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(In)Security and total defence on Gotland

Analysing the framing of Gotland as Sweden's most strategic island, and the implications for local security and governance

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Abstract

As geopolitical tensions in the Baltic Sea region have intensified in recent years, Gotland has reemerged as a strategically central location for both Sweden and NATO. The aim of this thesis is to examine how the changing security environment has affected more than just Gotland's military significance. This thesis asks: *“How is Gotland constructed as a security issue in public discourse, and how does this construction shape security practices and governance in the local society?”*. The study is based on a qualitative single case study design, with data collected from public documents, media articles, and semi-structured interviews with local experts. The analysis applies a WPR-approach and draws on securitization theory, ontological security, human security and multi-level governance theory. The results show that Gotland has been constructed as a strategically important territory, in response to perceived existential threats, leading to military and total defence establishments. Top-down and bottom-up total defence initiatives have created increased governmental coordination and communal security-seeking routines. However, existing vulnerabilities in terms of financing, infrastructure, and lack of human security have been exposed. This thesis helps demonstrate how security is more than military defence, and how a place of strategic importance is also a home.

Key words: Gotland, security, total defense, rearmament, governance

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1 Introduction

Within the past 10 years, Sweden has undergone significant changes in its defense and security policies. The Swedish government is currently carrying out the largest upgrade of the total defense since the 1950s. The reconstruction of the total defense has been ongoing since 2015, when the government and parliament assessed that the international security environment had deteriorated (Regeringskansliet 2026).

The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has further affected Swedish security. The Swedish Armed Forces states that Russia's invasion of Ukraine was a violation of the previous security order, where acceptance of the sovereignty of states and the inviolability of national borders prevailed. Since then, there has been an increased risk of influence operations and other hostile actions against Sweden, such as sabotage against infrastructure under the sea, cyberattacks, and political influence campaigns (Swedish Armed Forces 2025a). Sweden's accession to NATO in 2024 marked the end of over 200 years of Swedish neutrality. Then Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tobias Billström said: "Although Sweden's cooperation with NATO began decades earlier, the Swedish membership of NATO is a direct result of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and indefensible war of aggression." (Regeringskansliet 2024).

Within this context, Gotland has reemerged as a strategically central site for defence. Being the largest Swedish island located in the middle of the Baltic Sea, both the Swedish Armed Forces and NATO allies have pointed at the strategic nature of Gotland as an asset for security in recent years (Swedish Armed Forces 2025b; Ballout 2024). Gotland used to be highly militarized, but the last regiment was shut down in 2005 due to a perceived new era of security after the Cold War (Regeringens Proposition 2004/05:5 2004, p. 1). In 2018, the Gotland regiment P18 was reinstituted because of geopolitical tensions (Regeringens Proposition 2014/15:109 2015). How can an island territory end up being such a central component for the security policy of both a country and a military alliance?

From a non-military perspective, Gotland is more than just a strategic site. It is home to over 60.000 permanent residents. Being the only island-region in a country with no island policy, the local government is openly struggling to make ends meet in financing welfare and infrastructure. Problems with reliant energy and water supply, access to care, and affordable transportation to the mainland are some of the pressing challenges for Gotland (Region Gotland 2026). When the basic needs of Gotland's inhabitants aren't always met – how does the regional authorities and local community deal with the current geopolitical climate, and their responsibilities within the total defence plan?

With this thesis, I aim to draw a bridge between the global and local aspects of geopolitics by focusing on issues surrounding security, total defence and preparedness. This thesis will focus on finding out if Gotland has gone through the process of securitization, and if ontological security routines have been created to cope with the security threats at the local level. I am also interested in finding out how local authorities have handled the new security situation from the lens of multi-level governance, and if human security has been considered. The research project is based on data collection of public documents and media articles, as well as of semi-structured interviews with local experts on Gotland. The data will be analyzed with a WPR-framework, through the theoretical lens of securitization, ontological security, human security, and multi-level governance.

Based on my findings I will be making four main arguments in this thesis: (1) Gotland has undergone a securitization process due to its strategic geographical location in a time of increased geopolitical instability; (2) The securitization process has led to ontological security-seeking routines in the form of bottom-up total defence initiatives on Gotland; (3) Total defence has added a layer of complexity to the local governance; (4) Human security has yet been as developed as military security. I conclude that the security situation in the Baltic Sea thus seems to create complex outcomes for Gotland; on one hand it creates a strengthened community, on the other hand it increases pressure on local actors.

1.1 Background

In this section I will provide some background information on Gotland and the Swedish total defense strategy. This is essential so that the reader can grasp the topic of this thesis and be able to follow the upcoming analysis.

1.1.1 Gotland

Gotland is a Swedish island located in the Baltic Sea, about 100km from the Swedish coast. The total size of Gotland municipality is 3,134 square kilometers, with a population of 60,971 inhabitants as of 2024 (Nationalencyklopedin 2026a). Gotland in its entirety is governed by one municipal authority, that has extended responsibilities to cover the lack of a regional authority. Hence the name *Region Gotland* (SOU 2010:94) Gotland County also has governmental presence in form of a County Administrative Board, called *Länsstyrelsen Gotlands län* (Länsstyrelsen Gotlands län 2026).

Gotland dominated the Baltic Sea trade during medieval times, as the island was a central actor within the Hanseatic League. The fortified city of Visby used to house both monasteries and tradesmen from around Europe. Gotland has been home to the Gutes since prehistoric times, an ethnic group native to the island. Throughout history, bloody battles have been fought by the Gutes against both Danish and Swedish occupations. Gotland has been part of Sweden since 1679, except for a time in 1808 when Russian troops occupied the island declared it a Russian province. The Gutnish language, isolated location, independent roots and role in international trade have influenced the islands history, culture and language (Nationalencyklopedin 2026a). The local economy mainly consists of small businesses, public employment within Region Gotland and a few larger enterprises (Nationalencyklopedin 2026b). The limestone industry has been an important contributor to Gotland's economic development. Limestone is also widely regarded as a strategically raw material for Swedish infrastructure and resilience. As of

today, the limestone industry on Gotland supplies Sweden with 75% of its limestone (Törnquist & Almgren 2025).

Aside from Gotland's role within trade and limestone production, it has also been an important location for Swedish defense. Gotland used to be highly militarized between 1811 and 2005. During the peak in the 1990s, nearly 25,000 soldiers were stationed on the island. The Swedish parliament decided to disband the Gotland Regiment in 2004. In 2005 all military operations closed, except for the Home Guard. In the 2015 Defense Decision, it was decided that a permanent unit should be stationed on Gotland again. *Gotland Regiment P18*, was reinstated in 2018 (Holmqvist 2023). In parallel with the regiment, the Gotland Battle Group 'Stridsgrupp Gotland' will be established and dimensioned to meet an attack from a qualified opponent (Försvarsmakten 2025b).

1.1.2 Total defense in Sweden

Total defense is described by the Swedish government as the activity needed to prepare Sweden for war, consisting of both civil and military defense. The overarching goal of the Swedish total defense is to be able to defend Sweden and the Swedish population against armed attacks, to assert the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as to contribute to the defense of allies. Total defense involves the whole Swedish society, including individuals, non-profit organizations, religious communities and the business sector. Activities within total defense should be conducted both individually and with others, within and outside of Sweden and in accordance with Sweden's commitments as a member of NATO (Regeringskansliet 2026).

The Swedish government presented a Total Defence Bill for the 2025-2030 period in October 2024. The bill includes reinforcements of the total defense, with increased budgets for both military and civil defense through 2030. Some of the focus areas of the 2025-2030 total defense plan is to rapidly build up military capability, prioritize civil preparedness sectors, and to strengthen psychological defense and the will to defend (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2024).

1.2 Thesis outline

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter will be the literature review, where conclusions will be drawn on research gaps, theoretical and methodological approaches in previous research. The literature review will lead to the chapter on research purpose, where the research question(s) will be presented. The following chapter is the theoretical framework, which will provide a base for the upcoming analysis. The next chapter is about research methods, where the data collection, analytical framework and ethical considerations will be discussed. After the methods chapter is the analysis, which will be divided into four sub-chapters. In the chapter on conclusions, the research question will be answered and the results of the analysis discussed. The final chapter is the bibliography containing all references from the thesis. At the end of the thesis is the appendix, where several documents and tables are presented that are being referenced to throughout the methodological chapter.

2 Literature review

The aim of this chapter is to review what has already been written within the scholarly literature related to my research topic. Such as, which conclusions have been drawn, what concepts and theories have been applied, and which research methods have been used by previous scholars. Themes of security, total defence and strategic island territories are of relevance for this thesis. Particularly focusing on the Baltic Sea region and the Nordic countries. Gathering information about what has already been explored in the field, gives me a starting point for my own academic contribution (Bryman 2016, p. 98). I aim to take a critical approach, that means viewing the literature review as an active investigation of the research on a subject (Ibid. 2016, p.99).

The databases I used for the literature search was Google Scholar, EBSCO Host and the Lund University library platform FINN. Keywords used in the process were: *Gotland; Sweden; total defence; defence strategy; local; security; discourse; geopolitics; island; Baltic; Scandinavia; Greenland; Bornholm; Åland; Pacific*. To broaden the literature search, I included a mix of island territories that are of strategic security importance in the keywords. I mainly filtered for peer reviewed academic articles to make sure that I look at quality research. I also utilized the snowballing method by exploring the reference list of articles to further gather relevant sources (Machi & McEvoy 2016, p. 67-69). The literature review is sorted after a thematic approach. The themes are based on similarities between certain articles in terms of content.

This type of sourcing has its inherent limitations. The limited scope of this thesis limits the amount of literature brought into the review. There is a risk of selection bias in the decision of which literature is relevant. I have tried to combat this issue by using several electronic databases and mixing up the use of keywords. A

language barrier in the literature sourcing process could have been a further limitation, but most of the articles have been produced in a language I comprehend.

2.1 State-level security perspective

Much of the literature written on security in relation to island territories and total defence policy are discussing the state-level security perspective. Gricius (2025) examines how Greenland has been discursively produced as a “low-tension” territory in the highly geopolitical Arctic region. Public security narratives have downplayed the geopolitical rivalry, despite increasing power interests in the region. The local Greenlandic narratives are also de-securitizing the island as part of the push for sovereignty. The method used is discourse analysis of public documents and articles. The study highlights how state authority constructs regional security imaginaries and lifts the importance of continuing to study how desecuritization discourse changes in today’s new geopolitical reality of the Nordics post-2022.

Kazumine (2013) examines how remote Japanese islands in the Pacific are important strategic assets. They function as military chokepoints, and as baselines for expansive exclusive economic zones. Thereby shaping US-China maritime rivalry, since control over these islands strengthens deterrence and constrains Chinese naval access to the Pacific. The analysis strongly suites are the links between geography and maritime military strategy at the state level. In a similar matter, Chen and Krickel-Choi (2024) examines the security issues of the Japanese Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. Utilizing the analytical lens of ontological security and the conceptualization of a sovereign state ‘self’, the competition over the islands is understood as security-seeking. The article argues that Taiwan claims the islands to defend historical Chinese territory and gain back its sovereign self. China wants to prove their position as the ‘true China’ by acquiring the islands.

In conclusion the literature in this section highlights how strategic island territories are utilized by states within geopolitical conflicts. What most of these articles are lacking is a local perspective on security, such as what Gricius (2025) provides. For example, how locals interpret their own security and what effects are produced by these geopolitical tensions. This is a perspective I wish to contribute with through my thesis. The conclusions made by Kazumine (2013) seem close to what I could find in my thesis within the Baltic Sea context. As for methods and theories, I am inspired by Chen and Krickel-Choi (2024) to include ontological security into my theoretical framework. Using discourse analysis of public documents to study security narratives, is a method I will utilize based on Gricius (2025) article.

2.2 Colonial legacies of island territories

Many of the strategic island territories that scholars have examined within security studies have colonial legacies. Within the Nordic context, these islands are Greenland, Åland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands. Adler-Nissen and Gad (2014) relies on a framework of postimperial sovereignty games to explain how Greenland, Åland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands struggle to enhance their independence. Iceland is now a sovereign state and the others self-governed through different arrangements. The authors found that the islands develop close relationships with the EU to achieve independent subjectivity. The situation could be understood by imperial legacies, bringing this perspective into the larger theoretical discussion of European integration. The authors also end up questioning the Nordic welfare model as based on equality and consensus when you consider the imperial background of colonizing island territories.

Hansen (2023) analyses why Greenland is still a part of the Kingdom of Denmark through a security perspective on discourse. Arguing that Denmark's management of Greenland's independence claims operates through forms of what he calls "post-colonial gaslighting", reproducing hierarchical relations whilst framing Denmark as a stabilizing actor. Hansen uses a theoretical framework of ontological security

and colonial hierarchy to show how Greenland's sovereignty aspirations are tamed with narratives of responsibility and immaturity.

Gricius (2025) found that local narratives are de-securitizing Greenland as part of the push for sovereignty. The same local de-securitized identity is a part of the ontological security creation on Åland. Joenniemi (2014) argues that Åland's identity and political status have been shaped by ontological insecurity since the Finnish separation from Sweden. The inhabitants of Åland regard Sweden as their mother country, they became part of Finland with an autonomous standing and several economic, cultural and linguistic rights. The Åland Islands were also to remain demilitarized and neutralized. The settlement was conducive of a self-sustaining pattern of identity-related tensions between Åland and Finland. The League of Nations recognized this and provided Åland with an exceptional standing as a co-sovereign entity within Finland. Over time, Åland developed routines of ontological security-seeking through protecting autonomy and maintaining an island identity. The neutralization and demilitarization further provide Åland with a special standing, being securitized in a normal manner would deprive the Islands of their special nature according to Joenniemi (2014). The League of Nations pushed Åland to search for ontological safety under the shelter of the label "the Islands of Peace" and go against ordinary efforts of securitization.

These articles provide examples of how Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Åland are handling their situations of a 'colonial legacy'. Adler Nissen and Gad (2014) explain how these territories are looking to strengthen their relations with the EU as a push for independency. Both Hansen (2023) and Joeniemmi (2014) are utilizing ontological security successfully in their articles, making my decision to utilize this theory in my thesis stronger. Joeniemmi's article is providing an interesting angle on how Åland is positioned as a demilitarized island and the locals are finding ontological security within this identity. This provides me with a research gap to fill on how ontological security is created on a militarized island like Gotland.

2.3 Security culture and total defence

When examining the literature of Swedish and Nordic security policy, much is focused on the Baltic Sea region and its shared security culture. Authors Browning and Joenniemi (2004) writes that security issues have resulted in strong cooperation within the Baltic Sea region in the post-Cold War period. Examining if the enlargements of the European Union and NATO could potentially be undermining regional cooperation. Using discourse analysis and relying on three theoretical frameworks of security – realist, liberalist and (a)security discourse. Authors conclude that a lack of securitization could pave way towards an identity-region based on common interests and history instead of security threats (ibid.).

Mölder (2011) examines the theoretical concept of cooperative security dilemmas in the Baltic Sea regional context. Arguing that as many countries in the region recognize Russia as their primary security issue, additional cooperative security arrangements with the involvement of NATO and EU could be useful. Ekengren (2018) asks the question whether the confrontations between some EU member states and Russia becomes the end of a security community within the Baltic Sea region. Based on security community theory the author investigates possibilities of avoiding the return of geopolitical rivalry in the region. The study concludes that the EU institutions should find a way out of the geopolitical “zero-sum” game by not putting restrictions on participants from Russian regions in strategically chosen areas of cooperation (ibid.)

Kozierska et.al. 2025 writes that the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 forced the Baltic Sea region to quickly react to the changing security landscape. With Sweden and Finland joining NATO, the Baltic has become an inland NATO sea. As of the Baltic Sea states, the three Baltic nations and Poland reacted to Russia’s attack on Ukraine with a national existential crisis. The Baltic Sea region has since been the strongest advocates for military support to Ukraine and have been seeking support from the EU and NATO. Majority of the region’s states updated their security policies. Many states have also pushed for Ukraine’s accession to the EU and NATO as a security guarantee in the region (Kozierska et.al. 2025). These articles raise an interesting argument about what type of role EU and NATO plays within the Baltic Sea region, relevant for my thesis. NATO has

been more involved in the Baltic Sea region and Gotland in particular, and these scholars provides reasons to why that is.

Another orientation of literature on security in the Baltic Sea region has been societal security. Sundelius (2016) argues that European security thinking has shifted towards “societal security”, emphasizing resilience, critical societal functions, and the management of transnational flows and interdependencies. The threats are complex including issues such as terrorism, economic crises, energy resilience and cyberattacks. Something traditional state-centred approaches to security misses. Within the Baltic Sea region Sundelius finds that cooperation on such issues has been happening faster than in the rest of the EU, due to interconnected infrastructure for example.

Sergunin (2021) studies whether the concept of societal security is embedded in Russia’s discourses as well as plans for national security and the Baltic Sea region. It turns out Russia has a shared regional approach to the understanding of societal security threats and challenges with other nations in the region. In 2017 the CBSS countries even agreed on a common societal security strategy (ibid.). A more recent study published in 2024 investigates the defence policies of the states within the Baltic Sea Region from the perspective of a shared security culture. Using a comparative approach the authors analyses conceptualizations of total defence and resilience, with material sourced from interviews with national civil servants. Results show that there is fertile ground for a shared security culture to emerge, but there are only three Nordic states that show clear signs of shared conceptualization, threat perceptions and interaction preferences (Bengtsson et.al. 2024).

As for the security of critical infrastructure in the region, author Becker (2025) writes a legal review of the implementation of EU laws. The 2022 full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine and recent hybrid attacks on EU countries have been targeting critical infrastructure. Despite the Baltic Sea region being a hotspot for Russian aggressions, the study shows that there is limited legislative harmonization across the region for resilience of critical entities (ibid.) Quirico (2024) conducts a critical discourse analysis on the environmental and climate impact of the Russian gas pipeline Nord Stream 2 in the Baltic Sea. Arguing that environmental arguments

are the only legal channel that Baltic Sea states can use to prevent construction of underwater cables or submarine pipelines.

Hicks and Metrick (2018) highlights how security is a key challenge of the Baltic Sea, also for economic reasons since it is an important trade route. It is a challenging maritime operational environment, due to e.g. unexploded mines. The authors urge for stronger maritime domain awareness in Northern Europe.

These articles have highlighted how security has previously been studied in the Baltic Sea context, from the perspective of states and the international community (Browning & Joenniemi 2004; Mölder 2011; Ekengren 2018; Kozierska et.al. 2025). As Gotland is a territory located in the middle of this region, the conclusions from this thesis will be able to add to the previous literature. The articles on societal security, critical infrastructure and economic importance of the region provides a reference for how security is interpreted in the broader sense (Sundelius 2016; Bengtsson et.al. 2024; Becker 2025; Quirico 2024; Hicks & Metrick 2018).

To conclude, the literature on the themes related to this thesis are in a small niche of social scientific research. The themes of this thesis are not very well explored within scholarly literature, meaning that I am probably entering a newer field. This adds to my conviction that this field is of great importance, and my thesis will be able to add a small brick to the building of security studies related to island territories and total defence. Overall, there is basically no research done on security in relation to Gotland. There also seems to be a limited amount of literature on the securitization of islands in public discourse, something my thesis will provide. Bringing the local perspective into focus will be my most important contribution with this thesis. As most of the previous scholarly work focus on the international or national level. In the following chapter these conclusions will help shape the research purpose of this thesis.

3 Research purpose & question(s)

In this chapter, I will formulate the research purpose and the research question(s) for this thesis. As introduced in the introductory chapter, I wish to investigate how Gotland is constructed as a security concern in public discourse, and what such constructions mean for the people, institutions, and governance structures located on the island. I am interested in the current period of remilitarization after the island was demilitarized in 2005. The purpose of this research project is to understand how a territory can be securitized through language, and how a local society copes with the consequences of being a place of “strategic importance”.

Furthermore, the purpose of this thesis is to be of relevance for, and fill research gaps in, two academic disciplines: global studies and political science. To position this thesis within global studies, the topic exemplifies the local-global continuum, a key global studies concept. In the light of global geopolitical changes, Gotland has reemerged as a strategic site which has consequences at the local level. These are global processes that transcend national borders and levels of society, making the global reflect the local and the local reflect the global. By focusing on Gotland and bringing out the local aspect of security and governance, the global processes of geopolitics become tangible and accessible (Darian-Smith & McCarthy 2017, p. 12). Furthermore, this thesis will touch on multiple levels of analysis between state and nonstate actors, processes, and interactions that reflect the global imaginary (ibid. p. 3). Positioning this thesis within political science, the topic will bring understanding to something that has consequences for both political and social life (Halperin & Heath 2020, p. 99). Furthermore, the research topic is related to security studies, which is of importance for both disciplines (Anderson & Holmsten 2019a, p. 67).

After conducting the literature review, I found several research gaps that this thesis will help fill. For example, there has been no application of this research problem

or these theories on my specific case. My thesis will contribute to the existing scholarly literature by focusing on Gotland, including the perspective of regional experts, and drawing a link between public security discourse and its implications at a local level. As suggested by Halperin and Heath (2020), a good research question should be significant for an issue relating to the political science field, researchable and not yet answered definitively (p. 97).

My main research question is: *How is Gotland constructed as a security issue in public discourse, and how does this construction shape security practices and governance in the local society?*

The first part of the research question, “How is Gotland constructed as a security issue in public discourse (...)?”, is motivated by the need to examine security as a social and political construction. Grounded in securitization theory, it is possible to examine which aspects of Gotland are presented as requiring protection, which threats are emphasized and which actors are given responsibility for addressing them.

The second part of the question, “(...) and how does this construction shape security practices and governance in the local society?”, extends the analysis beyond discourse itself. Security constructions can have practical and institutional consequences. By utilizing ontological security and human security, security practices at a societal level can be analyzed. Multi-level governance provides a framework for analyzing how local governance has been shaped.

To further operationalize this research question, I have developed four sub-questions:

- Can the construction of Gotland as a security issue be understood as securitization?
- How does issues of security shape multi-level governance on Gotland?
- How do changes in Gotland’s security environment affect ontological security?

- How do changes in Gotland's security environment affect human security?

The sub-questions are aimed to be answered using the four different theories included in the theoretical framework; securitization, ontological security, human security and multi-level governance theory. The term 'security' will thus be defined in terms of this theoretical framework. In the following chapter, I will lay out the theoretical framework of this thesis that will guide the analysis and help answer the research question(s).

4 Theoretical framework

The aim of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework within which my research findings can be interpreted in the analysis (Bryman 2016, p. 18). This thesis examines how Gotland is constructed as a site of security and what consequences it has for the local society. The theoretical framework combines securitization theory, ontological security, human security and multi-level governance. Securitization is concerned about security seeking at the state level, whilst ontological security and human security can be applied to the societal level. Multi-level governance provides a framework for how different levels of governance interact. Together these four theories complement one another and provide a multi-dimensional approach to (in)security on Gotland at different analytical levels.

4.1 Securitization theory

Securitization theory provides a framework for understanding how issues become framed as matters of security. This theory is particularly suitable to help answer the sub-research question: “Can the construction of Gotland as a security issue be understood as securitization?”. Deriving from the Copenhagen School and developed by Weaver, Buzan and de Wilde, securitization theory aims to explicate the structures and processes that constitute security problems (Durak 2024, p. 342-343). Assuming that security is a socially and politically constructed phenomenon, securitization theory examines how security issues arise through political discourse (Balzacq 2010, p. 1).

Securitization theory generally focuses on the security of the state. Security is understood as survival from an existential threat. An existential threat justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle it. Traditionally a state representative can

use the term 'security' to declare an emergency condition, thus legitimizing the use of whatever means are necessary to block a threatening development (Buzan et.al. 1998. p. 21).

Buzan (1991) draws up types of national threats against five sectors; military, political, economic, societal and ecological (p. 116). Military action usually threatens all the components of the state and is at the core of national security concerns. Military threats involve the use of force and can be both direct and indirect. Indirect threats could be against allies, shipping lanes, or strategically placed territories (Buzan 1991, p. 116-118). For this thesis, the data suggests that the security discourse around Gotland is based on threats against the military sector.

An important contribution of the Copenhagen School is the securitization spectrum of public issues involving three levels: non-politized – politicized – securitized. Non-politicized issues receive little public attention and are not managed by the state. Politicized issues become subjects of public debate and government policy within established political procedures. Securitized issues are presented as existential threats requiring exceptional responses that transcend ordinary politics. Importantly, movement along this spectrum is neither linear nor permanent, depending on changing political circumstances (Buzan et.al. 1998, p. 23-24).

A successful securitization process consists of several interconnected elements:

- (1) First, a securitizing actor, typically political leaders, government agencies or other influential actors, frames an issue as an existential threat. This is done through a 'speech act', as security is performed through language. By declaring something a matter of security, political actors attempt to move an issue beyond the ordinary political debate (Buzan et.al. 1998, p. 26-27).
- (2) Second, this framing identifies a referent object that requires protection. The referent object is traditionally, but not exclusively, the state. It could also be a region or a concept such as the economy (Buzan et.al. 1998, p. 21).
- (3) Third, the securitizing move seeks to legitimize the adoption of extraordinary measures that go beyond routine political procedures. These measures could be

the legitimized use of force, state mobilization or the use of special powers. (Buzan et.al. 1998. p. 21).

- (4) Finally, securitization depends on audience acceptance. Security claims are to some extent only successful if the relevant audience accepts the framing as legitimate (Durak 2024, p. 343).

In the context of this thesis, securitization theory provides a framework for analysing how Gotland has been constructed as a strategic security object in public discourse following the 2005 demilitarization. The analysis will examine how the island is represented, who the securitizing actors are, which threats are articulated, what referent objects are portrayed as requiring protection, and how particular policy responses are legitimized. Based on my empirical material, special attention is given to whether these discourses justify policies associated with Sweden's renewed total defence strategy, increased military presence, and broader preparedness measures.

Securitization theory has been critiqued for focusing on elite definitions of security issues based on power structures in the field of security. Critical analysts argue that elite definitions of security should be challenged by looking at voices that are ignored or contradict the dominant perspective. (Otukoya 2024). As argued by Buzan (1991, p. 50), there is no necessary harmony between individual and national security. To analyse how the security situation has affected security on Gotland from a local perspective, I will be adding the theoretical perspectives of ontological security and human security.

4.2 Ontological security

While securitization theory explains how security threats are socially constructed through political and media discourse, it says relatively little about how such constructions are dealt with by the people living within these security environments. Ontological security offers a useful framework for examining how heightened security discourse and the remilitarization of Gotland has impacted everyday

security experiences in the local society. This theory will help answer the sub-research question: “How do changes in Gotland’s security environment affect ontological security?”.

The concept of ontological security was coined by psychologist R.D. Laing and further developed in social sciences by sociologist Anthony Giddens (Gustafsson & Krickel-Choi 2020, p. 876-877). Ontological security is a stable mental sense of order, continuity, and identity in daily life. In contrast to physical security, ontological security is sustained through routines, familiarity, and basic trust in both other people and social institutions. Ontological insecurity arises when these routines are disrupted or when the future becomes difficult to predict. Ontological insecurity, or existential anxiety, refers to a persistent sense of uncertainty regarding one’s place in the world and the stability of everyday life (Giddens 1991, p. 43-46). Ontological security theory has been used by international relations scholars to analyse individuals, societies, groups and states (Kinnvall & Mitzen 2017, p. 3). In the context of this thesis, I will analyse how the increased security discourse around Gotland has affected ontological security on a community level.

The practice of homesteading can be understood as routines through which communities seek to establish and maintain ontological security. Kinnvall (2004) examines homesteading practices among communities experiencing homelessness, arguing that the establishment of identity can function as an anxiety-controlling mechanism. In this context, the special concept of “home” is a bearer of security where identity can be constructed and maintained. Kinnvall defines homesteading as the creation of a political space through which individuals and communities can establish stability and reduce experiences of uncertainty and anxiety (p. 747).

Kvarnlöf et.al. (2026) draws a link between homesteading and crisis preparedness. In uncertain times, crisis preparedness can serve as a means through which individuals seek to create a sense of control and predictability, thereby contributing to ontological security. Preparing for potential crises could be understood as taking responsibility for protecting oneself and others, which can provide a sense of purpose and agency. These practices are often situated within the home, for example through the storage of food and supplies. Preparedness can also extend to

practices such as fortification, stockpiling and surveillance (Kvarnlöf et.al. 2026 pp. 968-971).

For the case of Gotland, crisis preparedness and total defence initiatives could be understood as routines asserting ontological security in the community. Where ontological security explains how people find security in a stable sense of order, human security focuses on complimenting state security with ensuring safety of communities from a wide range of threats.

4.3 Human security

Human security is a theory that puts the security of people ahead of other security concerns. Developed by Mahbub ul Haq in 1994, human security was presented as a new development concept in the UNDP Development Report. Later, human security has been developed as an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation (Ogata 2005, p. 11-12). Human security will help analyse for whom security on Gotland has been implemented, for the state or the people. This theory will help answer the sub-research question: “How do changes in Gotland’s security environment affect human security?”.

Human security focuses on two core ideals; ‘freedom of fear’ and ‘freedom from want’ (Ogata 2005, p. 11). Human security doesn’t seek to compete with state security but rather complement it. As state security tends to focus on protecting borders, human security’s goal is to protect the core of human lives in a way that enhances freedoms and fulfilment (ibid., p. 12). As Ogata (2005) explains, there are three approaches to operational tools that facilitates the implementation of human security. The first approach is the “protection of people’s security and their basic rights and freedoms”. Meaning that communities are protected against a wide range of threats such as diseases, famine, water shortage, and other things outside of external aggressions. This is done by developing processes and institutions that address insecurities in comprehensive and preventative ways (Ibid., p. 12). For this

thesis, this would mean that Gotland is protected against more than just external threats.

The second approach focuses on empowering individuals and communities to act on their own behalf. This is done by providing education, information, access to health care and social safety nets to prepare people for economic or political crises (Ogata 2005, pp. 12-13). The third approach aim to link together the broad arrange of issues that compromise human security. The expertise on multiple threats must be jointly developed between different levels of governance. Examples of issues that are of relevance for Gotland is the access to health care and education, provision of clean air and water supply. (ibid., p. 13).

Aside from issues of security, this thesis also covers how the security situation on Gotland has affected governance. To analyse this, I will utilize multi-level governance theory.

4.4 Multi-level governance

Multi-level governance (MLG) theory is used to describe political processes. Deriving from Gary Marks and the field of European Union studies, the theory has expanded beyond the EU, and concerns actors such as international institutions, states, and regions (Bache & Flinders 2004, p. 3-4). This theory will provide a theoretical framework for answering the sub-research question: “How does issues of security shape multi-level governance on Gotland?”.

The dispersion of governance between multiple jurisdictions is argued to be more efficient and superior to central state monopoly. By operating at multiple scales, governance can capture variations in the territorial reach of policy externalities. At the same time, there is no agreement on how multi-level governance best is organized. Type I multi-level governance is federalism, concerned with power

sharing between the central government and a tier of non-intersecting subnational governments (Marks & Hooghe 2004, p. 16-18).

Type II multi-level governance is less rigid, where jurisdictions operate at numerous territorial scales. Jurisdictions are task-specific and flexible, rather than rigid and general-purpose (Ibid, p. 20) At the local level, type II multi-level governance can take the shape of intersecting territorial organizations that complement or compete with general-purpose local governments. These organizations mostly perform a single function, e.g. fire protection, water supply, recreation or electric power, at the local level. The organizations are generally embedded in Type I local government but may also appear where local communities are faced with local common pool resource problems (Ibid., p. 26-27). Both types of multi-level governance can be found on Gotland when it comes to governing security. Using this theory to analyze the use of each one, particularly Type II civil society organizations will be useful.

My data has shown that one of the biggest shifts for governance on Gotland considering the security situation has been the implementation of total defense initiatives. The organization of total defense in the Nordic countries has been researched by scholars Pursiainen et.al. (2026), from the lens of multilevel governance. In Sweden, Finland and Norway, total defense has evolved into a civil-military cooperation and the coordination of actors across different levels of government. However, a structural paradox has been identified within the Nordic total defense systems. While subsidiarity and decentralization remain important principles, the operational demands associated with crises and war may simultaneously create pressure for greater centralization of authority and decision-making.

Pursiainen et.al. (2026) concludes that effective total defense coordination depends on clear mandates, adequate resources and sustained cooperation across governance levels. Central intervention becomes necessary and contested in cases where municipal capacity is uneven and responsibilities ambiguous. At the same time, total defense extends beyond state and military institutions, civil society and individual citizens have become increasingly incorporated into national

preparedness systems (ibid.). This perspective will provide a theoretical lens for analyzing how total defense has been translated across governance levels and into regional practices on Gotland.

Together, the theories of securitization, ontological security, human security and multi-level governance will provide a framework of different but complementing angles of analysis to the research problem. Of course, there are other theories that could have been included in this theoretical framework. For example, feminist theory or postcolonialism. The choice of theories landed on what was best suited for my research question and what could be applied to my data. Changing out theories would have changed the angle of the thesis or widened the scope of it.

This theoretical framework will be utilized later within the analysis. The next chapter will cover the research methods and ethical considerations of this thesis.

5 Research methods

The purpose, research question(s) and theoretical framework have been presented in previous chapters. In this chapter, I will be presenting and discussing the chosen methods, methodology, data collection and ethics of my research process. My methodological choices are based on the conclusions from the literature review, the research purpose, as well as what I consider most relevant to be able to answer my research question(s). This thesis is based on a qualitative single case study design, with data sourced from both public documents, media articles and semi-structured interviews. The analytical framework is based on WPR-analysis, which is well suited for integrating my empirical findings with the theoretical framework.

5.1 Interpretivist and constructivist methodology

My epistemological position for this thesis is interpretivist. The interpretivist approach argues that the subject matter of social sciences, e.g. people and social matter, is fundamentally different than that of the natural sciences (Bryman 2016, p. 7, 23-24). The interpretivist epistemology aims at understanding subjective knowledge that is contextual. There are no natural laws to be uncovered, but rather interpretations of reality from individuals that helps us understand social phenomena. The world cannot be understood as an objective reality, instead it should be seen as a series of interpretations that people within society give of their position. Me as the researcher will in turn produce this thesis with my own interpretations, and influence the people of society once again, a reflexive turn called the “double hermeneutic” (Della Porta & Keating 2008, p. 24-25).

My epistemological position leads me to an abductive approach to theory. The theory is there to guide my research process, but the results themselves also help influence the theories I am choosing. Before starting the research project, I came

up with ideas of theories to use, but the theoretical framework has been developed throughout the processing of my data. My chosen theoretical framework is applied throughout the analytical chapter to analyse what the data is telling me (Bryman 2016, p. 20).

My ontological position is constructivist and interpretivist, meaning that reality and social entities are to be considered as social constructions that are created through the perceptions and actions of social actors, i.e. people (Bryman 2016, p. 27-29). The interpretivist ontology claims that the objective and subjective meanings of reality are intrinsically linked. Knowledge of reality is attainable but not separated from human subjectivity (Della Porta & Keating 2008, p. 23). My epistemological and ontological positions reflect my research question, where I wish to understand subjective perceptions of security and security creation from social actors of different levels in society.

5.2 Qualitative case study of Gotland

Based on my interpretivist epistemological and ontological position, I will be using a qualitative research design to answer my research question. This research design is well fitting since it emphasizes words instead of quantification (Clark et.al. 2021, p. 31). This thesis takes the form of a case study, also known as a single-N study. By focusing on one case, I will be able to conduct a detailed analysis and reveal the case's unique features (ibid., p. 60). It would be interesting to conduct a multiple-case study, but the limitations of a master's thesis make it wiser to do in-depth research on a single case (Ibid., p. 63).

Choosing a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach, the research will be able to uncover causal paths and assess specific mechanism of a theory. The results will not be as generalizable as in a large-N study and thus lose some of its external validity. Instead, the research will have a stronger internal validity by being able to address contextual factors and maturation of (in)security that affects the relationship between security narratives, total defense policy and local realities

(Halperin & Heath 2020, p. 167–168). Ideally, I would be able to add a longitudinal element to my case study. Due to the limited timeframe of this thesis project, I can only conduct one investigation. It would add depth to be able to study developments of the case over time or go back a few years from now to revisit the case. (Clark et.al. 2021, p. 61).

Gotland has been selected as a case due to the island's unique status in Swedish defense strategy, the place is unusual in both the Swedish and European setting. It is what scholars would call an 'extreme case' (Halperin & Heath 2020, p. 168). Gotland is also a great case since it is an island territory, meaning that there are clear physical and social boundaries of where this region starts and ends. It is easy to define who the local actors are, and what the public is saying about Gotland in particular.

The method of exploratory research has been utilized within the research process. Since this thesis is taking on a new topic with little prior research, the adaption of a flexible framework for investigating the research puzzle was useful. The choice of theory, method and research question have all developed over time (Craig-Hare 2022).

5.3 Triangulated data collection

I will be utilizing two types of data for this thesis, the first being public documents and media articles, the second being semi-structured interviews. The idea to mix different types of data sources into the analysis is to provide a triangulation of data, analysis and findings. Finding correspondence between the sources will ensure greater confidence in my results and establish credibility (Clark et.al. 2021, p. 364). Each of the two types of data fill their respective purposes in answering the research questions and fulfill the research purpose of this thesis. How the data will be analyzed will be explained in the following sections of this chapter on the analytical framework. In this section, I will be discussing the two types of data collections.

5.3.1 Public documents and media articles

I am interested to analyze how Gotland has been presented in terms of security in public discourse. I chose to source both public documents and media articles, because together they create a general overview of the development of public discourse over time. The public documents I sourced are government bills, policy documents and articles from the websites of public authorities. The media articles were sourced from both national and international media, to cover how Gotland has been framed as a place of strategic importance in Sweden and abroad.

The sampling process for the documents and articles was purposive. Meaning that I selected a representative sample of opinions and views, after reading through hundreds of documents and articles (Battaglia 2008). In total, my sample consists of 8 public documents and 8 media articles. I used Swedish public authorities search engines to find state-level documents on issues such as security, military and total defense. The ones that had specific mentions of Gotland in them were selected to be part of my analysis. An issue with the sampling process for public documents is that many of them are not for public access. This is due to the secretive nature of threat assessments and security strategy. The commentary on how Gotland is positioned within Swedish security is not overly published by state sources either, making the sampling a bit narrow. Another method could have been to interview actors within the Swedish state, but analyzing public documents is more convenient and time effective. I did reach out to several Swedish authorities and government agencies but did not receive any answers or was told that they don't participate in interviews.

News articles were found by looking into several trustworthy media publishers, such as SVT, Omni and Sveriges Radio. I also used regular search engines such as google and put in key words like "Gotland", "security" and "strategic". I selected both news articles and opinion pieces by experts, to cover a mixture of authors and publishing houses. The timeframe of the documents and articles are limited to the years 2009-2026. This period is selected since it constitutes the remilitarization period of Gotland after the demilitarization in 2005.

5.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

I will be conducting semi-structured interviews with people involved in local governance on Gotland. As explained in the research purpose, the aim of this data collection will be to analyze how the construction of Gotland in public discourse shapes security practices and governance in the local society. This is best done by talking to the people involved in this context directly (della Porta & Keating 2008, p. 28, 30). I chose to sample participants based on their knowledge on these issues and involvement in public and civil society on Gotland, which is how I ended up with a sample group of local ‘experts’.

During my research process, I also considered conducting fieldwork by interviewing ‘civilians’ on Gotland. This, however, would have come with several challenges. Interviewing non-experts with no public involvement would involve more ethical considerations. The issues of security and its implications are potentially sensitive to discuss and could cause harm to the participant. Another issue is that I would not be able to come up with a representative number of participants, e.g. ages/genders/backgrounds, within the timeframe of the research project.

The sample process started with me sending out open interview invitations by email to the main public authorities on Gotland; Region Gotland (municipality), Länsstyrelsen Gotlands Län (county administrative board), and to Gotlands Regemente P18 (military regiment). I also sent out personal invitations to people with public email addresses within public administration of these authorities, and to about 15 of the top politicians in Region Gotland. Some of the people declined to take part in an interview since they did not think they had enough knowledge on the subject; others did not respond or didn’t have the time. My email invitation template can be found in the appendix.

The five participants I was able to interview are both regional politicians on Gotland, and public officials that are working on issues of preparedness and total defense on the island. The sample includes three top regional politicians from the three biggest political parties on Gotland, two from the ruling coalition and one in

opposition. By representing a broad political spectrum, I am accounting for political biases. All of them are salaried politicians that work in politics full-time. I also interviewed one civil expert on total defense at the Gotland County Administrative Board, as well as one military expert on total defense at the Gotland Regiment P18. This could be considered a group of experts, making these expert interviews. At the same time, the participants are also citizens on Gotland involved in civil society outside of their professional role. This provides credibility and expertise, as the interview participants talk about security from both the perspective of governance and the local society. The full list of interview participants, along with their titles and organizational belonging, can be found in the appendix.

The sampling method proved successful since I was able to create an analysis that answered my research question(s). Even though five people might seem like a small number of participants, I did reach saturation with the data I collected. The answers did start to repeat after only a few interviews, which gives me confidence in the quality of the smaller sample size. Something that could be questioned about my sample group is the lack of gender diversity, since only one woman is included in the sample. Since this is an ‘expert’-group of interview participants, I do not believe gender identity plays a role in the knowledge or expertise of a person. I therefore acknowledge this representation, but don’t see it as a limit.

The method of semi-structured interviews indicates a qualitative method of interviewing that is flexible and suitable for qualitative research (Clark et.al. 2021, p. 425). I could have conducted a survey instead, but that would create close-ended answer options, where I could miss important information that can only be received through an actual interview (Mason 2018, p. 111, 116).

I developed an interview guide based on my research question, with questions that are open-ended and not leading. The interview guide follows a logical order and is divided into general themes. I started by asking contextual questions about the participants’ professional role and background. The questions after that are all concerning security on Gotland, using relevant and comprehensible language for the people I am interviewing (Clark et.al. 2021, p. 429). The Swedish version of my interview guide, as well as an English translation of it, can be found in the appendix.

During the interviews I had the interview guide there as a support but wasn't rigid about following it in the right order or asking every single question. The interviews were more like a conversation, and I let the participant lead the conversation if they wanted to share more about a specific topic. I asked follow-up questions when suitable. I aimed for a non-biased, gentle and open position as an interviewer. Each interview began with me introducing myself and my research project, creating a friendly environment. I also explained the rights of the participant and asked if I could record the audio of the interview, accounting for interview ethics (Clark et.al. 2021, p. 432-433)

The interviews were all conducted individually for each participant online via Zoom, and I recorded the audio via the voice-recording function on my phone. The reason I ended up conducting digital interviews was due to tight scheduling on my interview participants end. To accommodate difficulty of meeting in person, video call interviews was the next best choice. I was still able to talk face-to-face with each participant. Digital interviewing can have its downsides with e.g. technological problems, but I didn't experience any of those thankfully. (Clark et.al. 2021, p. 440) The interviews were later transcribed by me without involvement of digital tools or AI. The transcription process gave me a chance to familiarize myself with the data and begin initial coding (Ibid., p. 441). All interviews lasted between 30-45 minutes and took place during the month of April 2026. I spoke Swedish with all the interview participants since that was everyone's first language, meaning that the transcripts are also in Swedish.

5.4 Analytical framework: WPR-analysis

For the analysis, my aim is to be able to come up with credible answers to my research question(s). The data I have collected will be analysed through a suitable method of analysis, and the results will be interpreted using my theoretical framework. I have chosen to base my analysis on Bacchi's (2009) 'What's the problem represented to be?'-approach, referred to as WPR-analysis.

Bacchi (2009) developed the WPR-approach to suit policy analysis (p. VII). As my thesis is more focused on multiple levels of analysis of a phenomenon, rather than policy evaluation, I will explain my motivation behind this choice. Bacchi's WPR-analysis aims to evaluate policy in a broad sense, accounting for the historical, national or international contexts that shapes it. Bacchi approaches policy by asking questions of its sources and how it operates; e.g. how governance occurs, and the implications for those that are being governed (ibid. p. IX). Bacchi assumes that governments are active in the creation of a problems through policy. Policies are making proposals for change, that is why they naturally contain implicit representations of problems. Asking 'what's the problem represented to be?' is important, since the problem representation carries implications for how the issue is interpreted, the way the involved actors are treated and evoked to think about themselves (Bacchi 2009, p. 1-2)

In my case, the 'problem' to be analysed is the public security framing of Gotland and its implications for local security and governance. It is not a specific policy per say, but Bacci's inclusive understanding of problem representations fit my research purpose, question(s), theoretical framework and empirical material. By applying this method of analysis, I will be able to answer how Gotland has been constructed as a security issue in public discourse, and how does this construction shape security practices and governance in the local society. Further motivations are that I have seen other scholars successfully use WPR-analysis when analysing securitization and multi-level governance, which are part of my theoretical framework. As my thesis will interact with policy concerning security, military and total defence, I also think a method created for policy analysis is suitable for my thesis.

Bacchi presents the following six questions to be included in a WPR-analysis (Bacchi 2009, p. 2):

1. What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?
3. How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?

4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?
6. How/where has this representation of the ‘problem’ been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?

I have been adapting and reducing the number of these original questions to fit the purpose of my thesis and my available data, as suggested by Bacchi. I also changed the order of the question to follow a more logical development of my analysis. My WPR-questions are the following:

1. What is Gotland represented to be in terms of security?
2. How has this representation of Gotland come about?
3. What effects are produced by this representation of Gotland at a local level?
4. What is left unproblematic in this security representation of Gotland? Where are the silences? Can Gotland’s security be thought about differently?

These four questions will be asked to my empirical material of public documents, media articles, and interview transcripts in the upcoming analysis. The theoretical framework will help interpret the data and provide explanations.

5.5 Ethical considerations

It is of big importance to consider the ethical implications of a research project, both from a legal and humanitarian standpoint (Bos 2020, p. 229). Research should be carried out with respect for human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms (Etikprövningsmyndigheten 2024, p.13-15). The main objective with the ethical considerations of this thesis is to cause no harm with my research. This includes no harm to interview participants, the community I am researching, or any other actor. To achieve this objective, I have considered several ethical dilemmas and potential risks related to my research process.

The first ethical consideration to establish is the one of the aims of this research project. This study will be conducted to help build the knowledge of security narratives and the challenges of insecure island territories. The beneficiaries of this study would be both the research objects and policymakers. Since this research is non-profitable, there are no commissionaires influencing this study (Bos 2020, p. 230-232, Israel 2015 p. 168-169).

The discourse analysis of public documents and media articles does not have any inherent ethical considerations related to it. The data used for this part of the thesis is public and thus expected to have been published with the consent of the involved parties. Since one of the data collection strategies is qualitative interviews, my main ethical consideration will be to avoid harming my participants (Israel, p. 124).

I will make sure that my interviewees understand the aim of my study and consent to taking part in it. Consent will be ensured by writing informed consent forms with each participant prior to the interview, as well as discussing ethical considerations in the beginning of each interview. Voluntary participation is also ensured by only interviewing legally competent adults, helping avoid deception. (Bos 2020, p. 231, 243-250, Israel 2015, p. 17). The consent form that I had each interview participant sign can be found in the appendix. In the consent form I inform the participants on the purpose of the study, what they can expect from the interview and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The interviewees won't receive any compensations for participation, preventing any dependencies between the researcher-participant relationship. Participation is solely based on the principal of impartiality (Bos 2020, p. 232-233).

I don't see myself putting anyone in risk by having them participate in my study (Bos 2020, p. 234) Neither Swedish nor EU authorities are known for penalizing people speaking their minds about public policy. I do recognize that the interviewees might be experiencing insecurity and ambiguous feelings the current security situation and their role within it. Since they are experts on the topic, this shouldn't cause any harm for them to talk about. The consent form discloses that the data collected during the interview might be personal, depending on what the

interview person decides to share. I did offer each interview participant to stay anonymous, but they all agreed to have their name and title published in the thesis. Finally, the consent form covered that I will be the only one with access to their personal data and the interview transcripts. Through properly caring for the ownership and storage of the collected data on my personal password protected devices in accordance with GDPR-regulations, I ensure that no third part could access unpublished materials. All data will be deleted after the thesis project is finished (Bos 2020, p. 262-265, Israel 2015 p. 102).

5.5.1 Positionality and reflexivity

Even though the aim is to act as neutral and fair as possible in all steps of the research project, the positionality of me as a researcher will affect the outcome of thesis. All the way from the introduction to the conclusion, this thesis is shaped by my personal choices and reflects my own subjectivity. As explained by my interpretivist methodological choice, I do believe that the research and the subjectivity of the researcher are intertwined. There is no such thing as objective research in the social sciences, so my subjectivity is inevitable.

My positionality as a person that grew up on the island of Gotland could unconsciously affect my outlook on this research project. A positive outcome of my familiarity with Gotland is that it gives me ‘insider’ status which has helped me during the interviews. As I am familiar with the terms, locations and events that the participants are talking about, I can easily know what they are referring to. This is something I do not think an outsider would. With that said, I take the position of a researcher and aim to make strong academic arguments, not biased ones. By acknowledging the inherent subjectivity of research and my own positionality, I can work on having active reflexivity. In all chapters of this thesis, especially this chapter on methods, I will explain what and how I am doing things to keep a continuous dialogue with the reader (Guillemin & Gillam 2004, p. 277-278). The goal of this thesis is to give a credible answer to my research question. Explaining how I am developing credible answers through a self-aware and critical process of inquiry is important (Halperin & Heath 2025, p. 4).

5.6 Limitations

There are many limitations to this study – mainly due to ethical concerns, lack of data and resources, and the limited timeframe and scope of the thesis. In this chapter I have explained the methodological choices I have made based on what I think will work the best. To there are limitations of conducting a single case study in terms of generalizability and external validity. Limitations of the sampling of both public documents, media articles and interview participants are their inherent subjectivity. The conclusions drawn from these data sources could have been very different with a different sample group and size. This impacts the analysis and conclusions of the whole thesis, which is based on these specific data sources.

The language barrier between Swedish and English is a further limitation of this study. I will personally translate and interpret all Swedish data to English to conduct the analysis. I do have a strong command of both languages, since Swedish is my mother tongue and English is my second language. I acknowledge that there is a risk that undertones, meanings and other language indicators can go lost through a translation process. I am aware of this limitation and will be doing my best to limit the potential issues of translating. I used AI for guidance on some sentence structuring and translations throughout the thesis. AI was an effective resource to help translate technical terms related to defense and governance.

This chapter has explained the methodological choices and ethical considerations of this thesis. In the next chapter, the analysis will take place.

6 Analysis

In this chapter I will be analyzing the empirical material with the help of the analytical framework of WPR-analysis, through the lens of my theoretical framework. The empirical material consists of public documents, media articles, and semi-structured interviews. The theoretical framework consists of securitization, ontological security, human security and multi-level governance theory. This chapter is divided into three sections, or themes, based on the logical development of the WPR-questions. The chapter ends with a fourth section where the analytical findings are discussed.

6.1 Gotland as a securitized territory

The first theme I aim to analyze is how Gotland is portrayed as a securitized territory by the Swedish state authorities and in media. Within this section I will be relying on the first and second WPR questions to guide the analysis. They are the following: WPR 1: ‘What is Gotland represented to be in terms of security?’, WPR 2: ‘How has this representation of Gotland come about?’.

During the years 2005-2018, Gotland was demilitarized without local forces. In the early 2000s, there was no public debate about Gotland’s strategic importance for Swedish security. The following extract is from an article published by SVT:

”Bedömningen att Ryssland inte hade förmåga att hota sina grannländer bidrog till bantningen och försvarets inriktning på internationella insatser, enligt Johan Wiktorin, riskanalytiker och ledamot i Kungliga Krigsvetenskapsakademien. – Det var ett väldigt avslappnat läge i närområdet, säger han om situationen i början av 2000-talet.” – Jönsson (2022)

In this article, military expert Wiktorin explains that Russia was assessed to not pose a threat towards its neighbours anymore when the Gotlandic regiment was shut down. The focus on international military efforts was also a reason for downsizing. Wiktorin states that it was a very relaxed situation in the region during the beginning of the 2000s. From a securitization perspective, Gotland would be considered a non-politicised issue during this time. The island received little public attention in terms of security and was not managed by the state (Buzan et.al. 1998, p. 23-24).

Jan Björklund restarted the debate around Gotland as a strategic site in the end of the 2000s. Being the Deputy Prime Minister in the centre-right government at the time, Björklund's participations in interviews and articles gained traction. This extract comes from an article by P4 Gotland:

"Det svenska försvaret måste stärkas, anser Folkpartiledaren Jan Björklund. Han är kritisk till att militären lämnat Gotland. Till Sveriges Televisions Rapport säger Björklund att det behövs någon form av försvarsförmåga på denna ö i skärningspunkten mellan Ryssland och Sverige. Folkpartiledaren vill att fler soldater och brigader än idag ska kunna mobiliseras om det skulle uppstå en hotfull situation." – P4 Gotland (2009)

Björklund states that Swedish defence must be strengthened and he is critical of the military leaving Gotland. He says that some form of defence capability is needed on this island at the intersection between Russia and Sweden. Björklund wants more soldiers and brigades to be able to be mobilized if a threatening situation should arise. This sentiment was not shared amongst the political opposition at the time.

Member of Parliament for Socialdemokraterna, Peter Hultqvist sent in a written question to then prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt. Hultqvist asks why Björklund has warned of a Russian attack against Gotland in media interviews. He states that it is a startling statement, opening the need for clarification of the security policy analysis on which the statement is based and whether it reflects the government's view of the situation (Hultqvist 2011). Then Minister for Defence, Sten Tolgfors replies to this question. In his reply, Tolgfors refers to the security policy assessment presented in the bill 2008/09:140. According to the government, an

individual military armed attack directly against Sweden remains unlikely for the foreseeable future. Crises or incidents involving military means of force may, however, arise in the region. In the longer term, threats of military attack can never be ruled out (Tolgfors 2011).

This development of events could be understood as the politization of Gotland as a security issue. Jan Björklund, as a high-level politician becomes the securitizing actor by framing Gotland as a mean to secure Sweden through remilitarization. Sweden becomes the referent object in need of protection, whilst the presence of Russia is both indirectly and directly, mentioned as the threat (Buzan et.al. 1998, pp. 21,26-27). The issue of remilitarizing Gotland is still on the level of politization, since it has become subject of public debate within established political procedures (Buzan et.al. 1998, p. 23-24). It is clear, that at this time in the end of the 2000's Gotland has not been generally accepted as a security issue by the public. Opposition politician Peter Hultqvist seems startled by Björklunds statements, and the response from Sten Tolgfors does not explicitly mention the need to remilitarize Gotland as part of the official defence policy.

A couple years later, Björklunds discourse around Gotland has gained a foothold in Swedish politics. The Swedish Armed Forces describes the Russian attacks on Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 as turning points for Gotland's strategic importance (Försvarsmakten 2025a). In an opinion piece, journalist Malmén (2023) presents another example of Russian threats against Gotland during this time. In 2013, Russian bomb planes were exercising outside of the island (ibid.). Considering these events, the new left-wing government presented a defence policy direction for 2016-2020 in bill 2014/15:109.

”Med tanke på utvecklingen i vår omvärld i allmänhet och i Östersjöområdet i synnerhet har Gotland en särskilt viktig position. Från militärstrategisk synvinkel har Gotland en viktig roll för kontrollen av sjö- och luftvägarna till och från Baltikum. Det är ett svenskt strategiskt intresse att ha en militär närvaro på Gotland. En svensk militär närvaro på och runt Gotland har också en stabiliserande effekt på den militär-strategiska situationen i Östersjöområdet.” – Regeringens Proposition 2014/15:109 (2015)

In this extract, the Swedish government states that Gotland has a ‘particularly important position’, based on the geopolitical developments globally and in the Baltic Sea region specifically. Gotland is presented to play an important military-strategic role of controlling sea- and airways to the Baltic states. Furthermore, the government states that it is of Swedish strategic interest to reinstate a military presence on Gotland. This is proposed to bring stability to the military-strategic situation in Baltic Sea region as well.

This could be interpreted as the Swedish government has overtaken the role of a securitizing actor. The referent object in need of protection is still Sweden, but also the whole Baltic Sea area (Buzan et.al. 1998, pp. 21, 26-27). The proposed threats are the negative geopolitical developments and the ‘military-strategic situation in the Baltic Sea’ that needs to be stabilized. These could be considered indirect threats, against allies, sea- and airways and Gotland as a strategically placed territory. A threat against the military sector is at the core of national security concerns and explains the proposition to reestablish a military presence on and around Gotland (Buzan 1991, p. 116-118). Gotland regains a military presence in 2018, based on this bill (Holmqvist 2023).

Since the Gotland regiment was reinstated in 2018, the discourse around the strategic importance of Gotland has been picked up by national media. The island is referred to as “strategic” and “a military carrier”. A news article from SVT refers to a speech during the inauguration by then commander-in-chief of the Swedish Armed Forces, Micael Bydén. Bydén said that Gotland is a strategic location and has been so over the centuries (Myllynen & Mårtensson 2018). In the following extract from another news article, the renewed military presence on Gotland is attributed to the new geopolitical situation. The journalist writes that politicians, experts and analysts have over the years likened Gotland with an aircraft carrier, centrally located in the Baltic Sea and favourable to wage war from (Jönsson 2022). Gotland’s strategic importance has now become a public truth, rather than an opinion by the few. Securitization theory could describe this change as the securitization reaching audience acceptance (Durak 2024, p. 343).

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has further affected Swedish security, and by extension the role of Gotland to secure Sweden. As stated in an article on the Swedish Armed Forces website, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been an important factor for Swedish defence. The Swedish Armed Forces also highlights that the risk for a military attack against Sweden is assessed as low, whilst there is a heightened risk for other hostile actions. Sabotage against infrastructure under the sea surface has occurred, cyber-attacks are recurring and political influence campaigns directed against Sweden are ongoing (Försvarsmakten 2025a). In the same article, the Swedish Armed Forces states that with Gotland as a base one can dominate the Baltic Sea and control communications by sea and in air (Försvarsmakten 2025a). These presentations of existential threats towards Swedish security have reinforced the securitized discourse around Gotland (Buzan et.al. 1998, p. 21).

In 2024, Sweden joined NATO as a direct result of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and the violation of the previous security order as stated by the Swedish Armed Forces and government officials (Försvarsmakten 2025a; Regeringskansliet 2024). Since Sweden's NATO accession, Gotland has gained strategic importance beyond Sweden. Gotland is now a strategic asset for NATO security as well. This discourse is exemplified through the following extract from a NATO article about the first official NATO visit to Gotland in 2024:

"Gotland is of immense strategic importance for the defence posture of both Sweden and NATO in the Baltic Sea Region. (...) After a briefing in the Regimental barracks, the NATO guests received an extensive tour round the island to familiarise them with the area and deepen their understanding for the unique geo-strategical location of Gotland." - JFC Brunssum Public Affairs Office (2024)

The sentiment that Gotland holds strategic importance for actors outside of the Swedish state is reinforced by the Swedish Armed Forces. The Headquarters has written that Sweden's NATO membership creates improved conditions for cooperation with the Baltic states, at a time when there is an increasing need for that type of cooperation. Gotland is of great importance to the alliance's ability to defend Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (FM2025-7991:24 2025). The foreign

minister of Lithuania, Gabrelius Landsbergis has stated that he wants to see Lithuanian soldiers stationed on Gotland after Sweden's NATO entry, based on the island's strategic position (Demred 2024). The securitizing actors have expanded to include both NATO and Swedish allies. All these actors wish to utilize Gotland for military purposes to secure themselves, hence identifying themselves as referent objects (Buzan et.al. 1998, pp. 21, 26-27). It could be implied, that Russia is the existential threat towards these parties. The Gotland County Administrative board writes on their website that as the global situation has deteriorated, the Baltic Sea has once again assumed central strategic importance. The CAD explicitly mentions that 'Russia's actions' and the 'increased NATO presence in the Baltic Sea' has changed the conditions in the area (Länsstyrelsen Gotlands län 2026).

International media have described Gotland in similar terms since the Swedish NATO entrance. Whoever controls Gotland during conflict could dominate the Baltic Sea region, says journalist Ballout in an opinion piece (2024). Gotland is also described as "the strategic Swedish island in the Baltic Sea" (Gutiérrez 2026), and "serving as a forward operating base for rapid response in regional conflicts" (Grosswald 2024). These repetitions of securitized language and threat perceptions from the Swedish state authorities and NATO could be understood as audience acceptance from the international media (Durak 2024, p. 343).

During the qualitative interviews I conducted with regional experts on Gotland, I asked how they interpret Gotland's role within Swedish security and Gotland's current security situation. All the interview participants repeated the threat image presented by Swedish authorities, explaining that they are following the security assessments made by the Swedish state. The interview participants also interpreted Gotland's role within the defence of Sweden as important, due to the island's strategic position. One interesting aspect is that many of the interview participants have always seen Gotland as important for Swedish security, the role has never reemerged or changed. They do however acknowledge the changes in Gotland's role that has been shaped by the NATO accession. As explained by Alf Söderman, a senior expert on total defence at the Gotland County Administrative Board, "Gotland has always been Sweden's eastern boarder but now it is also central for NATO's defence" (my translation). Anders Karlsson, the officer in control of total

defence planning at the Gotland Regiment P18, said that the Russian's has posed a threat towards Gotland over the past 200 years. The experts within the local governance of Gotland, thus play the part of both target audience and securitizing actors. The referent object on the other hand, is both Sweden, NATO and Gotland itself. The three regional politicians emphasised that Gotland is worth protecting for the local inhabitants as well (Buzan et.al. 21, 26-27).

To summarize, Gotland is presented to be of strategic interest for both Sweden and NATO as stated within public documents, and in both national and international media. Examples of these presentations are that Gotland has a central geopolitical location, the island is good to wage war from, and comparable to a military base. This presentation of Gotland has emerged from a changing geopolitical landscape, particularly in the Baltic Sea region. Russia has many times been positioned as an existential threat, due to its aggressions that have increased over the years. Particularly attacks against allied countries such as Ukraine, has affected the changing representation of Gotland in terms of security.

In this part of the analysis, I have argued that Gotland has undergone three out of the four steps of a securitization process. Gotland itself isn't the referent object, but rather the tool for ensuring protection of Sweden and NATO. This analysis could conclude that Sweden and NATO are both the securitizing actors, and the referent objects. Russia, and the more ambiguous 'geopolitical state', has been positioned as the existential threats. Finally, the discourse has been accepted and repeated by the public, through media and by public representatives on Gotland. Indicating that there is only one more step needed to conclude a successful securitization process, that 'extraordinary measures' has been taken. This will be discussed in the next section, on what the effects this representation of Gotland has produced at the local level.

6.2 Security seeking through total defence

The second part of the analysis will cover how security is created through remilitarization, preparedness and total defence on Gotland. The first theme analyses how Gotland is framed as strategically important, whilst the second theme examines the practical effects of this discourse. When coding the data I could find several examples of how securitization and insecurity has led to concrete forms of remilitarization, resilience build-up, and increased institutional coordination at the local level. The analysis will be based on the third WPR-question: WPR 3: “What effects are produced by this representation of Gotland at a local level?”.

The reinstatement of a local military base on Gotland in 2018 could be considered the strongest concrete example of an effect produced by the increasingly securitized representation of Gotland. As discussed in the previous section of the analysis, Gotland is presented to be a strategic location for the defence of both Sweden and NATO in public discourse. In 2014, the government decided to reopen the Gotland Regiment P18. The motivation behind this decision was that Gotland needed a military presence due to its strategic location considering emerging geopolitical tensions in the region (Regeringens Proposition 2014/15:109 2015).

Remilitarizing Gotland could be understood as a securitizing move, or extraordinary measure, legitimized by the Swedish government as a securitizing actor. Securitizing moves seeks to legitimize the adoption of extraordinary measures, such as the state mobilization or the use of force and special powers. Depending on how one interprets the reinstatement of a military regiment, it could fit into that definition. If so, the conclusion would be that Gotland as a security issue has gone through all four stages of securitization. By framing Gotland as a security issue, Sweden positions itself as a referent object in need of protection from external threats. The securitizing move is to utilize Gotland for military purposes, and the extraordinary measure is the remilitarization of the island. The audience acceptance of such a framing was described in the previous section (Buzan et.al. 1998, pp. 21, 23-24).

During my interview with Officer Anders Karlsson, we discussed the process of reinstating the Gotland regiment P18. Karlsson has been working within the Swedish Armed Forces since the 1990s, experiencing the dismantling of the

Gotland regiment in 2005. As an officer, he welcomes its return. He says that in hindsight, many of the high-level officers and politicians that was part of that decision making process now regrets it. Rebuilding the Gotland regiment from the ground up has been a long process that is not yet finished. Karlsson explains that the regiments' main goal right now is to educate future soldiers that can be part of a war organization.

Sweden's accession to NATO has further changed the military context of Gotland. Karlsson says: "Our role now, if we are talking about P18, is together with the Navy and Airforce to carry out the defence *on* Gotland, and together with NATO we carry out the defence *from* Gotland." (my translation). Officer Karlsson explains how the Swedish NATO accession has given Gotland a new military strategic importance. NATO has identified Gotland as 'key terrain', this means that NATO has a particular strategic interest in the island. NATO member states have already started utilizing Gotland as a place for military exercises, together with the Swedish Armed Forces. As of right now, there are no plans for NATO to open its own base on Gotland, which would be another exceptional effect of Gotland's changing security significance. Officer Karlsson clarifies that NATO could use Gotland to store supplies in the future.

If NATO is understood as a securitizing actor, appointing Gotland the label of 'key terrain' could be interpreted as positioning Gotland itself as a referent object in need of protection. Furthermore, putting troops on the ground and utilizing Gotland for practises could be explained by securitization theory as a securitizing move by NATO (Buzan et.al. 1998, pp. 21, 23-24). From a multi-level governance perspective, the organisation of a military on Gotland by the Swedish Armed Forces and NATO could be defined as Type I multi-level governance. The power is shared between the central military organisation and the subnational Gotland Regiment (Marks & Hooghe 2004, p. 16-18).

This brings us to the second example of an effect produced by the securitized representation of Gotland; the total defence rearmament at the local level. Total defence initiatives have been arising from different societal levels, from the top-down and the bottom-up. I interviewed total defence expert Alf Söderman at

Gotland County Administrative Board. In his role as the Director of Defence, he works together with civil society, government agencies, the municipality, and the Swedish Armed Forces, to coordinate total defence. Söderman explained that the Swedish government assigned the Gotland County Administrative Board and the Gotland Regiment P18 with a task to organize themselves into a total defence system in 2018. It was supposed to be a pilot project to build up a system that later could be applied in the rest of the country. The pandemic stopped the project, which later was restructured in 2023.

Officer Karlsson, and the other interview participants, describe today's increased institutional coordination on total defense on a horizontal level between the Gotland Regiment P18, the Gotland County Administrative Board, Region Gotland and the local police department. They also work together with civil society, local businesses, transportation companies, energy suppliers and others. Officer Karlsson says that the civil society is crucial for the functioning of a military defence, that is why the need of a total defence anchored in civil society is important. During a state of crisis or war, people will still need to access healthcare, childcare, infrastructure, food, transportation and other things. This is an example of how the security situation has correlated with Type II multi-level governance on Gotland. The jurisdiction from the Swedish government to develop a total defense organization in 2018 was task-specific and flexible, giving mandate to local authorities to shape total defense (Marks & Hooghe 2004, p. 16-18). As the need for total defense coordination increased on Gotland, this governance developed. As MLG theory explains, intersecting territorial organizations can take place to complement general-purpose local governments. In this case, to coordinate total defense between local authorities (Ibid., p. 26-27).

Pursiainen et. al. (2026) suggests that total defense expands beyond state, and military institutions. Civil society and individual citizens have become increasingly incorporated into national preparedness systems (ibid.). This reflects the type of communally run total preparedness organizations that have been created on Gotland, in parallel with the heightened security framing of the island.

A bottom-up initiative of total defense that is spreading all over Gotland is called 'Stark Socken'. It could be translated into 'Strong Parish', since 'socken' is the historical parish divisions of Gotland. This is an initiative that all interview participants wanted to discuss. As explained by Alf Söderman, 'Socknar' in plural, are the social and geographical division of Gotland. In total, the island is divided into 93 of them, whereas 46 are part of Stark Socken. Each socken often have a local community center that arrange different social activities based on the volunteer work of enthusiasts. As explained by all the interview participants, 'Stark Socken' is a grass-root initiative where locals organize themselves for civil preparedness voluntarily. Since the socken is already a place of community where one lives, it is a logical place for people to work on preparedness together.

The initiative is arranged in cooperation between actors such as Region Gotland, Länsstyrelsen Gotland, and voluntary defense organizations amongst others. It started about 1,5 years ago. The initiative takers provide guidance, lectures and a starting ground for socknar that want to start working on preparedness. Importantly, the initiative comes from the civilians themselves, they are the ones running the organizations at a community level. Examples of what is being done within these communities are the inventory of tools, necessities and knowledge. Some even store supplies within the community centers or parish halls. As Eva Ahlin from Centerpartiet explains, if someone is a nurse within the socken, they can become a contact person for the community in case of crisis. The consequences of the Stark Socken-initiative are described as two folded by the local experts, people become prepared for war, but also regular crises that often occur on Gotland, such as power outages. As explained by all interview participants, this initiative strengthens the communities to cope with everyday issues that normally happens.

Through the lens of ontological security theory, the Stark Socken initiative could have been gaining its success from people's security-seeking needs. The increasingly alarming public discourse around Gotland in terms of security could be disrupting the daily life of people, and make their future become unpredictable. This could create ontological insecurity in the local community, especially if the security of people's own home, or island, changes (Giddens 1991, p. 43-46). Working on communal preparedness within Stark Socken could be a way of

practicing homesteading, the creation of a political space through which the people on Gotland can establish ontological security (Kinnvall 2004, p. 747). Crisis preparedness in this case can serve as a means through which Gotland's inhabitants establish ontological security by taking responsibility for oneself and others (Kvarnlöf et.al. 2026, pp. 968-971).

To conclude, this section of the analysis has focused on what effects are produced by the securitized representation of Gotland at the local level. The security situation has led to several effects for both the local governance and in civil society. The interview participants all discussed three main shifts related to the changing security climate in recent years; the remilitarization of Gotland, the total defence rearmament in local governance, and the Stark Socken-initiative. The remilitarization of Gotland could be understood as a securitizing move from the Swedish state and NATO, based on securitization theory. The increased focus and coordination of total defence within local governance could be explained by both state-driven policies and increased cooperation between local actors. The changes could be understood as a combination of Type I and Type II multi-level governance. Finally, the Stark Socken initiative of communal preparedness across the island, exemplifies the establishment of ontological security through routines of homesteading.

It is clear, that the security situation on Gotland and the effects it has produced at the local level are more complex than what has been discussed so far within this analysis. In the next section, the focus will be on problematizing the security representation of Gotland, and how security on Gotland can be thought about in different ways.

6.3 Broadening the security perspective

The third section of this analysis will focus on the nuances and complexities that Gotland's reemergence as a site of strategic importance has contributed to. This will be done by answering the final WPR-question, WPR 4: "What is left unproblematic

in this security representation of Gotland? Where are the silences? Can Gotland's security be thought about differently?"

First and foremost, I will fill the silence of how the local society experiences their own position within Swedish security. I asked all the interview participants how they have perceived the link between the public security discourse around Gotland and feelings of insecurity amongst the local population. One perspective is that the regaining of a military presence on Gotland isn't only creating security for the Swedish state, it is also creating security for the local society. A total defence that can defend Gotland even if the island is cut off from mainland Sweden is important, Officer Karlsson says. Karlsson's understanding from working closely with the civil society on issues of total defence says that there seems to be a consensus: "We are all sitting in the same boat, we need to be able to fend for ourselves." (my translation).

This sentiment is shared by the other interview participants as well. Söderman from the Gotland County Administrative Board, pointed at the fact that the people on Gotland are pretty used to living in a place of strategic importance. An overwhelming majority of the citizens are positive towards the construction of a total defense and remilitarization of the island, according to all interview participants. Regional politician Filip Reinhag from Socialdemokraterna said, that he doesn't feel that people are scared on Gotland. Eva Ahlin stated that there has been a small shift, people are more aware of the security situation nowadays.

From a human security perspective, the reestablishment of a military presence and the build-up of a total defense has established a 'freedom of fear' in the local community. On the other hand, 'freedom from want' doesn't seem to have been fulfilled (Ogata 2005, p. 11).

None of the interview participants reject the need of a military security on Gotland. On the contrary, there is a broad understanding that Gotland needs to be defended. Something that did arise during the interviews with the regional politicians was the discussion of what security means and what costs result from it. Eva Ahlin and Filip Reinhag talk about how military defense has become the dominant representation

of security. There are distinctions between military and civil security, that needs to be accounted for. Before the renewed focus on Gotland's strategic importance, the island was already lacking investments in infrastructure and public service.

Ahlin gives the example of how the military has requested that Gotland's hospital, governed by Region Gotland, should be adaptable to an emergency preparedness hospital (beredskapssjukhus) and function as a military resource during crises. Ahlin explains that the focus should be to put the resources towards a well-functioning hospital in peacetimes. There needs to be a stable supply of electricity, water, materials, doctors and nurses during peacetime, if the hospital should have a chance of functioning in wartime.

Reinhag discusses how stable infrastructure is a prerequisite for the functioning of Gotland during crises or war. The island already has several areas of infrastructure that are struggling. Examples are the transportations to mainland Sweden, energy supply and water supply. Reinhag explains that there are high expectations from the central government that Gotland should level up its total defense and contribute to the defense of Sweden. On the other hand, the state isn't providing Gotland with enough resources. Central resources towards municipalities and regions are largely distributed per capita, Gotland has a very small population and therefor limited finances. He implies that the state should bear the additional costs of total defense.

Interpreted from a human security standpoint, the Swedish state hasn't protected the community against threats outside of external aggressions. Threats such as instable infrastructure could be seen as lack of protecting people's basic rights and freedoms. As the human security theory suggests, empowering communities to act on their own behalf by providing access to financial means bring is a tool to facilitate human security. In this case, the lack of financing of infrastructure and public service, creates less security (Ogata 2005, p. 12-13).

Rolf Öström, regional politician from Moderaterna, provides a similar perspective by emphasizing that security and preparedness cost money, and Region Gotland must put their money towards many things. Such as; schools, healthcare, care, and other forms of public service. His perspective lands on the fact that security policy

always involves prioritizing between different societal needs, if the budget is limited. This could mean that in some cases, total defense will be prioritized above other things.

Prioritization has also needed to happen within Region Gotland's own operations. The total defense rearmament has led to a focus on total defense within every function of the region's operations. As Ahlin explains, not enough people have been recruited to take on the new tasks related to the total defense plan. People within the regional governance have had to focus their time on issues of total defense, at the expense of other tasks. Ahlin also discusses how the security situation has led to issues of democracy. Only politicians and civil servants with a security clearance gets to take part in certain meetings and receive important information. More information is classified now, due to the changing geopolitical climate and rearmament. She is worried that it is going to be a prerequisite for everyone that works in public service to have the security clearance in the future.

From a multi-level governance perspective, this speaks to the structural paradox that decentralization of total defense is an important principle whilst operational demands create pressures for greater centralization. The regional government is challenged by the increased demands that come from total defense policies. Effective total defense coordination depends on clear mandates, adequate resources and sustained cooperation across governance levels (Pursiainen et.al. 2026). As Pursiainen et.al. (2026) concludes, central intervention might become necessary when the municipal capacity is uneven. The challenges of Region Gotland to adapt to extended total defense tasks, could be interpreted as such.

Another consequence of the remilitarization on Gotland has been problems of coexistence. The three politicians all mention the same example; a school in Västerhejde socken, located within the area of influence of Tofta skjutfält, a military practice area. This school is governed by Region Gotland and has needed a new permanent building to house students. The Swedish Armed Forces appealed the building permit for the school, which led to Region Gotland taking the decision to the Swedish Government. During the spring of 2026, the Swedish Government denied the building permit and sided with the Swedish Armed Forces. This is an

example of how the security situation has created conflict of goals between different governing actors on Gotland. From a human security perspective, this could be interpreted as state security being prioritized over people's security (Ogata 2005, p. 11).

Alf Söderman, that works at the Gotland County Administrative Board, explains that part of his job is to bring Gotland's needs up to the national level. This is done by working together with national authorities, not at least with the Government Offices and the Swedish Civil Defense and Resilience Agency (MCF). Human security could understand this as an effort to link together expertise on multiple threats between different levels of governance. This could be interpreted as an operational tool to facilitate the implementation of human security (Ogata 2005, p. 13).

On a similar note, Officer Anders Karlsson, explains how the Gotland Regiment P18 is competing for more financing from the Swedish Armed Forces. Rebuilding a military base from the ground up takes time and money, and there are other regiments in Sweden that think they that should be prioritized as well. He does understand that the Swedish Armed Forces doesn't have endless resources to give but also acknowledges the importance of Gotland for both Swedish and NATO's defense. Rolf Öström highlights the importance of not becoming divided in these strained times. There shouldn't be a division between Gotland and the rest of Sweden, neither should it be divisions amongst the actors on Gotland. Everyone should be working towards a common goal.

This section of the analysis has highlighted the complexity of the security situation on Gotland, and how security can be thought about in many ways. On one hand; the increased military presence on Gotland together with the total defense policies, creates protection and security. On the other hand; it creates friction between local actors, highlights the need for infrastructure investments, and stretches the already strained public service budgets. This paradox of Gotland being presented as an unsinkable aircraft carrier, whilst also being a peripheral region with everyday responsibilities to care for, becomes apparent.

From a human security standpoint, there are several examples of where human security is lacking on Gotland. Such as the protection against non-military threats; lacking infrastructure and financing of public service (Ogata 2005, pp. 11-13). From a multi-level governance perspective, there are challenges of governing total defense at a local level. There are downsides towards decentralization of total defense, such as lack of resources and personnel (Pursiainen et.al. 2026).

6.4 Discussion: Connecting the analysis

This analysis has been guided by four WPR-questions. In this section I will shortly be discussing how each of the questions have been answered and how they connect to one another.

The first question is WPR 1: ‘What is Gotland represented to be in terms of security?’. The analysis has covered several representations of Gotland in terms of security. Public actors and media have described Gotland as strategically important for military security. These descriptions could be related to securitization theory. Securitizing actors in forms of Sweden and NATO has positioned themselves as referent objects, and Gotland as a means to reach security. Why this has happened is explained through the second question.

The second question is WPR 2: ‘How has this representation of Gotland come about?’. Beginning in 2009, Gotland re-emerged as a place of strategic significance. This could be attributed to several geopolitical changes within the Baltic Sea region. Russia reappeared as an existential threat, due to increasing hostilities within the neighbouring area. As Russia invaded Ukraine, the position of Gotland became increasingly important. When Sweden joined NATO, allied countries started to develop a strategic interest in the island.

The third question is WPR 3: “What effects are produced by this representation of Gotland at a local level?”. This question helps bring the perspective down to Gotland, by opening for local interpretations of the security situation. The

reinstatement of a military presence on Gotland is important here, as this could be interpreted as a securitizing move as well. The local experts on Gotland highlights through the interviews how the build-up of a total defence has been an important effect. This is something that has created both new kinds of multi-level governance, and cooperations. Local citizens are working together within preparedness communities through Stark Socken, an initiative that could be interpreted as establishing ontological security.

The fourth question is WPR 4: “What is left unproblematic in this security representation of Gotland? Where are the silences? Can Gotland’s security be thought about differently?”. This question broadens the analysis by including more perspectives on how the current security climate has affected, or not affected, security on Gotland. The analysis concludes that based on multi-level governance, the changing security landscape creates a need for prioritization and strained budgets for other responsibilities in the local governance. The security situation also sometimes creates tension where conflicts of interest are created, such as the struggle over a building permit for a school. From a human security standpoint, the security from fear, but not security from want, has been in focus.

The development of the analysis has covered the full spectrum of the theoretical framework to help interpret the empirical material. As the chapter of the analysis is finished, the final chapter of the conclusion will be next. Within this chapter, the research question(s) will be answered, the broader implications of the research project discussed, and the research process reflected on.

7 Conclusions

In this chapter, conclusions from the analysis will be drawn by answering the research question(s). The broader implications of this study will also be discussed, along with reflections on the research process.

This thesis has aimed to answer the following research question: *“How is Gotland constructed as a security issue in public discourse, and how does this construction shape security practices and governance in the local society?”*

To answer this research question, I collected empirical material from public documents, media articles, and semi-structured interviews. I created a theoretical framework based on four theoretical perspectives: securitization, ontological security, human security and multi-level governance. The analysis has been guided by WPR-analysis, aimed to understand multiple perspectives of security and its implications for governance on Gotland. I will begin with answering the four sub-research questions I developed to help operationalize the main research question.

The first sub-question is: “Can the construction of Gotland as a security issue be understood as securitization?”. Based on the analysis, Gotland has increasingly been constructed as a strategically important territory in public discourse since the demilitarization in 2005. This construction is closely linked to Gotland’s geographical location in the Baltic Sea; Russia’s changing role as a perceived security threat; Sweden’s changing defense policy; and Sweden’s NATO accession. Sweden and NATO have emerged as both securitizing actors and referent objects. The security discourse has gained audience acceptance by media and local actors. The re-establishment of the Gotland Regiment P18 and increased NATO presence on Gotland could be interpreted as extraordinary measures. The findings support that the construction of Gotland as a security issue can be understood as securitization.

The second sub-question is: “How does issues of security shape multi-level governance on Gotland?”. The changing security environment on Gotland has expanded total defense responsibilities at the local level. Mainly, the development of Type II multi-level governance has been apparent, where total-defense has been assigned as a task to be organized at a horizontal level. The governing actors on Gotland have developed stronger coordination as a result. Tension has also been created in the local governance due to increased responsibilities and limited resources in relation to total defense.

The third sub-question is: “How do changes in Gotland’s security environment affect ontological security?”. The changing security environment has led to security-seeking routines in the local society. The strongest example is ‘Stark Socken’, a bottom-up initiative of communal preparedness. These practices can be understood as homesteading practices, that establish ontological security for the locals in times of increased insecurity.

The fourth sub-question is “How do changes in Gotland’s security environment affect human security?”. The remilitarization and total-defense build-up have provided the community with ‘freedom from fear’. Human security highlights how ‘freedom from want’ has been further challenged by the current security climate. Vulnerabilities in infrastructure, resource strains and tensions between public service and the military, are some examples of this.

Going back to the main research question: “*How is Gotland constructed as a security issue in public discourse, and how does this construction shape security practices and governance in the local society?*”. The conclusion can be drawn that Gotland has become increasingly securitized as a strategically important territory in public discourse. This is due to Gotland’s strategic geographical location in the Baltic Sea, in a time of increased geopolitical instability. The securitization process, or security construction, has shaped security practices and governance in the local society in several ways. The remilitarization of Gotland and total defense build-up at different levels of society have all shaped society in different ways. The securitization process has led to ontological security-seeking routines in the form

of bottom-up total defence initiatives on Gotland. Total defence has added a layer of complexity to the local governance, in some ways, the cooperation has increased. In other ways, it has shed light on issues with already lacking investments in infrastructure and overall budgetary strains. With that said, human security has yet been as developed as military security. I conclude that the construction of Gotland as a security issue thus seems to create complex outcomes for the local society; on one hand it creates a strengthened community, on the other hand it put strains on the local governance.

7.1 Broader implications

The conclusions of this thesis have several broader implications. The findings demonstrate that security is not just something that is constructed at a national level, it is a reality that has material consequences at the local level. The case of Gotland has illustrated how abstract geopolitical developments, such as increased geopolitical tensions in the Baltic Sea region, becomes tangible. On the ground, this looks like militarization, preparedness measures, civil society mobilization, and changes in local governing actors' responsibilities. Discussing issues of security and foreign threats, and preparing for crises, becomes normalized. This supports the local-global continuum, the understanding that global processes take on local expressions. The establishment of what constitutes an existential threat is happening at the global level, and the results of it can be found at the local level. This highlights the importance of studying security at multiple levels. Applying a similar research question as this one to other sites of geopolitical importance around the world could help shape better policies and bring important perspectives into light. Gotland is not the only example of such a place, other examples could be the Strait of Hormuz or Greenland.

Another conclusion from this thesis is that two levels of security can coexist at the same time. Gotland is used as a tool for Swedish and NATO security, whilst total defense creates a more resilient society at the local level. This thesis has implied that different actors understand security in different ways. The question of who's security is considered is of importance and has consequences for the functioning of

society. From a national perspective, security is understood as territorial integrity, defense and military capability. From the perspective of regional governance, security is understood as functioning welfare systems and public services. From a community perspective, security could entail familiarity and agency to protect oneself and others. Expanding military security does not necessarily impact other forms of security.

This case has further demonstrated that military defense cannot function independently from civilian society. This conclusion could be important for policymakers and evaluations of defense strategies. As highlighted in this thesis, during war or crises, the military needs to rely on society to keep going as usual. This depends on a resilient society, that can carry on with functions such as healthcare, transportation, food supply, energy supply, communications, childcare, during crises. As this study highlights, investments in a resilient society needs to happen before crisis arises. Total defense should be understood as a system of interdependence between military and civilian defense, and the civilian part of total defense cannot be forgotten. This is an important conclusion for policymakers within total defense.

The application of multi-level governance theory has explained how national security priorities have consequences for local governance. Local authorities have had to make trade-offs in terms of budgeting, where security could be favored over other services. This thesis also exemplifies how trade-offs have been made between public services and the military in the dispute around land use for a school. This raises a broader governance of who should pay for national security when the consequences are experienced locally? Should states take a bigger responsibility in centralizing the development of total defense, or should the burden be put on local governments? It poses an interesting question for future research on how states govern strategically important regions in other places.

Looking at the literature review, the results from this thesis will be contributing to existing literature on security in relation to strategic islands and the Baltic Sea region. Previous literature has mainly focused on strategic islands as a geopolitical asset for states, such as Kazumine (2013), Chen & Krickel Choi (2024) and Gricius

(2025). My contribution has been to make the link between the strategic perspective and the lived experiences of local actors. This thesis demonstrates how an island can be more than a strategic territory for geopolitical conflict; it can also be a home, a community, and a space for governance.

In difference to other strategic islands in the Nordics, such as Greenland, Åland, the Faroe Islands and Iceland, Gotland doesn't have a recent colonial legacy. This thesis concludes how Gotland is also not working towards creating independence, or positioning itself as de-securitized, such as these other islands. Building on scholars such as Adler-Nissen and Gad (2014), Hansen (2023), Gricius (2025) and Joeniemmi (2014), this thesis proves Gotland's uniqueness within the Nordic context. Gotland is positioned as a strategic asset for national and NATO security, a notion that is reproduced at the local level. What other factors makes Gotland unique in this sense, and why the local population is acknowledging the islands' strategic importance, could be further studied.

This thesis also contributes to the literature on security in the Baltic Sea region by bringing the perspective down to the local level. Reflecting the changing security landscape in the region, this thesis develops on previous notions of cooperative security dilemmas and security policy in the Baltic Sea (Browning & Joenniemi 2004; Mölder 2011; Ekengren 2018; Koziarska et.al. 2025). By providing a qualitative study on the development and effects of total defense and societal security, this thesis contributes to the literature of Sundelius (2016), Bengtsson et.al. (2024), Becker (2025), Quirico (2024) and Hicks and Metrick (2018).

Whilst this thesis has been an important contribution to scholarly literature, I have come up with several ideas for future research taking off from my thesis. By applying a different set of theories within a theoretical framework to the case of Gotland, or a different case, new analytical angles could become possible. I also recognize that by increasing the amount of data, more generalizable conclusions could be provided. Using other forms of data, such as questionnaires or social media posts, could also broaden the understanding of security on Gotland. Utilizing different methods of analysis could also provide different results. Such as; case studies, comparisons over time, quantitative analysis and discourse analysis. By

applying a normative or critical angle, the issue could also be problematized from a different perspective.

7.2 Reflections on the research process

By finishing this master's thesis, I am putting an end to a five year long academic journey at Lund University. I am reflecting on my time as a student, what I have learned, and how the research process for this thesis has been.

Figuring out the topic of this thesis was easy, as this topic is something I am deeply passionate about. Partly because of my personal connection to Gotland, partly because of my interest in security studies. Taking on the research project on the other hand, proved to be more difficult. There were many times I felt lost; from not finding relevant literature to put in the literature review, to dealing with ambiguous feelings about how to best source my data. I thought I would need to get more interview participants to create a relevant analysis, this thesis proves that that doesn't necessarily need to be the case. For another time, I would like to include the perspective of civil society more. I focused on the state and the local/regional authority level, for a broader discussion I could've added the voices of local businesses, NGOs, food producers (LRF) and other actors to discuss security. Other views than that of governing actors could bring a more holistic perspective on how a securitized society deals with issues of security, resilience and total defense. Adding the voices of "ordinary people" would also be an option, something that I opted out of due to lack of time, resources, and fear of ethical concerns.

There was also no obvious choice of theory or method of analysis for this research project, leading to an exploratory research process. I tested out several theories before landing on my selected theoretical framework, such as a small strand of theory called 'islandness'. I also thought about conducting a discourse analysis, or even media analysis. I figured it out eventually; from believing in my own vision, by being encouraged to keep going by my supervisor, and from daring to try out different choices.

In the end, I am happy about the outcome of my thesis and hope the results will inspire more scholars to work on islands and highlight the local aspects of security. Throughout this research process, I have also developed my skills as a researcher. I have learned how to take a very broad topic and make it into a clear-cut research question. This research process has practiced my skills in evaluating literature, theories and research methods. It has practiced my analytical skills by connecting data to theory, and my ability to draw conclusions. I feel confident moving forward knowing when and how to apply different methods, make research design choices and ask relevant research questions to social and political problems.

As a global studies student, I have learned how globalization can be connected to almost all social and political issues in the world. The global takes place at the local level as much as in the international. Having majored in political science in both my bachelor's and master's degree, I am so thankful for five wonderful years of emerging myself in the study of politics, power, and governance. I am looking forward to continuing to develop my knowledge for as long as I live.

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9 APPENDIX

9.1 Email invitation for interviews (Swedish)

Hej *namn*!

Jag heter Johanna Karlström och jag studerar mastersprogrammet i globala studier vid Lunds universitet. Jag skriver just nu min masteruppsats om hur Gotlands strategiska roll i försvaret påverkar totalförsvaret på Gotland, och hur olika aktörer uppfattar säkerhetsläget på ön. För min forskning intervjuar jag individer från civilsamhället, experter, regionala beslutsfattare och tjänstemän och andra som involveras i totalförsvaret på Gotland. Som gotlänning är det här ett ämne jag har ett stort intresse för, och jag ser fram att kunna bidra till kunskapen på området genom min uppsats. Jag kontaktar dig för att fråga om du har möjlighet att delta i en kort intervju på ämnet?

Intervjun kommer vara ca. 30 minuter lång. På grund av tidspress skulle jag vilja ordna en intervjutid inom kommande veckor, om möjligt. Den kan ske fysiskt på Gotland (t.o.m. 15/4) eller digitalt, exempelvis över Zoom, fram till 24/4. Jag är anpassningsbar och kommer gärna fram till en tidpunkt som passar dig.

Stort tack på förhand! Du gärna vidarebefordra mitt mail till någon du tror skulle kunna delta.

Med vänliga hälsningar,
Johanna Karlström

9.2 Interview participants – regional experts

Interview participants

Name	Organization	Political affiliation	Title/Positions (of most importance)
Eva Ahlin	Region Gotland (Municipality)	Centerpartiet (party in opposition)	Member of the Regional Council, Member of the Regional Board, 2 nd vice chairman of the Health and Medical Services Board
Rolf Öström	Region Gotland (Municipality)	Moderaterna	1 st vice chairman of the Regional Board, Member of the Regional Council, 1 st vice

		(co-governing party)	chairman of the Crisis Management Committee
Filip Reinhag	Region Gotland (Municipality)	Socialdemokraterna (co-governing party)	Chairman of the health and medical services board, Chairman of the European regional network CPMR
Alf Söderman	Länsstyrelsen Gotlands län (County Administrative Board)	n/a	Director of Defense Civil Protection and Emergency Preparedness Unit at Gotland County Administrative Board
Anders Karlsson	P18 Gotland (Swedish Armed Forces)	n/a	Rank: Major, Planning Officer for logistics and total defense (LOG/TF)

9.3 Interview guide (Swedish version)

Introduktion

- Kan du kort berätta om din roll och ditt arbete på *organisation*?
- Hur länge har du arbetat med frågor som rör säkerhet eller beredskap?

Säkerhetsläget

- Hur uppfattar du Gotlands roll inom Sveriges säkerhet?
- Har den rollen förändrats under de senaste åren, i sådana fall på vilket sätt?
- Hur upplever ni på *organisation* den nuvarande säkerhetssituationen på Gotland?
- Hur tror du att gotlänningar i allmänhet uppfattar säkerhetssituationen?
- Hur upplever du att media framställer Gotland i säkerhetsfrågor (nationellt/lokalt)?
 - Tror du att det påverkar samhällets uppfattning om säkerhetsläget, på vilket sätt i sådana fall?

Säkerhet/beredskapsarbete

- Hur arbetar *organisation* med totalförsvarsfrågor?
- Hur samverkar *organisation* på lokal nivå kring frågor om säkerhet/beredskap?
- Vad innebär totalförsvar i praktiken för Gotland, vilken roll har civilsamhället?

Relation mellan nationell/regional nivå

- Hur upplever du Gotlands ansvar när det gäller försvaret av Sverige?
- Får *organisation* det stöd som behövs från nationell nivå för att genomföra ert arbete, på vilket sätt?
- Har man från nationell nivå prioriterat Gotland på ett annat sätt idag, hur då?
- Finns det en spänning mellan nationella säkerhetsintressen och Gotlands behov?

Avslutning

- Är det något du tycker saknas i dagens diskussion om säkerhet på Gotland?

9.4 Interview guide (English translation)

Introduction

- Can you tell me about your role and your work within *organization*?
- How long have you worked with issues related to security and preparedness?

The security situation

- How do you perceive Gotland's role within Swedish security?
- Has that role changed in recent years, in what way?
- How does *organization* perceive the current security situation on Gotland?
- How do you think the inhabitants on Gotland experiences the current security situation?
- How do you perceive the media's portrayal of Gotland in relation to security issues (national/local level)?

Security/preparedness work

- How does *organization* work with total defense?
- How does *organization* collaborate on a regional level on issues related to security/preparedness?
- What does total defense mean in practice on Gotland, what role does civil society play?

Relation between national/regional level

- How do you experience Gotland's responsibility within the defense of Sweden?
- Does *organization* get the support needed from the national level in Sweden to carry out your work, in what way?
- Has the Swedish national level been prioritizing Gotland in a different way recently, how?
- Is there a tension between national security interests and the needs of Gotland?

Closing question

- Is there anything you think is missing from today's discussion of security on Gotland?

9.5 Consent form



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Consent form to participate in a Master Thesis at the Faculty of Social Sciences

I agree to participate in the thesis “(In)Security and total defence on Gotland”.

This is a student project conducted as a part of a master’s degree in global studies, with a major in political science. The study aims to examine how issues of security and total defence are understood and experienced in relation to Gotland. The purpose of this study is to contribute to a deeper understanding of how security issues are narrated, and how they are affecting local societies. The study involves data collection through semi-structured interviews, conducted in-person or online, within the timespan of around 30 minutes. The interviews will be held in Swedish.

There are two types of participants invited to this study: individuals working with regional governance/public administration on Gotland; and local inhabitants of Gotland. Participants working with regional governance/public administration on Gotland will be represented in their official role and are asked about how they experience issues of security and total defence in relation to their work. Participants that are local inhabitants will be asked about their personal perceptions of security and total defence. Personal data is collected to conduct and document the interview. The participation is completely voluntary. As a participant you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without providing a reason and without any negative consequences. There will be no reimbursement for participating in this study.

Information on the processing of personal data

The following personal data will be processed:

Name

E-mail address

Professional title/place of work

Political affiliation (politicians only)

Audio recording of the interview

Transcript of the interview

The following sensitive personal data will be processed:

Sensitive personal data may be processed indirectly, depending on what the participants share during the interviews. The participants may share opinions related to public policy and politics, which could be considered sensitive personal data. Some participants will be regional politicians, so their political views in their official role would not be considered sensitive personal data. On the other hand, if they are sharing personal opinions during the interview, this could be considered sensitive personal data. The interviews with local civilians could also include sensitive personal data, if they would raise any political opinions during the interviews.

Personal data will be processed in the following ways:

The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed with the consent of the participants. This is to make sure that the data can be properly analysed. The personal data in the form of names and personal information, audio recordings and transcriptions from the interviews will be securely stored on the researcher’s personal password-protected devices. The data will be stored and handled in accordance with Swedish GDPR-regulations and Lund University ethics guidelines. It will not be uploaded online or shared with a third party. The personal data will be kept until the material is fully analysed and the research project is finished. When the thesis has been defended and approved by a professor all personal data will be deleted.

The personal data in the form of identifiers, such as name, place of work/title and political affiliation will only be included in the thesis with the informed consent of the participant. All participants have the right to remain anonymous in this study. In case of anonymity, this will be ensured by not sharing the participants name, title, place of work or other identifiers in the thesis, the public or with other participants of the study. Sensitive personal data will be processed confidentially and only published with the consent of the participant.

Indicate your preference regarding anonymity as a participant:

- ☐ I agree that my name or other personal identifiers can be published in the thesis, within agreement.
- ☐ I wish to be anonymous and not have any personal identifiers published in the thesis.

We do not share your personal data with third parties.

Lund University, Box 117, 221 00 Lund, Sweden, with organisation number 202100-3211 is the controller. You can find Lund University's privacy policy at www.lu.se/integritet

You have the right to receive information about the personal data we process about you. You also have the right to have inaccurate personal data about you corrected. If you have a complaint about our processing of your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at dataskyddsbud@lu.se. You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority (the Data Protection Authority, IMY) if you believe that we are processing your personal data incorrectly.

I agree to participate in the thesis “(In)Security and total defense on Gotland”.

Location	Signature
Date	Name clarification