interpretation is that the title alludes to the inaction of the people visually portrayed. They are all young and in situations that are far from the constructed military reality of campaigns past. Both film and print portray situations where the imagery is positioned in civilian spheres: either in domestic space such as kitchens (SAF 4: *Frukost, Deg*) or in professional setting such as offices (SAF 4: *PostItI, PostItII*). The reality of the Self is no longer in the picture; the imagery reflects war zones or nature catastrophe. Instead, the Self appears in written text that spells out what the SAF is doing.

With the last campaign *A lot to do* (SAF 5 2013) the discursive circle closes. The movement from depicting the reality of the Self to the one of the Other now merges into a dual depiction of both. Here the power of the dichotomy is by far

the most evident. The graphics of the imagery even illustrates it. Here, the imagery is the space where the reality of the Self is constructed. Using pictures of war scenes, floods and burning cars this reality is constructed (SAF 5 2013 print 1-10). The text that is positioned across the image contrasts this. One print reads: "[a]ttacks by pirates threaten Somalia, is there a cross-word puzzle in this magazine" (SAF 5 print 1). Even the sentence dichotomise against the private sphere. A smaller corner text tells us about the work of the SAF as providers of food and defender of human rights. It is an expression of systematic separation of private and public, with the effect of gendered devalorization of the domestic sphere.

3.2 Visuals As The Other, Text As The Rational Self

In a visually expressed discourse text constitutes, as previously established, imagery. This textual status of images makes them meaningful and the signs they consist of bearers of meaning. This meaning can be expressed in the form of the imagery, such as in film or print format. The graphic disposition of prints is an abstract tool that is used to juxtapose the Self and Other in the campaigns. Through the campaigns the structure of the prints are the same: a headline that concurs with the theme of the campaign and a written text in the left corner that explains what the work of the SAF is (eg SAF 3 print). This structuring can be regarded as an intertextual form that makes the campaigns appear in unity. More importantly, the images behind the written text are inherently meaningful.

The graphic disposition of the prints illustrates how signs become meaningful. The rationality and explicitly expressed views in the written text position the Self as in control. The Self is focused to the written text, and can remain faceless. This invisibility has a normative power because it gives the sender the power to produce at stereotypical account of itself. The receiver cannot question the sender, because it is invisible. In the campaign *That will be okay* (SAF 3 2012) the prints have imagery that depict nature disaster and war zones. The text then implies that it is for the SAF to act as the agent that can protect and resurrect the civilian sphere from this danger. This is an example of a strengthening of a militaristic ideal, which is accomplished by the invisibility of the Self. It also illustrates the process of differentiating the Self from an identity of inaction. It strengthens its positive position within discourse by linking inaction to a negative identity and positioning the Self as the active subject that have the power to change circumstance. The graphic positioning of the written text works *with* the imagery to produce this process of differentiation.

3.3 The Reality of The Self: The Struggle Of War

With the gendered concept of militarism and the normative power of the masculine makes bodies important. The view that masculinity needs to be performed combined with the fluidness and instability of gender discourse, centres gendering social practice on bodies. In a military context, this is expressed by the irrelevance of the specific body: a soldier is a soldier, a representation of a group and not an individual. This is shown in the first film of the campaigns. First we as receivers are shown a stereotypic image of the presumed American soldier, with sound and special effects. It is a picture of technologically advanced warfare. In the middle of the film the screen is blackened, and when the image returns a group of male soldiers running in a snowy landscape (SAF 1 2011: Reklamfilm 1). The bodies featured are invisible, mere machines in a mission. The soldiers are interchangeable and their personal identity is irrelevant. Interesting here is the use of another powerful subject, the American military Other. By juxtaposing the Self of the SAF from technology, the body becomes important.

Another interesting aspect of the juxtaposing from the American military ideals is that it gives the SAF the initial chance to construct the image of its own reality. By using a stereotypical, but powerful, Other to differentiate from the image of the Self as humble is established. It is the juxtaposing from material assets as illustrated by advanced technological warfare machines (SAF 1 2011: Reklamfilm 2). Technology is over-shadowed by a constructed image of the able body. The gendered implications of this are evident in several ways. For one, the bodies are all male (SAF 1 2011: Reklamfilm 1 & 2). They are also invisible and neutral, because they constitute a norm of the apolitical masculine body. They are subjects in the sense that they are part of an agent Self.

This emphasis on the ability of the body as connected to gender discourse may be questioned by the advertisements dual focus on projecting an image to a general public and to potential recruits. Is this portrait of a low-tech military training a ploy to attract the 'right' recruits? With the gender discourse at the centre of analysis this claim would be rejected. It is a gendered picture that places norms of the military masculine at the centre, as given by a natural rational mind and strong body. This military ideal continues through the campaigns.

As a sender, the SAF holds the role of constructor of the discourse. Visuals are powerful and as advertisements, the sender can portray a constructed reality of war zones that is undisputed by discourse outside the own. When constructing the reality of war zones, this position of discursive independency is manifested in the campaigns of *That will be okay* (SAF 3 2012) and *A lot to do* (SAF 5 2013). Here, the Self is separated from the imagery, but the camera angles in the prints suggest that the Self is observing (SAF 3 2013: print 1, 5, 6). Representations of Others are visible, but without the calm that the invisibility suggests. The pictures of armed conflict follow an established Western view of war as something that takes place in distant lands.

The visual representations of people in the depiction of war zones follow a gendered separation of Self as agent and Other as passive. In the campaigns

focused to depiction of warfare, the people portrayed as civilians follow this norm of passivity. In *That will be okay* (SAF 3 2012) two prints seem to portray the same situation. In the first print a group of civilian men in non-Western clothes appear to shout at a fire (SAF 3 2012: print 5). In the next print another angle of the same picture shows that it is a burning car (SAF 3 2012: print 6). The men are portrayed as Others in need of the protector and saviour that is a foreign military. It does not rest on them to act, as the written corner text urges the receiver to act: “[w]hen everyone else are bystanders someone has to act” (SAF 3 2012: print 5) and “[military] service where you can make a real difference” (SAF 3 2012: print 5 & 6). This view clearly makes a hierarchical separation similar to that of Just Warrior and Beautiful Soul. The Just Warrior, the Self, needs to protect. However, the civilian men are not Beautiful Souls. They are distant others, feminized in their analogous link with the Beautiful Soul. They are bystanders that need a ‘someone’ to act. They are the ones in need of the real difference, but lack the agency to produce it themselves.

The reality of the Self as one of war situations is continuously built on the presumption of the Self as the agent. Both the graphic positions of prints (SAF 5 2013: print 1, 2, 4, 5) and the imagery (SAF 3 2012: 5, 6) show this discursive position. It can be regarded as part of a gender discourse because it separates the private and public, civilian and military, hierarchically.

3.4 There Is Nothing Natural About Nature: The Primary Enemy

The SAF are in some ways unique as a military body. Sweden has not been involved in armed conflict within the national border for several centuries. Its official mission rests on the principle of protection of human rights, as well as the protection of Sweden as a sovereign state. The official mission statement results in both national and international efforts. This means that efforts in national nature catastrophes and military missions abroad are two of the main tasks (Försvarsmakten 4). One of these two themes, war zones, has been covered previously in the analysis, but the depiction of nature is equally important to interpret gender discourse. Both representations of war and nature vocalize themes of danger, uncertainty and the ambiguity of a reality that needs the strong, stoic Self.

The strong and rational Self, capable in nature disaster, is depicted in the campaign *Who cares* (SAF 4 2012). In the film *Wood* the camera angle is from above, with sounds indicating its shot from an aircraft. The filmed area consists of dense concentration of pine and fir trees. The film ends with a written banner that covers the frame, reading that hundreds of people get lost in Swedish woods every year (SAF 2 2012: Skog). Here nature is threat, but with an implied notion that it can be tamed by the Self. The next film of the campaign draws on a similar theme.

Titled *Afghanistan* no people are visible, just a view over a vast landscape. The text banner reads that there are five million land mines in the country (SAF 2 2012: Afghanistan). Neither of the films portrays people. Yet, the campaigns construct a reality where a potential threat is in the unknown space. The imagery constructs nature as a force of destruction. The land mines represent how nature aides in man-built capacity for destruction. A strong Self needs to control this power. This construction of nature as both a natural and social spaces, in terms of capability, constructs the need for a Self as the protector.

In *That will be okay* natural disaster takes a front seat. Nature is no longer an abstract enemy, but an actively violent force. Here the films focus on the destruction caused by fire, flood and storm (SAF 3 2012: Allt ordnar sig, Översvämning, Storm). These films portray nature as not only a potential threat to society, but also a representation of the wild, separated from an organized society. In the films *Storm* and *Flood* nature disaster is the visual, but the sound play classic Swedish dance music. The image is almost absurd, but the written text ending the films urge the receiver to take action, reading: “[r]eally, does it always work out?” (SAF 3 2012: Översvämning, Storm), followed with the catchphrase “Welcome to our reality”.

Using nature as a symbol of the wild threat affect structural power relations. Posing questions about the solvability of these ‘wild’ situations also indicates the Self as the protector and saviour. The picture of a militaristic ideal appears. Positioning the Self, the SAF, as the implied saviour has both gendered and militaristic connotations. Constructing nature as enemy, with force to destroy and disrupt human life, is a reference to war. The portrayal of nature is an analogy to that of the inevitable war. Like nature catastrophe, war and armed conflict are crises. The gendered element the militaristic ideal embodies is the hierarchal position of a military body as solver in such crises. The advertisements reflect a self-image where the possibility to agency lies only with the SAF, and the receiver is urged to join to be able to be a part of this subjectivity.

3.5 Politicized Bodies: the Gendered Visibility of The Female Body

As the campaigns evolve, the invisibility and facelessness of the Self is consolidated and the sole focus is put on an imagined Other. This too means that bodies become visible, as they are of the Other. One film in the campaign *What are you doing* (2013) accentuates a visible, feminine, sexualized body. The film *Breakfast* shows a young woman taking pictures of her food, sitting in her kitchen dressed in a short kimono. The observer, as expressed by camera angle, shifts focus from her face to her body. She appears to be alone, but towards the end a young man, in underpants and a t-shirt, appears. He is getting out of bed (SAF 4 2013: Frukost). This film illustrates that gender is more than biological sex, or the

performed female gender. Her body, age and relationship all intersect in constructing the image of her as domestic. The nakedness of the man defines them as heterosexual, which in turn is a representation of how she needs to be related to a man. It is also a gendered representation of a traditional gender role, a woman situated in the heart of the domestic – in the kitchen. Her bare legs and short robe illustrates a sexualized, visible body.

In the campaign *A lot to do* (SAF 5 2013) the two of the films focus on journalists in war zones. In the first film, a middle-aged man is walking around in a house that has been damaged in the conflict. He is wearing a bullet proof vest and walks around the house freely (SAF 5 2013: Huset). In the other film a female reporter is reporting the news about the conflict. She is young and dressed in clean clothes, without a trace of the war (SAF 5 2013: Taket). These films express different gender roles. The man is portrayed as agent, he is able to walk around and be close to the conflict zone. His form of dress bares traces of militarization, with khaki pants and shirt. She is placed in the safety of a roof. She reports, but not given the power to tell a story. Her gender makes her body visible, political, and her physical movement appear to be hindered because of that.

The visibility of the female body is present in both campaigns. The woman in the kitchen is placed spatially in a domestic sphere. Her gender identity intersects with her living situation, but still need to be related to that of a man. She is constructed as the heterosexual norm (SAF 4 2013: Frukost). The body of the journalist appear neutral, but circumstance makes it visible in its inaction (SAF 5 2013: Taket). Both are examples of visible female bodies, where one is accentuated through sexualisation and the other is objectified because of its constructed neutrality.

3.6 Questioning The Reality Of The Other: The Insignificance Of The Private Sphere

It is not for poststructuralism to count and measure. However, it is relevant to note that a majority of the women are portrayed in domesticized or private situations, if represented at all. They are bound to the private sphere, whether it domestic (SAF 4 2013: Böcker) or professional life (SAF 5 2013: Taket). A public sphere is not necessarily military but connecting the work of the private sphere as less important indicates this. The rhetoric in *What are you doing* suggest just this. People are portrayed in situations where the written text, as an invisible embodiment of the SAF, implicitly questions their actions. In one print a woman is organizing books, and the corner text reads that the SAF is “rescuing people in distressed in the [Northern] mountains” (SAF 4 2013: Böcker). The text seems to suggest that the woman should question her private life. The result of written text is an apparent subordination of civilian life. Analogously, the work of the private

sphere is not as important as that of the military. This is a gendered separation, well within a tradition that devalues the work of the private sphere.

As illustrated above, the separation of private and public is both spatial and social. This is a reflection of the innate power dimension of gender norms. This power of gender produces social constructs that are hierarchical. In the case of the marketing campaigns the private, economic and domesticized spaces are bearer of norms and meaning that reflect the subordinate. It is an effect of gendering. In the campaign *What are you doin'* the reality of the Other as young and urban is constructed. The Self is invisible in the imagery, but still apparent as construct. The written text positions the Self as fundamentally different from the Other. The Self is saving people in distress, while the Other is organizing books. This is stereotypization at work. Using the element of written text, the Self is position as the legitimate and the actions of the Other are devalorized.

The insignificance of the private sphere is constructed as part of a militarization of the sphere itself. Civil life can be disrupted, and the threat of war or nature lingers. The SAF is portrayed as the only viable option to cope with the. Outside the private, a self-less public life exist. This theme continues in the rhetoric of the written text, continuously depicting the military reality: “[a]iding in natural disaster is part of our reality. Can it be part of yours?” (SAF 3 2012: print 4), “[...] an opportunity to make a real difference” (SAF 4 2013: print 5). These quotes are found in several prints and can be regarded as more than recruitment strategy. They reflect norms that devalorize the private sphere, constructing the military as the only space where real difference can be made. Differentiating the Other as of the private sphere, and thus of the space that needs protection, stabilizes the struggle of the Self. The Self constructs a reality that needs protection. Again, it can be relevant to note the dual purpose of the campaigns as aimed to reflect self-image to both recruits and a general public. When the advertisements draw on gendered concepts, such as separation of private and public and militarism, the receiver may identify as a representative of the negative identity of the Other. This further strengthens the Self.

The visual invisibility of the Self throughout the campaigns works to embed gendered power structures in discourse. By constructing a Self against an Other, the campaigns thrive of traditional gender roles that separates the private and public. The private is always hierarchically second. Consequently, civilian life is hierarchically subordinate. With a majority of representations of women in domestic spheres and civilian men in private, economic sectors, the opposing position of the SAF is graphically evident too (SAF 4 2013: film Post-It, SAF 5 2013: Huset). In the print *Dough* a young man is baking bread and taking picture of the dough. Dominating the image is a text that questions his actions, the same as the campaign title. In the left corner one can read that the SAF is removing mines, securing food transport and defending human rights (SAF 4 2013 Deg). The image is gendered because of the way the text is used. It is used as a voice of rationality, that differentiates between what is meaningful and not. The visual tone of the print implies that the man’s action, that of taking a picture of the dough, can be questioned. The work in the private sphere can be forsaken for the greater good, ie protecting human rights.

The private spaces portrayed in the campaigns are significant not only as representations of gendered space. In the campaign *What are you doing* the spaces are, among others, student housing (SAF 4 2013: Ballong), urban apartments (SAF 4 2013: Frukost, Böcker, Film Inredning) and night life (SAF 4 2013: Iphone). These spaces do not only portray a private sphere, but a privileged private sphere. They are invisible in the same sense that the masculine norm is invisible: they are taken for granted. The socio-economic aspect of them is left unreflected. This invisibility is related to intersectionality. Even though the private sphere are subordinate to that of the public military, the people visible in them are young, healthy and Caucasian (eg SAF 4 2013: Ballong, SAF 5 2013: Film Taket). They are part of the same norm as the visually representations of Swedish soldiers in *Welcome to our reality* (SAF 1 2011: Reklamfilm 1). The spaces that are depicted as war zones reflect a juxtaposed reality. It is the reality of poverty and destroyed houses (SAF 5 2013: Huset, SAF 3 2012: print 3). They are of the distant Other. An Other that is faceless but still in need of protection. Both are constructed realities that produces the strong Self. It can be noted that the continued portrayal of the insignificance of the private sphere illustrates a binary struggle. The gender discourse regarding private space is not only gendered in terms of portraying gender roles, but makes normative presumptions about intersectional attributes as well.

4 Conclusion

The purposes of this study have been to identify and deconstruct elements of the gender discourse in the 2011-2013 marketing campaigns for GMU. The feminist poststructural method has been used, resulting in the discourse being interpreted through the gendered dichotomy of Self and Other. The dynamic evolution of gender discourse in the campaigns shows that that gendered positions are constructed in several ways. Starting with an explicit focus on the reality of the military Self, discourse then evolves to produce a gendered construction of the reality of the Other. This means a greater focus on the separation of private and public, the visibility of politicized bodies, the militaristic norm as both of war and nature and the gendered depiction of reality by the use of dichotomies.

The result of this study is dependent on its method. The analysis shows how gender can be expressed and produced in the struggle between Self and Other. An interesting finding is that the visual set-up of the advertisement plays a central role in the perception of the Self as opposite to the Other. The gendered dimension in this lies in the message of the written texts as bearer of rationality. This contrasts and questions imagery, giving the Self agency. The representations of spaces are important in this construction as well. Using nature and war zones as expressions of danger, the text and imagery interacts and links the Self to the role of the saviour. Representations of private space instead work to strengthen the image of the Self by using depictions of gender roles, stereotyping work and creativity. It is also the space where bodies become political, rather than invisible. The interaction between representations of nature, war zones, private spaces and bodies is what forms this gender discourse of a Self and an Other.

On a final note, it is worth to mention that the poststructural discourse theory emphasizes the temporality of analysis. This means that further research is needed. The gender discourse of the marketing campaign can be reinterpreted, but what remains is their significance as a research object for political science. The construction and representations of gender travels in spheres that reach outside formal documents and discourse. The abstract nature of politics demands further research in visual manifestations of power and discourse.

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