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JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND  
COMMUNICATION**

# **FRAMING FRANCE IN SWEDISH MEDIA**

A quantitative content analysis of France's nation image as a cooperation partner in Swedish newspapers over the course of Brexit

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# Abstract

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- Aim:** To investigate how the Swedish media contributes to France's country image as a cooperation partner for Sweden and how this might have changed during the progress of Brexit.
- Theory:** Framing theory
- Method:** Quantitative content analysis
- Material:** 437 articles sampled from Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Aftonbladet, and Expressen
- Result:** The image of France as a cooperation partner demonstrated an increase in positive frames and decrease in negative frames in the portrayal of the Franco-Swedish relationship during the progress of Brexit. It demonstrated an increase of positive frames in the representation of France as a political cooperation partner, whilst the negative framing contained an increase during the progress of Brexit. The framing of France as an economic cooperation partner decreased over the progress of Brexit. The general framing of France contained an increase in positive frames and decrease in negative frames.

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## Executive summary

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the Swedish media contributes to France's country image as a cooperation partner for Sweden and how this might have changed during the progress of Brexit. This as the Franco-Swedish relationship has been evolving in a positive direction over the last couple of years, much as a result of the UK leaving the EU. As a country image can have a great impact on a nation's cooperation possibilities with foreign nations and media constitutes a vital cornerstone in projecting nation images, it is possible that the changes in the Swedish-Franco relationship can be detected in the portrayal of France in Swedish media.

Based on previous research on nation images and the framing theory, this thesis investigates if the perception of France in Swedish newspapers has changed over the course of Brexit. This is done by investigating the possible changes in France's image as a cooperation partner in three dimensions: the Franco-Swedish relationship, France as a political cooperation partner, and France as an economic cooperation partner. It also explores the differences between different genres. The frames investigated are positive and negative frames, focusing on dichotomous concepts such as 'us and them', 'responsible/irresponsible', 'trustworthy/unreliable'. In addition, it examines the framing of France in more general terms, analysing positive and negative elements in the articles, and exploring the differences between different genres.

The main results showed that the image of France as a cooperation partner has changed over the course of Brexit, foremost concerning the relationship and political cooperation, with an increase in positive frames. This indicates a positive development of France's projected nation image in Swedish newspapers regarding its construction as a cooperation partner. The results also demonstrated that the general image of France has changed over the course of Brexit in a positive direction, indicating an increasingly positive projected nation image. However, this positive trend did not always translate into the construction of France as a cooperation partner, which became apparent when analysing the differences in different genres and comparing the results from the framing of France as a cooperation partner and the general framing.

# Table of Contents

<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND	1
1.2 OUTLINE	2
<b>2.0 PREVIOUS RESEARCH</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 THE STRUCTURE OF FOREIGN NEWS	4
2.2 NATION IMAGE, BRANDING & PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	6
2.3 FRAMING THE COUNTRY IMAGE (IN FOREIGN NEWS)	9
<b>3.0 RESEARCH PROBLEM, AIM AND QUESTIONS</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 PROBLEM DESCRIPTION	13
3.2 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	15
3.3 DELIMITATIONS	15
<b>4.0 FRAMING</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 CHOICE OF THEORY	17
4.2 DEFINING THEORY	18
4.2.1 <i>Frame-building</i>	19
4.3 IDENTIFYING FRAMES	20
4.4 NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE FRAMES	21
<b>5.0 METHOD</b>	<b>24</b>
5.1 CHOICE OF METHOD	24
5.2 QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS	24
5.2.1 <i>Newspapers in the Swedish media system</i>	25
5.2.2 <i>Sampling of news articles</i>	26
5.2.3 <i>Coding scheme</i>	29
5.2.4 <i>Reliability and validity</i>	29
5.2.5 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	30
<b>6.0 FINDINGS</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1 THE NUMBER OF ARTICLES OVER TIME	33
6.2 THE FRANCO-SWEDISH RELATIONSHIP	35
6.3 FRANCE AS A COOPERATION PARTNER	38
6.3.1 <i>Political cooperation</i>	38
6.3.2 <i>Economic cooperation</i>	40
6.4 GENERAL FRAMING OF FRANCE	43
6.5 HYPOTHESIS TESTING	46
<b>7.0 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>48</b>
7.1 THE FRANCO-SWEDISH RELATIONSHIP AND FRANCE AS A COOPERATION PARTNER	48
7.2 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE GENERAL FRAMING	52
7.3 ACCESSING THE NATION IMAGE	53
7.4 CHANGES IN THE NATION IMAGE	54
<b>8.0 CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>60</b>
APPENDIX 1	60
APPENDIX 2	61
APPENDIX 3	63
APPENDIX 4	64
APPENDIX 5	65
APPENDIX 6	66
APPENDIX 7	67

## 1.0 Introduction

This thesis is a study of the image of France offered in Swedish media, more specifically Swedish newspapers. The first chapter of this thesis presents a short background of the Franco-Swedish relationship, followed by a presentation of the paper's outline.

### 1.1 Background

The last couple of years the world order has been rattled in more ways than one; the election of Donald Trump as the US president and the Brexit referendum constituting two of them. The UK exit from the European Union (henceforth EU) changed the power dynamics within the union, and its impact on coalition building can be seen in the reposition of the member states on multiple issues (Janning & Möller, 2018:1). For Sweden, Brexit meant the loss of one of its closest collaboration partners, as the countries have been united on numerous issues within the EU and have a long history of economic and political relations (Henig, 2019:8-9). Sweden must therefore reassess its relationships with other member states and find new coalitions (Johansson, Naurin, & Lindahl, 2019:18). Brexit has put France, together with Germany, at the centre of the Union (Krotz & Schild, 2018). The country has, especially under President Macron, started to catch up with Germany in importance as a collaboration partner in central and eastern Europe as well as in the north (Janning & Möller, 2018:5).

France and Sweden share a similar view on EU-issues such as obstacles for the digital development, sustainable development and climate, and the significance of cooperation (Nilsson, 2021-12-10; Regeringskansliet, n.d). On the other hand, the two countries are in disagreement on topics such as the introduction of minimum wages determined on an EU level. Sweden fears that certain legislative updates to the EU Commission's 'European Pillar of Social Rights' – particularly those to precarious workers and work-life balance – could undermine the Nordic collective bargaining model. For France, on the other hand, this constitutes an essential issue as minimum wages are argued to prohibit social dumping (de la Porte, 2019). The bilateral relations between the two nations are robust and have been fortified over the years, concerning economy, culture, defence, research and other important questions such as the climate. This is illustrated by increasing interest in direct investments and trade, tourism and cultural exchange, research, and education. In 2017, the two governments entered into a strategic partnership for innovation, digital transformation, and

green solutions, which also includes declarations regarding security and defence cooperation (Regeringskansliet, n.d). The cooperation on security and defence is increasing, a case in point being the Swedish government decision to continue its military participation in the French-led military operation in Mali called Task Force Takuba (Swedish Ministry of Defence & Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). However, the two nations do not entirely agree when it comes to security and defence concerning ‘strategic autonomy’. France's view is that Europe no longer can trust the US for military support and therefore should increase its military capacity in order to defend Europe without too much reliance on the US. Something Sweden is not completely onboard with (Nilsson, 2021-10-16). Regardless of the animosity in certain questions, France has come to play an ever more prominent role for Sweden, as it is a nation that, through initiative, opinion-forming, and alliance-building, shapes the future of the EU (Östengren, 2021).

Sweden and France's relationship has been evolving in a positive direction over the last couple of years, much as a result of the UK leaving the EU necessitating new forms of collaboration within the union. This does not necessarily mean that the positive development has transpired from the political realm into other realms – such as the public opinion or the media. As there is a strong interrelation between public opinion and the media, and media playing a vital role in informing us about foreign nations, it is of interest how the development of the Franco-Swedish relationship translates in Swedish media. Investigating how France's image as a cooperation partner is projected in Swedish media before, during, and after Brexit would provide some insight into the interaction between bilateral cooperation and media in constructing France's image in Sweden. It is this subject that this thesis will examine.

## 1.2 Outline

This thesis comprises of eight chapters: an introduction; previous research; research problem, aim and research questions; theoretical framework; method; results; discussion; and conclusion. The first chapter commences with the background of the Franco-Swedish relationship and an account thesis' outline. This is followed by a presentation of previous research on the structure of foreign news and news values, nation images, nation branding, and public diplomacy in chapter two. In chapter three, the research problem is presented, followed by the thesis' aim and research questions. Lastly, the delimitations of the study are

discussed. Chapter four presents the thesis' theoretical framework, which is constituted by the framing theory. More specifically, generic frames in terms of positive and negative frames. In chapter five, the chosen method is accounted for, which is quantitative content analysis, and the material is presented. The analysis procedure is discussed, as are the study's reliability and validity, and ethical considerations. Chapter six presents the content analysis findings, answers the thesis's research questions, and tests the hypotheses. Chapter seven discusses the results presented in chapter six and relates them to previous research. The thesis ends with a conclusion in chapter eight, where the study is summarised, the contribution of the research discussed, as well as its limitations and suggestions for future research.



## 2.0 Previous research

This chapter presents the previous literature relating to the subject of international news and values, nation image, and nation images in media. Firstly, how international news coverage is structured and organised will be presented, followed by a presentation of the nation image concept and an overview of how it relates to different research disciplines. After that, previous research on media framing of nation images will be presented, bestowing examples of how countries have been framed in foreign media.

### 2.1 The structure of foreign news

A central concern about international news coverage is that the real world becomes entirely mediated and thereby presented in a misleading, incomplete way (Wu, 2019:1). A common approach for studying the discrepancy between the 'real world' and the 'news world' is to examine the processes of news gathering and distribution from the premises of the concept of gatekeepers. Gatekeepers apply a set of traditional news values based upon the collective judgment of what is newsworthy and tend to select information which reflects proximity, unexpectedness, discrepancy, prominence, and conflict (Wu, 2000:110-111). When it comes to foreign news, the structural theory put forth by Norwegians Galtung and Ruge (1965) is often used, which centres around how world events become news. The basis of the structural theory in media is that the nature and amount of coverage a nation receives in another country's media is contingent upon economic, social, political and geographic characteristics. An essential aspect of their article is that it perceives the world as a global system wherein countries are structured into a centre-peripheral scheme. This relates to the more underlying question of why some countries get more news coverage than others.

Galtung and Ruge (1965) developed their analytical framework following the reasoning offered by Östgaard (1965:41-42), who identified three factors that influence the flow and structure of news: simplification, identification, and sensationalism. Galtung and Ruge (1965) introduced a system consisting of 12 factors that together constitute a definition of newsworthiness. The news values are (1) frequency (the time span taken by an event); (2) threshold (the size of an event); (3) unambiguity (the clarity of an event); (4) meaningfulness (consists of two dimensions: cultural proximity and relevance); (5) consonance (the predictability); (6) unexpectedness (the unpredictability or rarity of an event); (7) continuity

(once a story is selected it will continue to be covered); (8) composition (the mixture of various kinds of events); (9) reference to elite nations; (10) reference to elite persons; (11) reference to persons; and (12) reference to something negative (Galtung & Ruge, 1965:64-66, 70-71). These factors represent different aspects of an event's newsworthiness, and as such, they contribute to how the news is constructed (Galtung & Ruge, 1965:64-66, 70-71). After presenting these factors, the authors put forward three hypotheses: (1) the more factors an event fulfils, the higher probability it has of becoming news; (2) the lack of one factor necessitates a strong score on another factor in order to become news; and (3) events fulfilling none or very few of the factors will not become news. The factors are, in other words, cumulative and compensatory (Galtung & Ruge, 1965:71-72).

Following Galtung and Ruge's (1965) presentation of news value factors, several alternative, yet fundamentally similar, lists of news values developed and presented within academia. For example, Dupree (1971) studied the potential determinants offered in correlation with the international news coverage focusing on the US and found eleven 'country variables': GNP, GNP per capita, foreign stock, imports volume, language translatability, literacy rate, newspaper availability, populations, population density, distance, and continent (Dupree, 1971:227-228). Wu (2000) argues that population, geographical size, and GDP are highly related to international coverage, but their predictive powers are not as consistent and systematic as expected when observing across different countries. For instance, the population factor predicted well in Cyprus, Senegal and Gambia, but did a modest job in Kenya, Nigeria, Turkey, Germany, Ukraine, and the UK (Wu, 2000:125ff). Wu (2000:125ff) concludes that economic interest, information availability, and production cost of international news are forces that shape international news coverage worldwide, and a mixture of these forces are at work in determining the volume of information abroad. Balmas and Sheafer (2013) agree that proximity is the predominant news value affecting current international news flow. The proximity variables they determine to be the best predictors of news flow are value proximity – the similarity of democratic and political values; cultural proximity – values shared by different states; and geographic proximity (Balmas & Sheafer, 2013:458-460).

As France constitutes one of the countries in the centre of the world system theory, it receives more attention from the press than countries in the periphery. Although it is the US that dominates in almost every nation's foreign news hole, France as a powerful, elite (in

Galtung and Ruge's terms) nation, it receives much coverage (Segev & Blondheim, 2013:7; Wu, 2000:113, 121). As members of the EU, Sweden and France have a sort of close 'political' proximity as many political decisions are made by the same governmental agency. Compared to countries outside Europe, the two nations are also fairly close geographically, and are part of the Western cultural heritage. Add to that France's large economy, the trade between the countries, and the French language's translatability, just to name a few, it is reasonable to assume that France has a high 'newsworthiness' in Sweden.

## 2.2 Nation image, branding & public diplomacy

The news hole devoted to covering foreign countries and international affairs is shrinking significantly due to, according to media executives, the lack of public interest. At the same time, the intensifying globalisation increases the need for the public to have knowledge of the world (Wu, 2019:4). The public attains images of other countries and international affairs through the readings of mediated texts and images. Images of remote places, in terms of geographical and cultural distance, are significantly based on their representation in media (Stock, 2009:118). Consequently, people rely more on media for information on international issues than on direct experiences or by information-searching other sources (Li & Chitty, 2009:3).

A nation's image is defined by people outside that country based on their perception, which is informed by stereotypes, media coverage, and personal experiences (Fan, 2010:100). Perception is the view, belief and opinion about oneself and the external world, and there is both self-perception and 'other'-perception. Often our perception is based on stereotypes – clusters of preconceived notions, a term coined by journalist and media critic Walter Lippman to describe 'pictures in our heads' (cited in Li & Chitty, 2009:1). Stereotypes can be both positive and negative; more often than not, they are, however, negative. Stereotyping (i.e., assuming that all objects in a category are similar in ways beyond the one used to categorise them) produces prejudice, a prejudgement of people from other groups. Perceptions of a nation and its people are often based on outdated or inaccurate stereotypes (Fan, 2008:4; Li & Chitty, 2009:1-2). As prejudices about nations are carried forward through generations, historical events are decisive in a nation's image (Kunczik, 2003:412).

According to Fan (2008:3-4), a nation's image constitutes what its population wants the world to understand is most distinctive, central and enduring about their nation. The feedback

received by the nation from other countries regarding the credibility of the nation's claims constitutes its reputation. As such, Fan (2008) distinguishes between how a nation is perceived by another nation and how it believes itself to be perceived. In the field of public relations, Kunczik (2003) defines nation image as 'the cognitive representation that a person holds about a given country – a person's beliefs about a nation and its people' (Kunczik, 2003:412). In journalistic terminology, the image of a country can be discussed and defined in terms of economic, political, diplomatic, religious, and military relations 'in the changing domestic, regional and international scenario and its effects on the thoughts, behaviors, feelings, and inclinations of the owners of the media organization' (Noshina, cited in Saleem, 2007:136). Thus, a nation's image can be defined as 'a representation of a country's positive or negative standing in media, in terms of historical, political, economic, military, diplomatic and religious context' (Hanan cited in Saleem, 2007:136).

There are two approaches most commonly referred to regarding the study of nation images: nation branding and public diplomacy – both acknowledging the central role of media in creating and disseminating nation images. The introduction of the concept 'nation branding' and adhering research field is often credited to Simon Anholt, with Wally Olins constituting another important and often cited 'founding father' (Kaneva, 2011:117). A brand is to be understood as a way to impose a frame on a nation, and are created by professional selection and exclusion of specific symbols and meanings (Anzera, Gianturco, & Massa, 2019:81). According to Fan (2006:12), countries always have a national brand, no matter if they actively work to manage it or not. A nation's brand exists with or without any conscious efforts in nation branding, as each country has a current image to its international audience, be it strong or weak, clear or vague (Fan, 2006:12). Nation branding can be defined as a process through which a nation's image can be created or managed through altering, evaluation, and monitoring to strengthen its reputation amongst an international audience (Fan, 2010:101). Stock (2009:123) lists four main reasons why a nation should manage its image: to appeal to tourists; add value to products produced in the country, the so-called 'halo effect' or country of origin effect; to attract foreign direct investments (FDIs); and, to attract skilled labour/talented residents.

Public diplomacy emerged during the initial years of the cold war, information and persuasion campaigns becoming the principal weapons the superpowers utilised in their struggle for hegemony. The main objective of international public relations is to establish or

maintain positive images of one's nation (Kunczik, 2003:412-413). The idea was that by persuading the public opinion in the targeted society to accept a more favourable image of the other side, it would pressure its government to alter its hostile attitudes and policies (Gilboa, 2008:59). Central in public diplomacy is Nye's (2008) concept of soft power, which arises from the attractiveness of a nation's political values (when it actualises them at home and abroad), culture (in places where it is attractive to others), and foreign policies (when they are perceived as legitimate and having moral authority). It rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others, and public diplomacy is an instrument that governments use to mobilise their soft power resources (i.e., values, culture, policies) to attract the public of other nations, rather than merely their governments. This is done through subsidising cultural exports, broadcasting, arranging exchanges and so forth (Nye, 2008:95-97).

The rationale behind the importance of a positive nation image, within both public diplomacy and nation branding, rests on the idea that it generates positive outcomes in the interaction with other nations. If a country is positively perceived, it facilitates political alliances, nourishes cultural identification and attraction, and entices FDIs, tourism, exports, and the attractiveness of domestic labour markets. Conversely, an unfavourable image can generate hostility and isolation from other states or even the international community as a whole, and it can hamper export, tourism and labour migration (van Ham, 2001). The nation image, in other words, may have an impact on a nation's cooperation possibilities with other countries, as it affects the perception of one's country. One crucial determinant of the extent to which a nation's image is disseminated concerns its standing in global power hierarchy. This includes political, economic, and cultural power and the power of the language, which help establish and facilitate the image and spread of its information (Torelli, 2019:37-40). France is to be considered as a nation having all these factors in its favour; this does not, however, guarantee a favourable nation image. The consistency of information is of essence, and mass media and other forms of communication can strengthen or weaken the nation image (Torelli, 2019:40-41).

According to Kunczik (2003:409), the mass media hold a crucial position in both the domestic and international political process through their mediating function, and is therefore essential in disseminating the nation image. Mass media have broken into the traditionally exclusive sphere of diplomacy, thereby becoming an instrument of international issues, contributing to international orientation (Kunczik, 2003:409). Subsequently, international

political action starts to centre around creating newsworthy events, simplified by public relations practitioners knowing how journalists select news (Kunczik, 2003:410). Image production and branding are also communicative activities that presuppose some sort of mediation. Media corporations are platforms that government actors, branding consultants and corporate business representatives can use as a tool for nation branding, but they are also corporate actors in their own right. Even if initiators of a communication activity attempting to alter a nation image might have ideas on the effects of these campaigns, the media is an essential part of what will be covered, how images will be constructed and in which reception context they will be interpreted (Bolin & Ståhlberg, 2015:3076-3078). As such, the media is a vital cornerstone of a country's image, regardless of whether said country attempts to manage it or not (Bolin & Ståhlberg, 2015:3077).

The media image of a country is not only 'determined' by the logic of news values, as these values are subject to government and corporate pressure, organisational ideology, media practitioners' preferences and experiences, stereotypes, organisational ideology, time and space limitation, et cetera. In turn, these factors help create and reinforce a nation's image in media coverage (Li & Chitty, 2009:3; Saleem, 2007:136, 154). According to Li and Chitty (2009), nation images consist of two parts: the perceived images and the projected media images of another nation. The perceived images are the individual's images – the privately held frames in the minds of individuals; the projected media images are formulated, represented or reframed by media – the public frames discernible in media. The private and public frames are interconnected in constructing a country's image and media comprises a vital tool and channel for projecting nation images, and the framing theory is useful for investigating the projection of nation images in media (Li & Chitty, 2009:5-7).

### 2.3 Framing the country image (in foreign news)

Previous studies on the framing of national images in news media have focused on both long-time changes, often concentrating on the perception of superpowers (foremost US, China to an increasing extent) in foreign states (e.g., Cheng, 2021; Melnyk, 2021; Ospina Estupinan, 2017; Zhang & Mwangi, 2016) and been of a more issue/event specific character with a short-term focus (e.g., Huang & Leung, 2005; Pan & Lawal, 2017).

Analysing the media coverage of China in the daily press in the US between 1992 and 2001, Peng (2004) investigates the nation image offered in the New York Times and the Los

Angeles Times with the help of framing. The study has a quantitative, deductive focus, and was based on two broad categories (frames): positive and negative news. The author concludes that the tone of the articles was generally negative, and that news related to politics often was written from a critical perspective – something Peng (2004) attributes, partly, to editorial gatekeeping and the already set images of China both amongst the public and amongst editors. The results support the notion that news values, specifically that a country's GDP, trade and political relations, may be significant predictors of the country's coverage in another country. By adapting the framework of 'competing frames', Ozornina and Mannin (2020) investigate the framing of Russia's country image in the UK during the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Their study concludes that a negative perception of Russia prevails in the UK media, particularly in the broadsheets. Although Russia received fairly positive coverage during the World Cup, the British media returned to the same frequency of negative framing as pre-championship by the end of the event. The results support the assumption concerning short-term changes in a country's image connected to mega-events, concluding that the changes do not persist over time.

Investigating Serbia's media image in the EU, Cox (2012:176-178) concluded that the attempt to change the nation image and geographic positioning, from the stigma attached to the terms 'Balkan' and 'Yugoslavia' towards 'European' through public diplomacy was not reflected in European media. This may be a consequence of Serbia's defective public diplomacy, but it could also be the consequence of the audience's unwillingness to accept this new image. To adopt the new rhetoric of Serbia as 'European' would not only entail the reconceptualization of the country itself but also to re-evaluate their own identity. The studies of Ozornina and Mannin (2020), and Cox (2012) illustrate the complexity of country images and the dynamics of altering one, regardless of whether it is done intentionally or unintentionally. Changes in the 'real' world might not translate into, or be reflected in, the mediated nation image.

Saleem (2007), when summarising critical findings in the literature on framing foreign countries in US media, revealed that US media support US policies on foreign affairs, consequently framing foreign country images in accordance with the government's interests (Saleem, 2007:144-145, 152-153). This was also the case when it came to the framing of a foreign nation as an enemy or a friend, where US media tended to portray the relationship per the US government's foreign policies and diplomatic relations (Saleem, 2007:138). Moreover,

the interrogation of previous literature showed that media frames are central in determining audience perceptions of a given issue, problem, or event as dominantly positive or critical (Saleem, 2007:135-135). Wanta, Golan, and Lee (2004), found in their study that the more coverage a nation receives in American television, the more the American public thinks that the nation is essential to US national interests, and the more negative the coverage is, the more negatively will the public perceive the nation. As such, the projection of a nation image in media may be just as much of a reflection of that nation, as the own nation's interests.

Studying the image of European countries in Russian television between 2014 and 2018, Makukhin, Tsybul'ska, Pidgornyy, and Kavatsiuk (2018) analyses Russia's framing of France and other European countries. France is the country contributed the most negative coverage between 2014 and 2018 in Russian TV, followed by Germany and then the UK (Makukhin et al., 2018:25). The most common way to frame France is that the country is unstable, full of dangers, and insecure, and that the French people's safety is constantly under threat. This frame is used on stories about crimes, accidents, and natural and industrial catastrophes. The authorities are depicted as weak and inefficient, as are the police or armed forces if mentioned (Makukhin et al., 2018:28-30). This is connected to the coverage of terrorist attacks and the portrayal of France as under a never-ending attack. It is framed as a justified punishment of not only France but the European countries for inadequate policies, managing of the migration crisis, and the unwillingness to cooperate with Russia on various issues (Makukhin et al., 2018:33, 36). Another common negative framing of France is that its inefficient and weak management, and unswerving flaws in economy, policy, and security, leaves the population no choice but to protest and demonstrate their disagreement with government policy. Protests are portrayed as ineffective and a sign of weakness in Russia; they are, however, nothing astonishing in a democratic nation but a characteristic of free speech and an efficient tool in the dialogue between citizen and authorities. Of course, these frames are not solely used on France but on other European countries as well, such as Germany and UK (Makukhin et al., 2018:31-32, 36). The active framing of France's country image by Russia thus reflects its own agenda just as much, or even more than, it reflects France's image (at least from a 'western' perspective).

In terms of France's self-projected image on social media (twitter), it frames itself as a 'credible interlocutor in global security' (Anzera et al., 2019:97), and domestic issues are integrated with political solutions and the nation's transnational role in negotiations on shared



challenges (e.g., climate). The government demonstrates an awareness of the impact of transnational issues on the domestic level in its representation of traditional security issues, for example conflicts in other nations (Anzera et al., 2019:97-98). A case in point is the Syrian crisis, which constituted an international and collective security issue, as domestic security and the stabilisation of regional and global assets was presented as crucially dependent upon the resolution of the conflict. France's military interventions were thus framed as concrete actions to handle internal and global security (Anzera et al., 2019:93). Evidently, the few studies there are on France's image does not concern Sweden nor cooperation.

### 3.0 Research problem, aim and questions

The following chapter contains a short description of the research problem, defining the research gap and how the projected image of France in Swedish newspapers constitutes a prominent case to study. This is followed by a presentation of the study's aim and research questions, as well as hypotheses. Lastly, the paper's delimitations are discussed.

#### 3.1 Problem description

In the contemporary global world, the interdependency between countries has increased in step with the process of globalisation. Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the cold war area, the significance of national image construction became evident for governments (Gilboa, 2008:59). The globalisation of communication has been followed by a surge in national image construction, not only as a way to create domestic political support within a country but also to enlarge its international influence (Li & Chitty, 2009:1). Communication constitutes an essential tool in forming public opinion, and populations of foreign countries have become increasingly targeted in the communication efforts made by governments (Nye, 2008:95). Simultaneously, media has been labelled as the 'first rate competitors for the number one position as international image former' (Galtung & Ruge, 1965:64) and follows its own logic and routines in reporting international events (Li & Chitty, 2009:3; Peng, 2004). On the other hand, studies have, at least in the US, revealed that media falls in line with policies on foreign affairs, consequently framing foreign country images following the government's interests (Saleem, 2007:144-145, 152-153). As such, the image of a country, as projected in the media, may be influenced by foreign governments, the media itself, and the nation's own government.

The rationale of nation images is that they can either nurture or prohibit positive relations and outcomes, as a positive image facilitates political alliances and economic benefits (amongst other things) and a negative image can generate hostility from and isolation in the international community and obstruct economic transactions (amongst other things) (van Ham, 2001). Interestingly, the majority of studies within the nation image research field presuppose this condition when investigating nation images, not granting it a deeper evaluation. Studies like Stock's (2009) illustrates the influence a nation image can have on tourism and consumption, and it is often the changes in the individual's behaviour that is

studied within nation images and branding. On the other side of the spectra, we find studies such as Cox's (2012), focusing on active public diplomacy attempts made by governments and how these campaigns affect the nation's international relations.

Generally, the literature on nation images tend to be very US- and China-centred, and there is a need to widen the scope by focusing on other relations. As there is no previous research on the Franco-Swedish relationship it is of interest to investigate whether or not the findings from the US and Chinese context into the Franco-Swedish one and thereby cohere on a more general level. As depicted in the background of this chapter, Sweden and France's relationship has been evolving in a positive direction over the last couple of years, much as a result of Brexit. Therefore, how this translates into France's projected image in Swedish media is intriguing, as it is not certain that media represents the relation as evolving in a positive direction. Investigating France's country image as projected in Swedish newspapers before, during, and after Brexit would provide some insight into the interaction between bilateral cooperation and media in constructing France's projected media image in Sweden. It also offers the opportunity to interrogate the relationship between the general positive and negative framing of France's national image and France's positive and negative framing as a cooperation partner, in Swedish newspapers.

There is a gap in the literature regarding the projected media image of a nation in a foreign country concerning cooperation; specifically, whether the general framing of a nation image in positive and negative terms coincides with how it is constructed as a nation to cooperate with. Therefore, it is of interest to examine *nation image* with a specific focus on cooperation. This as a positive or negative framing of a nation's image as a cooperation partner may entail adverse outcomes in terms of, for instance, bilateral partnerships and economic transactions. Studying this can thus contribute to the research field by deepening the knowledge on the projected media images of a nation by investigating whether a generally positive or negative framing of a nation entails the same framing as a cooperation partner.

## 3.2 Aim and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the Swedish media contributes to France's country image as a cooperation partner for Sweden and how this might have changed during the progress of Brexit. By analysing this, the thesis aims to deepen the knowledge of the media image of France in Sweden and the understanding of how country images are projected in media.

The research questions posed to guide the analysis reads as follows:

RQ1: Has the projected image of France in Swedish newspapers changed over the course of Brexit?

- a) In its portrayal of the Franco-Swedish relationship?
- b) In its construction of France as a cooperation partner?
- c) Did this differ between genres?

RQ2: What is the ratio of general positive and negative frames constructing France?

- a) Did it differ between the period before, during, and after Brexit?
- b) Did it differ between genres?

Hypotheses:

- 1) After Brexit, the ratio of general positive frames will have increased.
- 2) France will be presented as a good cooperation partner in Swedish media to an increasing extent during the period after Brexit.
- 3) Before Brexit the framing of France as a cooperation partner was at a lower ratio than in the period during and after Brexit.
- 4) There was an equal ratio in the framing of France as a cooperation partner in the period during Brexit.
- 5) The depiction of France as a cooperation partner will be most common in the political genre.

## 3.3 Delimitations

This thesis focuses on France's nation image in Swedish media, focusing specifically on how France is framed as a cooperation partner and how this image may have changed throughout Brexit. The analysis of France's nation image is explicitly limited to cooperation and general positive and negative framing in the Swedish media; it will not provide an entire account of the French nation image, nor will it analyse public diplomacy attempts made by the French government or go into detail on gatekeeping. The study is also limited to a specific time frame – before, during, and after Brexit divided into three 12-month periods. It will discuss the perception of France offered in Swedish media, limited to four print media sources. The result

of this research would arguably have been more complete if all media outlets and news providers in Sweden had been included, including broadcast and social media, this is however beyond the scope of this study.

## 4.0 Framing

The theoretical framework applied in this thesis is the framing theory. The upcoming sections in this chapter will provide the history and a definition of the framing concept, explain the frame building process, map out how to identify frames and explain the difference between generic and issue-specific frames. Lastly, it will offer a typology of the frames that will be used in this thesis.

### 4.1 Choice of theory

Central in a framing approach in research is that the meaning-making process shapes social interaction, and it has as its premiss a social constructivist perspective on social phenomena (Shehata, 2015:342). The foundation of framing theory consists of a comprehensive framework regarding how events and issues are organised and made sense of. Within media and communication studies, framing is concerned with how issues are constructed and how meanings are developed within texts (Reese, 2001:7-8). As a theory, framing has pervaded the research on the role of communication in how people understand their social reality (Shehata, 2015:337, 342).

Another approach frequently applied when researching the relation between communication and people's perceived images of reality is agenda-setting (Shehata, 2015:337). The distinction often made between the two is that agenda setting concerns *what* is located on the agenda, framing focuses on *how* topics on the agenda are portrayed or perceived (Shehata, 2015:342). Frames may have an agenda-setting function due to their ingenuity in exposing certain subjects and related subtopics, forcing others into the background (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997:45). Nevertheless, frames move beyond agenda setting in that it provides a way to understand and think about events, rather than simply positioning topics in the forefront or background of public discourse (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997:45). Applying framing theory allows for the investigation of how different issues concerning France are portrayed in Swedish media, which suits the purpose of this study as the focus is on how rather than what. The framing theory thus constitutes a better apt than the theory of agenda-setting, which focuses more on the 'what'.

## 4.2 Defining theory

Tuchman (1978) applied the concept frame as a metaphor to illustrate how media reporting functions like a window to the surrounding world for most people, but that the window can never constitute an objective reflection of reality. The reason for this, according to her, depends on two interrelated factors: how the window is structured (e.g., large or small, opaque or transparent) and placed (e.g., facing a street or a backyard), and how the onlooker is positioned (e.g., far or near, gazing straight ahead) (Tuchman, cited in Shehata, 2015:342). According to Tewksbury and Scheufele (2019:53), media reporting contains both information and frames, and it is essential to distinguish between the two. More often than not, information is more specific (e.g., how individuals are affected by a problem) and can affect the beliefs about an issue of the audience members. A frame, on the other hand, consolidates information and other symbolic resources and builds associations that can influence the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour of an audience.

Numerous definitions of the framing concept have been presented within academia, offering different understandings of the concept to varying degrees. One of the most cited definitions was offered by Entman in his article *Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm* from 1993, in which he had the intent to give the concept a more concrete and universal characterisation. His definition emphasises selection and salience:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation for the item described.

(Entman, 1993:52)

The focus on salience and selection accentuate that framing includes not merely what is made prominent but also what is treated as secondary, triennial, or is left out entirely (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997:45). Central in Entman's definition is that framing concerns how the communicator constructs reality in such a manner as to direct thoughts in a specific direction, through highlighting certain aspects and the usage of certain words, facts, metaphors, et cetera (Entman, 1993:53; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2019:56). Framing is inevitable and can be both a conscious and an unconscious result of journalistic actions, as media reporting is always structured on particular perspectives or problem formulations resulting from (un)conscious editorial choices (Shehata, 2015:342-343). Although media must select certain aspects of reality to reduce the complexity of a reported event, Entman's definition of framing focuses on *how* these aspects are organised (Reese, 2007:151). Essential in understanding how an

audience processes information is the dual nature of frames – as they are both concrete manifestations in different forms of communication and mental maps that people depend upon to make sense of their surroundings. Thus, distinguishing between private and media (public) frames is vital (Shehata, 2015:343). This thesis will, as already mentioned, focus on the media frames, not investigating the private frames of the Swedish population nor the effects of the public frames.

#### **4.2.1 Frame-building**

Framing is understood as a dynamic communicative process consisting of *frame-building* and *frame-setting* and includes the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture (De Vreese, 2005:51; Entman, 1993:52-53). Frame-building refers to how frames emerge, the factors influencing the structural qualities of frames, which can be both internal and external. Internal factors determine how journalists and news organisations frame issues, in other words, their media logic. The external factors, of equal importance, refers to the continuous interaction between journalists and elites and social movements (De Vreese, 2005:51-52). The outcome of the frame-building process is the manifest frames in the text, which are the focus of this thesis. Frame-setting refers to the interplay between media frames and audience knowledge and predispositions, as frames in, for example, the news may affect the individual's interpretation and evaluation of issues and events. Investigating this part of the framing process entails studying to what extent and under which circumstances audiences reflect and mirror frames made available to them (De Vreese, 2005:52). Frame-setting lies outside the scope of this thesis' investigation but is essential in understanding framing theory and framing as a process.

The creation and social negotiation of frames (i.e., frame-building) occur in at least three related areas: journalistic norms, political actors, and cultural contexts. Research on frame-building is often based on sociological foundations and assumes that media frames may set the terms of the debate amongst citizens. The notion is that, in such a debate, frames may gain influence if it fits with media routines or practices, is heavily sponsored by elites, and resonate with popular culture (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2019:56). Regarding journalistic norms, previous research offers at least five aspects of news production and selection that potentially influence how journalists frame a given issue: professional routines; organisational pressures and constraints; external pressure from interest groups; larger societal values and



norms; and the ideological or political orientation (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2019:56). When journalism offers multiple frames, the news consumer embraces the problem formulation closest to their own values and predispositions (Shehata, 2015:346).

### 4.3 Identifying frames

This study will undertake a deductive approach, theoretically deriving frames from the existing research literature. As such, the range of possible frames is identified and operationalised prior to the analysis, rather than during the analysis as would with an inductive approach (Matthes & Kohring, 2008:259-262). Cappella and Jamieson (1997:39, 57) argue that considering any production feature of visual or verbal text to qualify as a candidate for framing the news is a too broad conceptualisation. In other words, a general definition of framing, focusing on the way the story is written or produced (including orienting headlines, specific word choices, rhetorical devices used, the narrative form, et cetera) will be problematic for the researcher. They offer three criteria that a frame must meet in order to have the potential to matter in understanding news effects (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997:47):

1. *The frame should have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics.* This assures that the frame can be identified from features of the text, not just its effects.
2. *The frame should be commonly observed in journalistic practice.* This means that what is studied is a frequent and regular occurrence in the experience of the news consuming public.
3. *The frames should be able to be reliably distinguished from other frames.* This assures that the frames studied can be recognised by news consumers. Frames that matter to public attitudes and behaviour must be shared, regular and reliably distinguished, as not every possible difference between texts entails a difference in framing.

A fourth criteria from Capella & Jamieson (1997:87) can be added:

4. *The frame must have representational validity.* This means that a frame must be recognised by people other than the researcher and not a creation of his or her imagination.

One can deduce two ideal-typical categories within the framing research field: issue-specific and generic framing (De Vreese, 2005:54ff). Specific framing refers to frames pertinent only to a specific event or issue, for example, the intifada, the election of a specific US president and labour disputes. This approach allows for a deep detail-orientation and the frame specificity of the specific case investigated (De Vreese, 2005:54ff). This approach generally

entails an inductive method, which often results in the development of a unique set of frames. This makes the analysis difficult to generalise and compare, and the frames less applicable in other cases/studies (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2019:61). Generic frames, on the other hand, can be identified in relation to different topics, over time, and/or in different cultural contexts, and are more generally applicable (De Vreese, 2005:55ff).

Generic frames result from media logic (i.e., journalistic values, routines, and practices that imprints the editorial work at a news organisation), meaning that the source of this form of framing originates with the media themselves. Issue-specific frames, instead, originate from political actors and have various advocators (frame sponsors). The issue-specific frames thus differentiate from generic frames in where they originate from and how they emerge (Shehata, 2015:343-345). Since this thesis aims to understand better how Swedish newspapers portray France as a cooperation partner in a general sense, rather than focusing on a specific issue, generic frames are best suited.

#### 4.4 Negative and positive frames

The generic frames used in this thesis are positive and negative frames, a choice made based on previous research on nation images. The negative and positive frames concern the overall tone of media's reporting and whether it is positive or negative. As a country's image is defined as a representation of a country's positive and negative standing in the media (Hanan cited in Saleem, 2007:136), investigating France's media image through positive and negative frames is deemed suitable. The definition of negative and positive frames is based on Peng's (2004:60-61) definition of favourability in news stories, and more specifically, her adaptation of the definition towards country images. According to Peng (2004:60-61), a positive story is defined as the prevailing elements or overall tone in the story that suggest economic, political, and social strength/stability, and progress and improvement. This, following Peng (2004), tends to contribute to a favourable country image. In contrast, a negative story is defined as the prevailing elements or overall tone, which suggests economic, political, and social weakness/instability, conflicts, and religious, human rights, or other problems. This tends to contribute to an unfavourable nation image. Lastly, if the prevailing elements or overall tone in the story is either a balance of positive and negative, or mixed, it is defined as a neutral story. As demonstrated in previous research, a favourable nation image may increase other

nations will and want to cooperate with one's nation, and the opposite is valid for a negative nation image.

For the more specific framing of France as a cooperation partner, the positive and negative frames are based on previous research. Three dimensions constitute the image as a cooperation partner in this thesis: the Franco-Swedish relationship, political cooperation (refers to security and defence, education and other social conditions), and economic cooperation (refers to political economy and economic activities such as trade and transactions). As demonstrated in table 4.4.1, there are specific constructions of a nation that translates into positive and negative framing.

Table 4.4.1 Analytical scheme for the positive and negative framing of France's cooperation image based on previous research.

	Positive concepts	Negative concepts	Sources
Relationship	Us Friend Partner	Them Enemy Threat	Kunczik (2003) Saleem (2007) Li and Chitty (2009) Ozornina and Mannin (2020)
Political cooperation	Responsible Following international law Peacekeeping missions In line with Swedish national interests Stability (clear rule, democratic institutions, law and order) Positive towards international cooperation	Irresponsible Conflicts (domestic and international) Turbulent rule Human rights violations Religious and other problems Breaking international law Negative towards international cooperation	Ospina Estupinan (2017) Peng (2004) Kunczik (2003) Melnyk (2021) Saleem (2007) Swedish Ministry of foreign Affairs (2021) Anzera et al. (2019)
Economic cooperation	Trustworthy (trust in future) Stability/strength Economic growth Opportunities Beneficial Responsible	Unreliable Instability/weakness Problem/risky Economic stagnation/degradation Irresponsible	Melnyk (2021) Ozornina and Mannin (2020) Peng (2004)

**Comment:** The table summarises concepts for negative and positive framing for a nation's image as a cooperation partner. It is based on concepts interpreted in previous research to describe a nation as a potential cooperation partner in positive or negative terms. In the table, these are organised as dichotomous within each dimension (relationship, political cooperation, and economic cooperation). The table also includes the sources used for each dimension.

Important to note is that other generic frames would have been possible to employ in this thesis. For example, the responsibility frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000:96) could

have contributed to the understanding of France's national image regarding the responsibility the government is perceived to have both internationally and domestically.

## 5.0 Method

In this chapter, the choice of quantitative content analysis as a method will be discussed, followed by an introduction of the method, the sampling of material, and the coding scheme. Lastly, the reliability and validity of the thesis will be discussed, followed by ethical considerations.

### 5.1 Choice of method

To attain the aim of this study and to answer its posed research questions, a quantitative content analysis is conducted to provide evidence of how Swedish media frames France as a cooperation partner before, during, and after Brexit. By adopting a quantitative approach, it is possible to statistically determine the ratio of positive and negative frames, and to draw generalising conclusions. A qualitative approach would have allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the material and comprised a searching-out of underlying themes in the material being analysed (Bryman, 2016:557). It would also allow for an analysis of the latent content in the material, which is in contrast to the quantitative approach's focus on the manifest content. As such, a quantitative approach may fail to note structures and patterns that could have provided answers to the research question(s), hidden in the manifest content (Bryman, 2016:557-560).

As a quantitative approach enables the statistical analysis of the analytical units and a focus on the general rather than the specific (Bryman, 2016:304-307, 557-560), a quantitative approach is deemed more suitable. The quantitative content analysis is specifically suitable for tracking changes over time, allows for the analysis of a larger material, and enables generalisations (Bryman, 2016:304), which aligns with the purpose and structure of this study. Thus, although with its limitations, a quantitative content analysis was chosen for this study, as it was deemed best suitable to attain this thesis' aim and answer its posed research questions.

### 5.2 Quantitative content analysis

Content analysis is an approach to the analysis of documents and texts, and a quantitative content analysis seeks to, through a systemic and replicable manner, quantify this content in terms of predetermined categories (Bryman, 2016:289; Neuendorf, 2002:10-14). Such

analysis aims not to interpret a phenomenon nor offer a detailed description of the material but instead to offer a 'numerically based summary of a chosen message set' (Neuendorf, 2002:14). The purpose of a quantitative analysis is, simply put, to produce counts of key categories and measurements of the amounts of other variables. The approach is nomothetic, seeking to generate generalisable conclusions rather than focusing on a complete and precise conclusion about a specific case (i.e., idiographic) (Neuendorf, 2002:14-15).

Based on the research approach presented, and the thesis's ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches, a quantitative content analysis is well suited for this study. The purpose of this thesis being to investigate how the Swedish media contributes to France's country image as a cooperation partner and how this might have changed during the progress of Brexit, the method offers a tangible approach to attain it. As the focus is on the manifested content within Swedish news articles, the analytical approach is also suitable, focusing on what is present and countable. That said, Neuendorf's (2002:15) remark of the problematics with the dichotomy of the manifest and latent content and notion that it might be more beneficial to view it as a continuum from highly manifest to highly latent is important to bear in mind.

### **5.2.1 Newspapers in the Swedish media system**

The Swedish media system is often regarded as the epitomise of the democratic corporatist model. This model is characterised by having an early development and high circulation of the mass press, a public service model of broadcasting, a tradition of state intervention in defence of the ideological plurality of the media, a well-established professional culture in journalism, and a high (although weakened with time) political parallelism (de Albuquerque, 2011:74). A significant aspect of the Swedish media system is that the daily press reaches broad audiences (Pettersson, Djerf-Pierre, Strömbäck, & Weibull, 2005:39), which constitutes the foundation for the choice of using newspapers as the source for the material in this thesis. The quantitative content analysis was based on printed newspaper articles about France in four different traditional media outlets: Dagens Nyheter (DN), Svenska Dagbladet (SvD), Aftonbladet, and Expressen. These were chosen as they have the broadest range of readership in Sweden, and print media had a 64% daily range of readership in 2020 (counting both paper and digital) (Ohlsson, 2021; TU, 2017-05-22). Choosing these outlets thus ensures a

comprehensive outreach to the Swedish population and allows for a generalisation of the media framing of France.

These four outlets also represent two forms of newspapers: broadsheet (DN and SvD, in journalistic style if not in form) and tabloid (Aftonbladet and Expressen, both in journalistic form and style) (Nord & Strömbäck, 2006:92). This is interesting as there may be differences in reporting foreign news. Generally, broadsheet papers emphasise in-depth coverage and sober writing and pay more attention to 'hard' news such as politics and economics. Tabloids, in contrast, tend to produce more sensational news and is often regarded as 'softer', focusing on stories such as sports, human interest, and entertainment (Gran, 2016:5-6). It is often perceived as more market-driven than broadsheet papers (Nord & Strömbäck, 2006:92). More importantly for this study, tabloids tend to pay more attention to national human-interest stories than international events, and entertainment, crime, and sex are given priority over political and international news stories (Gran, 2016:5-6). As such, there may be a difference in how DN and SvD cover news about France in comparison to Aftonbladet and Expressen. Although the journalistic differences between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers are converging (Nord & Strömbäck, 2006:93), there are still differences essential to represent in the sampling of material in order to get a as clear picture as possible of how France's nation image is portrayed in the Swedish press.

### **5.2.2 Sampling of news articles**

The time frame used for this analysis is based on three 12-month-periods: December 1st, 2011, to November 30th, 2012; December 1st, 2015 to November 30th, 2016; and December 1st, 2020 to November 30th, 2021. The first time period was chosen to establish a baseline for how the media reports on the Franco-Swedish relationship before Brexit, the second period was chosen to investigate how the Franco-Swedish relationship was depicted during Brexit, and the last period was chosen to interrogate whether a change in the reporting of the relationship can be detected in Swedish media. The reason for the time frame stretching from December of one year to November of the following year was to assemble an as contemporary material as possible in the third period. For consistency, the same dates were chosen for the two earlier periods.

The first, rough sampling was done by entering the following search term in Retriever<sup>1</sup>:

France\* AND (EU\* OR Brexit\* OR Summit\* OR Sweden\* Or Swedish\* OR French\* OR Government\* OR Cooperation\* OR Election\*)<sup>2</sup>

The total population of articles when deploying this search string in the media archive Retriever was N=14758, a pretty large number especially considering this thesis' timeframe. Therefore, it was necessary to draw a sample, resulting in n=437 (see table 5.2.1).

The sampling was done using multistage sampling, meaning that two sampling steps are used (Neuendorf, 2002:86). In this case, a proportionate stratified sampling method was used, followed by a systematic random sampling. Stratified random sampling involves dividing the entire population into homogeneous groups based on a specific variable interesting to the researcher (Neuendorf, 2002:85-86). In other words, the population is stratified by a specific criterion which ensures that each subgroup of a given population is adequately represented within the whole sample population of the research study (Bryman, 2016:192-193; Cöster, 2020:48-51). A proportionate stratified sampling means that the sample size of each stratum is proportionate to the population size of the stratum, which is advantageous as it ensures appropriate representation for the various groupings. In addition, the technique 'reduces the sampling error for the stratifying variable to zero' (Neuendorf, 2002:86).

The total population of news articles was divided into groups based on news outlet and publication month, and thereafter it was then possible to proportionately divide the sample from each newspaper per month. For example, in June 2012, there were 701 articles published on the topic following the search string, which constitutes 4.7% of the total population ( $701/14758=0.047$ ). In order to know how many articles that should be drawn from June 2012, the proportion (4.7%) was multiplied by the population of that month ( $0.047*701=33$ ). By calculating this for each month, the sample could be divided proportionally over the time periods. In order to ensure a proportionate division amongst the media outlets, but a proportionate division amongst months is still necessary. Therefore, the publications of the newspapers in a month were divided with the total population of newspapers published that month, based on the search string. To exemplify, DN published 205 articles in June 2012, which constitutes 29% of the population ( $205/701=0.29$ ); thus, 29% of the sample from June

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.retriever.se/tag/mediearkivet/>

<sup>2</sup> In Swedish: Frankrike\* AND (EU\* OR Brexit\* OR Toppmöte\* OR Sverige\* OR Svenska\* OR Franska\* OR Regering\* OR Samarbete\* OR Val\*)



2012 should come from DN, which is ten articles ( $0.29 \cdot 33 = 10$ ). This calculation was done for each news source and each month.

A systematic random sampling was then conducted to achieve a random sample within each month. The technique consists of selecting every  $x$ th unit based on a calculated skip interval – ‘the  $x$  in the  $x$ th’ (Neuendorf, 2002:85). A skip interval is calculated based on the following formula:

$$\frac{(\text{Population } N)}{(\text{Sample } n)} = \frac{\text{Population of news articles for newspaper } x \text{ month } x}{\text{Sample of news articles for newspaper } x \text{ month } x} = \text{Skip interval}$$

To illustrate, continuing with the example of DN in June 2012, the population is 205 and the sample 10, resulting in the skip interval 21 ( $205/10 = 20.5$ ), meaning that every 21st article is drawn. This calculation was made for each media outlet each month. For a random sample to be considered random, the process must begin with a random start between 1 and  $x$  (Neuendorf, 2002:85); in this thesis, it was set between one and the strata ( $k$ th) number for the newspaper the specific month sampled. Another important consideration for this form of sampling is the periodicity in the units that coincides with the skip interval, as this could threaten the representativeness of the sampling (Neuendorf, 2002:85). As the order of the articles is listed based on publishing date and news source, instead of as, for example, most viewed news, the risk of this threatening the representativeness was deemed low.

Table 5.2.1 Media content analysis sample divided according to newspaper and time period (number of articles).

Newspaper	Total population	Sample	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
Dagens Nyheter (DN)	4358	125	46	53	26
Svenska Dagbladet (SvD)	4162	120	34	53	33
Aftonbladet	3167	100	33	43	24
Expressen	2931	92	28	43	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>14758</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>104</b>

**Comment:** The table demonstrates the total population ( $N$ ) of news articles for each newspaper when using the search string in Retriever, and the sample drawn from each newspaper for each time period investigated.

The final step of the sampling process was to remove articles that did not fit the criteria of articles of interest. Articles removed were (1), articles only referring to France as a location or point of origin; (2), articles consisting of lists (e.g., sports events); (3), articles in which

France was only mentioned briefly; (4), news in travel, vine, and fictional accounts of France; (5), articles where the search terms could not be identified. If an article was removed, the following article was chosen.

### **5.2.3 Coding scheme**

The coding scheme included nine variables (see table in appendix 1), where the first five variables concerned identification number, publishing date, media outlet, which genre the article belonged to, and which time period it was published in. The sixth variable referred to the general tone about France and whether it was positive, negative, or neutral. Variables 7-9 concerned the framing of France as a cooperation partner. The seventh variable coded the Franco-Swedish relationship; the eighth coded the framing of France as a political cooperation partner; the ninth coded France as an economic cooperation partner.

The coding process followed the advice offered by Neuendorf (2002:132-134) to use code training and code revision. The code training allowed for the revision of the codebook (see appendix 2), which provides the coder detailed instructions on how to code, ensuring clear instructions for the coder. In doing so, the coder is prepared for various types of coding situations when the actual coding begins. After the systematic coding was conducted, the result was compiled into an Excel document, where the variables frequency was statistically analysed.

### **5.2.4 Reliability and validity**

Within all research, reliability and validity is vital. Reliability can be defined as 'the extent to which a measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials' (Neuendorf, 2002:141). In this study, this translates to intercoder reliability, as a human coder was used to conduct the coding. The best approach to ensure high intercoder reliability is by using multiple coders and ensuring their results coincide to as high a degree as possible (Neuendorf, 2002:141-142). Due to time and resource restraints, this was not possible to do in this study. In order to ensure consistent coding, a pilot study was first conducted in order to ensure that the variables were clear and excisable and to avoid discrepancies (Neuendorf, 2002:146-148). After all the units had been coded, the result was verified through an additional coding. The first five articles in each period were coded again, and after that, every fifth article in the sample, which allowed for a comparison with the first coding. As the second coding resulted

in a concordant outcome with that of the first coding and was faced with the same interpretive issues as the first time, the intercoder reliability can be deemed reasonable. Through the same coding scheme and with the same material, the results were the same at two different points in time.

External validity, also termed generalisability, concerns whether the findings can be generalised to other contexts and can be assessed by looking at the sample's representativeness (Neuendorf, 2002:115). As this study's material was determined through a non-probability sampling method, the sample may be determined as representative of the total population of the sampling period. As such, the result can be generalised for the entire output of the four newspapers, limited to the three time periods. Neuendorf (2002:89) further suggests that with a dichotomous (binominal) variable, a 95% level of confidence requires a sample size of 384 units to attain a +/- 5% sampling error. As this thesis sample consists of 437 articles, its sampling error can be determined to be around 5%. Internal validity is the match-up of a conceptual definition and an operational definition (measurement). In other words, it concerns whether the researcher measures what he or she sets out to measure (Neuendorf, 2002:107, 115 ). In order to ensure a high internal validity, the themes stated in the coding schemes were developed in accordance with this study's aim and research questions and its theoretical framework. The coding scheme constituted the centre of the content analysis and was complied with throughout the analysis.

### **5.2.5 Ethical considerations**

In all forms of research, it is of essence that the researcher(s) considers the ethical principles of conducting science, which can be divided into four main themes (Bryman, 2016:135): (1) Whether there is harm to participants; (2), whether there is a lack of informed consent; (3) whether there is an invasion of privacy; and (4) whether deception is involved. Even though this study does not concern sensitive subjects or individuals, it is still necessary to maintain a good research practice. Therefore, the Swedish Research Council's eight general rules were adhered to when conducting this research (Swedish Research Council, 2017:10).

## 6.0 Findings

Throughout the content analysis, the aim was to search for indicators constructing France as a cooperation partner and identify if a positive or negative frame was present in this construction. This was done with the help of the pre-designed coding scheme (see Appendix 1). The aim was further to compare how the framing of France in Swedish news media might have changed during the progress of Brexit by investigating the three 12-month periods. The list of articles can be found in appendix 7. This chapter will begin with a short overview of the publications of articles during the three time periods, in section 6.1. This is followed by a presentation of the content analysis results in accordance with the posed research questions. RQ1 stated: *Has the projected image of France in Swedish newspapers changed over the course of Brexit?* and contains three sub-questions relating to the portrayal of the relationship, the construction of France as a cooperation partner, and if the possible changes in depiction differs between genres. In answer to the question of how Swedish newspapers' portrayal of the Franco-Swedish relationship have changed during the course of Brexit, the results demonstrate an increase in positive frames between the three time periods (6% to 15% to 17%) and a decrease in negative frames between the first and second period, and an increase between the second and third period (35% to 17% to 21%). However, the number of articles portraying the relationship is still relatively low (64%). In addition, differences between genres and time periods were detected.

In answer to the question of how Swedish newspapers' portrayal of France as a political cooperation partner have changed throughout Brexit, the results demonstrate an increase in positive frames between the three time periods (from 16% to 22% to 37%). The negative framing of France increases between the first period and the second period (from 13% to 21%) but decreases again in the third period (16%). Differences between genres and time periods were detected. In answer to the question of how Swedish newspapers' portrayal of France as an economic cooperation partner have changed during the course of Brexit, the results show that France was primarily not constructed as an economic cooperation partner (87% of the articles in total lacks frames). The period with the highest ratio of frames was the first period (27%), followed by the third period (11%), and, lastly, the second period (4%). The negative framing of France was highest in the first period (15%) and lowest in the second and third periods (1% and 9%, respectively). The percentage of positive frames demonstrated

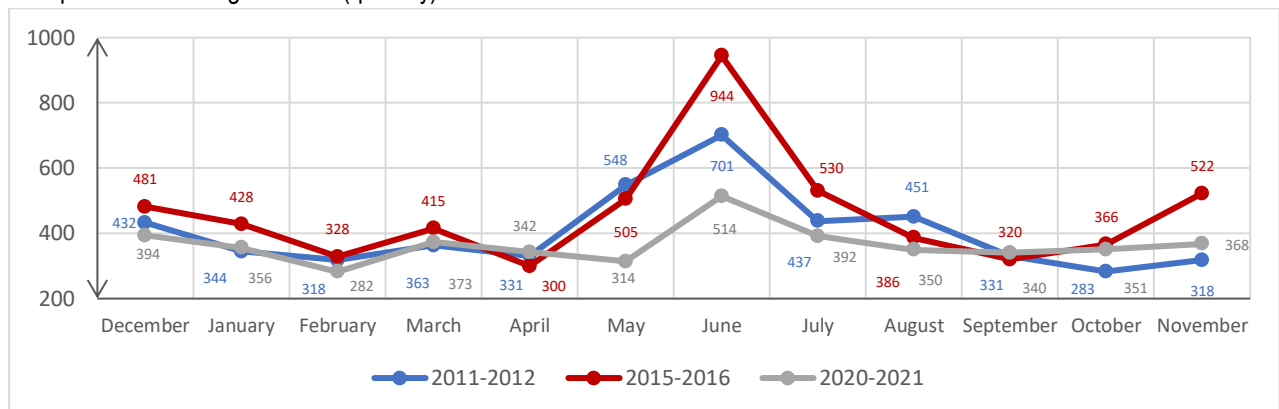
the same results (15% to 3% to 2%). In addition, differences between genres and time periods were detected.

The second research question was *What is the ratio of general positive and negative frames constructing France?* and contains the two sub-questions concerning possible changes between the time periods and whether it differs between genres. In answer to the question what the ratio of positive and negative stories is, and if this differs between the three time periods and the different genres, the ratio of positive frames is 41% in total, for negative frames 31% in total, and for neutral frames 29% in total. The positive frames increase from period one (38%), to period two (40%), to period three (47%), the negative frames decrease over time (from 33% to 31% to 27%), whilst the neutral frames decrease (29% in period one to 26% in period three). Differences between genres were also detected.

## 6.1 The number of articles over time

As shown in figure 6.1.1, the number of articles varies between the three time periods and between months. What is evident is that the reporting peaks in June in all three periods, with the highest number of articles in June 2016 (period 2) with 944 articles, followed by June 2012 (period 1) with 701 articles, and 514 articles in June 2021 (period 3). The explanation for this is that June is the prime time for international sports events: football, the Olympics, handball, et cetera. In 2016, France hosted the FIFA World Cup for men, explaining the high publication rate. Otherwise, the reporting generally follows the same trend when comparing the three time periods in terms of increases and decreases, although the amount of reporting in terms of the number of articles variates to different degrees.

Figure 6.1.1 Number of articles published on the topic when using the search string in Retriever throughout the three time periods according to month (quantity).



**Comment:** Figure illustrating the number of articles published by DN, SvD, Aftonbladet, and Expressen combined, for every month under the three time periods. It illustrates a significant increase during the month of June in all three periods, this is because the many world sports events. The data is retrieved from Retriever using the search string presented in the method chapter.

There are also differences between the time periods regarding the number of publications in each genre. Overall, the highest number of published articles are in the political genre (39%) and the sports genre (28%). As illustrated in table 6.1.1, period one contains the highest percentage of sports articles (34%), followed by the second period (27%), with the lowest percentage in the third period (20%). The opposite trend is seen when it comes to politics, with period three containing the highest number of articles (50%), followed by the third period (39%), with the first period presenting the lowest percentage of political articles (28%). In the first period, 16% of the articles are within the economy genre, whilst periods two and three witness a decrease to 5% and 4%, respectively.

Table 6.1.1 Division of the population of news articles according to genres in the three periods (quantity, per cent).

	Period 1		Period 2		Period 3		Total	
Sports	48	(34%)	52	(27%)	21	(20%)	121	(28%)
Politics	40	(28%)	76	(39%)	53	(50%)	169	(39%)
Culture	16	(11%)	20	(10%)	13	(13%)	49	(11%)
Economy	22	(16%)	10	(5%)	4	(4%)	36	(8%)
Social relations	9	(6%)	9	(5%)	4	(4%)	22	(5%)
Crime	6	(4%)	20	(10%)	9	(9%)	35	(8%)
Other	0	(0%)	5	(3%)	0	(0%)	5	(1%)
Sum (%)	100		100		100		100	
Number of articles	141		192		104		437	

**Comment:** The table shows number of sampled articles in each genre in the three different time periods in per cent. Sports and politics stand for the highest number of articles in each period. The 'other' genre is only represented in the second period and consists of articles not possible to place in the other genres. The coding into the different genres were based on their dominant 'theme'; the articles in the politics genre, for example, includes elements that would fit into the economy genre, and is thereby a theme more present than just the articles in the economy genre.

There are also variations between the four news outlets when it comes to the output of articles in the different genres when looking at the different news outlets. As illustrated in table 6.1.2, Expressen and Aftonbladet contain the highest number of sports articles (49% and 37% respectively), whilst DN and SvD contain the highest number of political articles (48% and 44% respectively). DN and SvD also published the highest number of articles concerning the economy (10% and 15%, respectively).

Table 6.1.2 The division of articles between news outlets according to genre in the three time periods combined (quantity, per cent).

	DN		SvD		Aftonbladet		Expressen		Total	
Sport	20	(16%)	19	(16%)	37	(37%)	45	(49%)	121	(28%)
Politics	60	(48%)	53	(44%)	34	(34%)	22	(24%)	169	(39%)
Culture	17	(14%)	12	(10%)	11	(11%)	9	(10%)	49	(11%)
Economy	12	(10%)	18	(15%)	1	(1%)	5	(5%)	36	(8%)
Social relations	6	(5%)	6	(5%)	8	(8%)	2	(2%)	22	(5%)
Crime	8	(6%)	12	(10%)	8	(8%)	7	(8%)	35	(8%)
Other	2	(2%)	0	(0%)	1	(1%)	2	(2%)	5	(1%)
Sum (%)	100		100		100		100		100	
Number of articles	125		120		100		92		437	

**Comment:** The table illustrates the number of sampled articles in each genre from the four newspapers studied in quantity and per cent. DN and SvD has the most published articles in the politics genre followed by the sports genre, whilst Aftonbladet and Expressen has the highest number of published articles in the sports genre followed by the sports genre.

## 6.2 The Franco-Swedish relationship

This section presents the content analysis results when coding the Franco-Swedish relationship, how this has changed between the time periods and the differences between news genres. The portrayal of the Franco-Swedish relationship has changed between the different periods, as can be seen in table 6.2.1. What becomes apparent is that the framing of the relationship as positive has increased with each period, starting at 6% in period one, to 15% in period two, to 17% in period 3. The period before Brexit did not witness many positive frames of the Franco-Swedish relationship, and even though there is a very high percentage of articles where the relationships are not mentioned at all in all periods, there has been an increase during the progression of Brexit. The negative framing of the relationship is highest in the first period (35%) and nearly halved in the second period (17%), only to rise a bit in the third period (21%). Regardless, the negative framing is higher than the positive in all three periods.

Table 6.2.1 The framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship in the three periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	6	15	17	12
Negative	35	17	21	24
Not present	60	68	62	64
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	141	192	104	437

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship as positive and negative in the three different time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present. The coding was based on a 'us and them' dichotomy, where positive framing was an 'us' and negative framing an 'us versus them'. If, for example, France and Sweden have different positions on an issue, the relationship is negative, but if they are to help each other, the relationship is positive. If the relationship was not mentioned in any way, it was coded as 'not present'.

Just as the portrayal of the Franco-Swedish relationship differs between the time periods, the results demonstrate differences between the different genres, as demonstrated in table 6.2.2. The most common genre to frame the relationship as negative is within the sports genre (67%), and the politics genre represents the genre where the relationship is framed as positive most frequently (23%). Generally, the other genres do not present the relationship to various extent and with varying ratio of positive and negative frames.



Table 6.2.2 The framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship according to genre in the three time periods combined (per cent).

	Sport	Politics	Culture	Economy	Social relations	Crime	Other	Total
Positive	2	23	10	3	14	11	0	12
Negative	67	11	0	8	0	3	0	24
Not present	31	66	90	89	86	86	100	64
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	121	169	49	36	22	35	5	437

**Comment:** The table demonstrates the framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship as positive and negative in the different genres in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present.

How the Franco-Swedish relationship is framed varies between the different time periods as well as between different genres. Thus, how these differences translate within genres and between time periods generates a more in-depth picture of the portrayal of the relationship in Swedish news media. Since sports and politics represent the genres with most frames, these will be presented. To view how the framing of the relationship differs within genres and between periods, see table in appendix 3. As can be distinguished in table 6.2.3, the framing of the relationship within the sports genre is the most negative in the first period (79%), closely followed by the third period (76%). The second period has a lower ratio of negative frames (52%) and is the only period to contain positive framing of the relationship (4%).

Table 6.2.3 The differences in the framing of Franco-Swedish relations in the sports genre in the three time periods combined (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	0	4	0	2
Negative	79	52	76	67
Not present	21	44	24	31
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	48	52	21	121

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship as positive and negative in the sports genre, within the three different time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present.

In the politics genre (see table 6.2.4), the relationship has experienced an increase in positive frames, especially between the first and the second period – from 10% to 28%. Simultaneously, negative frames have decreased between the first and second periods (from 18% to 8%). Even though there is a decrease in positive frames and an increase in negative frames between the second and third periods, the third period is still closer to the results found

in the second period than the first. As such, the relationship is framed more positively in the third period than in the first.

Table 6.2.4 The differences in the framing of Franco-Swedish relations in the politics genre in the three time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	10	28	26	23
Negative	18	8	11	11
Not present	73	64	60	66
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	40	76	53	169

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship in the politics genre in terms of positive and negative frames, within the three different time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present.

## 6.3 France as a cooperation partner

This section presents the content analysis results when coding France as a cooperation partner, how this has changed between the time periods and the differences between news genres. This section is divided into two parts: 6.3.1 presents the findings regarding the construction of France as a political cooperation partner, and section 6.3.2 presents the findings concerning economic cooperation. Both were coded in terms of positive and negative frames, with the help of the analytical scheme presented in the theory chapter. This was based on previous research on country images, where attributes or actions prescribed to a nation, France in this case, entails a positive or negative framing.

### 6.3.1 Political cooperation

The framing of France as a political cooperation partner, in total and within the different periods, is summarised in table 6.3.1.1. Foremost, France was not constructed as a political cooperation partner, meaning no presence of a positive or negative frame. However, the construction of France as a political cooperation partner increases (both positive and negative frames) from period 1 to period 3, from 29% in the first period to 44% in the second period and 53% in the third period. The negative framing is lowest in the first period (13%), highest in the second period (21%), and decreased again in the third period (16%).

Table 6.3.1.1 The framing of France as a political cooperation partner in the different time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	16	22	37	23
Negative	13	21	16	18
Not present	71	56	47	59
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	141	192	104	437

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of France as a political cooperation partner in positive and negative frames in the three different time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present. The coding was based on previous research on country images, focusing on attributes or actions prescribed to France that entails a positive or negative framing. In articles where France was portrayed as taking responsibility for international and domestic issues, acting or agreeing with Swedish national interests, the framing was positive (and negative when vice versa). An important factor here is the view and attitude towards international cooperation – if positive and protective of this, the framing was positive, and vice versa.

The findings, when looking at the different genres, demonstrate that the representation of France as a political cooperation partner is more common in some genres than in others. As table 6.3.1.2 demonstrates, only 3% of the articles contain political cooperation in the sports

genre. The political genre, conversely, contains 62% frames in total (positive plus negative) of France as a cooperation partner. The crime and the social relations genre show similar results.

Table 6.3.1.2 The framing of France as a political cooperation partner according to genre in the three time periods combined (per cent).

	Sport	Politics	Culture	Economy	Social relations	Crime	Other	Total
Positive	1	24	16	25	27	46	0	23
Negative	2	37	12	8	23	26	0	18
Not present	97	38	71	67	50	29	100	59
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	121	169	49	36	22	35	5	437

**Comment:** The table demonstrates the framing of France as a political cooperation partner in positive and negative frames in the different genres in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present.

The differences between the genres are further distinguished when dividing the results into the three time periods (see table in appendix 4 for a complete account). For instance, within the political genre, there is no vast difference in the ratio of positive frames between period 1 (33%) and period 2 (32%), but there is an increase between period 2 to period 3 (45%). Simultaneously, the number of articles without the representation of political cooperation decreases, whilst the ratio of negative frames show modest variations, as can be seen in table 6.3.1.3.

Table 6.3.1.3 The framing of France as a political cooperation partner within the politics genre in the three time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	33	32	45	24
Negative	28	33	32	37
Not present	40	36	23	38
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	40	76	53	169

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of France as a political cooperation partner in positive and negative frames in the politics genre within the three time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present.

Within the social relations genre, an increase in positive frames can be distinguished between the three periods, as can a decrease in negative frames, whilst the absence of France as a political cooperation partner varies from low, to high, to low (see table 6.3.1.3). Generally, the ratio of positive and negative frames, as well as absence thereof, varies between the genres: two genres may both display an increase in positive frames, but one of

them an increase in negative frames and the other an increase-decrease of negative frames between periods (see table in appendix 4).

Table 6.3.1.3 The framing of France as a political cooperation partner within the social relations genre in the three time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	11	33	50	27
Negative	44	11	0	23
Not present	44	67	50	50
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	9	9	4	22

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of France as a political cooperation partner in positive and negative frames in the social relations genre within the three time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present.

### 6.3.2 Economic cooperation

The framing of France as an economic cooperation partner, in total and within the different periods, is summarised in table 6.3.2.1. Foremost, France was not constructed as an economic cooperation partner, meaning no presence of a positive or negative frame (87% in total). The period with the highest ratio of frames (positive and negative) was the first period with 27%, followed by the third period with 11%, and, lastly, the second period with 4%. The highest number of positive frames were found in the first period (12%), followed by the third period (9%), and lastly the second period with only 1%. The highest per cent of negative frames were found in the first period (15%), with period two and period three containing the lowest percentage (3% and 2%, respectively).

Table 6.3.2.1 The framing of France as an economic cooperation partner in the different time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	12	1	9	6
Negative	15	3	2	7
Not present	73	96	89	87
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	141	192	104	437

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of France as an economic cooperation partner in positive and negative frames in the three different time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present. The coding was based on previous research on country images, focusing on attributes or actions prescribed to France that entails a positive or negative framing. A case in point is France's economic stagnation and problematic labour laws resulted in a negative framing of the country as an economic cooperation partner – foremost during the 2012 European financial crisis. The description of France as one of the largest economies leads to a positive framing.

The findings when looking at the different genres shows that the representation of France as an economic cooperation partner is more common in some genres than in others. As

table 6.3.2.2 demonstrates, the economic and the social relations genres represent the highest percentages of frames with 23% and 39%, respectively. The other genres reflect the framing in table 6.3.2.1, except for crime lacking positive frames and culture lacking negative frames and ‘other’ representing total absence.

Table 6.3.2.2 The framing of France as an economic cooperation partner according to genre in the three time periods combined (per cent).

	Sport	Politics	Culture	Economy	Social relations	Crime	Other	Total
Positive	3	8	8	17	5	0	0	6
Negative	6	5	0	22	18	6	0	7
Not present	91	88	92	61	77	94	100	87
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	121	169	49	36	22	35	5	437

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of France as an economic cooperation partner in positive and negative frames according to the different genres within the three different time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present.

The differences between the genres considering the three time periods offers further insight into the framing of France as an economic cooperation partner (see table in appendix 5 for a complete account). For instance, within the economy genre, the first period shows a ratio of 14% positive frames and 27% negative frames, compared to a total of 10% positive and negative frames, respectively, within the second period. This is triumphed by the third period with 50% positive frames and 25% negative frames in the third period. Worth noting is that the third period only consists of four articles. This is illustrated in table 6.3.2.3.

Table 6.3.2.3 The framing of France as an economic cooperation partner within the economy genre in the three time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	14	10	50	17
Negative	27	10	25	22
Not present	59	80	25	61
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	22	10	4	36

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of France as an economic cooperation partner in positive and negative frames in the economy genre, within the three different time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present.

Within the political genre (see table 6.3.2.3), the highest ratio of positive frames is found in the first period (20%), followed by the third period (8%), and lastly the second

period (1%). The highest number of negative frames was found in the first period (15%), with a low ratio in both the second and third period (1% and 2%, respectively). The first period also has the highest ratio of frames (both positive and negative) with 35%.

Table 6.3.2.3 The framing of France as an economic cooperation partner within the political genre in the three time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	20	1	8	8
Negative	15	1	2	5
Not present	65	97	89	88
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	40	76	53	169

**Comment:** The table shows the framing of France as an economic cooperation partner in positive and negative frames in the political genre, within the three different time periods in per cent. It also shows the percentage of articles with no frames present.

## 6.4 General framing of France

This section will present the results of the content analysis in answer to the research question *What is the ratio of general positive and negative frames constructing France?* and the sub-questions whether this differs between the timer periods and between genres. A positive story was operationally defined as the prevailing elements or overall tone in the story that suggest economic, political, and social strength/stability, and progress and improvement. A negative story was defined as the prevailing elements or overall tone, which suggests economic, political, and social weakness/instability, conflicts, and religious, human rights, or other problems. This tends to contribute to an unfavourable nation image. Lastly, a neutral story was defined as the prevailing elements or overall tone in the story being either a balance of positive or negative elements. To illustrate:

### *Positive element:*

In France, a proposed law regarding the criminalisation of so-called 'virgin citification' and virgin operations is under assessment. Sweden should immediately follow the French example and do the same (authors translation).

I Frankrike behandlas just nu ett förslag om att kriminalisera så kallade oskuldsintyg och oskuldsoperationer. Sverige bör omgående ta efter det franska exemplet och göra likadant. (Expressen, 2021-06-23).

### *Negative element:*

The vaccine scepticism is high in France in general, even for well-trying vaccines, like those against measles, rubella, and pertussis, for example. Almost every other Frenchman has in different probing stated that they would not take the [Covid19] vaccine (authors translation).

Vaccinskepticismen är stor i Frankrike i vanliga fall, till och med för beprövade vaccin, som de mot mässling, röda hund och kikhosta, till exempel. Nästan varannan fransman har i olika sonderingar sagt att de inte tänker ta sprutorna. (Svenska Dagbladet, 2020-12-04).

The general portrayal of France in terms of positive, negative, and neutral frames is summarised in table 6.4.1. In total, the ratio of positive frames exceeds that of both negative and neutral frames with 41% to 31% and 29%, respectively. The same trend is found within the different periods, with the positive frame scoring the highest percentage in each time period. Simultaneously, the negative frames decrease with each period, from 33% in the first period, to 31% in the second period, to 27% in the third period. Disparities between the three periods are also distinguishable, presenting an increase in positive frames and a decrease in negative frames.



Table 6.4.1 The framing of France in terms of positive, negative or neutral in the three time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	38	40	47	41
Negative	33	31	27	31
Neutral	29	30	26	29
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	141	192	104	437

**Comment:** The table shows the general framing of France in positive, negative and neutral frames in the three different time periods in per cent. The coding was based on the overall tone and prevailing elements in the articles, attributing France positive or negative attributes. A balance of positive and negative elements resulted in a neutral framing. For instance, positive attributes were things like a strong position on the international arena, and a negative attribute was a weak(end) position on the international arena.

The general framing of France differs between genres, and whilst some follow the general trend of a higher account of positive frames, others do not, as can be observed in table 6.4.2. For instance, culture has 61% positive frames, 29% negative frames, and 10% neutral frames. In the economy genre, on the other hand, positive frames represent 22%, negative 47%, and neutral 31%.

Table 6.4.2 The ratio of positive, negative, and neutral frames according to genre in the three time periods combined (per cent).

	Sport	Politics	Culture	Economy	Social relations	Crime	Other	Total
Positive	68	24	61	22	27	31	0	41
Negative	13	37	29	47	36	34	80	31
Neutral	19	38	10	31	36	34	20	29
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	121	169	49	36	22	35	5	437

**Comment:** The table shows the ratio of positive, negative and neutral frames within the different genres, framing France in general terms.

The differences between the three periods within the different genres also varies, as some show vast differentiations and others do not (for a complete account of this, see table in appendix 6). Whilst the percentage of positive frames within the sports genre varies between 67% and 69% amongst the three periods, positive frames in the politics genre range from 13% (period 1) to 22% (period 2) to 34% (period 3) – illustrating the general trend of an increase in positive frames as shown in table 6.4.3. Similar results were found in the culture genre, whilst the social genre shows a decrease between periods 1 and 2 and an increase between periods 2 and 3 (see table in appendix 6). The politics genre also shows a decrease in negative frames, as shown in table 6.3.2. Similar results were found in the crime genre and the opposite in the culture genre (see table in appendix 6).

Table 6.4.3 The ratio of positive, negative, and neutral frames within the politics genre in the three time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	13	22	34	24
Negative	45	37	32	37
Neutral	43	41	32	38
Sum (%)	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	40	76	53	169

**Comment:** The table shows ratio of positive, negative and neutral frames within the politics genre, and the differences between the time periods.

As illustrated in table 6.4.4, the trend of increasing positive frames occurs in the economic genre (from 18% to 20%, to 50%). However, when it comes to negative frames, the ratio was 41% in period 1, 60% in period 2, and 50% in period 3. A similar result is found in the crime genre concerning positive frames, moving from 17% (period 1) to 40% (period 2) down to 22% (period 3) (see table in appendix 6).

Table 6.4.4 The ratio of positive, negative, and neutral frames between periods in the economy genre in the three time periods (per cent).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
Positive	18	20	50	22
Negative	41	60	50	47
Neutral	41	20	0	31
Sum	100	100	100	100
Number of articles	22	10	4	36

**Comment:** The table shows ratio of positive, negative and neutral frames within the economy genre, and the differences over the time periods.

## 6.5 Hypothesis testing

This paper stated five hypotheses: H1: *After Brexit, the ratio of general positive frames will have increased*; H2: *France will be presented as a good cooperation partner to an increasing extent in the study period after Brexit*; H3: *Before Brexit the framing of France as a cooperation partner was at a lower ratio than in the period during and after Brexit*; H4: *There was an equal ratio in the framing of France as a cooperation partner in the period during Brexit*; and, H5: *The depiction of France as a cooperation partner will be most common in the political genre*. The results of the content analysis demonstrate an increase in general positive frames after Brexit, confirming the first hypothesis (H1). The second and third hypotheses is not as easy to confirm or deny as the result varies between genres and in the three dimensions of cooperation (the relationship, political and economic cooperation partner). France is presented as a good cooperation partner to an increasing extent when it comes to the portrayal of the relationship and the construction of France as a political cooperation partner thus confirming H2. The framing of the relationship as positive went from 6% in period one to 15% to 17% in period three; thus, the hypothesis can be confirmed concerning the Franco-Swedish relationship. As a political cooperation partner the increase is from 16% in period one to 22% in period two and, finally, 37% in period three which confirms the hypothesis.

The construction of France as an economic cooperation partner demonstrates the opposite results, as there is a decrease from 12% in the first period to 9% in the third, with the lowest percentage in the second period (1%). As France is not presented as a good economic cooperation partner to an increasing extent, H2 is not confirmed within this dimension. Hence, the hypothesis that France will be presented as a good cooperation partner to an increasing extent (H2) in the study period after Brexit is confirmed for the Franco-Swedish relationship and France as a political cooperation partner but is discarded when it comes to France as an economic cooperation partner. The divergence between the different genres entailed confirmation of the hypothesis in some instances (e.g., as an economic cooperation partner in the economy genre or political cooperation in the political genre) and disregarded it in others (e.g., as an economic cooperation partner in the political genre). The political genre had the highest ratio of frames in the political cooperation-dimension (62%) thus confirming H5. In the economic cooperation framing the economy genre had the highest ratio (39%) thus disconfirming H5, and in the framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship the sports genre had

the highest ratio of frames (69%) followed by the political genre (34%), also disconfirming H5. H3 was confirmed in the framing of France as a political cooperation partner, with the ratio of frames increasing from 29% in the first period, to 44% in the second period, and 53% in the third period. In the other two dimensions (relationship and economic cooperation), H3 was not confirmed as the ratio of frames did not increase. In the second period, there was a somewhat equal ratio of positive and negative frames, confirming H4: the Franco-Swedish relationship had 15% positive and 17% negative frames; France as a political cooperation partner had 22% positive and 21% negative frames; France as an economic cooperation partner had 1% positive and 3% negative frames.

## 7.0 Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine how the Swedish media contributes to France's nation image as a cooperation partner for Sweden and how this might have changed during the progress of Brexit. In more detail, it focused on the portrayal of the Franco-Swedish relationship, France as a political and economic cooperation partner, and the framing of France in positive, negative, or neutral terms. It also addressed the differences between different media genres. This chapter will discuss the result of the content analysis and relate it to the previous research introduced in chapter two.

### 7.1 The Franco-Swedish relationship and France as a cooperation partner

Regarding the portrayal of the Franco-Swedish relationship, there has been an increase in positive framing when examining the period before, during and after Brexit. This is especially the case in the political genre, but the same trend is witnessed in the cultural, social relations, and crime genres. The framing of the relationship as an 'us' may result in cooperation in the international realm (Li & Chitty, 2009:2), and as such, the increase in the framing of the relationship as positive contributes to a positive nation image of France as a cooperation partner. As the political genre has witnessed not only an increase in positive framing of the relationship but also a decrease in the negative framing (although there has been a minor increase between the second and third time period), France's image as a cooperation partner has moved in a positive direction in terms of the Franco-Swedish relationship's representation in Swedish political news. The positive trend could be explained with the correlation between government policies and media presented by Saleem (2007:138), meaning that the Swedish press follows the Swedish government's policy line against the 'friends and foes'. As Brexit has pushed Sweden towards finding new cooperation partners within the EU, the government's stance towards France may have changed, and in extension, the framing of France in Swedish newspapers. From the frame-building perspective, this could be interpreted as a framing 'heavily sponsored by elites' (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2019:56) or the result of journalists' interaction with elites (De Vreese, 2005:51-52).

The politics genre demonstrates an increase in the positive framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship, and a decrease of negative frames between the first and third period, from 18% to 11% (the second period representing the lowest ratio of frames at 8%). The

image of a nation as an ‘ally’ or an ‘us’ has a positive impact on cooperation (Li & Chitty, 2009:2), and the increase therefore signifies an enhancement in the construction of France as a cooperation partner. The conclusion can be drawn that, since this concerns political news, the relationship between France and Sweden has evolved towards more cooperation within political issues during the progress of Brexit. The sports genre demonstrates a high ratio of negative frames concerning the relationship. The reason for the high percentage of negative frames in the sports genre has much to do with the inherent ‘us versus them’ logic in sports, thus logically containing the highest degree of negative framing. For this reason, the negative framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship within the sports genre is unlikely to affect the image of France as a cooperation partner. Thus, the negative framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship within the sports genre is unlikely to be related to the Brexit process, and to bear an effect on the image of France as a cooperation partner.

The relationship as an ‘us’ presents itself in issues such as criminality through the cooperation of police forces, and on topics such as trade. For instance, the foreign policy against China is constructed as an ‘us’ situation: France argues that a strong policy against China would be counterproductive for all parties, something Swedish companies are portrayed to agree with – siding with France (and Germany) instead of the US. Another one is the joint mission to prevent terrorism in Mali, through task force Tuba. The relationship as an ‘us versus them’ concerned security and defence, where an increasing collaboration with France often was in opposition to collaborating with the US – an ‘us’ more ‘desired’ by the Swedish government. Over the three time periods there was, however, a slight shift as the US relationship became more tentative, and the framing of France as a ‘them’ is not as clear in the third period. Lastly, there is a clear ‘us versus them’ when Sweden does not agree with the decisions in the EU, often in relation to budgets and stimulus packages. This was the case during the EURO crisis 2012, and the case with Covid19 recovery plan.

The construction of France as a political cooperation partner increases throughout the three time periods, something that indicates an enhancement in the importance of France as a political cooperation partner during the course of Brexit. The positive framing has also increased over time; however, the third period distinguishes itself in comparison to the other two by the fact that it has the highest percentage difference between positive (37%) and negative (16%) frames. The change between the two first periods and the third period indicates that, in addition to the increased coverage, the nation image of France in Swedish

media pertaining to France as a political cooperation partner has become progressively positive after Brexit. As such, the image of France as a cooperation partner in Swedish newspapers has increasingly become characterised as a nation taking responsibility in the international realm (e.g., organising peace talks and climate conferences, seeking solutions to terrorism and working against IS), as acting in line with Swedish national interests, and as stable and cooperative. As national interest often outweighs other factors to play an active role in framing international news (Saleem, 2007:140), the increasing positive framing of France as a political cooperation partner may be a consequence of the nation's increasing importance for Sweden and Swedish interests, especially in the EU. Interestingly, the negative framing of France as a cooperation echoed much of the negative framing done by Russia (Makukhin et al., 2018), the significant difference being that the portrayal of France is never as vindictive as the Russian one. It does concern terrorism, security, and the strikes but never in such a manner as to blame France or alienate it from Sweden.

Regarding the framing of France as a political cooperation partner in different genres, it is reasonable that the politics genre contains a high ratio of both positive and negative frames as it predominantly concerns itself with the concepts defining political cooperation. The fact that the genre contains the highest percentage of negative frames (37%) can be derived from the importance of national interest as a factor in framing foreign news, as it is more likely to report on and discuss issues and events where this is a prominent factor. Even though the negative framing is consistent throughout the three time periods (between 28% and 33%), the positive frames increase from 33% and 32% (period 1 and 2) to 45% in the third period. This may partly result from an increasing alignment in the national interests and France taking a more prominent role as a responsible actor in the international realm (or rather that this responsibility-taking is given more space in Swedish media). One interesting aspect of this is that France's own presentation of itself as a 'credible interlocutor in global security' (Anzera et al., 2019:97) is, to a certain extent, translated into the Swedish media, framing the nation similarly. This is clear in the significance given to France as a military nation, particularly prominent in the second period, and decision-making concerning international security issues. For example, the positive elements in articles where Sweden assists France militarily in Syria in 2015, and the frustration when Sweden did not assist to the extent requested.

The construction of France as an economic cooperation partner was generally very low, especially in the second and third periods (96% and 89% of the articles lacking the

construction, respectively). The first period consisted of the highest percentage of frames (27%), which is most likely because of the EURO zone crisis that year. This falls in line with Galtung and Ruge's (1965:64ff) definition of newsworthiness and the structure of foreign news, as the EURO crisis was of great intensity (therefore passed the threshold), was of high meaning (it concerned the whole world but especially the EU), showed excellent continuity, was of negative character, and concerned elite countries. Although the ratio of negative frames is a bit higher than the positive (15% compared to 12%), the image of France as an economic cooperation partner was quite balanced. As France was not the root cause of the crisis and was presented as taking responsibility, the nation's domestic economic issues were counterpoised. The second period contained almost no construction of France as an economic cooperation partner (3% in total), and the third period showed a slight increase, especially in positive frames (9%). The absences of framing France as an economic cooperation partner in the articles have three possible, but not excluding, explanations: the French economy is one of the largest economies in the EU and the world, therefore it represents stability and trustworthiness even though it suffers from high unemployment rates and stagnation, thus it constitutes low news values; as Sweden and France are both members of the EU, the economic cooperation between the two nations is already set and news concerning economy in the form of trade and investments tend to either focus on the EU or go unnoticed, representing business as usual therefore lowering its newsworthiness; another aspect is that the coverage of economic issues focuses on the EU, and centres around groups or coalitions rather than on individual countries. Notwithstanding, the articles presents France as an economic actor both in terms of it constituting a large and important economy (positive framing), and as suffering from high unemployment rates and stagnation (negative framing) throughout the periods.

Generally, the low ratio of frames framing France as a cooperation partner (the relationship as well as political and economic cooperation) could be explained by its low news value. This could be a consequence of news regarding France, in general, having low newsworthiness. This is highly unlikely, though, as Sweden and France have close political, cultural, and geographical proximity, and France constitutes an essential and significant economy and trade partner for Sweden. A more likely explanation is that the Franco-Swedish relationship and France as a cooperation partner consist of a low amount of news factors, thus decreasing its possibility to become a part of news events and thus framed as either positive or



negative. Another important dimension of this may be the high reporting on the US and other 'elite' nations such as the UK and Germany, occupying the news hole, thus decreasing the reporting on other nations, such as France (Segev & Blondheim, 2013:7; Wu, 2000:113, 121). The increase in framing France as a cooperation partner can from this perspective be partly explained by Brexit, and the US withdrawal from European cooperation as it opens up space in the news hole (once the fuss has died down).

## 7.2 Positive and negative general framing

Regarding the ratio of general positive and negative (and neutral) frames, the increase in positive frames and decrease in negative frames from the first to the third period signifies a clear positive development of France's nation image in Swedish media when investigating its construction as a cooperation partner. Although the coding for positive and negative news stories provide a rather general analysis of France's country image, it is of the essence for its perception as a possible cooperation partner. This has to do with how the nation image affects other nations' attitudes and actions towards one's own country. If the image is positively comprehended, it facilitates political alliances, nourices cultural identification and attraction, and entices FDI's, tourism, exports, and increases the attractiveness of domestic labour markets. Conversely, an unfavourable image can generate hostility and isolation from other states or even the international community as a whole, and it can hamper export, tourism and labour migration (van Ham, 2001). Thus, the general positive and negative framing of France in the articles contributed to the framing of France as a cooperation partner in a more latent form. The increase of positive frames, and decrease of negative frames, consequently, affects the construction of France as a cooperation partner in a positive direction during the development of Brexit. This positive development coincides with the development witnessed in regard to France as a political cooperation partner, where the percentage of positive frames also increased over the course of Brexit. However, the decrease is not as straightforward – in comparison to the second period, the negative frames were reduced, but not to as low levels as in the first period. When it comes to the construction of France as an economic cooperation partner, although it has a general low ratio of frames, the trend found in general framing does not translate at all.

The increase in positive framing within the general framing translates to the political genre regarding the framing of France as a political cooperation partner, but there the negative

framing increases rather than decreases. Another example is the framing of France as a political cooperation partner in the economy genre, where the second period demonstrates a higher ratio of positive frames (30% compared to 20%) and a much lower ratio of negative frames (20% compared to 60%). Similar results were found in the first period. This extends the observation that the trend found in general framing does not translate to the framing of France as a political cooperation partner. The same conclusion can be drawn concerning the other genres, demonstrating variations between the construction of France as a cooperation partner and the general framing of France. The framing of France as an economic cooperation partner in the political genre compared to the general framing demonstrates a much lower ratio of negative frames in the first period (15% compared to 45%), and in the economy genre the second period demonstrates a lower ratio of positive (10% compared to 20%) and negative frames (10% compared to 60%). Thus, what is promoted as possible gains or losses in terms of political and economic cooperation as advocated by the literature (e.g., bilateral agreements, FDIs, or exclusion from the international community) is not guaranteed by a general positive nation image but needs to be examined with a more precise framework.

### 7.3 Accessing the nation image

Although this thesis did not study the effects of framing France's nation image in Swedish media, the results indicate what sort of image is accessible to readers. As discussed in chapter five, there can be a difference between the reporting on international news between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, which was not investigated in this thesis. What can be said when looking at the division of articles between the outlets is that DN and SvD (broadsheet) produced a higher number of articles on the subject than Aftonbladet and Expressen (tabloid). Furthermore, the publication of political news was higher for DN and SvD than Aftonbladet and, especially, Expressen. Conversely, the number of published sports articles were much higher for Expressen and Aftonbladet than the other two. This does confirm the difference between broadsheet and tabloid discussed in the method chapter, with DN and SvD focusing more on 'hard' news (politics) and Aftonbladet and Expressen on 'soft' news (sports) (Gran, 2016:5-6). This is relevant as differences were detected in the framing of France between different genres and provides an indication for what image of France as a cooperation partner the Swedish audience may be provided with depending on chosen newspaper.

## 7.4 Changes in the nation image

As the image of a country, in journalistic terminology, concerns the interrelationship between nations in the changing domestic, regional and international scenario (Saleem, 2007:136), it is interesting how France's positive standing in the media has changed over the course of Brexit. As already discussed, there are discrepancies in the trend of an increased positive framing between the portrayal of the Franco-Swedish relationship, France as a cooperation partner, and the general framing of France. This attests to the complexity of nation images and the fact that the representation of a country's positive or negative standing in the media is contingent upon multiple factors that together shape the nation image. As France takes responsibility for international and domestic issues, or its responsibility-taking gains coverage, and Swedish and French national interests came to align to an increasing extent, it resulted in its positive framing as a cooperation partner. Its image as a prominent sports nation increases its general positive framing, whilst the 2012 EURO crisis set its economic stability into focus. The diversity of framing within the different genres further corroborates the complexity of framing nation images, as certain genres demonstrated the general developments of France's nation image, others illustrated dissimilar trends.

Much like previous research, this study illustrated the complexness of country images and the dynamics of altering one, and thereby offers the same results. Granting all this, it becomes apparent that although there has been a positive trend in the framing of France as a cooperation partner, it is not possible to ascribe it solely to the Brexit progress. That said, the results indicate that there has been a shift, which is reasonable considering how Brexit has contributed to changes in the regional (EU) scenario, as well as the international scenario. Thus, it is not only the action of the own state that affects its nation image, but also the actions of other nations – in this case, the British decision to leave the EU.

## 8.0 Conclusions

This thesis has analysed how France's media image is depicted in the Swedish print media, focusing on the changes in the construction of France as a cooperation partner during the course of Brexit. Three time periods situated before, during, and after Brexit were analysed by conducting a content analysis based on positive framing in order to achieve the thesis' purpose and answer its posed research questions. It answered the first research question *Has the projected image of France in Swedish media changed over the course of Brexit?* by coding the portrayal of the relationship, the construction of France as a political cooperation partner, and the construction of France as an economic cooperation partner. It concluded that the portrayal of the relationship had witnessed an increase in positive frames and decrease in negative frames; that the construction of France as a political cooperation partner has increased in general, and in positive frames in particular; and that the construction of France as an economic cooperation partner was generally low throughout the time periods, which might have to do with the already well-established economic cooperation between Sweden and France through the EU. The result also demonstrated differences between different genres. In conclusion, the image of France as a cooperation partner has changed over the course of Brexit, foremost concerning the relationship and political cooperation, with an increase in positive frames. This indicates a positive development of France's projected nation image in Swedish newspapers regarding its construction as a cooperation partner.

In answer to research question two *What is the ratio of general positive and negative frames constructing France?* the ratio of positive frames was 41%, negative frames 31%, and neutral frames 29% in the three time periods combined. The difference between the three time periods consisted of an increase in positive frames and a decrease in negative frames. The result also demonstrated variations in the ratio of frames between the different genres. In conclusion, the general image of France has changed over the course of Brexit in a positive direction, indicating an increasingly positive projected nation image. However, this positive trend did not always translate into the construction of France as a cooperation partner. This conclusion symbolises this thesis' most significant contribution to the research field of nation images: a general positive framed nation image does not necessarily include a positive framed cooperation image. Thus, the notion of outcomes such as FDI's and bilateral agreements in case of a positive nation image is more complex. A generally positive projected nation image may contain a negative projected image of the nation when it comes to cooperation – and vice

versa. In addition to a need to conduct more studies to verify or disregard these results, there is also a need to investigate whether the framing of a nation's cooperation images affects the actual cooperation.

This study is not without its limitations. Firstly, this paper was not able to determine whether the changes in France's projected nation image as a cooperation partner in Swedish print media is the result of Brexit. Although the study did not set out to do so, it leaves the question of whether these changes result from Brexit or other events. Thus, a challenge still remains in investigating the correlation between France's image as a cooperation partner for Sweden and the changes in power dynamics within the EU. Secondly, the low ratio of frames regarding the portrayal of the Franco-Swedish relationship and France as a cooperation partner indicates, as discussed, that France, in general, is not constructed as a cooperation partner in Swedish print media to a large extent. On the other hand, this may also be understood as a flaw in the study's coding scheme and that it might have benefitted from including more concepts and definitions of a positive and negative cooperation partner. As the coding scheme was based on previous research, this suggests a need for further research on nations' cooperation images in order to develop a more comprehensive analytical framework. One approach to this could be to focus on more specific issues involving France and Sweden using an inductive approach and comparing them in order to find common keywords.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1

Table. Coding scheme

1. Identification number	
2. Date	YYMMDD
3. News outlet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DN</li> <li>2. SvD</li> <li>3. Aftonbladet</li> <li>4. Expressen</li> </ol>
4. Genre	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sport</li> <li>2. Politics</li> <li>3. Culture</li> <li>4. Economy</li> <li>5. Social issues</li> <li>6. Crime</li> <li>7. Climate</li> </ol>
4. Which time period is the article from?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Period 1</li> <li>2. Period 2</li> <li>3. Period 3</li> </ol>
6. General tone	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. Neutral</li> <li>1. Positive</li> <li>2. Negative</li> </ol>
7. Relationship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. Not present</li> <li>1. Positive</li> <li>2. Negative</li> </ol>
8. Political cooperation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. Not present</li> <li>1. Positive</li> <li>2. Negative</li> </ol>
9. Economic cooperation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0. Not present</li> <li>1. Positive</li> <li>2. Negative</li> </ol>

## Appendix 2

Table. Code book

1. Identification number	Year-Month-Newspaper-Number, number being the number in Retriever (latest to oldest publishing date)
2. Date	YYMMDD
3. News outlet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DN</li> <li>2. SvD</li> <li>3. Aftonbladet</li> <li>4. Expressen</li> </ol>
4. Genre	<p>What genre does the article belong to? If unsure, put most “dominant” genre.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sports: Sport games, events</li> <li>2. Politics: Elections, agreements, policies, treaties, summits et cetera</li> <li>3. Culture: Art</li> <li>4. Economy: Labour, market, reforms, trade et cetera</li> <li>5. Social relations: Human interest-stories, stories with a focus on the individual ‘ever day’-person.</li> <li>6. Crime: laws, criminal activities, justice procedures et cetera.</li> <li>7. Other: if unable to place in any of the other six genres</li> </ol>
5. Which time period is the article from?	<p>Period 1 refers to 2011-2012          Period 2 refers to 2015-2016          Period 3 refers to 2020-2021</p>
5. General tone	<p>A positive story was operationally defined as the overall tone or prevailing elements in the story that suggest political, social and/or economic stability/strength, and progress and improvement.</p> <p>A negative story was operationally defined as the overall tone or prevailing elements in the story that suggest political, social and/or economic instability/weakness, conflicts, and human rights, religious and other problems.</p>

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	<p>A neutral story was operationally defined as the overall tone or prevailing elements in the story is either a balance of negative or positive, or mixed.</p> <p>Sports and culture are included in social stability/strength.</p>
6. Relationship	<p>Is the relationship portrayed in a positive (us) or negative light (us vs. them)? If it is not portrayed at all, then put not present.</p> <p>If, for example, France and Sweden have different positions on an issue the relationship is negative, to help each other is positive.</p>
6. Political cooperation	<p>How is France portrayed in terms of political cooperation? I.e., prescribed with positive or negative attributes.</p> <p>Taking responsibility refers to a nation's attempt to solve an issue, conflict, or crisis.</p> <p>National interests are either stated in the article as an agreement, or in line with Swedish Government's Statement of Foreign Affairs 2021.</p> <p><i>Refers to security and defence, education and other social conditions such as health, innovation and technology, environment.</i></p>
7. Economic cooperation	<p>How is France portrayed in terms of economic cooperation? I.e., prescribed with positive or negative attributes.</p> <p><i>Refers to economic activities such as trade and transactions, political economy.</i></p>

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## Appendix 3

Table. The framing of the Franco-Swedish relationship according to genre and time period (percent).

	Positive	Negative	Not present	Sum (%)	Number of articles
<b>Total</b>				100	437
<b>Sports</b>					
Period 1	0	79	21	100	48
Period 2	4	52	44	100	52
Period 3	0	76	24	100	21
<b>Politics</b>					
Period 1	10	18	73	100	40
Period 2	28	8	64	100	76
Period 3	26	11	62	100	53
<b>Culture</b>					
Period 1	13	0	88	100	16
Period 2	15	0	85	100	20
Period 3	0	0	100	100	13
<b>Economy</b>					
Period 1	5	14	82	100	22
Period 2	0	0	100	100	10
Period 3	0	0	100	100	4
<b>Social</b>					
Period 1	11	0	89	100	9
Period 2	11	0	89	100	9
Period 3	25	0	75	100	4
<b>Crime</b>					
Period 1	0	17	83	100	6
Period 2	5	0	95	100	20
Period 3	33	0	67	100	9
<b>Other</b>					
Period 1	0	0	0	0	0
Period 2	0	0	100	100	5
Period 3	0	0	0	0	0

## Appendix 4

Table. The framing of France as a political cooperation partner according to time period and genre (percent).

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Sum (%)	Number of articles
<b>Total</b>				100	437
<b>Sports</b>					
Period 1	0	0	100	100	48
Period 2	2	6	92	100	52
Period 3	0	0	100	100	21
<b>Politics</b>					
Period 1	33	28	40	100	40
Period 2	32	33	36	100	76
Period 3	45	32	23	100	53
<b>Culture</b>					
Period 1	6	13	81	100	16
Period 2	25	20	55	100	20
Period 3	15	0	85	100	13
<b>Economy</b>					
Period 1	23	5	73	100	22
Period 2	30	20	50	100	10
Period 3	25	0	75	100	4
<b>Social</b>					
Period 1	11	44	44	100	9
Period 2	33	11	67	100	9
Period 3	50	0	50	100	4
<b>Crime</b>					
Period 1	33	17	50	100	6
Period 2	35	30	35	100	20
Period 3	89	11	0	100	9
<b>Other</b>					
Period 1	0	0	0	0	0
Period 2	0	0	100	100	5
Period 3	0	0	0	0	0

## Appendix 5

Table. The framing of France as an economic cooperation partner according to time period and genre (percent).

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Sum (%)	Number of articles
<b>Total</b>				100	437
<b>Sports</b>					
Period 1	6	13	81	100	48
Period 2	0	2	98	100	52
Period 3	5	0	95	100	21
<b>Politics</b>					
Period 1	20	15	65	100	40
Period 2	1	1	97	100	76
Period 3	8	2	89	100	53
<b>Culture</b>					
Period 1	13	0	88	100	16
Period 2	0	0	100	100	20
Period 3	15	0	85	100	13
<b>Economy</b>					
Period 1	14	27	59	100	22
Period 2	10	10	80	100	10
Period 3	50	25	25	100	4
<b>Social</b>					
Period 1	11	22	67	100	9
Period 2	11	11	78	100	9
Period 3	0	0	100	100	4
<b>Crime</b>					
Period 1	0	0	100	100	6
Period 2	0	5	95	100	20
Period 3	0	0	100	100	9
<b>Other</b>					
Period 1	0	0	0	0	0
Period 2	0	0	100	100	5
Period 3	0	0	0	0	0

## Appendix 6

Table. The framing of France in terms of positive, negative or neutral according to time period and genre (percent).

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Sum (%)	Number of articles
<b>Total</b>				100	437
<b>Sports</b>					
Period 1	67	17	17	100	48
Period 2	69	8	23	100	52
Period 3	67	19	14	100	21
<b>Politics</b>					
Period 1	13	45	43	100	40
Period 2	22	37	41	100	76
Period 3	34	32	38	100	53
<b>Culture</b>					
Period 1	56	25	19	100	16
Period 2	60	30	10	100	20
Period 3	69	31	0	100	13
<b>Economy</b>					
Period 1	18	41	41	100	22
Period 2	20	60	20	100	10
Period 3	50	50	0	100	4
<b>Social</b>					
Period 1	22	44	33	100	9
Period 2	11	44	44	100	9
Period 3	75	0	25	100	4
<b>Crime</b>					
Period 1	17	67	17	100	6
Period 2	40	35	25	100	20
Period 3	22	11	67	100	9
<b>Other</b>					
Period 1	0	0	0	0	0
Period 2	0	80	20	100	5
Period 3	0	0	0	0	0

## Appendix 7

**Table 1 Articles from DN, all three periods**

Date	Title	ID
2020-12-20	Johan Esk: Sveriges lyft är inget lyft för skidskyttesporten	2012DN108
2020-12-12	Digitalt klimatmöte ska sporra länder att höja sina ambitionsnivå	2012DN105
2020-12-01	Sarkozy: Jag erkänner inte någon av de skändligheter jag anklagas för	2012DN31
2021-01-30	Blågult till VM-final för första gången på 20 år	2101DN14
2021-01-16	Sarkozy utreds igen för misstänkt korruption	2101DN61
2021-02-16	Filosofen som förbinder vår tids våld med det förflutna	2102DN37
2021-03-22	Akuta dödshot förde Sverige in i topphemlig polisoperation	2103DN30
2021-03-18	EU-kommissionen enig om att införa vaccinationsbevis	2103DN36
2021-04-28	Över hundra teatrar ockuperade i Frankrike R Erik de la Regu...	2104DN12
2021-04-10	Le Pen ställer upp 2022	2104DN65
2021-05-28	Mirabeau rosé skördar framgångar	2105DN15
2021-05-01	Amat Levin: Nu ökar pressen på väst att lämna tillbaka stulna afrikanska artefakter	2105DN77
2021-06-28	Sveriges insats i Mali ifrågasätts	2106DN9
2021-06-17	Högströms hörna: Frankrike och Tyskland spelade väldesignad och trist EU-fotboll	2106DN46
2021-06-09	Utländsk polis rycker in och hjälper Sverige – igen	2106DN84
2021-07-31	Michel Houellebecq skildrar den hycklande samtidens tankevärld	2107DN7
2021-07-19	Belgien ber EU-länder om hjälp	2107DN47
2021-07-08	Ryskt bubbel väcker ilska i Champagne	2107DN81
2021-08-15	Vad är det som är så roligt?	2108DN50
2021-08-01	Stödet ökar för dem som demonstrerar mot vaccinpass	2108DN107
2021-09-25	Ungerska premiärministern bjuds in i valkampanjen - i Frankrike	2109DN52
2021-09-22	Nej, det handlar inte bara om ubåtarna	2109DN106
2021-10-17	Klyftan allt bredare mellan stormakterna	2110DN36
2021-10-04	Fransk Trump vinner mark inför presidentvalet	2110DN86
2021-11-27	Tragedin är inte Europas fel	2111DN12
2021-11-11	EU-länderna beställer fler vaccindoser	2111DN68
2015-12-26	Peter Wolodarski: Historisk chans att ge skydd och rättighet...	1512DN11
2015-12-17	Svenskt nej till att skicka Gripenplan	1512DN42
2015-12-12	Trycket utifrån blottar svagheter	1512DN72
2015-12-04	Ännu oklart hur Sverige ska bistå Frankrike	1512DN110
2016-01-23	Gränskontroller på väg tillbaka	1601DN40
2016-01-11	Värdig ceremoni avslutade hyllningar av terrorns offer	1601DN79
2016-01-02	Ett år i terrorns tecken	1601DN119
2016-02-18	Förlust mot Frankrike i badminton-EM	1602DN36
2016-02-12	Terrordömda riskerar mista medborgarskap	1602DN64
2016-03-24	8 frågor och svar	1603DN33
2016-03-18	Frankrike får svensk vapenhjälp	1603DN69
2016-03-09	Rokoko som postmodern lek	1603DN112



2016-04-28	Avgörande närmar sig för fransk proteströrelse	1604DN10
2016-04-13	Ökad EU-press på skatteflyktingar	1604DN61
2016-05-28	EU-ledare skissar på en union utan Storbritannien	1605DN18
2016-05-25	Danska får världens största designpris	1605DN37
2016-05-19	Protester lamslår Frankrike	1605DN74
2016-05-12	Skyll inte på globaliseringen	1605DN108
2016-05-06	En historisk natt på Louvren	1605DN135
2016-06-30	Annika Ström Melin: Frågan är vilken väg EU ska ta utan britterna	1606DN3
2016-06-22	Sanktionerna mot Ryssland förlängs	1606DN16
2016-06-25	Annika Ström Melin: En dramatisk vändpunkt för hela europeis...	1606DN31
2016-06-23	Ian McEwan: Brexit väcker Europas gamla spöken till liv	1606DN47
2016-06-20	Albanien tog historisk seger – men Frankrike tog hem gruppen	1606DN68
2016-06-16	Frankrike fixade ny seger i sista minuten	1606DN102
2016-06-15	Fler bråk – då kan Ryssland kastas ut	1606DN111
2016-06-13	Ryssland och England kan diskas	1606DN128
2016-06-10	Utomhus-tv förbjuds under fotbolls-EM	1606DN161
2016-06-10	Hemmasuccé i EM kan ena Frankrike	1606DN168
2016-06-10	Johan Esk: Känslan är - trots allt - äntligen!	1606DN166
2016-06-08	Sverige har flest Brexitskeptiker	1606DN184
2016-06-05	Beskedet som ger Parisborna hopp: Vattnet har slutat stiga	1606DN199
2016-06-03	Flera döda i svåra översvämningar	1606DN219
2016-06-01	"Jätteavtal viktigt för svenska bolag"	1606DN232
2016-07-28	Hollande pressas efter terrorattacken i kyrkan	1607DN13
2016-07-17	"Dådet kommer att påverka EU:s agenda"	1607DN45
2016-07-14	Själv förordar jag federalism	1607DN67
2016-07-08	Griezmanns två mål tog Frankrike till final	1607DN92
2016-07-02	Klustervapen förstörda i förtid	1607DN119
2016-08-26	Johan Schück: Italiens kris kan snabbt bli hela Europas	1608DN21
2016-08-18	Minister stödjer burkiniförbud	1608DN49
2016-08-06	Försäljningen av nya bilar faller i Europa	1608DN82
2016-09-16	Skilsmässan försvårar EU:s vägval	1609DN36
2016-09-03	Voltaire är rykande aktuell än i dag - läs och sprid	1609DN80
2016-10-22	"Djungeln"-flytt börjar nästa vecka	1610DN27
2016-10-14	Fransk miljöoptimism lyser upp klimatmörkret	1610DN66
2016-10-05	Tåg ska rädda fabrik	1610DN108
2016-11-26	Annika Ström Melin: Mycket står på spel för hela Europa när	1611DN28
	...	
2016-11-19	Le Pens mål: En politisk jordbävning	1611DN65
2016-11-17	Tro, hopp och en ny kandidat	1611DN81
2016-11-12	Så nära en sensation	1611DN111
2016-11-10	Bomberna vid Stade de France förändrade synen på säkerhet	1611DN136
2016-11-08	Så blev förlusten mot Sverige i Kiev en vändpunkt för Frankrike	1611DN164
2011-12-21	Rådet i Frankrike: Ta bort inläggen	1112DN25
2011-12-06	Ordning i klassen	1112DN117
2011-12-03	Här är Sveriges motståndare	1112DN137
2011-12-31	Fransk ilska mot höjd bokmoms	1112DN4
2012-01-24	Europas socialister har inte lyckats förklara sin roll	1201DN34

2012-01-16	Ingrid Hedström: Hollywoodifiering har gjort USA:s politik till vår egen	1201DN75
2012-01-03	Irans vapentester provocerar	1201DN116
2012-02-19	Oroligt hav	1202DN44
2012-02-05	Och vad händer nu med euron?	1202DN104
2012-02-04	Implantat opereras bort på löpande band	1202DN108
2012-03-23	Tragedin följs av politiska påhopp Morden i Frankrike.	1203DN32
2012-03-16	Kärvt sälja bilar i Europa	1203DN71
2012-03-03	Varning för överhettning	1203DN126
2012-04-30	"Skriet" till salu och upptakt till OS.	1204DN11
2012-04-20	Sarkozys sista strid	1204DN58
2012-04-07	Presidenten måste vara beredd att slåss för ekonomin	1204DN98
2012-05-23	Blanc håller ögonen på Zlatan	1205DN53
2012-05-20	Toppmöte oenigt om Grekland	1205DN65
2012-05-14	Konservatismens auktoritära sida	1205DN90
2012-05-08	Verkligheten kan bli smärtsam för franska väljare	1205DN121
2012-05-06	Hollande solklar favorit	1205DN114
2012-05-03	Borg trycker på för hårdare bankkrav	1205DN163
2012-06-29	Oklart varför Sverige agerar bromskloss på toppmötet	1206DN11
2012-06-24	EU och Turkiet samarbetar igen	1206DN34
2012-06-20	Oh la la, Sverige	1206DN57
2012-06-18	Hotet om ekonomisk kollaps avvärjt	1206DN72
2012-06-17	Orimligt valsysteem missgynnar nya partier	1206DN91
2012-06-14	Hollandes sambo i Twitterskandal	1206DN124
2012-06-05	"Lloris är ingen kille som ställer sig upp och ryter till"	1206DN171
2012-06-04	Franska extremhögern ett familjeföretag	1206DN191
2012-06-01	Mvila skadad när Frankrike vann	1206DN208
2012-06-16	Franska blixtmål sänkte Ukraina	1206DN104
2012-07-25	Att sluta tvåa kan vara en vinstlott	1207DN30
2012-07-17	Nya anklagelser mot IMF:s chef	1207DN50
2012-07-07	Tysklands nota är för stor	1207DN87
2012-07-02	Ett EM utan sensationer - de dyraste lagen vann	1207DN112
2012-08-27	Den nationella -identiteten göder krisen	1208DN21
2012-08-16	Sverige blir snart ett engelsktalande land	1208DN51
2012-08-11	Franska vräkningar under EU:s lupp	1208DN80
2012-08-03	Hammarström hoppas kunna ordna en repris	1208DN110
2012-09-27	Kvinnor på gränsen till genombrott	1209DN13
2012-09-13	Franska böjelser	1209DN60
2012-10-21	Många vill ha två jobb samtidigt	1210DN39
2012-10-08	Emirens hjälp till fattiga franska förorter upprör	1210DN88
2012-11-29	Staten, det är jag	1211DN7
2012-11-17	Förnekelse och fria fantasier	1211DN64

**Table 2 Articles from SvD, all three periods**

Date	Title	ID
2020-12-26	Utdragen väntan för tusentals strandade lastbilschaufförer	2012SvD18
2020-12-18	Macron smittad efter EU-mötet	2012SvD54
2020-12-11	Piken inför rivalmötet: "Sverige är inte lika bra som Frankrike"	2012SvD90
2020-12-04	Så olika prioriterar Europa när miljoner ska vaccineras	2012SvD125

2021-01-23	Google hotar blockera australiska sökningar	2101SvD39
2021-01-11	Svenska duon tvåa efter norska missen	2101SvD81
2021-01-08	Ekonomiska stämmingsläget i eurozonen bättre än väntat	2101SvD94
2021-02-26	Inte heller Sverige fritt från "islam-vänsterism"	2102SvD12
2021-02-12	40 miljoner	2102SvD61
2021-03-24	Sanktioner från Kina kan stoppa EU-avtal	2103SvD42
2021-03-16	Fransk barriär luckras upp mot extremhögern	2103SvD88
2021-03-02	Unga feminister mot gamla sexliberaler när metoo får nytt liv	2103SvD127
2021-04-28	Franska ex-generaler varnar för inbördeskrig	2104SvD10
2021-04-18	Jenny Nordberg: Riskfritt för mäktiga män att tala om kvinnor	2104SvD65
2021-04-07	Hyllad avlyssning kan stoppas i Sverige - saknar lagstöd	2104SvD113
2021-05-19	Konspirationsgrupper kallas för "säkerhetsrisk" i Europa	2105SvD55
2021-05-01	Ekonomisk dynamik är livsviktig	2105SvD107
2021-06-29	Imam åtalas för att ha provocerat fram lärarmord	2106SvD5
2021-06-19	Nu kommer EU:s coronastöd - miljarder euro delas ut i EU	2106SvD40
2021-06-12	Så försöker Joe Biden locka Europas ledare	2106SvD78
2021-06-08	"Galet och ansvarslöst" med möte i Strasbourg	2106SvD115
2021-07-26	"Jag vill sända ett mycket starkt budskap och uppmanar alla att ta vaccinet	2107SvD24
2021-07-17	Sahel-regionen kan bli Europas nya utmaning	2107SvD60
2021-07-08	Han ville låta djuren undervisa människorna	2107SvD94
2021-08-18	IHF:s beslut försvårar Sveriges VM-väg: "Makaber förändring"	2108SvD35
2021-08-04	Cyberbevakningen är vår tids kärnvapen	2108SvD87
2021-09-19	Notre-Dame säkrat - nu kan katedralen börja återställas	2109SvD45
2021-09-03	Peter Wennblad: Nej tack till vaccinpass	2109SvD93
2021-10-28	Fransk ilska över väntan på brittisk fisk	2110SvD13
2021-10-11	Fler än 1 100 migranter stoppade	2110SvD65
2021-11-29	EU:s gränsmyndighet: Spaningsflyg mot migrantbåtar i Engelska kanalen sätts in	2111SvD6
2021-11-20	Högerelitisten Zemmour hotar Macron och Le Pen inför valet	2111SvD49
2021-11-11	"Grönland förbjuder uranbrytning	2111SvD93
2015-12-28	Historielöshet fel recept mot terrorism	1512SvD8
2015-12-17	Trovärdigheten fick sig en törn	1512SvD39
2015-12-13	Le Pen ska stoppas med taktikröster	1512SvD76
2015-12-09	2-grader kan bli 1,5 grader	1512SvD107
2015-12-04	Låt tomten slippa skämmas	1512SvD137
2016-01-25	Ekonomins rockstjärna riskerar att ställas inför rätta	1601SvD28
2016-01-18	"Serievärlden i Frankrike har	1601SvD54
2016-01-11	Lagen stöter på motstånd i Frankrike	1601SvD85
2016-01-04	Ny elmarknad kräver vägval	1601SvD111
2016-03-24	Franska medier i betal-kampanj	1603SvD25
2016-03-17	Avtal med Turkiet riskerar krascha	1603SvD60
2016-03-04	London ökar stöd till Calais	1603SvD107
2016-02-23	Le Pen begär ryskt mångmiljonlån	1602SvD20
2016-02-08	Firade 100 med ett mål i krossen	1603SvD74
2016-04-29	Fransk proteströrelse laddar för den 1 maj	1604SvD8
2016-04-12	"Europa behöver en ny dröm"	1604SvD58
2016-05-27	Polis satte in tårgas mot protest i Paris	1605SvD27
2016-05-22	Europa kommer att behöva diktatorer	1605SvD43
2016-05-14	ROKOKO - ETT ENKLARE SÄTT ATT LEVA	1605SvD71

2016-05-07	Schlagern om ett enat Europa klingar falskt	1605SvD96
2016-06-29	EU-kritikerna får ny näring	1606SvD13
2016-06-27	Dråpslag för global stabilitet	1606SvD26
2016-06-24	Sveriges VM-lottning klar: "Hygglig"	1606SvD52
2016-06-23	Om britterna lämnar EU	1606SvD60
2016-06-20	Fransmännen tog hem gruppsegern	1606SvD75
2016-06-19	Mycket står på spel	1606SvD90
2016-06-16	Polis använde tårgas mot fans	1606SvD112
2016-06-15	IS tar på sig polismord - terroristen sände live	1606SvD128
2016-06-13	Skandalscenerna får mig att må illa	1606SvD144
2016-06-11	Kaos i Frankrike när flera strejker stör EM	1606SvD161
2016-06-10	Franska favoriter ska frälsa landet	1606SvD172
2016-06-08	Världsmusiker och stjärnskott	1606SvD191
2016-06-07	Man misstänks att ha planerat attack under EM	1606SvD205
2016-06-06	17	1606SvD219
2016-06-04	Frankrike värd för möte om Mellanöstern	1606SvD235
2016-06-01	Avtalet bakom gränslösa krig	1606SvD252
2016-07-28	Kritiken växer i Frankrike	1607SvD14
2016-07-22	Fransk närvaro i Libyen fördöms	1607SvD34
2016-07-14	Förbud mot slöja är diskriminering	1607SvD62
2016-07-09	Frankrike närmar sig EM-drömmen	1607SvD90
2016-07-02	Brexit är bara en krusning på ytan	1607SvD120
2016-08-27	Polisen slipper burkini-fars	1608SvD19
2016-08-16	Sverige står mot Norge i kvartsfinal	1608SvD57
2016-08-07	Tårtljus bakom tragedi	1608SvD95
2016-09-28	Svensk skepsis kring EU-försvaret	1609SvD11
2016-09-10	Planerade attentat i Paris	1609SvD64
2016-10-15	DEN VACKRA EPOKEN	1610SvD38
2016-10-02	EU:s ledare använder välkänt taktiskt trick	1610SvD92
2016-11-28	Fransk "Thatcher" nu kandidat i presidentval	1611SvD12
2016-11-22	"Statlig inkomst räddning i populismens tidsålder"	1611SvD37
2016-11-14	Populisterna kan rita om Europakartan	1611SvD62
2016-11-10	Litar på den franska säkerheten	1611SvD92
2016-11-04	HSBC nära åtal för skattefuskar	1611SvD118
2011-12-24	Turkiet tog hem diplomat	1112SvD5
2011-12-13	Deppa inte - OS kan bli roligare	1112SvD43
2011-12-06	Skuldbros Merkozys bud	1112SvD73
2012-01-19	"Vi behöver inte sälja våra Volvo-aktier"	1201SvD43
2012-01-04	Varför ett verk för soloblockflöjt?	1201SvD90
2012-02-26	Merkozys position i Europa utmanas	1202SvD14
2012-02-09	Kaosen växer efter Capellos beslut att avgå	1202SvD68
2012-03-29	Far till terrorist stämmer polisen	1203SvD8
2012-03-23	Morddrama kan öka spänningar	1203SvD30
12-03-07	Nördens karta till Skuldeuropa	1203SvD82
12-04-25	"Europas muslimer diskrimineras"	1204SvD13
12-04-07	Ikea i Frankrike medger spioneri	1204SvD69
12-05-31	Frankrike har plats för lirare	1205SvD4
12-05-24	Hollande vill se euroobligationer	1205SvD34
12-05-16	Först på agendan: "Grexit"	1205SvD66
12-05-10	Svaga banker hot mot EU	1205SvD86
2012-05-06	Verklighetsflykten till makten	1205SvD112

2012-06-25	Så vackert, men ack så tråkigt	1206SvD15
2012-06-20	Vackert slut på en svensk epok	1206SvD33
2012-06-16	Flyt för Frankrike	1206SvD61
2012-06-12	Fördel Hollande i parlamentsval	1206SvD80
2012-06-03	Polis söker styckare	1206SvD110
2012-07-26	Peugeot faller hårt	1207SvD21
2012-07-18	PSG - en nyrik klubb med ambitioner	1207SvD49
2012-07-05	Lokal och grön industri ska lyfta Frankrike	1207SvD87
2012-08-24	Frankrike underlättar för romer	1208SvD14
2012-08-13	Franskt underskott sjönk	1208SvD29
2012-08-09	Levanten var en brygga mellan öst och väst	1208SvD82
2012-08-02	Lamt Sverige föll tungt	1208SvD116
2012-09-29	Bistra signaler från Paris	1209SvD7
2012-09-09	EU-flytt för näringsens skull	1209SvD82
2012-10-10	Protester möttes av tårgas	1210SvD47
2012-11-30	Spariver slår mot EU-bistånd	1211SvD2
2012-11-18	Hollande struntar i Sveriges väl och ve	1211SvD43

**Table 3 Articles from Aftonbladet, all three periods**

Date	Title	ID
2020-12-25	Lång väntan för strandade chaufförer i brittiska Dover	2012Aft8
2020-12-14	EU:s fördömande av Zams avrättning retar Iran - kallar på ambassadör	2012Aft47
2021-01-30	MÅLSUCCÉN	2101Aft9
2021-01-15	Frankrikes jätteåtgärd mot viruset - utgångsförbud för 60 miljoner	2101Aft49
2021-02-05	Grönsaksgangstrar och fransk skamsoppa	2102Aft53
2021-03-28	Nu kan Frankrikes långsmala limpa bli nytt världsarv hos Unesco	2103Aft13
2021-03-06	FIN FRANSK GEST TILL POROMAA: "ÄR STORT AV DEM"	2103Aft75
2021-04-16	Vaccinationen ett lopp i kollektiv kämpaglöd	2104Aft32
2021-05-30	EU på jakt efter mer hård makt	2105Aft17
2021-06-28	Svensk film har en identitetskris	2106Aft13
2021-06-19	14 får åka till OS - 9 är debutanter	2106Aft50
2021-06-16	Männen halkar efter kvinnorna - överallt	2106Aft82
2021-06-08	Svenska kritiken: "Galet" EU-möte	2106Aft100
2021-06-04	Bank: Segervapnet i EM - en fråga landslaget jobbat med sedan dag 1	2106Aft118
2021-07-31	Har inte samma nivå som i VM...	2107Aft2
2021-07-05	Europarådet uppmanar: Ta hem de som stridit för IS	2107Aft78
2021-08-19	FN måste motverka alla former av rasism	2108Aft27
2021-08-05	Flinck: Tomas Axnérs amatörer skriver historia	2108Aft61
2021-09-17	Frankrike rasar mot ny säkerhetspakt: Det är en dolkstöt i ryggen	2109Aft25
2021-09-08	Sverige kämpar för fransk sexköpslag - kan påverka svensk lag	2109Aft53
2021-10-22	Pakten som är ett hot mot Sverige	2110Aft21
2021-10-08	Ett EU-försvar är lika stabilt som en hägring	2110Aft68
2021-11-19	Vaccinpasset en morot för skeptikerna	2111Aft19
2021-11-08	STRAFFHJÄLTEN: ""JAG BLEV LURAD"	2111Aft60
2015-12-17	'Regeringen vill leverera bomber till Frankrike'	1512Aft28

2015-12-13	Målet: President	1512Aft54
2015-12-03	Fångarna ses som en tillgång	1512Aft85
2016-01-30	Kolgjini: De har prioriterat helt rätt	1601Aft4
2016-01-23	BLÅGULTS FRUKTAN: LÄGGMATCH	1601Aft35
2016-01-09	En norsksvensk sandlåda	1601Aft75
2016-02-16	Frändén: I kväll finns inga ursäkter för PSG	1602Aft23
2016-03-19	'VI HAR HONOM'	1603Aft34
2016-03-01	Filmgala för fler än vita	1603Aft72
2016-04-05	Kommuner blundar för radikaliseringsen	1604Aft49
2016-05-27	- Svenska EM-orter terrorismål	1605Aft24
2016-05-19	Spelar Putin rakt i händerna	1605Aft60
2016-05-13	Hjälten: "Nu ska vi vinna skiten..."	1605Aft95
2016-05-07	Joel Asoro sänkte England i U17-EM	1605Aft220
2016-06-29	"Det finns en oro"	1606Aft2
2016-06-26	Vi måste kräva en demokratisk skola fri från all religion	1606Aft16
2016-06-25	Rosenbad har fel - Europa är ännu en idyll	1606Aft40
2016-06-22	Demokrati - inget för vanligt folk	1606Aft64
2016-06-19	Planen: Slå till under EM	1606Aft48
2016-06-11	IVE LATAN "Zlatan har varit väldigt bra - men PSG hade en historia före honom	1606Aft156
2016-06-04	Bottenservice på krogarna i Sverige	1606Aft115
2015-06-10	FOLKET: TYSKLAND TAR HEM DET IGEN	1606Aft87
2016-06-08	"FINNS EN VISS ORO"	1606Aft191
2016-06-30	Svenska trösten: Bland de snabbaste i EM	1606Aft169
2016-06-26	Kampanjen om kontroll gav krasch: Lämna-sidans scenario är en fantasi	1606Aft30
2016-06-20	GULDVPANET Bank: Deschamps hacka bjöd oss på fem förhåxande minuter	1606Aft81
2016-06-11	PREMIÄR-PARTYT	1606Aft73
2016-06-03	Nio döda i kaosväder i Europa - ovärderliga konstverk måste flyttas	1606Aft223
2016-06-24	FLINCK: VÄGEN TILL KVARTSFINAL LIGGER ÖPPEN	1606Aft50
2016-07-23	IMF-chef inför rätta - riskerar fängelse 'Olyckligt om IMF tappar drivkraft'	1607Aft24
2016-07-16	HAN KÖRDE LASTBILEN	1607Aft51
2016-07-10	DÖDEN ÄR ÖVERALLT - Franske löjtnanten Henri Desagneaux om helvetet vid	1607Aft77
2016-07-04	PANG, BOM - KRASCH	1607Aft107
2016-07-02	Finland bryter inte Europas front mot Ryssland - någon i väst måste prata med Putin.	1607Aft128
2016-08-25	Här tvingas hon ta av sig sjalen	1608Aft19
2016-08-02	Burka handlar inte om religion - utan förtryck	1608Aft83
2016-09-30	Kerry: USA mycket nära att bryta samtal med Ryssland	1609Aft5
2016-10-25	Delas upp - för att bussas iväg	1610Aft8
2016-10-07	Titta på Frankrike - och sluta kasta bort maten	1610Aft56
2016-11-29	En dröm för Putin - vem som än vinner	1611Aft6
2016-11-19	70	1611Aft35
2016-11-12	MINUT 54: MÅL MOT MIRAKEL	1611Aft66
2016-11-02	DÅ: STARTADE NU: PETAD	1611Aft119
2011-12-13	Flinck: Inte fiaskostämpel - men ett stort misslyckande	1112Aft33
2011-12-04	Guldregn över la musique	1112Aft71

2011-12-02	DANMARK KAN VARA BÅDE DRÖM OCH MARDRÖM...	1112Aft97
2012-01-07	Fusket som skakar om bröstjätten	1201Aft51
2012-02-25	Franska valet är årets mest nervpirrande	1202Aft15
2012-03-31	Redan de gamla perserna lurade varann 1 april	1203Aft1
2012-03-13	Vad som helst för makten	1203Aft34
2012-04-20	Vrede från vänster	1204Aft27
2012-05-27	Krisen är inte ett slagträ, Reinfeldt	1205Aft25
2012-05-20	Gör slag i saken och åker hem	1205Aft55
2012-05-15	SÅ ÄR LÄGET HOS SVERIGES EM-MOTSTÅNDARE	1205Aft75
2012-05-07	Vive le François!	1205Aft103
2012-05-04	Här håller alla på Hollande	1205Aft123
2012-06-30	Bila i Frankrike? Glöm inte alkoholmätaren	1206Aft3
2012-06-24	Merkels problem är inte att hon är tysk	1206Aft23
2012-06-20	Frankrike: Sverige tufft - lättare mot Spanien	1206Aft45
2012-06-19	GLENN HYSEN: HELA VÄGEN IN I KAKLET NU GUBBAR	1206Aft65
2012-06-17	Frankrike tar inget för givet mot Sverige: "De kan spela utan press"	1206Aft88
2012-06-16	- De kommer att spela för sitt land	1206Aft104
2012-06-12	"SÅ FIXAR VI DET..."	1206Aft134
2012-06-10	Evra: Hodgson kan göra som di Matteo	1206Aft146
2012-06-06	Benzema: Vi är redo för EM	1206Aft170
2012-07-29	"Om det står 2-2 en kvart kvar och Japan leder, då kanske man kan släppa den..."	1207Aft16
2012-07-21	HERMANS historia: Zlatan bär Eiffeltornet på bröstet	1207Aft44
2012-07-08	Stryker inte medhårs	1207Aft82
2012-08-13	...FÖR NI GAV ALLT	1208Aft29
2012-08-11	Eurokrisen får Europa att spricka	1208Aft62
2012-08-02	Så ska hon sänka sina kompisar	1208Aft101
2012-09-22	Snart kan Paris stå i lågor igen	1209Aft31
2012-09-05	Krossad: extremhögerns myt om muslimer	1209Aft76
2012-10-26	Konstbråk om Zidanes skalle	1210Aft6
2012-11-17	Därför måste kvinnor kvoterats in i styrelser	1211Aft39
2012-11-15	Massprotest i hela Europa	1211Aft46

**Table 4 Articles from Expressen, all three periods**

Date	Title	ID
2020-12-25	Ger vinnare till julklapp	2012Exp9
2021-01-29	Drömfabrik	2101Exp18
2021-01-09	Hade vi klarat oss bättre själva?	2101Exp49
2021-02-01	I FRANKRIKE ÄR DET DJUNGELNS LAG SOM GÄLLER	2102Exp47
2021-03-19	Våga fatta rätt beslut!	2103Exp25
2021-03-06	Mardrömmen upprepades för Jacquelin - Sverige 11:a	2103Exp54
2021-04-26	Därför viker vi alltid ner oss när EU roffar åt sig	2104Exp10
2021-05-02	När fransk mat blir ett helt liv	2105Exp59
2021-06-30	MBAPPÉS ORD OM FIASKOT Jag misslyckades	2106Exp4
2021-06-23	Hur många flickor ska behöva könsstympas?	2106Exp39
2021-06-16	Ikea får miljonböter efter spionage	2106Exp71
2021-06-12	Fortsatt bråk i Frankrike: Mbappé har avvisat ursäkt	2106Exp91
2021-06-08	Spelvärt med blått EM-guld	2106Exp109

2021-07-26	Demonstrationer i flera länder: "Andra klassens medborgare"	2107Exp21
2021-07-10	SOK:s klädsponsor utreds: "Allvarligt"	2107Exp54
2021-08-18	NU FRUKTAR EU-LEDARE EN NY STOR FLYKTINGVÅG	2108Exp20
2021-08-07	ORDEN EFTER BLOHMS TÅRAR: "DET STANNAR MELLAN OSS"	2108Exp42
2021-09-17	IS-ledare dödad av franska styrkor	2109Exp32
2021-09-03	Nato är svaret du famlar efter, Hultqvist	2109Exp61
2021-10-01	Sarkozy döms - la för mycket på valkampanj	2110Exp59
2015-12-28	Juridikmissbruk förstör debatten	1512Exp11
2015-12-17	S-topparnas	1512Exp42
2015-12-13	OJ, DET BLIR EN MÄSTAR-SKRÄLL	1512Exp67
2015-12-07	Högerpopulister framåt i Frankrike	1512Exp87
2016-01-31	VÄRLDENS TUFFASTE	1601Exp1
2016-01-16	Berggren: Bilindustri storpolitik på hög nivå	1601Exp46
2016-02-01	Tränarens tårar i tv efter favoritvinsten: "Segern är min fa..."	1602Exp53
2016-03-29	Kampen mot terrorn är viktigare än partigränser	1603Exp5
2016-03-20	Älskade USA - överge oss inte	1603Exp44
2016-04-24	Vi måste lära fler länder om Sveriges sexköpslag	1604Exp8
2016-05-26	Lotta Schelin längtar efter att fullborda trippeln: "Det hade varit helt sjukt"	1605Exp36
2016-05-20	Vithetsprivilegier	1605Exp58
2016-05-15	Flyktingsmugglarna blåser polisen - i 200 km/h	1605Exp78
2016-05-06	"Bra spelare är alltid välkomna"	1605Exp108
2016-06-27	7 minuter som räddade EM	1606Exp22
2016-06-26	Fransk filosofpodd	1606Exp38
2016-06-25	KOLLAPS HOTAR EU	1606Exp47
2016-06-22	Något är galet	1606Exp68
2016-06-20	Noa Bachner: Det går inte att fly från intrycket att Paul Po...	1606Exp78
2016-06-19	I Frankrike är alla lika inför laget	1606Exp87
2016-06-17	DAGS ATT VISA ELDEN	1606Exp111
2016-06-12	Väst går sönder och vänstern spelar med	1606Exp144
2016-06-11	Drömlottning	1606Exp160
2016-06-10	Nytt tyskt guld ger bra betalt	1606Exp174
2016-06-07	25-ÅRIG MAN PLANERADE 15 EM-ATTACKER	1606Exp192
2016-06-03	Parisbon: "Det är oroande det här"	1606Exp219
2016-06-03	EXTREM-VÄDRET	1606Exp221
2016-06-29	FRANKRIKE-VARNINGEN	1606Exp07
2016-07-23	SKRÄCKEN I EUROPA	1607Exp15
2016-07-17	EU måste stå enat på Frankrikes sida	1607Exp39
2016-07-10	ÖDESFINAL FÖR STJÄRNORNA	1607Exp68
2016-07-07	Extremhögerens nya ansikte - unga, vackra välklädda	1607Exp91
2016-07-02	INGEN SKRÄCK, LAGERBÄCK	1607Exp120
2016-08-18	Sverige sjua - långt från medaljmålet: "Hoppats på mycket medalj"	1608Exp20
2016-08-26	Hon skapade burkinin för att ge kvinnor mer frihet	1608Exp50
2016-09-21	Åtta gripna kopplas till Nicedådet	1609Exp20
2016-09-04	Familjen Le Pens strid om den franska makten	1609Exp58
2016-10-11	PANGMÅLET	1610Exp36
2016-10-01	Vem bryr sig om ryska bomber?	1610Exp71
2016-11-18	Hela sanningen bakom "Cocos" väg till Chanel	1611Exp27
2016-11-13	Efter hyllningarna - nu tror svenska spelarna på VM	1611Exp50



2016-11-09	PARIS: Hollandes rädsla - populistisk vind i seglen	1611Exp73
2016-11-02	ANDERSSONS TRUPPSKRÄLL	1611Exp98
2011-12-17	Sex länder riskerar sänkt kreditbetyg	1112Exp43
2011-12-11	Johanssons segerrecept i åttondelen: Stoppa franska storstjärnan	1112Exp68
2012-01-19	Dåligt trav skulle dömas ut av franska domare	1201Exp30
2012-02-16	NU HAR NEDRÄKNINGEN TILL ELITLOPPET STARTAT	1202Exp29
2012-03-22	MOTIVET: HÄMND	1203Exp16
2012-04-29	1800-talsfranskt pussel	1204Exp4
2012-05-28	Lagerbäck: "Tuff nöt för Sverige"	1205Exp29
2012-05-24	Reinfeldt gav stöd åt Merkel	1205Exp43
2012-05-18	MÄSTERLIGT	1205Exp69
2012-05-05	Semestra billigt i lyxiga Cannes	1205Exp98
2012-06-24	UTSKÄMDA - IGEN	1206Exp24
2012-06-23	INGEN ÄR STÖRRE ÄN KOLLEKTIVET	1206Exp37
2012-06-20	GLÄDJENS ÅTERKOMST	1206Exp58
2012-06-17	Frankrike tänker gå för målfest	1206Exp83
2012-06-14	Var sak på sin plast	1206Exp108
2012-06-12	STJÄRNANS PSYKNING 1	1206Exp123
2012-06-10	Tuff diskning av Carambole P	1206Exp142
2012-06-06	Falskt, Frankrike	1206Exp164
2012-06-01	STYRKEBESKEDET	1206Exp83
2012-07-30	"Team USA levererar alltid"	1207Exp9
2012-07-15	Sveriges nya guldhjältar 2	1207Exp58
2012-07-09	Efter fiaskot i EM - nu tar Deschamps över franska landslaget	1207Exp87
2012-08-22	Mammor och pappor våga vara föräldrar	1208Exp18
2012-08-13	NI ÄR OS-GULD VÄRDA	1208Exp43
2012-08-03	Dennerby: "Vi vet var vi har dem"	1208Exp86
2012-09-10	Nu ska Frankrike höja skatten	1209Exp34
2012-10-20	Sund svensk skepsis i EU	1210Exp16
2012-11-24	FRÅGOR & SVAR OM FÖRHANDLINGEN	1211Exp12