Refugee children or Afghan men?

A critical discourse analysis of representations of unaccompanied youth in Swedish newspapers

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Abstract

In 2015, a record number of people fled to Sweden and other European countries, due to war and conflicts. During that year, more than 35,500 children and youths entered Sweden as minors without guardians, also called unaccompanied minors. This study examines how children and youth who had entered Sweden as unaccompanied minors, were represented in seven Swedish newspapers during the two time periods September 28, 2015 – November 29, 2015 and July 9, 2018 – September 9, 2018. Stuart Hall’s theory of representation and his theory of racialized regimes of representations are applied as the main parts of the theoretical framework. Critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics are used as methodological approaches.

The study identifies some essential differences between the two time periods and between the various types of newspapers, based on their political stances. While articles published in 2015 focused on immediate issues such as how to fix accommodations, the 2018 articles focused on long-term issues such as integration and unaccompanied youth’s chances to get residence permits. The articles in the nationalist right-wing newspaper *Nya Tider* mainly portrayed unaccompanied youth in hostile terms, whereas representations in the other newspapers were marked by more diversity and some examples of challenges of stereotypes.

Moreover, the study shows that the newspapers’ discourse on unaccompanied youth contributed to construct the idea of unaccompanied youth as an anonymous mass, rather than as human beings. This was done by representing unaccompanied youth in terms of e.g. *numbers* and by the use of the conceptual metaphor *water*. The analysis also shows that the newspaper articles constructed the two binary oppositions *costs/sources of profit* and *unaccompanied youth/Swedes*, which contributed to establish an “us” and “them”.

**Keywords:** Unaccompanied Minors, Unaccompanied Youth, Refugees, Refugee Children, Immigration, Sweden, Representation, News media, Newspapers, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)
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1. Introduction

In 2015, a record number of 65 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide (UNHCR, 2016). Although most of these people were displaced internally, more than 3 million people were registered as asylum seekers in 2015. 300 000 of these asylum seekers were registered as unaccompanied minors; children without guardians who had left their countries due to persecution, war and conflicts, and suppression of human rights (Sandermann and Zeller, 2017).

Unaccompanied minors are considered to be one of the most vulnerable groups of migrants. They are under pressure both in the asylum process as well as in their everyday lives as children in often unfamiliar countries, without any parent being present and taking care of them. Not only are they at greater risk than others of developing mental health problems such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder; they are also at risk of being exploited and having their rights violated due to their age and status in society. (Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2017; Herz and Lalander, 2017)

In Sweden, almost 163 000 people applied for asylum in 2015 and 35 500 of these were registered as unaccompanied minors (Migrationsverket, 2019a). The relatively high number of asylum seekers received a great deal of media coverage at a time when political forces hostile to immigration had gotten stronger (Krzyżanowski, 2018). The most obvious example of this development was the increased support for the nationalist right-wing party the Sweden Democrats in the 2014 general election (Valmyndigheteten, 2014). The increased support for the Sweden Democrats and the large number of people seeking asylum in Sweden in 2015 preceded a more restrictive asylum and immigration policy presented by the Swedish government in November that year (Regeringskansliet, 2015).

In 2018, the next general election took place in Sweden. At that time, the asylum and immigration policy that was introduced three years earlier had resulted in a drastic decrease of asylum seekers in Sweden. Following that trend, the number of unaccompanied minors who applied for asylum in Sweden decreased from 35 500 in 2015, to below 1 000 in 2018. (Migrationsverket, 2018a, 2019a)

While many studies on how refugees and immigrants are represented in news media have been published recently, there are still important perspectives that remain to be applied. First of all, most studies analyze texts and images published in major news outlets belonging to the political centerfield (cf. Strömbäck et al., 2017; Tyyskä et al., 2018) and thereby exclude both far-right and left-wing news media. Secondly, although many recent studies examine the news
reporting during the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, there is still a lack of studies that compare news media representations of refugees and immigrants in and around 2015 with later news media representations. Thirdly, although unaccompanied minors are recognized as one of the most vulnerable groups of migrants (Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2017), no study has been found that looks into how this group of people specifically is represented in news media. This thesis aims to contribute to this research field by, at least partially, filling these research gaps. The study explores how unaccompanied youth who have entered Sweden as unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors were represented in seven Swedish newspapers during the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 and during the general election campaign in Sweden in 2018. The purpose of the study is to gain insights into how the group was portrayed and to explore possible differences in the representation of unaccompanied youth between the two periods as well as between the different types of newspapers.

The importance of studying how unaccompanied youth are represented in Swedish newspapers is based on a theoretical understanding of the world that put emphasis on language use as a way of constructing people’s perception of reality. This way of making sense of the world implies that people’s ideas of other groups of people to a large extent are constructed socially, through language use. Hence, in order to gain knowledge about what understandings of unaccompanied youth have been constructed socially, texts in different types of media are essential to analyze.

In short, this study’s theoretical framework stands on three pillars. The first pillar is critical discourse analysis (CDA). This means that the study looks into the relationship between language and society, by the use of a critical approach. The second pillar is the theory of representation, which implies that people’s understandings of the world to a large extent are constructed through language use. The third pillar is the theory of racialized regimes of representation. This theory enables the study to further examine in what ways stereotypes of certain groups of people are created and how groups of “us” and “them” can be constructed by the use of language.

Four national newspapers (Aftonbladet, Dagens ETC, Dagens Nyheter, and Nya Tider) and three local (Gotlands Tidningar, Upsala Nya Tidning, and Västerbottens-Kuriren) are included in the study. These newspapers represent a broad variety in both political stances and geographical coverages. As previously stated, critical discourse analysis is used as the main methodological approach, which in this study means that 139 articles published in the seven newspapers have been examined both on a micro text level as well as on a larger societal level. In order to complement the qualitative critical discourse analysis with an analysis of a wider
range of articles, an automated word combinations analysis of a total number of 497 articles has been conducted.

**The main research question for this study is:**

*How were unaccompanied youth represented in Swedish newspapers during the two time periods September 28, 2015 – November 29, 2015 and July 9, 2018 – September 9, 2018?*

**This main research question is broken down into the following four sub-questions:**

1. What topics were unaccompanied youth connected with?
2. How were unaccompanied youth represented linguistically?
3. What differences and similarities appeared between the different types of newspapers?
4. What differences and similarities were found between the two time periods?

**1.1 Disposition**

In this first chapter, a brief introduction to the subject including the aim of the study is presented, followed by an overview of previous research and a short presentation of the theoretical framework and the study’s research questions. In the second chapter, a presentation of the political situations in Sweden in 2015 and 2018 is provided. The third chapter presents existing research within the field of representations of refugees and immigrants in news media. In chapter four, the theoretical framework is developed. The study’s methodology is presented in the fifth chapter. Chapter six consists of a thorough analysis of seven Swedish newspapers’ representations of unaccompanied youth in Sweden. The analysis chapter is divided into two parts: the first part covers articles published in 2015 and the second part covers articles published in 2018. Finally, the seventh chapter includes a concluding discussion of the findings and suggestions for future research. It ends with some ideas of how to challenge stereotypical representations of unaccompanied youth, aimed at journalists and others who want to participate in public discussions.
2. Background

In order to get a deeper understanding of the articles that are analyzed in this paper, it is important to know in what context they have been written and read. Thus, a brief overview of the political situations in Sweden in 2015 and 2018 respectively, with a focus on asylum and immigration policies, is presented below.

2015

A record number of about 163,000 asylum seekers entered Sweden in 2015. Approximately 35,500 of these asylum seekers were registered as unaccompanied minors, of whom 32,500 were boys and 3,000 were girls. The three most common citizenship among the unaccompanied minors who applied for asylum in 2015 were Afghanistan (23,500), Syria (4,000), and Somalia (2,000). (Migrationsverket, 2019a)

That year, about 33,500 unaccompanied minors were registered in the Swedish Migration Agency’s accommodation program, which distributed unaccompanied minors evenly across Sweden. In the three regions that are covered by the three local newspapers that are analyzed in this study, the distribution of unaccompanied minors was as follows: 1,787 in Uppsala County (covered by *Upsala Nya Tidning*), 1,032 in Västerbotten County (covered by *Västerbottens-Kuriren*), and 201 in Gotland County (covered by *Gotlands Tidningar*). (Migrationsverket, 2019a)

As an answer to the high number of asylum seekers who entered Sweden, a network called “Refugees welcome” was created during the autumn of 2015. The network organized activities in order to support asylum seekers in all parts of Sweden, from Malmö in the South to Luleå in the North (Hansson, 2015; Järkstig, 2015; Naess, 2015). Local groups that belonged to the network collected money, food, toys, and clothes for the thousands asylum seekers who were looking for a safe place to stay (Järkstig, 2015; Naess, 2015). The parole “Refugees welcome” was also used in large manifestations for a humane reception of asylum seekers that were organized in all major towns in Sweden, including Uppsala and Umeå (Hansson, 2015; Johansson, 2015; Kvist, 2015).

While many Swedes gathered in support of a humane asylum and migration policy, the nationalist right-wing party the Sweden Democrats had recently increased its support to 12.86 % of the votes in the Swedish national election in 2014, making it the third largest party in the Swedish parliament (Valmyndigheten, 2014). While this meant that the party had more than
doubled its voting share, the party did not take place in the Swedish government which was constituted by the Social Democrats and the Green Party (Riksdagsförvaltningen, 2014).

On November 24, 2015, the Swedish government proposed a new asylum and migration policy aiming to lower the number of refugees in Sweden (Regeringskansliet, 2015). At that point of time, Sweden received approximately 75,000 asylum seekers only during the two months October and November (Migrationsverket, 2019a). The Swedish government’s law proposal included replacing permanent residence permits with temporary residence permits for several groups of refugees, including unaccompanied minors who have entered Sweden after this new policy had been introduced (Regeringskansliet, 2015). Like most other countries, Sweden has signed the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, in which children below the age of 18 are given extended rights in the asylum process compared to adults (Migrationsverket, 2019b). In order to avoid that people older than 18 were recognized as minors, medical age controls were announced. Finally, the government announced that ID checks were going to be introduced on all public transports into Sweden. The new migration policy resulted in that Sweden went from having relatively generous asylum laws to receive a minimum number of asylum seekers, compared to other EU countries (Migrationsverket, 2018a).

2018

The general election in 2018 took place on September 9 (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2018). In the election campaign that preceded the election, the sitting government (consisting of the Social Democrats and the Green Party), the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats competed separately against a liberal-conservative coalition consisting of the four parties the Moderates, the Centre Party, the Liberals, and the Christian Democrats (Lindblad, 2019).

Following the asylum and migration policy that was introduced in 2015, the number of people who applied for asylum in Sweden decreased from 163,000 in 2015 to 21,500 in 2018. The number of unaccompanied minors followed the same trend and decreased from 35,500 in 2015 to just below 1,000 in 2018, of whom about 700 were boys and 250 were girls. The three most common citizenships among these unaccompanied minors were Syria (136), Morocco (126), and Somalia (106). Among unaccompanied minors who were covered by the Swedish Migration Agency’s accommodation program, 64 lived in Uppsala County, 45 in Västerbotten County, and 3 in Gotland County. (Migrationsverket, 2019a)

Many of the youth who had applied for asylum in Sweden as unaccompanied minors in 2015 had turned 18 while they were waiting for their decisions (Migrationsverket, 2018b). This
complicated their asylum processes and could result in negative decisions due to their age. Since the Swedish Migration Agency recognizes large parts of Afghanistan as safe enough to expel people to (Migrationsverket, 2019c), the exact age of unaccompanied youth have been especially decisive for Afghan youth. At the same time, expulsions to Afghanistan have been criticized by organizations such as Save the Children Sweden, who claim that Afghanistan is not safe to expel children and youth to (Rädda Barnen, 2019). Deportations of Afghan youth have also been criticized by the organization “Young in Sweden” (Ung i Sverige), which has organized several large protests against deportations to Afghanistan, since its establishment during the autumn 2017 (Mattisson, 2017).

In order to mitigate the consequences caused by the long waiting times for decisions in unaccompanied youths’ asylum processes, the law on upper secondary education was introduced on July 1, 2018. This law granted unaccompanied youth, who had been denied asylum, residence permits on condition that they met certain requirements. These requirements included that the applicant had to have been registered as an unaccompanied minor at the time the asylum application was rejected, that the applicant had received the negative decision at the age of 18, that the applicant had waited for at least 15 months for the decision, and that the applicant was studying or intended to study at upper secondary level in Sweden. In December 2018, the Swedish Migration Agency had received almost 12 000 applications invoking this new law. At that point, just over 5 000 of the applications had been approved and about 2 500 had been rejected. (Migrationsverket, 2018b)
3. Literature review

This chapter covers the existing research on how refugees and immigrants are represented in news media. The studies that are included have been chosen based on their relevance for this thesis. Since there are no clear boundaries between different types of media platforms within this research field, such as between newspapers and online news sites, all types of news media are included. However, studies that focus on what has been written on for instance a certain social media platform are excluded from this review, since it focuses on news media platforms specifically, not just media in general.

The research on how refugees and immigrants are portrayed in news media is in many ways multi-faceted; it differs significantly when it comes to aspects such as what types of media platforms are studied, what kinds of research methods are used, and regarding the research results. In order to avoid oversimplification when presenting distinguishable general patterns in the existing research, examples of research results that contest these patterns are also included.

When it comes to the limitations of this review, it should be mentioned that it mainly covers Western news media that have been published within Western academic journals. Even though this limitation may be considered as justifiable, it is important to make clear that it implies that it is an overview of mainly Western studies and that studies published elsewhere and in other languages have been excluded. Moreover, two of the studies that are included in this overview consist of reports written on behalf of organizations and have not been published in peer reviewed scientific journals. These two are Berry et al. (2015), a report commissioned by UNHCR, and Strömbäck et al. (2017), a report published by the Swedish governmental organization Delmi. These reports are included in this review because they are conducted scientifically and are of certain relevance for this study. A final remark concerning limitations is that the two studies Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) and KhosraviNik (2009) belong to the same research project and use the same raw data. However, both studies are included since their research questions differ considerably.

The review is divided into three sections. The first part introduces general patterns in the research field, the second part describes common themes and various ways of representing refugees and immigrants in news media, and the final part consists of some concluding remarks.
3.1 General patterns

3.1.1 Differences between national and local news outlets

In a study of the framing of Syrian refugees, Wallace (2018) conducts an automated content analysis on news articles published in eight Canadian newspapers between 2012 and 2016. Wallace finds that national newspapers tended to focus on issues related to conflicts significantly more frequently compared to regional newspapers. According to Wallace (2018), this difference is due to different amounts of resources and different policy focus in regional and national newspapers respectively. In the same vein, Cooper et al. (2017) analyze the attitudes to refugees and asylum seekers present in articles published in four Australian regional newspapers between July 2014, and April 2015. By applying a mixed methods approach, including an automated content analysis and a qualitative content analysis, Cooper et al. (2016) find that the tone in general was positive to refugees in all four regional newspapers; refugees were humanized by a focus on their personal stories and their future plans. However, the tone used in articles on national topics was less positive, mirroring the more negative national discourse on refugees in Australia (Cooper et al., 2016).

Even though differences between local and national newspapers is a seemingly common pattern, not all studies identify such differences. In a longitudinal study of how Canadian newspapers reported on immigrants and refugees during the period between 2005 and 2015, Lawlor and Tolley (2017) combine an automated content analysis and an automated sentiment analysis. In contrast to the two studies mentioned above, Lawlor and Tolley do not identify any considerable variations between local and national newspapers in how they report on refugees and immigrants.

3.1.2 Differences based on political views

While there is no consensus among researchers whether or not news media’s political views affect their reporting on refugees and immigrants, most studies do show a correlation between political views and how refugees and immigrants are represented. Refugees and immigrants are generally represented in more humane terms in liberal newspapers while conservative newspapers tend to represent refugees and immigrant in more negative terms and construct a conflict between “us” and “them”. Another interesting aspect is that most studies are limited to only include mainstream news media with liberal, conservative, or social democratic political stances. Keeping in mind the significant differences between conservative and liberal news media in general, the exclusion of far-right and left-wing news media is a noteworthy research gap.
As one of the earlier and most cited studies in the field of how immigrants and refugees are represented in media, Teun van Dijk’s study “Racism and the Press” (1991) analyzes articles concerning “ethnical issues”, published in major UK and Dutch newspapers during the second half of 1985 and the first half of 1989. van Dijk combines a quantitative content analysis with a qualitative critical discourse analysis. The study also includes 150 interviews with newspaper readers are included in order to examine the relationship between newspapers and their readers regarding the coverage of ethnical events. According to van Dijk (1991), conservative newspapers framed ethnical events as a conflict between “us” and “them”, whereas liberal newspapers were more varied in their ways of representing these events. At the same time, ethnic minorities were associated with stereotypical topics such as crime, immigration problems, and violence in both conservative and liberal newspapers. The study also indicates that racist ideologies mainly are formed from “societal elites” to the rest of the population, through media and education.

In a more recent study of how refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants were represented in six major British newspapers during the Balkan conflict in 1999 and during the British general election in 2005, KhosraviNik (2009) finds differences between liberal and conservative newspapers. In conservative newspapers, refugees and immigrants were portrayed as individuals to a lower degree compared to liberal newspapers. The liberal newspaper The Guardian in particular portrayed asylum seekers as individuals and described their background stories in detail. By portraying asylum seekers as individual human beings, The Guardian contributed to humanize them, according to KhosraviNik.

Similarly, Bhatia and Jenks’s (2018) study of US news media during the first half of 2017 identifies a discursive struggle between liberal and conservative/right-wing media on how to represent Syrian refugees. While conservative and right-wing news media represented Syrians as security threats and dangerous "Others", liberal news media represented Syrians both as victims of war and as ordinary hardworking people who were enabled to tell their own stories.

Tyyskä et al. (2018) analyze how Canadian media cover the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada. They analyze (manually) the content of articles published in three major newspapers and videos published by three different news agencies, during the time period September 2015 to April 2016. Their study shows that articles reflect the political views of the newspapers. The conservative newspaper National Post was more critical to the liberal government's reception of refugees compared to the center-liberal newspaper Toronto Star, which represented Canadians as a humanitarian and caring people.
Although some studies do not find any significant differences in how refugees and immigrants are represented based on the selected news media’s political views (see Strömbäck et al., 2017 and Wilmott, 2017), one can distinguish some general differences between liberal and conservative news media’s representations of refugees and immigrants. In addition to the studies mentioned above, also Chouliaraki (2017) and Berry et al. (2015) identify right-wing news media in general as more hostile against refugees and immigrants compared to liberal news media. Accordingly, Wallace (2018) suggests that not only should newspapers be compared based on their geographical spread, but also on their political leanings. Based on the findings in the studies presented above, Wallace’s conclusion has been taken into consideration in the present study.

3.1.3 The impact of decisive events

Vollmer and Karakayali (2018) analyze how refugees were represented in articles published in German newspapers and weekly magazines (print and online) between March 2015 and March 2016. They apply a mixed methods approach, including computational screening and critical discourse analysis (CDA). According to Vollmer and Karakayali (2018), there was a shift in attitude towards refugees in German news media that occurred over time and was related to some essential discursive events. Three events with particular impact were the publication of the Alan Kurdi photo in September 2015, the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015, and The New Year’s Eve of 2016 in Cologne. Vollmer and Karakayali (2018) note that the portrayal of refugees can be reversed if their representation as "deserving" is damaged. The refugees then turn from being represented as victims to villains. One way in which refugees were framed as less deserving was by representing them as young male adults rather than families, which happened the days after The New Year's Eve of 2016, when German newspapers reported on an event where Northern African men allegedly sexually assaulted women in Cologne.

On September 2, 2015, the Kurdish toddler Alan Kurdi was photographed lying dead on a beach in Turkey after his family had attempted to reach the Greek island of Kos (Smith, 2015). The photo of Alan Kurdi’s body was spread in news media all over the world. In Wallace’s (2018) study of how Syrian refugees were framed in Canadian newspapers between 2012 and 2016, she notes that after the publication of the Alan Kurdi photography, the newspapers shifted from framing Syrians refugees predominantly in terms of conflict, to a more humanitarian representation of refugee families and their resettlement. Even though the conflict frame was highly represented during the entire time period, there was a significant decrease in the use of the conflict frame during the period following the publication of the Alan Kurdi photo in
September 2015. Representing Syrian refugees in a more human way after the Alan Kurdi photo seems to be a general pattern (see also Raja and Alotaibi 2018), while the period after the terrorist attacks in Paris was marked by a less positive and more suspicious way of representing migrants (Chouliaraki, 2017).

Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) combine corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis in their longitudinal study of how refugees and asylum seekers were represented in UK newspapers between 1996 and 2005. They notice that major political events, like the introduction of new asylum laws and general elections, can have large impact on the frequency of reporting on topics related to refugees and immigrants. Although Lawlor and Tolley (2017) do not find any substantial differences in the framing of immigrants and asylum seekers in Canadian newspapers between 2005 and 2014, they do note that temporarily negative ways of framing refugees seem to be connected to certain focusing events.

3.2 Representations of refugees and immigrants

Although the research field on representations of refugees and immigrants in news media is multi-faceted, some common patterns can be discerned. Firstly, the terminology that is used for asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants is used differently in different news media, and change over time (Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; Lawlor and Tolley, 2017; Vollmer and Karakayali, 2018). Another aspect that many studies notice is that refugees and immigrants often are represented in larger groups, both in text (Abid et al., 2017; Chouliaraki and Zaborowski, 2017) and in images (Wilmott, 2017; Zhang and Hellmueller, 2017). Thirdly, several studies recognize that refugees and immigrants often are represented in connection to criminality (Strömbäck et al., 2017) and as security threats (Bhatia and Jenks, 2018; Tyyskä et al., 2018). Finally, a notion that has been made by Cooper et al. (2016) as well as Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017), is that refugees’ voices seldom are making heard. Instead, politicians and journalists are often those who deliver their opinions in news coverage on refugees and immigrants.

3.2.1 Different use of terminology

Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) analyze the representation of refugees and asylum seekers in articles published in 19 UK newspapers between 1996 and 2005. According to their study, there was a confusion in how the terms refugee, asylum seeker, and immigrant were used in media. This confusion was particularly common in tabloids, where inaccurate and misleading terms
such as "illegal asylum seeker" and "bogus immigrant", appeared to a significantly higher extent compared to broadsheets. Gabrielatos and Baker’s study show that refugees and immigrants were mainly represented in negative terms, as in the two following newspaper quotations: “AN ARMY of 110 000 Iraqi refugees heading for Britain (…)” (Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008, p. 24) and “HUNDREDS of illegal immigrants waiting to sneak into Britain (…)” (Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008, p. 24).

Vollmer and Karakayali’s (2018) study of German newspapers and weekly magazines published between March 2015 and March 2016, shows that the public discourse on refugees in German newspapers changed over time; from being positive and welcoming to being more suspicious and hostile. Similarly to Gabrielatos and Baker (2008), Vollmer and Karakyali also notice that different discourses appeared simultaneously. Taking notice on the fact that discourses both can change over time and appear parallelly is essential in order to avoid over-simplifications concerning media representations of refugees and immigrants.

According to Lawlor and Tolley (2017), immigrants and immigration were framed in economic terms in Canadian newspapers, while refugees were framed as potential security threats. In addition, their study indicates that newspapers have a preference for immigrants who are perceived to be able to contribute economically and who originate from a certain group of countries. Refugees, on the other hand, were generally framed far more negatively compared to immigrants.

In their study of how the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 was represented in German media, Holmes and Castañeda (2016) questions the dichotomic construction of deserving and undeserving, noted in representations of refugees and migrants. As they point out, asylum and what is being perceived as legitimate reasons for asylum have changed over time. Holmes and Castañeda are therefore critical to the idea of the voluntary economic migrant as an opposite to the deserving refugee which, they argue, is present in media representations of refugees and migrants in general. In Germany, people who had fled from other countries than Syria were questioned because they emigrated from countries that were viewed as safe by the German state. According to Holmes and Castañeda, the discourse of deservingness moves the responsibility away from historical, political, and economic decisions made by major Western countries that have caused migration – and puts it on people who have left their countries.

3.2.2 Collectivization and othering

Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017) analyze how and to what extent refugees' voices appeared in the news in eight European countries (Greece, Serbia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Germany,
France, UK, and Ireland) between June 2015 and December 2015. They find that strategies of silencing, collectivization, and decontextualization contribute to construct an “us” (European news readers) and “them” (refugees). According to Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017), both passivation and collectivization contribute to dehumanize refugees; being portrayed as passive victims makes refugees appear as not being able to take care of themselves, whereas collectivization contributes to create the image of refugees as anonymous numbers, rather than human beings.

A common way to collectivize and anonymize refugees and immigrants is by referring to them as numbers or as large quantities of water (Abid et al., 2017; Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2009). Similar to Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017), Abid et al. (2017) argues that the widespread use of water metaphors to describe Syrian refugees is a way to dehumanize them, as they are transformed into indistinguishable entities instead of individual humans.

The three studies Zhang and Hellmueller (2017), Chouliaraki (2017), and Wilmott (2017) all analyze how refugees and immigrants were represented in photos published in and around 2015. Firstly, Zhang and Hellmueller (2017) analyze photographs of what they refer to as the “European refugee crisis”, published between January and September 2015 on the news websites of CNN International and Der Spiegel. Although a majority of the photos on both news sites consisted of groups of refugees, Zhang and Hellmueller notice that CNN International represented refugees as individuals and showed the refugees’ facial expressions more often than Der Spiegel. According to Zhang and Hellmueller, this way of portraying refugees as individuals with feelings contributes to humanize them. Secondly, Chouliaraki (2017) analyzes photos of migrant-related selfies published in Western news networks (such as CNN, BBC, The Guardian, The Daily Mail, and The Sun) between June 2015 and March 2016. Chouliaraki argues that the way migrants were portrayed when they took selfies dehumanized them since the focus was on the act of taking selfies rather than what the selfies actually captured. According to Chouliaraki, this sort of news reporting contributes to othering migrants by presenting the familiar act of taking selfies as something strange. Chouliaraki also finds that selfies in which migrants and celebrities appear together portray migrants as "suffering others", in contrast to the familiar faces of celebrities. Thirdly, Wilmott (2017) examines how Syrian refugees were portrayed in images published on three UK newspapers’ websites (The Guardian, The Telegraph, and The Independent) between September 2 and September 9, 2015. Wilmott finds that British media portrayed refugees as "Others" and made them appear as security threats rather than people in need. In a majority of the images, refugees were photographed in groups, with no eye contact with the camera. This way of portraying refugees makes them appear as
anonymous Others, according to Wilmott. Another way in which refugees were portrayed as anonymous Others, was by not being identified by for example name and age in the captions describing the images (Wilmott, 2017).

3.2.3 Criminality and security threats

In the study of Swedish newspapers portrayals of immigration between 2010 and 2015, Strömbäck et al. (2017) note that positive depictions of immigration in Swedish newspapers were less common compared to negative ones. The three most common ways of depicting immigration negatively in Swedish newspapers were by representing immigrants as weakening social cohesion, contributing to increased criminality, and making Sweden economically weaker. The most common positive way of representing immigration was to write that it contributes to provide competence that Sweden is in need of (often related to the labor market). According to Strömbäck et al. (2017), the disproportionate negative representation of immigration in Swedish newspapers does not correspond to known (mainly positive) societal effects of immigration. Also in Hultén’s (2006) historical study of Swedish newspapers’ representations of immigration does criminality constitute one of the main themes.

Representing refugees and immigrants as criminals is, however, not a phenomenon specific for Swedish news media. In Wilmott’s (2017) study of British news websites’ visual representations of refugees, Wilmott finds that in those cases when other people than refugees were represented in images, military, police, and coast guards were the most common categories of professions. Wilmott argues that this is a way of framing refugees as criminals. Zhang and Hellmueller (2017) do similar findings in their analysis of photos of the “European refugee crisis”, published on the news sites of CNN and Der Spiegel during the first half of 2015. They note that photos of confrontations between refugees and police units were much more common on the website of Der Spiegel compared to CNN International. Zhang and Hellmueller view that kind of representation as a way of dehumanizing refugees by depicting them as "illegal invaders". While the humanitarian rights aspects were the most prominent frames appearing on CNN, Der Spiegel focused as much on issues concerning law and border control as on human suffering.

In accordance with the notion that newspapers’ political views have an impact on their reporting on refugees and immigrants, Bhatia and Jenks (2018) note that in especially conservative and right-wing US news media, Syrians were represented as security threats and dangerous "Others". In their study of Canadian newspapers, Tyyskä et al. (2018) find Syrian
refugees in general being represented as vulnerable and lacking agency, while Syrian males – especially single males – were represented as security threats.

3.2.4 Absence of refugees’ and immigrants’ stories

While Tyyskä et al.’s study shows that Syrian males were represented as security threats, Syrian females and children were absent (Tyyskä et al., 2018). In their analysis of whose voices appeared in Australian regional newspapers between July 2014 and April 2015, Cooper et al. (2016) find that journalists were the dominant voice, at the expense of refugees' ability of telling their own stories. Likewise, in Chouliaraki and Zaborowski’s (2017) study of to what extent refugees’ voices appeared in newspapers in eight European countries, they find that refugees’ and “European citizens”’ voices were silenced in articles related to refugees. Quotes from migrants and refugees appeared in 16.6% of the articles, whereas voices of politicians appeared in 66% of the articles (Chouliaraki and Zaborowski, 2017). This is also a notion that Chouliaraki (2017) makes in her study of migrant-related selfies published in Western news networks. According to Chouliaraki (2017), not letting migrants tell their own stories means that they are denied public recognition in favor of stories about the celebrities who they are taking selfies together with.

A possible consequence of news media preventing refugees from making their voices heard is that the reasons why they have fled from their countries remain untold. Even though the large number of refugees who entered EU in 2014 and 2015 did so due to conflicts and human rights abuses (UNHCR, 2016), the overall press coverage in Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and UK rarely reported on the reasons why the refugees have fled (Berry et al. 2015). The neglect in news media of the economic, political, historical, and social reasons why people have fled their countries is also pointed out by Holmes and Castañeda (2016).

3.2.5 The Swedish context

Hultén (2006) analyzes how one national (Dagens Nyheter) and three local (Arbetarbladet, Vestmanlands Läns Tidning, and Borås Tidning) Swedish newspapers have reported on immigration from 1945 to 2005. A combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis is applied in order to analyze both texts and images. While all four newspapers over time shared the same four key topics immigration, crime, culture and sports, the national newspaper Dagens Nyheter reported more frequently on crime and used a conflict angle more often compared to the local newspapers. According to Hultén, the local perspective contributed to make topics
such as co-operation, shared interests, and common grounds appear more frequently in local newspapers compared to national newspapers.

In their study of European newspapers reporting on migration during 2014 and the first half of 2015, Berry et al (2015) find that Swedish newspapers were the most positive ones towards refugees and migrants, whereas the UK newspapers were the most negative (British right-wing media was by far the most hostile). Another finding in their study is that newspapers in Sweden reported broadly in similar ways, independent of their political leanings (Berry et al., 2015). This is also noted in the study by Strömbäck et al. (2017); there were only small differences between different Swedish newspapers regarding how they reported on immigration between 2010 and 2015. In addition, these differences did not seem to be connected to the newspapers’ political stances (Strömbäck et al., 2017). While these findings are interesting, it should be mentioned that none of these two studies include neither a nationalist right-wing nor a left-wing oriented newspaper.

Dahlgren (2016) examines how the "refugee crisis" was covered in one local and four national Swedish newspapers, as well as on three Swedish TV channels, during the autumn of 2015. According to Dahlgren, the discourse in Swedish media's reporting concerning the "refugee crisis" was indeed multi-faceted: anti-racist discourses appeared parallel to critical stances toward refugees and immigration. As the crisis proceeded, openness and solidarity were replaced with "taking responsibility" – which meant a more restrictive attitude towards immigration and refugee policy. At the end of autumn 2015, it became more common to portray refugees as an "administrative challenge" that needed "to be taken care of" (Dahlgren, 2016).

Cock et al. (2018) and Hovden et al. (2018) are two other studies that examine Swedish newspapers’ coverage of the so-called refugee crisis in 2015. In their comparative study, Cock et al. (2018) compare how refugees were reported on in news articles published in two Swedish and four Belgian major newspapers between August 24 and September 27, 2015. Their quantitative content analysis shows that refugees seldom were allowed to speak for themselves in neither Belgian nor Swedish newspapers. It also indicates regional differences among the Belgian newspapers in how tolerant they were towards migrants. Hovden et al. (2018) examines how the so-called refugee crisis was covered in Scandinavian newspapers during three separate time periods in 2015: April 20 – May 1; September 3 – September 16; November 16 – November 27. They conduct a quantitative content analysis on nine national newspapers of various political stances, ranging from left-wing to conservative. Similar to Cock et al. (2018), Hovden et al. (2018) note that refugees rarely get their voices heard in the newspapers, especially in relation to government representatives. Within the Scandinavian newspapers,
Swedish newspapers were the most positive towards refugees whereas Danish newspapers were the most negative. At the same time, Scandinavian newspapers wrote overall less often about negative consequences of refugees entering the countries compared to European press in general. Additionally, Hovden et al.’s (2018) study shows that the Scandinavian newspapers focused more on negative consequences during the period in November, compared to April and September.

3.3 Concluding remarks

Even though the existing research on how refugees and immigrants are represented in news media is multi-faceted in many ways, some general conclusions that are of certain relevance for this study are presented below.

3.3.1 Methodological variations

This literature review has identified a wide range of data types, lengths of time periods and methodological approaches that have been applied in this research field. The lengths of the time periods that have been studied range from about a week (see Abid et al., 2017; Raja and Alotaibi, 2018; Wilmott, 2017), to a decade (Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; Lawlor and Tolley, 2017), or even several decades (Hultén, 2006). While many studies have analyzed what have been published during the so-called “refugee crisis” between 2014 and 2016 (e.g. Dahlgren, 2016; Vollmer and Karakayali, 2018; Wallace, 2018; Zhang and Hellmueller, 2017), there seem to be a lack of studies that compare news media content published during this period with more recent news media content.

When it comes to types of data, there are both examples of studies that analyze images (Chouliaraki, 2017; Wilmott, 2017; Zhang and Hellmueller, 2017) as well as those that analyze texts (Berry et al., 2015; Cooper et al., 2016; Strömbäck et al., 2017), while others analyze both (Hultén, 2006; Tyyskä et al., 2018; Vollmer and Karakayali, 2018). While most studies only include printed newspapers (Cooper et al., 2016; Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; Hultén, 2006), several studies also look into what is written on online news sites (Abid et al., 2017; Bhatia and Jenks, 2018; Chouliaraki, 2017). The differences between local and national newspapers that have been noted by Cooper (2016), Lawlor and Tolley (2017), and Hultén (2006), are important to be aware of in order to get a deeper understanding of possible variations in the news media content. While the above-mentioned studies compare local and national news outlets, not any recently published Swedish study has been found where this aspect is explored (Dahlgren’s
(2016) study includes a regional newspaper, but no comparisons to national news media are being made).

Furthermore, there is a wide variety of applied methodological approaches. Both quantitative (see Berry et al., 2015; Lawlor and Tolley, 2017; Strömbäck et al., 2017; Wilmott, 2017; Zhang and Hellmueller, 2017) as well as qualitative (see Chouliaraki, 2017; Tyyskä et al., 2018) methodologies have been used. A surprisingly common approach is mixed methods, used by Gabrielatos and Baker (2008), Hultén (2006), Vollmer and Karakayali (2018), and Cooper et al. (2016) among others.

An interesting aspect concerning newspapers political stances is that while studies include news media with varied political stances (Berry et al., 2015; KhosraviNik, 2009; Strömbäck et al., 2017), all except one study (Bhatia and Jenks, 2018) exclude nationalist right-wing news media, and very few include a left-wing news outlet (e.g. Hovden et al. (2018)). No study has been found that includes any Swedish nationalist right-wing or left-wing news outlets. This notion is of particular interest keeping in mind how news media differ in their representations of refugees and immigrants based on their political stances, as has been mentioned above.

3.3.2 Findings
While it is important to keep acknowledge ambiguities exist and changes occur over time, some patterns can be recognized regarding how refugees and immigrants are represented in news media.

Firstly, one of the most common way of representing refugees and immigrants is by collectivization and othering (Abid et al., 2017; Chouliaraki and Zaborowski, 2017). A particular recurring way of doing this is by the use of water metaphors (Abid et al., 2017; Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2009). Portraying refugees and immigrants as criminals is another common pattern that has been noted in many studies (Lawlor and Tolley, 2017; Wilmott, 2017; Zhang and Hellmueller, 2017).

Secondly, Bhatia and Jenks (2018) note that representing Syrian refugees as security threats and dangerous “Others”, is common in foremost conservative and right-wing US news media. Tyyskä et al. (2018) find that while Syrian refugees in general were represented as vulnerable and lacking agency, Syrian males – especially single males – were represented as security threats. These conclusions are interesting for the present study, since most unaccompanied youth who have entered Sweden are males (Migrationsverket, 2019a).

Thirdly, as has been noticed by Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017) and Cooper et al. (2016), the voices of refugees and immigrants are absent in favor of journalists and politicians.
While this is an additional way of othering (Chouliara, 2017), it might also contribute to keeping refugees’ stories untold (Berry et al., 2015).

When it comes to differences and similarities between how news media in different countries represent refugees and immigrants, they have more in common than what separates them. Factors such as decisive events, news media’s political stances, and geographical spread (national vs local) appear to have the most impact on the content, while it seems to be of less importance whether it is a news website, news TV channel, or a printed newspaper that is studied.
4. Theoretical framework

“Language does not reflect reality in a direct and simple way but contributes to shaping it.”
(Bergström and Boréus, 2012, p. 354, author’s translation)

The above quote describes the foundation of the theoretical framework that is developed in this chapter. The chapter consists of three main parts. In the first part, theoretical concepts that constitute the base of critical discourse analysis are defined. In the second part, Hall’s theory of representation provides the study with an understanding of how language contributes to the shaping of meanings of things. Finally, the theory of racialized regimes of representation builds on Hall’s theory of representation while dealing more specifically with how power is exerted through representations of different groups of people. While the three parts are interrelated to each other, each contributes with certain aspects to the theoretical framework as a whole.

4.1 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

In this study, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used as a theoretical and methodological approach. A theoretical foundation of CDA is that language is a social practice that is both constituted by societal structures while simultaneously stabilizing or challenging these structures (van Dijk, 2015). Although different approaches within CDA vary in theory and methodology, they have a common interest in deconstructing ideologies and power relationships through systematic analyses of language use. Being open about one’s positioning and keeping a self-reflective perspective of one’s research process are other aspects that CDA researchers share (Wodak and Meyer, 2016a).

Different from other theoretical and methodological approaches, CDA is not a “value free” approach in which distant observers seek to describe certain aspects of the world from outside, without any prior assumptions. In CDA studies, hidden as well as visible structures of discrimination, domination, and power are critically examined by analyses of how these social inequalities are being constituted through language use. In addition to being critical to societal inequalities as they appear today, being critical also implies the insight that society can be structured differently. (Wodak and Meyer, 2016a)

Moreover, CDA studies are multidisciplinary regarding both methodology and theory. In order to emphasize the multiplicity of methodologies and theoretical approaches that are applied within CDA, it is sometimes referred to as critical discourse studies (Wodak and Meyer,
2016a). The theoretical framework that is described below is developed and adapted in order to be most useful for this study specifically.

4.1.1 Discourse
The term discourse has been defined in many different ways; from narratives in certain forms – such as texts, sounds, or images – to language itself. This study uses Fairclough and Wodak’s (1997) definition of discourse as “language use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258). They refer to social practice as a two-way relationship between a specific discursive event (e.g. a newspaper article) and its situational, institutional, and societal context. This means that discourse both constitutes and is constituted by situations, institutions, and societal structures. Moreover, discourse is constitutive “both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it.” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258) Following Boréus and Seiler Brylla (2018), a certain discourse is to be understood as a semiotic practice concerning a specific theme within a certain social context. This implies that opposing views can be found within the same discourse. The discourse that is examined in this study is what is written in Swedish newspapers about unaccompanied youth. As noted by Reisigl and Wodak (2016), the interpretation of discourse is dependent on the analyst’s perspective. A discourse does not have a definite meaning. Rather, it is possible to interpret a discourse in different ways.

4.1.2 Power
Since CDA research to a large extent is about studying how discourse produces and reproduces social inequalities in which one group exerts power over others, power is an essential concept for all CDA researchers. Apart from physical constraint and economic exploitation, Hall (2013) refers to power in “broader cultural and symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain ‘regime of representation’. It includes the exercise of symbolic power through representational practices.” (Hall 2013, p. 249). Texts – such as newspaper articles about unaccompanied youth – are both results of and arenas for power struggles between competing ideologies (Wodak and Meyer, 2016a). According to Fairclough (1995), the invisibility of the ideological assumptions that are implied by the way language is used, as well as the invisible connection between language and power, contributes to strengthen the power of language. At the same time, language is not powerful by itself; rather, it is a tool through which dominant groups can strengthen and maintain their positions (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016).
4.1.3 Ideology and hegemony

Reisigl and Wodak define ideology as “a perspective (often one-sided), i.e. a worldview and a system composed of related mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes, values and evaluations, which is shared by members of a specific social group.” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016, p. 25) Fairclough defines ideologies as “representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation.” (Fairclough, as quoted in Wodak and Meyer, 2016, p. 9). In addition, Fairclough (1995) views ideology as an analytical tool, and suggests that a critical discourse analyst should look into what ideological work is being done in a certain text. At the same time, Fairclough stresses that ideology can be more or less prominent depending on what type of media discourse is studied.

Wodak and Meyer (2016) defines hegemony as a state when most people in a certain society think alike about certain issues, or even forget that there are alternative ways of thinking about these issues. As Reisigl and Wodak (2016) underline, one of the purposes of CDA is to deconstruct hegemonic ideas by exposing the underlying ideologies that construct, maintain, or challenge dominance.

4.2 Representation

4.2.1 Meanings are constructed through language within cultures

The reason why media is chosen as data in this study is because it is assumed that everything – objects, people, events, and ideas – get their meanings by the way they are represented in languages consisting of images, sounds, or words. These various expressions contribute to construct the meanings of things. Even though the meaning making process is partly individual, shared meanings are enabled through shared languages; people who belong to the same culture have shared understandings of the world through a shared understanding of a common language. In all languages, certain elements stand for certain meanings: words represent meanings in a written language, physical gestures stand for certain meanings in body language, and different colors represent different meanings in traffic. In all languages, signs represent ideas, concepts, and feelings that people who belong to the same culture interpret similarly. (Hall, 2013a)

According to Hall (2013), things’ meanings affect the way people behave to each other, what rules we follow and how social life is ordered. Thus, meanings are what people who want to have influence on other people’s minds seek to shape. The shaping of meanings takes place in social interactions between people directly or through media.
4.2.2 The relationship between things, concepts, and languages

Hall (2013) makes a distinction between things themselves and people’s mental concepts about these things. Concepts consist of people’s ideas of a cup of coffee, war, or refugees – what we think of when these words are expressed. However, the mental concepts do not necessarily correspond accurately with the things they represent. When we for instance read about the situation for unaccompanied youth in a newspaper, the mental concepts that are generated in our minds may not be in conformity with unaccompanied youth’s actual circumstances.

According to Hall (2013), the production of meaning occurs in two processes. In the first process, mental concepts are connected to certain things, such as people or events. In the second process, people’s mental concepts are connected to sets of signs that represent the concepts. Signs can consist of sounds, words, or symbols, and are organized in various languages. As pointed out by the linguist Saussure, the relationship between a sign and a concept is determined by a system of social conventions (Culler, 1976). These social conventions are specific for different cultures and various times in history. This, in turn, means that all meanings “are produced within history and culture” (Hall, 2013a, p. 17). In other words, meanings differ both between different cultures and between different time periods and are thereby never completely fixed. Hence, there is no single, stable and universal true meaning – for anything.

The connections between people’s conceptual systems and languages are constructed through codes that “stabilize meaning within different languages and cultures” (Hall, 2013a, p. 7) while also “tell us which concepts are being referred to when we read or hear which signs” (Hall, 2013a, p. 7). According to Hall, these codes are socially fixed within a culture; children belonging to a certain culture learn its codes between language and conceptual systems as they are brought up.

Since things have different meanings to different people, there is no “correct answer” to what a certain text “actually” means; it is a question of interpretation in which one has to put forward the reasons why a text has been interpreted in a certain way. This implies that competing meanings of texts often coexist, why absolute and infinite definitions of the meaning of a text cannot be made (Hall, 2013a). Following the idea that meanings change depending on cultural and historical contexts, the process of interpretation is an essential part of the meaning making process. The idea that people differ in their interpretations of texts implies that the same text can have different meanings to different persons – including the writer of the text. Hence, different understandings of specific words and texts coexist in all languages, independent of the writers’ intentions. These variations in how a text is interpreted is what Hall refers to as sliding.
of meanings. In this sense, a reader of a text “is as important as the writer in the production of meaning” (Hall, 2013a, p. 18).

4.2.3 The relationship between symbolic systems and the material world
According to Hall (Hall, 2013a), the meaning of a certain thing is not inherent in the thing itself. Neither do the speaker of a certain word decide how it should be understood by the audience. Rather, meanings are constructed through the relationships between concepts and signs. However, Hall points out that this does not mean that there is no material world. He distinguishes between on the one hand the material world in which things exist, and on the other hand the symbolic practices and processes “through which representation, meaning and language operate” (Hall, 2013a, p. 11). Even though the material world indeed exists, meaning is mediated through language systems. While language systems can consist of a material object, it is always its symbolic function that generates meaning.

In order to explain the relationship between the material world and symbolic systems, Hall (2013) uses the traffic light example. While a green light is a material thing, its symbolic connection to the concept “start to drive” is socially constructed. The meaning of “start driving your vehicle” is not intrinsic in the green light itself, but in what people in a certain culture have agreed that the color green on a traffic light means. However, the notion that meaning is constructed symbolically does not mean that it cannot have any material effects. As noted by Hall, a traffic light certainly affects the traffic in a material sense.

4.2.4 Newspapers’ impact on ideology
There are three main reasons why the discourse in newspapers are analyzed in this study. Firstly, media discourse both shapes and is shaped by the wider social and cultural context in which it operates (Fairclough, 1995). This entails that societal patterns and changes can be studied through the study of media discourse. Secondly, as Brennan (2012) argues, newspapers’ regular reporting on people and events makes them reflect contemporary patterns and changes in society. Thirdly, van Dijk (1991) underlines newspapers’ ways of representing refugees and asylum seekers as a way of enabling an ideological framework for interpretations of minority groups. Depending on what ideologies are most dominant, these may legitimate or challenge prejudices and discrimination.
4.3 Racialized regimes of representation

By going through how black people historically have been visually represented in British culture, Hall (2013) develops the theory of racialized regimes of representation. Although Hall writes specifically about racialized representations of black people in British culture, he points out that the theory of racialized regimes of representation (which he refers to as “the spectacle of the ‘Other’”) can be applied also on other dimensions of othering.

4.3.1 Stereotyping: naturalizing otherness

According to Hall (2013), differences has an ambiguous function in the construction of meaning within a culture. Since things do not have intrinsic meanings, meanings are often constructed through differences that can help us make sense of the world and ourselves; we may not fully know what we are, but we – generally speaking – know what we are not. Males can be described as opposites to females, wealth can be described as an opposite to poverty, and asylum seekers can be described as opposites to Swedes. These types of differences are defined as binary oppositions and play a crucial role in the construction of stereotypes (Hall, 2013a).

Stereotypes appear when a group of people is reduced to have certain characteristics, and these characteristics are exaggerated and simplified. They contribute to splitting up people and creates an “us” and a “them”, based on what is considered to be normal and acceptable – and what is not. By presenting differences between certain groups of people as if they were given by nature rather than culture, these differences appear to be natural and unchangeable. In this sense, stereotyping has the function of fixing boundaries between those who belong and those who do not. (Hall, 2013a)

4.3.2 Binary oppositions

In order to distinguish binary oppositions between groups of people from opposites within a group of people, this study refers to the former as external binary oppositions and the latter as internal binary oppositions. External binary oppositions can on the one hand help us make sense of the world and ourselves. On the other hand, they contribute to negative feelings and hostility against the “Other” – what we are not. As pointed out by Derrida (1981), binary oppositions are generally not neutral. Instead, there is a power relation between the two opposites in which one has power over the other.

While external binary oppositions construct opposites between different groups of people, Hall (2013) points to internal binary oppositions as a way of representing a group of people in a dichotomous way – such as good/bad, criminal/law abiding, or victim/perpetrator. According
to Hall (2013), people who in various ways are being seen as different from the majority are represented in terms of internal binary oppositions to a higher degree than others. Additionally, external as well as internal binary oppositions have a reductionist function in the sense that they make the world appear as consisting of opposites, while nuances and variations that exist in reality are reduced.

4.3.3 Contesting stereotypes

Although discursive practices such as stereotyping can contribute to stabilize a certain meaning, meanings can never be completely fixed. There will always be a certain amount of sliding in meaning. Hence, stereotypes can be challenged by contesting discursive practices. Hall (2013) describes three main strategies of contesting a racialized regime of representation: reversed representation, positive representation, and contesting a stereotype from inside. All these representations show that racialized regimes of representation are possible to contest.

The first example of strategy is to reverse the racialized regime of representation. If unaccompanied youth are stereotypically represented as criminals, a reversed representation could be to publish an article about an unaccompanied youth who condemns criminality. While this kind of portrayal may contribute to a more diverse representation, it also confirms the internal binary opposition that is a part of the stereotype.

The second example of strategy is to represent a subordinated group in positive terms outside any dominating internal binary opposition. An example of that could be to publish an article about unaccompanied youth taking part in a creative activity such as a theatre play. However, like the strategy of reversed representations, positive representations are in some way also defined by the internal binary oppositions within a group of people; pretending as if an internal binary opposition does not exist does not necessarily make it disappear.

The final example is to contest the stereotype from inside. The point of this strategy is to take advantage of the fact that meaning is never finally fixed and therefore possible to change from within the representation itself. An example of this could be to allude to a negative stereotype of unaccompanied youth while representing the group in positive alternative terms. The idea is to challenge the negative representation, rather than trying to ignore it.
5. Methodology

5.1 Research paradigms

Sorting a study to a particular research paradigm can be an effective way to provide the reader with information about basic assumptions that guide the study. How to define and use research paradigms is, however, a contested issue. Morse et al. (2002), differ between a rationalistic quantitative paradigm and a naturalistic qualitative paradigm. Based on the different natures of the two paradigms, Morse et al. suggest that different verification strategies should be used. Similarly, Silverman (2017) identifies a positivist paradigm (mostly used in quantitative studies) and a constructionist paradigm (mostly used in qualitative studies). According to Silverman (2017), these two research paradigms have different stances on aspects such as truth, objectivity, and subjectivity. This way of splitting up methodologies to either the quantitative or the qualitative camp is in a way understandable: there are logical reasons for systematic differences between quantitative and qualitative methodologies when it comes to for example sampling methods and evaluation strategies. However, splitting up research to either the quantitative or the qualitative side, and ascribe certain ontological and epistemological assumptions to the two sides, is problematic. What says, for instance, that a study making use of a quantitative methodology cannot grasp that complete objectivity is unattainable? And why would a researcher using a qualitative methodology not be able to agree on the claim that some studies can benefit from limiting the analyst’s personal views and opinions?

In contrast to Silverman (2017) and Morse et al. (2002), Guba and Lincoln (1994), emphasize that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods is not superior to what paradigm a certain research project belongs. Instead, they define a research paradigm as “a set of basic beliefs […] It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world,’ [sic!] the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). Based on the assumption that ideas that have been developed in a certain research paradigm are crucial for any study’s research design, Guba and Lincoln argue that all studies should clarify to what paradigm they belong. Following Guba and Lincoln’s (1994) definitions, this study would belong to a mixture of the postpositivistic, the critical theory and the constructivist research paradigms. However, since there are no universal definitions of research paradigms, one can question the need of all studies to be sorted into certain paradigms. Hence, rather than trying to squeeze this study into a somewhat fitting paradigm, its ontological and epistemological approaches are developed here below in order to inform the reader on what fundamental ideas about the world it is based on.
5.2 Ontology

This study’s ontology entails an understanding of reality as existing of two dimensions: a material reality and a mental reality. A material reality – consisting of real objects such as human beings, water, and newspapers – is assumed to exist. The other dimension of reality consists of mental concepts that are used to make sense of things that they represent (both material and imagined things). These concepts can be constructed both through social interactions and through physical experiences. A social interaction can be everything from talking with another person to reading a news article, while a physical experience can be to see, feel or hear something in the material world. The mental concepts of objects do not necessarily correspond with the actual natures of the things they are meant to represent. As described in the traffic light example mentioned in the theoretical framework above, the two dimensions of reality do affect each other – why studying their dialectical relationship is of interest.

Depending on the nature of an object, it is more or less likely that the mental concept of it is based on physical experiences from the material world or on social interactions. The idea that a rock is hard is for example likely to be based on one’s physical experiences of the material world, while one’s concepts of asylum seekers one has never met are likely to be based on social interactions. At the same time, there is no clear division between the mental and the material dimensions reality; while a person’s concept of a rock as something hard may be based on physical experiences of rocks, the expression “hard as a rock” is socially constructed. Even the reaction to pain that one may feel when hitting oneself on a rock is arguably socially constructed to a certain extent. Likewise, a person who has constructed certain mental concepts about refugees partly based on what the person has read about refugees in the news, may also have had some personal experiences of refugees in the material dimension of reality. These examples show that splitting up reality into a material and a mental dimension is a simplified way of making sense of it. In reality, the two dimensions are deeply interrelated with each other.

5.3 Epistemology

Guba and Lincoln (1994) define epistemology as the relationship between the “knower” and what can be known. This relationship is dependent on the researcher’s ontological understanding of reality; if one for example believes in a “real” reality, then one should try to describe this reality as objectively as possible. The understanding of reality as described above is what guides this study’s epistemology: even though there is an objective material reality “out there”, people make sense of it based on their subjective mental concepts of it. That is,
consequently, also the case for the present study; I, as a researcher, have a subjective view of reality which affects how I make sense of it. Since the mental dimension of reality is shaped both by the material dimension of reality and of social interactions, the relationship between the material dimension of reality and social interactions that take place within it are of interest to explore.

People’s mental concepts of things are both collective and individual and build upon their concepts of other things, why knowledge and the creation of new knowledge always is subjective. However, in the case of the present study, personal subjectivity does not have an intrinsic value. Therefore, certain strategies are applied to limit personal bias and to ensure credibility; these strategies are further developed below. This does, however, not mean that subjectivity is eradicated from the study. Since subjectivity is a natural part of all human life, it is also a natural part of all human research.

The ontological and epistemological assumptions described above constitute, together with the theoretical framework, the basis of the study’s methodology. This means that all methodological decisions are informed by the above described understandings of the world and what sorts of knowledge about it one can obtain.

5.4 A critical discourse analytical approach

While CDA studies have in common that they analyze how discourse practices legitimate, maintain, or challenge power relations in society, they consist of a variety of methodologies. This study makes use of a CDA methodology that has been developed for this study in particular. As has been mentioned in the theoretical framework above, CDA studies do not claim to be objective and value-free. Instead, they are characterized by an explicit aim to describe, explain, and challenge social inequalities based on for example class, ethnicity, and gender (Wodak and Meyer, 2016b).

The methodology that is applied in this study is characterized by an *abductive* approach. This means that the study’s theoretical framework and methodology partly were developed before the analysis process and partly during the analysis process (Wodak and Meyer, 2016b). The purpose of doing so was to provide the study with the most useful theoretical and methodological tools in order to answer the research questions.

van Dijk (2015) differentiates between the *micro* and the *macro* as different levels of analysis. While societal structures belong to the macro level, specific texts belong to the micro level. Exploring the relationship between these two levels of analysis is an essential part of
CDA studies in general. According to van Dijk (2015), micro and macro levels of analysis can be connected by viewing individual language users as members of certain social groups, and vice versa. Another way is to view individual discursive events as parts of larger social processes, such as the reproduction of stereotypes of certain groups of people.

5.5 Sampling procedure

5.5.1 Purposeful sampling

According to Silverman (2017), purposeful sampling implies providing a study with the most useful cases based on the research question(s) in the least resource consuming way. This study makes use of the three purposeful sampling strategies criterion sampling, theoretical sampling, and maximum variation sampling.

Criterion sampling is used when cases that meet certain criteria are included in a study (Patton, 1990). In this study, the two time periods and the search term “unaccompanied” were used as sampling criteria.

Theoretical sampling consists of three stages (Silverman, 2017). First, it implies selecting units that represents certain aspects that are relevant in relation to the study’s theoretical framework. Second, deviant sampling units that are expected to challenge the theoretical framework should be included in order to provide the study potentially unexpected insights. Third, the researcher should, based on the analysis, consider including new units that can provide more information about certain characteristics, or focus on a narrower set of units that may be more informative in certain aspects.

Maximum variation sampling means to gather empirical data from as varied cases as possible (Patton, 1990). In this study, the newspapers’ various geographical spread and their different political stances, ensure maximum variation.

5.5.2 Sampling process

In order to find the most information-rich data to answer the research questions for this study, the two time periods 2015-09-28 – 2015-11-29 and 2018-07-09 – 2018-09-09 were chosen. The first time period, 2015-09-28 – 2015-11-29, was chosen based on the fact that more than 35,000 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in Sweden in 2015, most of them in October and November (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2016). Additionally, on November 24, Sweden’s new restrictive asylum policy was announced (Migrationsverket, 2018a). In order to include what was written in the newspapers about this change, the time period ends five days after the
announcement. The second time period, 2018-07-09 – 2018-09-09, was chosen in order to compare how unaccompanied youth were represented in late 2015 with how they were represented during the national election campaign that took place in the middle of 2018.

Following the abductive approach that is applied in this study, sampling decisions have been taken both before and during the analysis process. While the two time periods as well as the newspapers were selected before the analysis was conducted, the exact lengths of the two time periods were decided after an initial overview of the number of articles published during each time period.

5.6 Research data

The reason why newspapers are chosen as data in this study is because they can be expected to affect people’s mental concepts of unaccompanied youth. As stated by Lawlor (2015), media representations play an extra important role as sources of information for people’s constructions of opinions on matters which they lack personal experiences of, which can be expected in the case of unaccompanied youth. Even though the importance of social media has increased over time, news media are still the main source of information about politics and society (Strömbäck et al., 2017). Newspapers in particular do still hold a central position when it comes to feeding and affecting other media types (Cock et al., 2018).

Although media habits have evolved and changed considerably since the 1990’s when for instance van Dijk (1991) and Fairclough (1995) published their works, newspapers do still offer an accessible and broad range of dominant as well as challenging discourses on refugees and asylum seekers. The fact that these discourses today can be found also on other media platforms, such as social media, does not make texts published in print of less importance.

5.6.1 Seven Swedish newspapers

The newspapers that are included in this study (see figure 1) have been chosen based on a number of criteria. First, they represent a broad political spectrum ranging from left to far-right. Second, the sample consists of four national (Aftonbladet, Dagens ETC, Dagens Nyheter, and Nya Tider) and three local newspapers (Gotlands Tidningar, Upsala Nya Tidning, and Västerbottens-Kuriren). Third, there is a variety when it comes to the owners of the newspapers. Fourth, the three local newspapers are each situated in regions which received a substantial number of unaccompanied youths in 2015 (Migrationsverket, 2019a), while they also cover a diverse geographical area consisting of small towns, rural parts, and relatively large towns. In
addition, the three local newspapers represent the three main geographical regions in Sweden: Gotland (Southern Sweden), Svealand (Central Sweden), and Norrland (Northern Sweden).

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aftonbladet</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>515 000</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Social democratic</td>
<td>Schibsted Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagens ETC</td>
<td>9 100</td>
<td>65 000</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>ETC Utveckling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagens Nyheter</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>583 000</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Bonnier AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gotlands Tidningar</td>
<td>10 200</td>
<td>23 000</td>
<td>Local (Gotland)</td>
<td>Social democratic</td>
<td>NTM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nya Tider</td>
<td>6 300</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Nationalist right-wing</td>
<td>AlternaMedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upsala Nya Tidning</td>
<td>40 200</td>
<td>103 000</td>
<td>Local (Uppsala County)</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>NTM and UNT Förvaltning AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Västerbottens-Kuriren</td>
<td>27 300</td>
<td>63 000</td>
<td>Local (Västerbotten)</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>VK Press</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Overview of the newspapers that are included in the study.

In figure 1, each newspaper is assigned to a certain political stance. This is both based on what political stance the newspapers themselves proclaim they belong to and on the content they publish. All newspapers are daily newspapers except Nya Tider, which is a weekly newspaper. The edition sizes of Aftonbladet and Dagens Nyheter are unknown, as is the number of people Nya Tider reach per day.

\(^1\) Including digital version of the newspaper.
5.6.2 Data gathering

All articles except the ones published in Nya Tider (see below) were gathered through the database Mediearkivet/Retriever. The word “ensamkommande” (unaccompanied) was used as search query. The query was searched for during the two time periods 2015-09-28 – 2015-11-29 and 2018-07-09 – 2018-09-09 separately. This resulted in 383 articles (210 542 words) published in the former period and 114 articles (84 243 words) in the latter (see figure 2). All 497 articles were saved (metadata deselected) in the Rich Text Format (RTF).

Since Nya Tider was not available on Mediearkivet/Retriever, all articles published in the 18 issues of the newspaper during the two time periods were manually examined line by line at the National Library of Sweden (Kungliga Biblioteket). A total number of 21 articles (10 from 2015, 11 from 2018) including the query “ensamkommande” (unaccompanied) were scanned and saved on a USB memory (in PDF format).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aftonbladet (Social democratic, national)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagens ETC (Left-wing, national)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagens Nyheter (Liberal, national)</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gotlands Tidningar (Social democratic, local)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upsala Nya Tidning (Liberal, local)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Västerbottens-Kuriren (Liberal, local)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nya Tider (Nationalist right-wing, national)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In total</strong></td>
<td><strong>383</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Number of gathered articles.*

5.6.3 Data management

Two separate corpora were created to prepare the articles for the corpus linguistic analysis: one containing all articles published in 2015 (N = 383), and another containing all articles published in 2018 (N = 114). Although metadata was deselected when the articles were saved from Mediearkivet/Retriever, some metadata concerning copyright was still left. This metadata was deleted manually. The articles published in Nya Tider were converted from image files (PDF) into text files (RTF) by importing them to Google Docs. All errors that were generated by this conversion were edited manually.
In order to sort out the most information-rich articles for the qualitative analysis, the search results were sorted in Mediearkivet/Retriever by the sorting option “most relevant”. This sorting makes use of the FAST ESP ranking system which ranks search results according to their relevance for the query. Factors that affect the ranking are for instance the occurrence of the query term in each article in relation to the total occurrences of the query term in the data (Fast Search & Transfer, Inc., 2008). The top 15 articles published in each newspaper during the two respective time periods were gathered into 14 documents, one for each period and newspaper. If any of the newspapers had published less than 15 articles containing the word “unaccompanied” during one or both time periods, all articles were gathered. The decision to set the number of articles to 15 was based on the assumption that that number of articles would provide the analysis with enough data in order to achieve data saturation. However, it turned out in the analysis process that data saturation was achieved already when 10 articles from each newspaper and period had been analyzed.

5.7 Analytical tools
This study combines critical discourse analysis (CDA) with corpus linguistics (CL), in order to achieve an analysis of both depth and width. As has been stated by Baker et al. (2008), combining CDA with CL is a way to reduce personal bias, which may affect any qualitative analysis. In the present study, the CL consists of a word combinations analysis which is combined with the CDA analytical tools topic analysis, keyword analysis, metaphor analysis, and lexical oppositions analysis. The section below presents the operationalization of the four research questions. Each analytical tool is further described in the sections that follow.

5.7.1 Unaccompanied youth as a social actor
According to the Swedish Migration Agency, an asylum seeker is a citizen who has arrived in a foreign country and applied for asylum, whereas a refugee is a citizen who have got a residence permit (Migrationsverket, 2015). However, in the Swedish newspapers, the word “refugee” was used both when it referred to refugees as well as asylum seekers. Moreover, “unaccompanied refugee children” and “unaccompanied” were interchangeably used when referring to the group unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee minors. In order to make the text more readable, this study makes use of the terms “unaccompanied youth”, “unaccompanied minors”, “unaccompanied children” and “unaccompanied refugee children” when it refers to unaccompanied youth who have applied for asylum in Sweden as minors. While there are unaccompanied youths in various ages, the vast majority of unaccompanied minors who applied
for asylum in Sweden between 2015 and 2018 were above the age of 13, and many youths in this group have now turned 18 (Migrationsverket, 2019a).

5.7.2 Operationalization of research questions

1. What topics were unaccompanied youth connected with?
The first research question is examined by a combination of a quantitative analysis of the most frequently used word combinations and a qualitative analysis of what topics unaccompanied youth were connected with in the articles. While the word combinations analysis enabled an analysis of a large number of articles automatically, the manual analysis of topics in a smaller number of articles enabled a deeper understanding of the topics and how they were connected with unaccompanied youth.

2. How were unaccompanied youth represented linguistically?
The second research question is answered by the three linguistic tools keyword analysis, metaphor analysis, and lexical opposition analysis. These three linguistic tools were chosen because they complement each other and contribute to an information rich analysis that puts focus on the various dimensions of how unaccompanied youth were represented linguistically.

3. What differences and similarities appeared between the different types of newspapers?
The different types of newspapers were compared based on the analytical aspects described above. This comparison was mainly conducted on micro text level in the analysis chapter, while it had a broader macro level perspective in the concluding discussion.

4. What differences and similarities were found between the two time periods?
The analysis chapter is divided into two main parts: one in which all articles published in 2015 are analyzed and one in which all articles published in 2018 are analyzed. This structuring of the analysis enabled a comparison between the two time periods in all analytical aspects, in the analysis chapter as well as in the concluding discussion.

5.7.3 Word combinations analysis
Words are arguably the most basic meaning making element in a text. What words we use to describe a certain phenomenon, and how these words are combined with other words – affect how we perceive that phenomenon (Boréus and Seiler Brylla, 2018). The word combinations analysis in this study was conducted in the text analysis software MAXQDA, version 18.2. In MAXQDA, the two corpora were analyzed separately by using the analytical tool “Word combinations”. The number of word combinations was set to 4 to 5 words, differentiation was set to “None”, the box “Only word combinations within sentences” was checked, and no stop
list was applied. These settings resulted in two tables consisting of the 15 most common word combinations that appeared in the articles during the two time periods. In order to display these word combinations more graphically, word clouds were generated based on each list of the 15 most common word combinations. The more frequent a certain word combination appeared in the articles, the bigger it is in the word clouds. However, the sizes of the word combinations are based on their ranking (1 to 15) in the list of the 15 most common word combinations, which means that the sizes of the word combinations in the word clouds are not necessarily proportional to how frequent they appear in the articles. The most common word combinations were translated into English, making the word combinations analysis more understandable for non-Swedish readers.

The word combinations analysis indicates what topics the word “unaccompanied” was associated with in the corpora, while it also contributes to reducing personal bias and provides the reader with information about the whole dataset, what Silverman refers to as “the flavour of the data as a whole” (Silverman, 2017, p. 396). What is important to remember, however, is that an automated analysis conducted in a software only provides information that is countable. While this kind of CL tool can be useful to analyze large datasets, it does not inform the analyst about the larger context in which the phrases were used. Therefore, Boréus and Seiler Brylla (2018) suggest CL to be combined with qualitative methods that take whole texts and their contexts into consideration. Hence, the word combinations analysis was combined with the following four qualitative analytical methods: topic analysis, metaphor analysis, lexical oppositions analysis, and keyword analysis.

5.7.4 Topic analysis
According to van Dijk (2015), one way of exercising power over other groups is by controlling what topics are covered in media, and what new topics are introduced. As noted by van Dijk, all discursive expressions are not always parts of larger power relations; this relationship is dependent on in what context a certain discursive event appears. This means that what overall topics were covered in the newspaper articles, can contribute both to what features unaccompanied youth were associated with as well as inform other analytical approaches about the context in which the discursive expressions appeared.

5.7.5 Metaphors: metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors
Metaphors are terms commonly used within certain fields that replaces terms that are used in other fields. They are used both consciously and unconsciously in order to make concepts easier
to grasp (van Dijk, 2015). Normally, the transition occurs from the familiar to the less experienced and abstract (Boréus and Seiler Brylla, 2018). In the expression “you are my sunshine”, the word “sunshine” is an example of a metaphor.

Boréus and Seiler Brylla (2018) differ between metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors. Metaphorical expressions can refer to ideas, feelings, or things that are explicitly replaced with certain terms commonly used in other fields, as in the expression “you are my sunshine”. Conceptual metaphors, on the other hand, are more general collective agreements within a language community about explaining a certain phenomenon in terms of something else. They can be found in a text by searching for metaphorical expressions that support a more general conceptual metaphor. The conceptual metaphor “TIME IS MONEY” can for instance be expressed in terms of people spending, borrowing, or wasting time (as seen in this example, conceptual metaphors are written in capital letters). According to Boréus and Seiler Brylla (2018), conceptual metaphors affect how people perceive reality by stressing certain aspects of a phenomenon and downplaying others. Because of the indirect way of representing unaccompanied youth metaphorically, only conceptual metaphors were examined in the analysis.

5.7.6 Lexical oppositions

Another way of constituting discourse is by using lexical oppositions such as “us and them”. Lexical oppositions are often characterized by positive self-presentation (us) and negative other-presentation (them). These oppositions constitute an understanding of society as being divided into competing groups, where the in-group (us) is superior to the out-group (them). (Boréus and Seiler Brylla, 2018)

5.7.7 A keyword analysis of unaccompanied youth as a social actor

According to Boréus and Seiler Brylla (2018), keywords are characterized by being frequently used and in focus of a communication process, and they are often parts of a semantic struggle. While keywords can entail information about different groups’ ideas about a phenomenon, the way they are used also influences meaning making within a language community. They work as important signs in the communication process as they highlight certain aspects and deemphasize others. Because of their importance, the meanings of keywords are continuously negotiated between language users. These negotiations of meanings can take the form of various compositions with other words, as well as alternative ways of expressing the keyword itself. The negotiations of keywords’ meanings are also notable when it comes to various types
of meta linguistics, such as using the term “so called”, certain layout for the keyword, or to write keywords within citations (“x”).

In order to analyze how unaccompanied minors have been referred to, a modified keyword analysis focusing on the representation of unaccompanied minors as a social actor is applied. Based on Whetten and Mackey (2002), social actors are defined as individuals, groups of people, or organizations that act and are represented in certain ways in a text. By using the concept social actor, the analysis does not only look into how a specific word (such as “unaccompanied”) was used, but how unaccompanied youth were referred to as a social actor.

5.7.8 The coding process

Based on the qualitative analytical tools that are described above, 10 articles from each newspaper2 and period were analyzed systematically, according to the following coding scheme:

**Topic analysis:** What topics were unaccompanied youth connected with?

**Metaphor analysis:** What conceptual metaphors were used for unaccompanied youth?

**Analysis of lexical oppositions:** What lexical oppositions related to unaccompanied youth can be identified?

**Keyword analysis:** What words and meta linguistics were used when unaccompanied youth were referred to? What characteristics were unaccompanied youth associated with?

Based on the coding scheme above, the articles were coded by the use of the text analysis software MAXQDA. Categories belonging to each analytical aspect emerged inductively and were then sorted into main themes. The first step of the coding was to code the top five articles in each newspaper published in 2015, according to the FAST ESP ranking system described above. Once a new category emerged, previously analyzed articles were re-examined. Next, five articles from each newspaper published in 2018 were analyzed. When all top five articles in each newspaper had been analyzed, the following five articles in each newspaper were examined. This procedure resulted in a total number of 70 analyzed articles published in 2015 and 69 analyzed articles published in 2018. At that point, the patterns in the analysis had been stabilized and no new themes emerged, why data saturation as it is defined by Creswell and Creswell (2018) was considered to have been reached. The purpose of doing the coding

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2 Except for Västerbottens-Kuriren during the 2018 time period, since no more than 9 articles contained the word “unaccompanied” during that period.
iteratively was to enable new categories to be identified as well as detect any inconsistencies in the coding. Mixing the order in which the newspapers were coded reduced the risk of coding inconsistency due to stepwise changes in how the articles were interpreted.

All quotes that are used as examples of different themes in the analysis chapter have been translated into English. While this means that the quotes in fact are translations of quotes and therefore are a step away from the study’s primary sources, the translation process was considered to be necessary in order to make the study meaningful also for non-Swedish readers. Misspellings were corrected in the translation process.

5.8 Methodological considerations
5.8.1 The research question
This study aims to answer the following main research question:

*How were unaccompanied youth represented in Swedish newspapers during the two time periods September 28, 2015 – November 29, 2015 and July 9, 2018 – September 9, 2018?*

Of course, it is challenging to answer that question with certainty. How could one know how unaccompanied youth were represented in *all* Swedish newspapers when the data is gathered from only seven newspapers? And why does the study only include some aspects of representation and ignore others? While this critique is relevant, avoiding asking this type of broad research questions because they are not possible to answer with 100 percent certainty, would result in research where only snippets of society are studied and no major issues are dealt with. Having said that, the strengths of the conclusions that are drawn in this study are only as strong as its readers value the relevance of the gathered data and how the study’s theory and methodology are applied.

5.8.2 Unequal treatment of data
Unlike the other newspapers, *Nya Tider* was not searchable on Mediearkivet/Retriever. As mentioned above, this resulted in that the articles published in *Nya Tider* were gathered manually instead of automatically. The choice to include the newspaper despite this methodological concern was based on two reasons. First, *Nya Tider* is the largest nationalist right-wing printed newspaper in Sweden; choosing not to include it would have meant that the representations of unaccompanied youth in this type of newspapers would have remained unknown. Second, the hours that I spent on close reading the 18 issues of *Nya Tider* provided
me as analyst insights into what kind of language and content were common in the newspaper, which enabled a more fruitful analysis.

5.8.3 “Unaccompanied” as search term
By using the term “unaccompanied” (ensamkommande) as search term, articles that exclusively used other terms when referring to the social actor group unaccompanied youth, may have been excluded from this study. However, the manual search in Nya Tider resulted in only one (1) article that referred to unaccompanied youth without including the search term “unaccompanied”. Instead of including the term “unaccompanied”, the article only used the terms “Afghans” and “Afghan men”. This is an especially interesting notion since Nya Tider clearly was the one newspaper that used the most alternative ways of referring to unaccompanied youth and even questioned the very term “unaccompanied”. Still, it is not completely unlikely that an unknown number of articles that only included terms such as “refugee children” were excluded from the analysis due to the chosen search term.

5.8.4 Personal bias
As has been mentioned in the theoretical framework above, one aspect of a critical discourse study is to be open about one’s own positioning (Wodak and Meyer, 2016b). Therefore, I want to declare that I am critical to stereotypical representations of unaccompanied youth, as well as the ideological underpinnings that these stereotypes are results of. At the same time, I have put effort in the analysis to not go “too far” from what is actually written in the articles. This has at times been challenging, since qualitative text analysis to a large extent is to declare what is not explicitly expressed in a text. I also want to declare that two persons who are quoted in the study are acquaintances of mine, namely Lisa Pelling and Lisa Skiöld. The reason why their quotes are included in the study is because they contribute to the analysis in essential ways. Hence, excluding them would have meant that personal relationships would have affected the study.
5.9 The study’s credibility

In this section, the two concepts validity and reliability are used to explain in what ways this study’s credibility has been ensured.

5.9.1 Validity

Validity is defined by Silverman (2017) as referring to the credibility of a researcher’s interpretations. Silverman identifies anecdotalism as the main challenge for qualitative researchers who attempt to achieve credible interpretations. It occurs when an analyst chooses a few well-fitting examples to represent a whole dataset. This study makes use of the following three strategies suggested by Silverman (2017) to avoid anecdotalism and strengthen the study’s validity:

- **The constant comparative method**: Different types of data should be analyzed and compared in order to verify or reject initial findings. In this study, the iterative analysis process has resulted in a constant comparison of various representations of unaccompanied youth and thereby enabled consistency in the interpretation of these representations.

- **Deviant case analysis**: Deviant cases should be identified and closer examined in order to put new light to a certain theory or an assumed relationship. Examining deviant cases has benefited this study in two aspects. Firstly, deviant cases have contributed to underline the diversity in the analyzed material. Secondly, the identification of deviant representations of unaccompanied youth have contributed to clarify what unifies the overall representations.

- **Simple tabulation**: By presenting some aspects in a simple tabulation, the researcher effectively provides the reader with information about the whole dataset instead of just a few examples. The two word combinations analyses presented in the analysis chapter below are intended to give the reader a picture of the representations overall.

5.9.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to “the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions” (Hammersley as quoted in Silverman, 2017, p. 383). In this study, three methodological strategies have been applied in order to ensure the study’s reliability. First of all, the use of the coding scheme
described above has clarified what questions have been asked in the text analysis. Secondly, the iterative analysis process has resulted in a constant comparison of the categories throughout the analysis. Finally, the use of a text analysis software has made it easier to keep track of all categories and further ensured consistency in the analysis process.

5.10 Ethical considerations
All newspaper articles that are quoted in this study have already been published in newspapers that anyone can access. This means that every individual who appears in this study with his/her name, has already gone public when the newspapers were published. While this circumstance means that this study does not reveal any names that have not been revealed before, it does not ensure that no individual could be harmed as a result of their name appearing in this study. The Swedish Research Council emphasize that research on vulnerable groups such as children should not be executed if it can be conducted on less vulnerable groups (Vetenskapsrådet, 2018). Since this study is about how unaccompanied youth were represented in Swedish newspapers, it has not been possible to exclude that group from the thesis. Moreover, to exclude unaccompanied youth who are name given in the articles, could contribute to an anonymization of the group rather than representing them as real individuals. Finally, the Swedish Research Council emphasize that insignificant harm may be justified in order to achieve important findings concerning people’s quality of life (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017), which this study intends to do.

5.11 Limitations
This study is not an attempt of being objective and “value-free”. As pointed out by Guba and Lincoln (1994), there is no value-free social science; decisions that are taken in any research project are not guided simply by objective theoretical concepts, but by values. Rather than claiming objectivity, this study attempts to be open and explicit about its ontological, epistemological and theoretical understandings of the world. However, being open about one’s view of society does not prevent a study from any personal bias that does not derive from the theoretical or methodological concepts that are explicitly defined. In order to reduce such personal bias, the analysis has been conducted systematically following the analytical steps that are described in this chapter. The automated word combinations analysis has also contributed to reduce any personal bias.
When it comes to the reproduction of discourse, researchers’ influence on public discourse should not be neglected, why the critique of CDA studies as reproducing the discourses they attempt to criticize is worth taking into consideration. However, if the main contribution of a study that criticizes a discriminatory discourse would be its own contribution to that discriminatory discourse, then it has not succeeded in the formulation of its critique.
6. Analysis

This chapter is divided into two main parts by time period: the first part consists of an analysis of Swedish newspapers’ representations of unaccompanied youth in late 2015 and the second part consists of an analysis of the representations of unaccompanied youth in the middle of 2018. The two time periods are analyzed separately according to the following structure: 1) Frequent word combinations analysis, 2) Topic analysis, 3) Metaphor analysis, 4) Lexical oppositions analysis, 5) Keyword analysis: words and metalinguistics, and 6) Keyword analysis: characteristics. In order to make the text readable for people who do not understand Swedish, quotations have been translated into English.

As has been discussed in the methodology chapter above, this thesis uses the terms “unaccompanied minors”, “unaccompanied children”, “unaccompanied refugee children” and “unaccompanied youth” interchangeably when referring to youth and children who have applied for asylum in Sweden as unaccompanied minors. This is in accordance with the approach of analyzing the group of unaccompanied youth as a social actor (further explained in the methodology chapter). The reason why the thesis does not simply use one of the terms is because that would be incoherent with how the group is referred to in the newspaper articles.

6.1 The representation of unaccompanied youth in 2015

This section consists of both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of how unaccompanied youth were represented in Swedish newspapers between 2015-09-28 and 2015-11-29. The quantitative analysis covers the most frequently used word combinations and is based on 383 articles containing the word “unaccompanied”. The qualitative analysis, which is divided into five different analytical approaches, is based on 70 articles containing the word “unaccompanied”.


6.1.1 What were the most frequent word combinations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Word combination</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>boende för ensamkommande flyktingbarn</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>för ensamkommande flyktingbarn i</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>sökt asyl i sverige</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ett boende för ensamkommande</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>söka asyl i sverige</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>som kommer till sverige</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>hittills i år har</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>att ta hand om</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>myndigheten för samhällsskydd och</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>boende för ensamkommande flyktingbarn i</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>ett boende för ensamkommande flyktingbarn</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>för samhällsskydd och beredskap</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>att det finns en</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>för att ta emot</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: The 15 most frequently used word combinations in articles containing the word “unaccompanied”, published between 2015-09-28 and 2015-11-29.

The above table (Table 3) shows the 15 most frequently used word combinations consisting of four to five words that appeared in articles in which the word “unaccompanied” (ensamkommande) was used. As displayed in the table, the top three most frequently used word combinations in the articles published during the time period 2015-09-28 – 2015-11-29 were: “accommodations for unaccompanied refugee children” (boende för ensamkommande flyktingbarn, N = 40), “for unaccompanied refugee children in” (för ensamkommande flyktingbarn i, N = 28), and “applied for asylum in Sweden” (sökt asyl i Sverige, N = 27).
Figure 1: Word cloud of the 15 most frequently used word combinations in articles containing the word “unaccompanied”, published between 2015-09-28 and 2015-11-29.

The word cloud above (Figure 1) visualizes the frequencies of the 15 most frequently used word combinations. The font sizes of the word combinations are based on the ranking of each word combination in the above list (Table 3), ranging from 1 (largest) to 15 (smallest) – where 1 is the most frequently used and 15 is the least frequently used.

The word cloud indicates that the most frequent topic in articles about unaccompanied youth concerns their accommodations. Apart from the most frequently used word combination “accommodations for unaccompanied refugee children”, three other top 15 word combinations also refer to accommodations in various ways: “an accommodation for unaccompanied” (ett boende för ensamkommande, N = 26), “accommodations for unaccompanied refugee children in” (boende för ensamkommande flyktingbarn i, N = 22), and “an accommodation for unaccompanied refugee children” (ett boende för ensamkommande flyktingbarn, N = 21). The second most common type of word combination concerns the number of asylum seekers who had applied, and would apply for, asylum in Sweden that year: “applied for asylum in Sweden” (sökt asyl i Sverige, N = 27), “apply for asylum in Sweden” (söka asyl i Sverige, N = 23), and
“so far this year” (hittills i år, N = 23). A typical sentence including two of these expressions was published in Dagens Nyheter, November 14, 2015: “So far this year, 27 000 unaccompanied children have applied for asylum” (Hittills i år har 27 000 ensamkommande barn sökt asyl i Sverige). Notably, “to take care of” (“att ta hand om”, N = 23) was one of the most frequently used word combinations, indicating a sense of empathy and willingness to help unaccompanied refugee children. In the qualitative analysis that follows, the most frequently used word combinations are placed in both a text specific as well as a wider societal context.

6.1.2 What topics were unaccompanied youth connected with?
The three most dominant topics related to unaccompanied youth that appeared in articles published in 2015 were accommodations, financial issues, and willingness to help.

**Accommodations**
As indicated by the word combinations analysis above, accommodations was the single most common topic in connection with unaccompanied youth in 2015, noticed in all newspapers. The topic was mainly referred to in terms of a challenge that was facing Swedish municipalities. By stating that something causes a “challenge” is often another way of saying that it is causing a problem. By repeating this statement in article after article, Swedish newspapers contributed to establishing the idea that unaccompanied youth caused Swedish municipalities problems in terms of finding accommodations.

The refugee crisis is a fact. As is the shortage of accommodations and sleeping places for those who have entered Sweden. The shortage is so great that the municipalities are desperately forced to place children in accommodations with staggering prices.

*(Aftonbladet, 2015-10-14)*

The quote above is from a news article published in the national social democratic newspaper *Aftonbladet* in which the issue of accommodations for unaccompanied youth is portrayed as causing Swedish municipalities serious problems by costing them large amounts of money. The fact that many unaccompanied youths had entered Sweden recently is stated as “a fact”, making it appear as something natural without any causes. According to the article, this “fact” had some serious impact on Swedish municipalities who were “desperately forced to place children” in expensive accommodations. Furthermore, the article presents a story in which everything started when a large number of unaccompanied children and other asylum seekers entered
Sweden and that this “fact” has made Swedish municipalities desperate in their efforts to find accommodations for these people. Hence, it was not the unaccompanied children who had fled their countries and possibly were without shelter who were represented as the ones being desperate.

**REFUGEES:** An average of 15-25 unaccompanied refugee children a week are forced to move to Uppsala. “Finding accommodations for them is a huge challenge”, says Kjerstin Tejre at the social service. *(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2015-10-13)*

The above quote – published in the local liberal newspaper *Upsala Nya Tidning* – is another example of a news article in which finding accommodations for unaccompanied children was represented as a challenge for a Swedish municipality, not for the unaccompanied children who had fled to Sweden. The excerpt below, from the nationalist right-wing newspaper *Nya Tider*, takes the idea that Swedish authorities are the ones in need a step further.

**THE ODD COUNTRY:** The shortage of places for asylum immigrants is so acute that newly arrivals may have to sleep in the Migration Agency’s receptions, Lunchekot [radio news, author’s note] reports.

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The Odd Country: The shortage of places for asylum immigrants is so acute that newly arrivals may have to sleep in the Migration Agency’s receptions, Lunchekot [radio news, author’s note] reports.

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-- There are some of our own spaces and receptions that we have to use temporarily while we try to find better places for accommodation. And that is of course a challenge, says Willis Åberg, the person responsible at the agency for finding accommodation places. *(Nya Tider, 2015-11-10)*

By stating that Sweden is an “ODD COUNTRY” because its authorities are willing to do what they can to find a place to sleep for unaccompanied youth and other asylum seekers, it declares that the problem is the country’s willingness to help these people. Accordingly, the lack of accommodations for unaccompanied youth and other asylum seekers was *not* the main problem.

**Willingness to help**

As indicated by the frequency of the word combination “to take care of” (att ta hand om) in the word combinations analysis above, the second most common topic was people’s willingness to help unaccompanied youth, noted in all newspapers. In the editorial below, published in the national liberal newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, the author requests a policy that makes it easier for citizens to let unaccompanied refugee children into their homes and points to the great
The commitment that is mentioned above, was also noticed in articles published in local newspapers, giving an impression of whole communities gathering together in order to help unaccompanied children in need.

However, it is not just those who come into contact with unaccompanied children in their profession who have come to listen. […]
– The voluntary community is a huge part of the reception. The number of volunteers has increased, and it is fantastic. It feels like in the 60's, such a gathering in society that mobilizes and sees the need, says Lisa Skiöld.
(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2015-11-11)

In the interview quoted above, Lisa Skiöld, a representative of a local child organization in Uppsala, presents an image of a growing voluntary community “like in the 60’s” that “sees the need” and wants to improve the reception of unaccompanied children. Only a couple of weeks after the interview with Skiöld, an opinion piece with a completely different tone and perspective on the future was published in the national left-wing newspaper Dagens ETC. The piece comments the Swedish government’s more restrictive asylum and migration policy, which was introduced on November 24, 2015.

Sad and depressing today. And tomorrow we will start from all over again! Will never stop believing in the good, in humanity and empathy with those who flee from war and injustice!!!
(Dagens ETC, 2015-11-26)

Compared to other articles in this category, the opinion piece above is deviant in the sense that it is not about any ongoing solidarity activity. Instead, it describes a drawback for those who
believe in a humane asylum policy. Skiöld’s encouraging and vivid description of a solidarity movement “like in the 60’s”, is in the opinion piece replaced with sadness and hopelessness, although the article author believes in a comeback “tomorrow” for “humanity and empathy”.

Financial issues
While financial issues were noticed in all newspapers, the topic was discussed from two main perspectives. The focus was either on companies that were making money on unaccompanied youth’s accommodations or on how to finance the reception of unaccompanied youth. In the following news article, Aleris – a company owned by the wealthy Wallenberg family (TT, 2018) – is mentioned as an example of a company making money on offering accommodations for unaccompanied minors.

MAKING MONEY ON THE CRISIS: The lack of accommodations makes municipalities desperately forced to place unaccompanied refugee children at accommodations with expensive price tags. For example, the Wallenberg-owned Aleris takes 84,000 SEK per month to place one child in a family residence.

(Aftonbladet, 2015-10-14)

By mentioning the company’s wealthy owner Wallenberg in contrast to the unaccompanied children that were in need of shelter, the article underlines wealthy companies’ eagerness to make money on children in need. Similarly, the news article below also highlights the possibility for companies to make money on unaccompanied children.

This year, some 40,000 unaccompanied refugee children are expected to seek asylum in Sweden. In a short period of time, a lucrative business has evolved in connection to the children and many want a part of the cake.

(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2015-11-18)

In the article below, a collection done during a fundraising TV gala is put in relation to the total cost of receiving unaccompanied refugee children.

A TV gala called ”Sweden collects”, collected 40 million [SEK, author’s note]. But for how long do we endure this? As a perspective, Morgan Johansson (S) is telling that the places for the unaccompanied refugee children have cost the state 9 billion [SEK, author’s note] so far in 2015 and that is even before the end of the year. (Nya Tider, 2015-10-20)
When the question “How long do we endure?” is asked in the quote above, it is presumed that “we” consist of the Swedes, and that “we” are struggling in order to afford the reception of “them”, the unaccompanied children. Stating that unaccompanied refugee children are “them” in need of “our” money, is a way of constructing the binary opposition unaccompanied youth/Swedes. In this light, the question “for how long do we endure this?” appears to be natural to ask.

6.1.3 What conceptual metaphors were used to refer to unaccompanied youth? The two most commonly used conceptual metaphors for unaccompanied youth were UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WEIGHTS\(^3\) and UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WATER. UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS GOLD was noticed as a deviant conceptual metaphor.

**UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WEIGHTS**
The conceptual metaphor UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WEIGHTS was noticed in all newspapers except *Nya Tider* and *Dagens ETC*. It was mostly used in terms of the burden, or pressure, unaccompanied youth supposedly put on the national budget and on Swedish municipalities. The news article quoted below describes the situation in Stockholm in November 2015.

> The city is gearing up to cope with the refugee crisis and to take care of the unaccompanied children. Only the accommodations require 300 services and new major recruitments are about to be made. The large number of people coming to Sweden right now puts pressure on municipalities all around the country.
> *(Dagens Nyheter, 2015-11-02)*

Note how the large number of refugees entering Sweden is described in terms of “pressure” that is put on Swedish municipalities. This “pressure” comes from the weight constituted by “unaccompanied children”. In other words, the large number of unaccompanied children constitute a heavy problem for Swedish municipalities that they need to cope with. By representing unaccompanied children in these terms, they appear as a problem rather than a vulnerable group of people who have had to leave their countries. This is also valid for the news

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\(^3\) As has been mentioned in the methodology chapter, conceptual metaphors are written in capitalized letters.
article below about the new asylum and migration policy presented by the Swedish government the day before the article was published.

In addition to ID checks on buses and trains to Sweden and increased dependency requirements on family immigrants, several changes aim to reduce the pressure from the unaccompanied refugee children.

(Aftonbladet, 2015-11-25)

As in the previous article, the weight that puts pressure on Swedish municipalities consists of “unaccompanied refugee children”. The article above foresees a future in which this weight is “reduced”. In the next quote, published in the local liberal newspaper Västerbottens-Kuriren, unaccompanied minors and other asylum seekers are once again represented in terms of weights. This time, the reader does not have to draw the conclusion that pressure is something that constitutes a problem, since that is expressed explicitly.

Such pressure on the refugee reception has never existed and he thinks that the municipalities should be proud of how they deal with the problems and try to do their best.

(Västerbottens-Kuriren, 2015-11-26)

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WATER

Previous studies have shown that water is a common conceptual metaphor for refugees and immigrants (Abid et al., 2017; Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2009). This was also the case in Swedish newspapers’ representations of unaccompanied youth in 2015. The conceptual metaphor UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WATER was noticed in Dagens Nyheter, Gotlands Tidningar, Upsala Nya Tidning, and Västerbottens-Kuriren. This conceptual metaphor was mainly used as a way to describe the entry of a large number of people to either Sweden or to certain Swedish municipalities, as in the articles below.

Norrtälje municipality cannot handle the stream of unaccompanied refugee children. (…)
– We cannot do what the law requires of us, says Catarina Odenberg, acting chief administrative officer.

(Dagens Nyheter, 2015-10-21)

In the news article quoted above, “the stream” of unaccompanied refugee children is described as being so steady that the Norrtälje municipality cannot handle the situation any longer.
UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WATER is used in a similar way in the editorial below, published in the local social democratic newspaper *Gotlands Tidningar*.

We have previously received newly arrived people with residence permits, unaccompanied refugee children, and young people. The increased influx has caused the Migration Agency to change its earlier plans to go through agreements with the region and negotiate the accommodations by itself.

(*Gotlands Tidningar, 2015-11-20*)

In the following news article, refugees and unaccompanied children are represented in terms of both a wave and as a stream, making the conceptual metaphor UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WATER even more obvious.

This wave of refugees and unaccompanied children has challenged the entire police and social services, says Mehdi. He still thinks that today's refugee stream has contributed to a more tolerant society.

(*Västerbottens-Kuriren, 2015-11-26*)

The use of the conceptual metaphor UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WATER contributes to establish the stereotype of unaccompanied children as consisting of a large mass, rather than individual human beings. As has been noted by Abid et al. (2017), the water metaphor makes groups of people appear as masses rather than individuals. It thereby contributes to dehumanize the groups that are referred to.

**UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS GOLD**

Although the conceptual metaphor UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS GOLD only appeared in the two newspapers *Dagens ETC* and *Dagens Nyheter*, it is interesting as a deviant conceptual metaphor for unaccompanied youth. As in the article below, all articles in which the conceptual metaphor UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS GOLD was noticed, used it as an illustration of how corporations were making profit on unaccompanied youth.
Taking care of unaccompanied refugee children is a gold mine for companies. In the past, Dagens ETC has told about Aleris who in Gothenburg takes SEK 2 700 per day and child for their accommodations in Gothenburg. Based on the Migration Board's latest figures saying that 14 000 unaccompanied refugee children have come to Sweden this year, there is no indication that the profitable trend will be broken.

(Dagens ETC, 2015-10-09)

6.1.4 What lexical oppositions were constructed in relation to unaccompanied youth?
The three most common lexical oppositions were: unaccompanied youth vs other public expenditures, unaccompanied youth vs refugees in neighboring countries, and unaccompanied youth vs Swedes. While the lexical opposition unaccompanied youth vs other public expenditures appeared in a majority of the newspapers, the two lexical oppositions unaccompanied youth vs refugees in neighboring countries and unaccompanied youth vs Swedes were only found in the nationalist right-wing newspaper Nya Tider. Arsonists vs Sweden was noted in just one article published in the social democratic newspaper Aftonbladet.

Unaccompanied youth vs other public expenditures
The lexical opposition unaccompanied youth vs other public expenditures was used as a way of putting the estimated cost of unaccompanied youth and other asylum seekers in relation to other public expenditures. While doing so, the cost of receiving unaccompanied youth was represented as an opposite to public expenditures such as education, health care, and social services. In the editorial below, the cost for the Swedish Migration Agency’s reception of asylum seekers is compared to other public expenditures.

The cost increase is thus SEK 70 billion in two years. This corresponds to the state's entire costs for school, higher education and research for one year. Or the defense for about 1.5 years. This means that society not only has extremely large practical problems to solve.

(Aftonbladet, 2015-10-23)

By writing that it is a problem that the cost for giving asylum to people who have fled from their countries corresponds to the defense budget for 1.5 years, it is stated what is a necessity and what is a problem “to solve”.
It is a worrying sign that the region's social services, the first day refugees come to Gotland, close the counseling for drug abusers, because one must prioritize unaccompanied refugee children. [...] A consequence of the refugee reception can thus be increased competition for public resources, such as health care, dental care, school, social services etc.

(Gotland Tidningar, 2015-11-19)

In the opinion article above, unaccompanied refugee children are portrayed as being in “competition” against public expenditures such as “dental care, school, social services etc”. When there is a competition between any type of things, it means that if one of the things is going to improve or grow, the others need to decrease or lose. This is a way of constructing the idea of an opposition between receiving unaccompanied refugee children and other public expenditures and that these expenditures cannot coexist.

The emphasis on what unaccompanied youth as a group is expected to cost and put that cost in relation to public expenditures, the idea of unaccompanied youth as a public expenditure among other public expenditures is created. By doing so, unaccompanied youth are transformed into an expenditure, unlike the rest of us. Hence, the lexical opposition unaccompanied youth vs other public expenditures establishes the binary opposition unaccompanied youth/Swedes, even though it is not as explicit and direct as in the following lexical opposition.

**Unaccompanied youth vs Swedes**

The lexical opposition unaccompanied youth vs Swedes was a reoccurring theme in Nya Tider.

In the news article quoted below, the Swedish gym chain Friskis & Svettis is criticized for offering special deals for unaccompanied youth.

Friskis & Svettis started a collection together with the Red Cross in October. The purpose was to give so-called unaccompanied children an opportunity to go to the gym. “We do not give away any member’s money. This is a collection”, says Friskis & Svettis. Any similar offer for Swedish children does, however, not exist.

(Nya Tider, 2015-11-10)

By constructing this lexical opposition between unaccompanied youth and Swedes, the article gives the impression of the gym mistreating “Swedish children” in favor of unaccompanied youth. In the article below, the author Jan Sjunnesson, is interviewed about his opinion on introducing border checkpoints.
Sjunnesson also explains that the Minister of Interior Anders Ygeman (S) motivated the need for border controls to ensure the rights and security of unaccompanied children.

– So it isn’t about the Swedish people's best, says Sjunnesson.

*(Nya Tider, 2015-11-17)*

By claiming that the border checkpoints are not for “the Swedish people’s best” because they are supposed to ensure the rights of unaccompanied children, Sjunnesson constructs the idea that if something is beneficial for unaccompanied children (which can be discussed in this case), it cannot be good for “the Swedish people”. This way of reasoning further strengthens the binary opposition unaccompanied youth/Swedes

**Unaccompanied youth vs refugees in neighboring countries**

As in the case of the previous lexical opposition, *unaccompanied youth vs refugees in neighboring countries* was only found in *Nya Tider*. The quote below consists of a citation of Hans Erling Jensen who is presented in the article as a Danish who has founded the organization Right Hand Aid. The quote consists of his speech at a protest manifestation held in Sweden against immigration.

“The government estimates that 30 billion [SEK, author’s note] will go to receive 30 000 so-called unaccompanied children. This means that it is coldly expected to cost one million a year per ‘child’?” Jensen said. “For that money we would have been able to save five million people to live a decent life in the immediate area”, he explained.

*(Nya Tider, 2015-11-10)*

In his speech, Jensen constructs an opposition between receiving unaccompanied children in Sweden and helping millions of people living in areas closer to countries most people flee from. Hans Erling Jensen develops his ideas concerning how to help refugees in neighboring countries in the interview below.

– For the same cost as ten days' help to a refugee in Sweden, we help a child in the poorest countries for a whole year. For SEK 5 000, we give these children the same conditions as, for example, a single unaccompanied in Sweden costs for three days - except Ipads and Nike shoes! For me, it feels callous, even blunt, to let those who really need and do not have a chance, pay for the luxury refugees’ stay in Sweden!

*(Nya Tider, 2015-11-17)*
By using the term “luxury refugees” who are given “Ipads and Nike shoes”, Jensen creates the image of spoiled unaccompanied youth living in luxury, on the expense of people living in “the poorest countries”. Similar to previous studies (cf. Holmes and Castañeda, 2016; Vollmer and Karakayali, 2018), the lexical opposition unaccompanied youth vs refugees in neighboring countries is a way of creating the internal binary opposition deserving/undeserving.

Arsonists vs Sweden

As an example of a deviant lexical opposition, arsonists vs Sweden was noticed in a news article published in Aftonbladet. In the quote below, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven constructs a lexical opposition between those who burn refugee residences, and Sweden.

Stefan Löfven believes that those who commit the crimes are "enemies of Sweden and Swedish democracy".
– This is a very serious crime and it is a threat to our common society. It has to be dealt with firmly, the Prime Minister said yesterday.
(Aftonbladet, 2015-10-29)

In contrast to the previously mentioned lexical oppositions, arsonists vs Sweden constructs an inclusive idea of Sweden and Swedes. Not only does Sweden include people who happen to have been born in Sweden, but also refugees and asylum seekers who have migrated to the country.

6.1.5 What terms and meta linguistics were used to refer to unaccompanied youth?

The tree most common terms to refer to unaccompanied youth in 2015 were: unaccompanied refugee children, unaccompanied children, and youth. In Nya Tider, these terms were questioned by the use of meta linguistics. Gotlander (a local inhabitant) was noted as a deviant example of term for an unaccompanied youth, used in the local newspaper Gotlands Tidningar.

Unaccompanied refugee children

As indicated in the word combinations analysis above (see Figure 1), the term “unaccompanied refugee children” (ensamkommande flyktingbarn) was the most common way to refer to unaccompanied youth in 2015 and appeared in all newspapers except Nya Tider. As one could expect, the term was used in articles about all sorts of topics. The first quote below is from an opinion article published in the national social democratic newspaper Aftonbladet and the
second one is from a news article in the local liberal newspaper *Upsala Nya Tidning*. Both quotes are representative concerning the contexts in which the term was used.

The refugees are expected to be more than twice as many as expected this summer. The unaccompanied refugee children are expected to be more than threefold as many.  
(*Aftonbladet*, 2015-10-23)

For every unaccompanied refugee child, compensation is paid to the receiving municipality at SEK 1 900 a day, or about 700 000 per year.  
(*Upsala Nya Tidning*, 2015-11-21)

**Unaccompanied children**

The second most commonly used term to refer to unaccompanied minors was *unaccompanied children*. This term was frequently used in all newspapers except *Nya Tider*. Several articles used the two terms *unaccompanied refugee children* and *unaccompanied children* interchangeably. The two quotes below are representative for the articles in which the term was used.

More than 8 000 unaccompanied children have come to Malmö this year alone. A special unit has now been set up where 14 recruiters are looking for staff to the children's accommodations.  
(*Aftonbladet*, 2015-11-04)

The Social Administration opens three new accommodations for unaccompanied children in Slite, Stånga, and Hemse. Each accommodation has room for 16 boys in their teens.  
(*Gotlands Tidningar*, 2015-11-27)

**Youth**

Apart from the terms *unaccompanied refugee children* and *unaccompanied children*, *youth* was the most commonly used term referring to unaccompanied minors. Notably, in all articles that used the term *youth*, at least one of the two terms *unaccompanied refugee* and *unaccompanied children* was also used, as in the two local news articles quoted below.
Ever since last summer unaccompanied children have arrived in Gotland, the last five arrived last Monday, all from Afghanistan. About 90 per cent of all youth who have arrived in Gotland come from there.  
*(Gotlands Tidningar, 2015-11-18)*

More and more municipalities refuse to receive unaccompanied refugee children and youth who are assigned to them. Now the receiving municipality Malmö intends to accompany the children to the opposing municipalities and hand them over there, according to Sydsvenskan [Swedish newspaper, author’s note].  
*(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2015-11-28)*

In both articles quoted above, the terms *youth* and *children* are used interchangeably, except when the word “children” is used as a part of the two terms *unaccompanied children* and *unaccompanied refugee children*.

**“Unaccompanied refugee children”**

In *Nya Tider*, the terms *unaccompanied refugee children, unaccompanied children, and even youth* were challenged by the use of meta linguistic tools such as citation marks and the term “so called”.

Aftonbladet writes that the police alarm about that unaccompanied are committing crimes and that the crimes have “increased shockingly” in recent years, but continue calling them "children". It is particularly strange that the media think we are so easily fooled.  
*(Nya Tider, 2015-10-20)*

By writing “children” within citation marks, the above opinion article questions the accuracy of calling unaccompanied children for children. It also states that the term unaccompanied children is used in “media” in order to fool its readers, as if “media” had a hidden agenda of making people believe that unaccompanied children were children even though they were not. Similarly, the news article below questions the term *unaccompanied refugee children* by constructing an image of the typical “unaccompanied refugee child” as a healthy young man in his later teens.
That is undeniably another lot in life than that of Mohammed, 17, a well-trained and healthy youngster (not infrequently with a beard who raises suspicions that he may be older than he claims to be) if he has managed to get to Sweden as an "unaccompanied refugee child".

(Nya Tider, 2015-11-17)

Similar to the lexical opposition *unaccompanied youth vs refugees in neighboring countries*, the representation of unaccompanied children as strong and healthy young men – who “may be older” than what they claim to be – is another way of establishing the internal binary opposition *deserving/undeserving*. In the editorial below, the word “unaccompanied” is questioned.

In 2004, Sweden received 23 161 asylum seekers, of which 388 were "unaccompanied". This year there may be 190 000 asylum seekers, of which 40 000 are "unaccompanied", according to the Migration Board's latest forecast.

(Nya Tider, 2015-11-17)

The above questioning of the term “unaccompanied” is used to criticize the number of unaccompanied children who were expected to apply for asylum in Sweden in 2015. It is a way of saying: “if thousands of unaccompanied children are expected, they can hardly be described as ‘unaccompanied’”.

**Gotlander (a local inhabitant)**

A deviant example of term that was used to refer to an unaccompanied youth was found in an article published in *Gotlands Tidningar*. This article used the word *Gotlander* (a local inhabitant) when it was referring to an unaccompanied youth who participated in a youth film festival.

– I sat there among all other young film makers and so it was my name that was called on, it was really unexpected, says Mubarak Shah Purdel, a 19-year-old upper secondary school student from Klintehamn who became the second Gotlander to win first prize in the November festival's middleweight class for young filmmakers between 16 -19 years.

(Gotlands Tidningar, 2015-11-26)

By using the term for a local inhabitant, Mubarak, who came to Sweden as an unaccompanied minor, is represented as a part of the in-group local Swedish inhabitants. The statement “from Klintehamn”, which is a town on Gotland, is another way of saying that Mubarak is one of us
on the island, independently of where he was born. This representation of an unaccompanied youth as a young and promising Gotland film maker both effectively challenges stereotypical representations of unaccompanied youth as well as the binary opposition unaccompanied youth/Swedes.

6.1.6 What characteristics were unaccompanied youth associated with?
The four most common characteristics that were used to portray unaccompanied youth in 2015 were: numbers, costs, a source of profit, and in need of help. Numbers was by far the most common characteristic appearing frequently in all newspapers. Notably, unaccompanied youth were as often referred to as costs as they were referred to as a source of profit, indicating a focus on money in the representations of unaccompanied youth. Various ways of expressing that unaccompanied youth were in need of help appeared in all newspapers except Nya Tider. In addition to these four characteristics, representing unaccompanied youth as having fled from war and violence was noticed as a deviant characteristic.

**Numbers**
In articles that referred to unaccompanied youth in terms of numbers, the numbers mostly referred to how many unaccompanied minors had entered Sweden and EU so far, and how many were expected to arrive during the rest of the year. Most articles highlighted the fact that the number of unaccompanied minors who were entering Sweden was increasing and several articles pointed to forecasts made by the Swedish Migration Agency that seemed to have underestimated the number of unaccompanied minors that would arrive in Sweden in 2015, as in the news article below.

The Migration Agency raises the forecast for the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children coming to Sweden this year from 12 000 to 30 000, SVT revealed yesterday. Last year, 23 160 unaccompanied children sought asylum in the EU's 28 countries.

*(Aftonbladet, 2015-10-22)*

As has been noted in previous studies (see Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2009), the repetitive use of numbers as the main characteristic used to represent unaccompanied minors and other asylum seekers contributes to make them appear as an anonymous mass instead of
individuals. The next news article is about the estimated number of unaccompanied children that would come to Gotland (which is an island).

On Monday night, another five unaccompanied refugee children came to Gotland. The number on the island is now approaching 100. 
(Gotland Tidningar, 2015-11-18)

The use of the term “The number” (antalet) when referring to unaccompanied refugee children, further underlines the importance of numbers as a characteristic in representations of unaccompanied minors.

**Costs**

Various ways of representing unaccompanied youth in terms of costs were found in all newspapers except the local liberal newspaper Västerbottens-Kuriren. More specifically, unaccompanied youth were often associated with public expenditures, as in the news article below.

Several municipalities state that a normal family home placement through private companies usually costs between SEK 1 200 and SEK 1 300 per child per night, a cost that increases if the child has any extra needs. But in the fierce competition for places, it is not uncommon for municipalities to be forced to instead pay from SEK 2 000 up to SEK 3 500 per day for a child without any extra support. 
(Dagens Nyheter, 2015-10-08)

The above quote is typical for many news articles in the sense that it informs the reader how much a municipality pays for unaccompanied minors. Likewise, the next quote is from an opinion article written by Bert Karlsson, who himself was making money on running accommodations for refugees and asylum seekers in 2015 (Syrén, 2016).

The children are placed in big cities, sometimes in apartments that cost SEK 60 000 a month for 20 square meters! Mölndal municipality outside Gothenburg solely pays almost a million per day for unaccompanied children. 
(Aftonbladet, 2015-10-13)
In the article quoted above, Karlsson is critical to the high costs payed by Swedish municipalities for accommodations. He suggests that the municipalities should not be involved in the negotiations with companies that are offering accommodations. Karlsson’s criticism of the high costs payed by Swedish municipalities consolidates the idea that it is okay to make money on unaccompanied children, as long as you do not make more profit than Karlsson’s own company. An alternative critique would be to criticize all companies that were making money on municipalities efforts to find accommodations for unaccompanied minors, which is exemplified in the quote by Lisa Pelling below.

**A source of profit**
Articles in which unaccompanied minors were represented in terms of a source of profit were identified in all newspapers except Gotlands Tidningar and Nya Tider. Most of these articles were critical to the large profit companies were making on offering accommodations for unaccompanied minors, as in the case in the following news article published in Dagens ETC.

MIGRATION: Attendo Individual and Family [a company, author’s note] earned about SEK 67 million on taking care of unaccompanied refugee children in 2014. As record numbers of refugees are expected, it is unlikely that the profit will be any less in 2015. – It is a system error, says Lisa Pelling, investigator in migration and head of research at the think tank Arena Idé [a social democratic think tank, author’s note].

**(Dagens ETC, 2015-10-01)**

Pelling’s critique differs from Karlsson’s in the sense that she thinks that the whole system in which companies are making profit on unaccompanied refugee children is dysfunctional, not that unaccompanied children may be a bit too expensive in some cases. The news article below highlights the large profits consulting companies were doing on negotiating with family homes for unaccompanied minors.

Many consulting companies make big money. For example, last year Aleris-owned Nåjden AB made a profit of SEK 29 million on the basis of a turnover of 110 million, which means a profit margin of 27 percent. And that was already before the increase of the unaccompanied.

**(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2015-11-21)**
By stating that the company Nåjden AB’s profit was large even before the increase of “the unaccompanied”, unaccompanied minors are represented as a source of profit; the more of “the unaccompanied”, the more profit for companies such as Nåjden AB.

Although the critique of making profit on unaccompanied minors may be perfectly valid, the representation of unaccompanied minors in terms of either a cost or a source of profit contributes to construct the internal binary opposition cost/source of profit. This binary opposition shows that the portrayal of unaccompanied minors to a substantial part was about whether they constituted a cost or a source of profit. This binary opposition has a reducing effect since all other characteristics that are parts of individuals who happen to belong to the group unaccompanied youth are neglected.

In need of extra help

All newspapers except Nya Tider represented unaccompanied youth as being in need of various types of extra help. In the editorial cited below, mental illness and drug abuse are mentioned as problems that unaccompanied children suffer from more often than other groups of people.

Many of the unaccompanied children who come to Sweden need advanced help. The health care system does not have the resources to receive everyone with post-traumatic stress syndrome, a common diagnosis after severe trauma.

(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2015-10-07)

While unaccompanied children may be in greater need of extra support from society due to reasons such as mental illness, stating that they need to be taken care of contributes to the idea of unaccompanied children as being victims. This is also true for the opinion article below, which calls on more people to get involved in supporting unaccompanied children.

Gotland and our unaccompanied children need your commitment now. You can personally make an important and meaningful effort as a receiver for a child. Children who have their parents and relatives hundreds of miles away from our safe and beautiful island.

(Gotland Tidningar, 2015-11-14)

Being represented in terms of a victim is a stereotype that has been noted by e.g. Bhatia and Jenks (2018) and Vollmer and Karakayali (2018). As explained in the theoretical framework above, stereotypes are constructed by representations of a group of people in terms of certain
characteristics which make them seem strange and different from the rest of us, and thereby contributes to constructing an “us” and “them”.

**Having fled from war and violence**

What unifies unaccompanied youth as a group is that they have fled from their countries. One could therefore expect that the reasons why they have left their countries would be in focus in the reporting. However, this characteristic was only noticed in four articles, making it a deviant characteristic. The quote below is from a news article published in *Dagens Nyheter*. It concerns the expected number of unaccompanied children entering Sweden in 2015.

> The reason why so many unaccompanied refugee children come to Sweden right now is, according to the Migration Agency, mainly the conflict in Afghanistan, but also the deteriorating situation for Afghan refugees in Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey, SVT (Swedish television, author’s note) states.
> *(Dagens Nyheter, 2015-10-21)*

While letting unaccompanied youth speak about the reasons why they fled to Sweden may contribute to a deeper understanding of their situation, these representations also contribute to the stereotype of unaccompanied youth as victims. The following quote is from an unaccompanied youth who was interviewed about his experiences from the escape to Sweden.

> – When I was nine, my parents were killed. A friend of the family came and brought me and my little brother Mohammed to Iran, he says.
> *(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2015-11-02)*

The article above differs from other articles both in the sense that an unaccompanied youth himself is given voice and in the sense that he is given the opportunity to explain the reasons why he escaped.
6.2 The representation of unaccompanied youth in 2018

6.2.1 What were the most frequent word combinations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Word combination</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>få stanna i sverige</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>i kraft den 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>i kraft den 1 juli</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>kraft den 1 juli</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>trädde i kraft den</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>trädde i kraft den 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>avslag på sin asylansökan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>fått avslag på sin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>fått avslag på sin asylansökan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>att få stanna i</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>att stanna i sverige</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>barn och unga i</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>den så kallade gymnasielagen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>en ny chans att</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>för barn och unga</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>jag stannar till slutet</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: The 15 most frequently used word combinations in articles containing the word “unaccompanied”, published between 2018-07-09 and 2018-09-09.

The table above (Table 4) displays the 15 most frequently used word combinations, consisting of four to five words, in Swedish newspaper articles published during the period 2018-07-09 – 2018-09-09, containing the word “unaccompanied” (ensamkommande). As shown in the table, the three most frequently used word combinations during this period were: “to stay in Sweden” (“få stanna i Sverige”, N = 19), “came into force the 1st” (“i kraft den 1”, N = 16), and “into force July 1” (“i kraft den 1 juli”, N = 16).
Figure 2: Word cloud of the 15 most frequently used word combinations in articles containing the word “unaccompanied”, published between 2018-07-09 and 2018-09-09.

The word cloud above (Figure 2) visualizes the 15 most frequently used word combinations in articles containing the word “unaccompanied”. The font size of each word combination is based on its ranking in the above list (Table 4) of the 15 most frequently used word combinations in the corpus. The word cloud indicates that the focus in the articles published in 2018 had shifted from how to accommodate unaccompanied refugee children to whether or not asylum seekers would be given asylum in Sweden. The date July the 1st, 2018, was the first day the so-called law on upper secondary education came into force. This law enabled unaccompanied youth who had been denied asylum the possibility to apply for residence permit in Sweden in order to study at upper secondary level (Migrationsverket, 2018b). A number of word combinations, such as “rejection of their application for asylum” (“avslag på sin asylansökan”, N = 15), refer to asylum seekers whose asylum applications had been rejected.

There are two aspects that could be expected to be present in the word cloud (Figure 2) that are not there. Firstly, although the word “unaccompanied” was used as the search term and therefore appears in all articles, none of the most frequent word combinations in the 2018 articles included that word. This indicates a greater diversity in ways of referring to unaccompanied youth during the period in 2018 compared to the period in 2015. Secondly, the time period 2018-07-09 – 2018-09-09 covers the two last months of the Swedish general
election campaign. However, none of the most commonly used word combinations deal with the ongoing election campaign explicitly.

6.2.2 What topics were unaccompanied youth connected with?
The most frequent topics in the articles published in 2018 were: unaccompanied youth’s chances to stay in Sweden, integration, criminality, and culture.

Unaccompanied youth’s chances to stay in Sweden
The most discussed topic in the 2018 articles concerns unaccompanied youth’s chances to stay in Sweden. In accordance to the word combinations analysis above, most articles concerning unaccompanied youth’s chances to stay in Sweden dealt with the law on upper secondary education (gymnasielagen) from various views. While support for the law was expressed in some articles, most articles criticized the law either for not giving enough unaccompanied youths residential permits or for giving too many unaccompanied youths residential permits. Above all, the law was criticized for being unclear and it was described as uncertain whether or not it would be implemented in the Swedish migration system due to judicial issues. The news article below, published in the national liberal newspaper Dagens Nyheter, concerns whether or not the law actually would be used.

The law has encountered resistance in several instances. The migration courts in Malmö and Stockholm have, on various grounds, decided that the reduced requirement of proof of identity should not be applied, which has resulted in that two of Sweden's four migration courts have rejected the law.
(Dagens Nyheter, 2018-07-19)

By mentioning the law on upper secondary education in article after article, an image of unaccompanied youth as being connected with legal matters was created. The next quote is from a news article in which a conservative member of parliament, Jan Ericson, expresses his critique on the law. It was published in the nationalist right-wing newspaper Nya Tider.

– In this case, advocates for the new law prioritize investing 2 billion [SEK, author’s note] a year, including the municipalities' costs for upper secondary school, on 9 000 adult men without asylum reasons. It will be in total at least 6 billion for three years, Ericson pointed out. (Nya Tider, 2018-07-24)
Ericson’s way of referring to the law on upper secondary education as something that only would benefit “adult men without asylum reasons”, is a way of representing unaccompanied youth who were covered by the law as being grown up men who should be able to take care of themselves. Although the vast majority of unaccompanied minors who entered Sweden between 2015 and 2018 were boys, several thousands were girls (Migrationsverket, 2019a). Pretending as if none of these girls would be covered by the law reveals a willingness to establish an idea of unaccompanied youth as only consisting of adult men. Furthermore, by stating that the ones who were covered by the law did not have any asylum reasons, Ericson constructs the idea that there are no reasons why the group of unaccompanied youth, who was covered by the law, should have been given residence permits. Hence, they do not have any legitimate reasons to stay in Sweden.

Integration
While the articles published in 2015 focused on how to accommodate unaccompanied youth and other refugees, the articles published in 2018 put more focus on how well unaccompanied youth had integrated in society. In the article below, the manager of a café that was initiated as an integration project for unaccompanied youth is interviewed in the national social democratic newspaper Aftonbladet.

– Café Påtår started with an integration purpose. The young people needed a chance to learn how the labor market works and this is a good start for the youth, says Yakoob Ramazani, the manager at Café Påtår.

(Aftonbladet, 2018-07-28)

The following quote is from a news article published in local liberal newspaper Upsala Nya Tidning, in which Reshad Shakoor, an unaccompanied youth from Afghanistan, is interviewed.

Reshad Shakoori, unaccompanied from Afghanistan, has in just a few years learned Swedish and got a job as a car mechanic in Uppsala. He recently received his very first salary.

(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2018-08-26)

The two articles above are representative for the articles that include the topic integration; the focus is on to what extent unaccompanied youth have got jobs and earn money. Consequently,
the way newspapers wrote about unaccompanied youth and integration was yet another way of representing unaccompanied youth in terms of the binary opposition cost/source of profit, as noted in the 2015 articles.

Criminality
Criminality was noticed as a topic in *Nya Tider* and *Upsala Nya Tidning*. In *Nya Tider*, unaccompanied youth were mostly mentioned in connection to sexual harassments and drug abuse. In the quote below, the author refers to an unaccompanied youth that allegedly had been accused of rape. The same person who was accused of rape had previously appeared in an article published in a local newspaper that questioned the idea of expelling him to Afghanistan, since that would imply a risk for his life.

The Afghan is now being prosecuted for rape alternatively negligent rape, which probably means that he claims that he did not understand that the unconscious woman wasn’t aware of what was going on. The prosecutor suggests a prison sentence and a ten years expulsion. *(Nya Tider, 2018-08-14)*

In contrast to the articles published in *Nya Tider*, in the interview with Reshad Shakoori quoted below, he as an unaccompanied youth is given the opportunity to tell his view on the local Uppsala police’s image of unaccompanied youth committing crimes.

*Uppsala police has reported problems with unaccompanied Afghans who abuse drugs and commit crimes. What do you say about that? [...]*

– I often read on social media that some see us Afghans as rapists and criminals. Even though 99 percent of all unaccompanied behave, you in the media only report on the single percent who behaves badly. *(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2018-08-26)*

Shakoori’s quote above is an example of contesting the stereotypical image of unaccompanied youth as being criminal. However, as Hall (2013) mentions, to oppose a certain stereotype may on the one hand contribute to a more diverse representation, while on the other hand establish the internal binary opposition criminal/law-abiding.
Culture

Culture was noticed as a deviant subject and appeared in four articles. It differs from other topics in the sense that it is related to creativity. The article quoted below reviews a theatre play in which unaccompanied youth took part in. Notably, this is one of a small number of articles that had to do with the ongoing election campaign.

In a collaboration with unaccompanied, refugee children’s and their mothers’ stories are highlighted in a purple, inflatable "refugee tent" that will tour in public spaces until the election. The perspective is important and often missing in the debate.  
(*Aftonbladet*, 2018-08-01)

Another article gives attention to a teacher who is using music as a way to connect to unaccompanied youth from Afghanistan.

Her entrance to her new students, all boys, was to play Swedish music, like the 60s song "I once had a boat" [Jag hade en gång en båt, author’s note] with Cornelis Vreeswijk and Ann-Louise Hanson, and talk about the lyrics. It attracted the students to tell about their own, usually difficult experiences and the music became an opening in the contact between Zara and the students.  
(*Dagens Nyheter*, 2018-08-27)

By presenting unaccompanied youth in positive terms related to cultural expressions, both articles above challenge stereotypical representations of the group.

6.2.3 What conceptual metaphors were used to refer to unaccompanied youth?

In contrast to the articles published in 2015, only one conceptual metaphor – UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WEIGHTS – was noticed in the articles published in 2018. Being one of the most frequently used conceptual metaphors in the 2015 articles, UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WEIGHTS was noted in only two articles published in 2018. The article quoted below criticizes the law on upper secondary education for being too expensive.
The government's decision to give 9,000 Afghans a "new chance" for residence permits to study in Sweden is according to media supposed to cost SEK 2.9 billion. This is not what the government actually has written, and Nya Tider’s scrutiny shows that it could be considerably more expensive than that, probably at least SEK 9 billion. The municipalities will have to carry the extra costs.

(Nya Tider, 2018-07-24)

In this quote, unaccompanied youth are portrayed as being the weights in terms of costs that Swedish municipalities have to “carry”.

6.2.4 What lexical oppositions were constructed in relation to unaccompanied youth?

The two most common lexical oppositions that appeared in the 2018 articles were unaccompanied youth vs other public expenditures, noted in Aftonbladet and Nya Tider, and unaccompanied youth vs Swedes, noted in Upsala Nya Tidning and Nya Tider. The articles published in Nya Tider that contained these two lexical oppositions were more hostile against unaccompanied youth compared to articles in other newspapers.

Unaccompanied youth vs other public expenditures

The quote below is from an opinion article written by Tobias Billström, a conservative member of the Swedish parliament. Billström criticizes the nationalist right-wing party Sweden Democrats for consider supporting the Social Democrats after the general election, even though the Social Democrats had introduced the law on upper secondary education.

A restrictive and long-term sustainable migration policy must be based on Sweden taking both its partial responsibility for a world where many are on the run and at the same time is meeting our various welfare commitments.

(Aftonbladet, 2018-07-25)

In the quote above, the Swedish welfare system is represented as a lexical opposition to helping people who have fled from their countries. The use of the words “we” and “our” strengthens the idea of an “us” who have some welfare expenses that we need to take care of, and a “them” who want our financial help. This lexical opposition supports the idea of viewing people who have fled their countries as being a possible threat to the Swedish welfare system.

The lexical opposition between unaccompanied youth and other public expenditures appears also in the following quote, in which the Swedish government is criticized for
prioritizing shelter to unaccompanied youth instead of spending money on “necessary investments” such as infrastructure and housing construction. The citation consists of a quote of Markus Wiechel, a nationalist right-wing member of the Swedish parliament.

[The government] prioritizes these 9 000 over a restored welfare and over restored security in our streets and squares. It prioritizes this over the necessary investments in infrastructure, housing construction and the Swedish economy in terms of for example support for business and industry.

(Nya Tider, 2018-07-24)

Unaccompanied youth vs Swedes
Making it appear natural that a certain group of people, “them”, does not belong to a larger group of people, “us”, is one of the main effects of external binary oppositions. In the two articles quoted below, the group unaccompanied youth is portrayed as “them”, those who are in opposition to “us”, the Swedes. In the first quote, the law on upper secondary education is criticized for resulting in unaccompanied youth (referred to as “Afghan men without the need of asylum”) getting jobs instead of Swedes.

THE NEW LAW gives over 9 000 Afghan men without the need of asylum nevertheless the opportunity to stay in Sweden to study at upper secondary school. Thereafter, they will be able to obtain permanent residence permits if they can support themselves, a requirement that will be easier to meet by generous government grants to those companies that employ newly arrived immigrants instead of Swedes.

(Nya Tider, 2018-07-24)

The second article quoted below is an opinion article that questions the need of protection for unaccompanied youth, which the law on upper secondary education was aimed for. Instead of worrying about the safety of unaccompanied youth, the article author suggests that rapes on Swedish girls and women caused by foreigners should be dealt with.

The government should now address the serious crime and revoke Swedish citizenship/permanent residence permits. These individuals are not desirable in this country. There must be an end to these disgusting rapes/group rapes that are practically exclusively committed by non-Swedish men – but only against Swedish girls/women.

(Nya Tider, 2018-08-07)
Even though it is not explicitly written that unaccompanied youth tend to rape Swedish girls, the lexical opposition between unaccompanied youth on the one hand and Swedish girls and women who have been raped by foreigners on the other, establishes the stereotypical image of unaccompanied youth as being sex offenders. This type of stereotypical representations of refugees and immigrants as criminals have previously been noted in both Swedish (Hultén, 2006; Strömbäck et al., 2017) and international studies (Lawlor and Tolley, 2017; Wilmott, 2017; Zhang and Hellmueller, 2017).

6.2.5 What terms and meta linguistics were used to refer to unaccompanied youth?
As indicated by the word cloud above (Figure 2), the words that were used to refer to unaccompanied youth were more diverse in the articles published in 2018, compared to the ones published in 2015. While some articles still referred to the group as unaccompanied children or unaccompanied refugee children, the most common way of referring to the group in 2018 was unaccompanied youth. Notably, terms that contested the discourse of unaccompanied youth as children, were clearly more common in 2018 compared to 2015. This was manifested by the use of the terms unaccompanied men and Afghan men, or simply unaccompanied Afghans. While this use of contesting terms was particularly apparent in Nya Tider, referring to unaccompanied youth as unaccompanied men and unaccompanied Afghans was also noted in the local newspaper Upsala Nya Tidning. Additionally, more explicit challenges of the idea of unaccompanied youth as being children by the use of meta linguistics, were noticed in Nya Tider solely. The word “children” was for example written enclosed in quotation marks and the expression “so called” was in some articles used before the term “unaccompanied children”.

Unaccompanied youth
While other terms were used to various degrees, unaccompanied youth appeared frequently in all newspapers. In some articles, the term “youth” was used separately from “unaccompanied” when it referred to unaccompanied youth mentioned earlier in the article in terms of either “unaccompanied” or “unaccompanied youth”. Unlike the articles published in 2015, the term unaccompanied children appeared in only one of the articles, which also used the term unaccompanied youth. Notably, that article refered to unaccompanied children who entered Sweden in 2015. The quote below is from a news article citing what Swedish prime minister Stefan Löfvén said in a TV interview when he was asked about the law on upper secondary
education. In the quote, Löfvén mentions the transition from being underage to be of age that many unaccompanied adolescents had experienced while they were waiting for answers on their asylum requests.

- They are young unaccompanied who were then considered to be minors, who have now crossed that threshold during this long, long wait. As an exception, one is able to do a new application, says Stefan Löfven.

(Aftonbladet, 2018-08-22)

Similar to the article quoted above, many other articles that referred to unaccompanied youth in terms of unaccompanied youth were about the law on upper secondary education. In the following article, the focus is on the vulnerable situation for thousands of unaccompanied youth who have applied for residence permit.

There is great uncertainty whether it is possible to apply the new law that will give unaccompanied youth a new chance to stay. The government is awaiting legal notice. Meanwhile, about 2 000 youths are at risk of losing their accommodations and benefits.

(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2018-08-03)

Unaccompanied children & unaccompanied refugee children

Only 7 of the analyzed articles published in 2018 use the terms unaccompanied children or unaccompanied refugee children. The corresponding figure for 2015 was 54 articles, which gives a hint of the shift in terms used to refer to unaccompanied youth as a social actor between the two time periods. Among the articles published in 2018 that used the terms unaccompanied children or unaccompanied refugee children, most referred back to 2015 or earlier, as in the article below. The article is about an extension of the law on upper secondary education, commented by the Swedish Migration Agency’s legal representative Anna Lindblad.

- It should have been clear to the municipality that this is an asylum seeker. It was like that during the autumn 2015, when there were so many unaccompanied children that they were driven to a municipality and only later visited the Migration Agency, says Anna Lindblad.

(Dagens Nyheter, 2018-09-06)
Unaccompanied men & Afghan men

While only one of the articles published in 2015 used at least one of the two terms unaccompanied men or Afghan men when referring to unaccompanied youth, that number increased to five articles in 2018. The terms were noticed in Nya Tider (national, right-wing) and Upsala Nya Tidning (local, liberal).

When the government presented the amnesty to thousands of Afghan men on November 27, they chose to call the bill "A new opportunity for residence permits for unaccompanied".
(Nya Tider, 2018-07-24)

In the news article quoted above, the law on upper secondary education is criticized for enabling 9 000 “Afghan men” residence permit. The article neglects the fact that everyone who was eligible to apply for residence permit according to the law on upper secondary education have had to be registered as an unaccompanied minor at the time when they applied for asylum, and must have had waited for at least 15 months for their decision (Migrationsverket, 2018). By neglecting these facts, it appears as if the group unaccompanied youth consists of fully grown up men who should be able to take care of themselves, and not be treated as adolescents who have had to escape from their countries.

About 9 000 people, mostly men from Afghanistan, are covered by the law, which has been motivated by humanitarian causes. On the one hand, the persons concerned are not considered to have sufficiently strong grounds for asylum in Sweden. On the other hand, many have been waiting so long for their decisions that they have rooted themselves here.
(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2018-09-01)

While the article above in addition to the term “men from Afghanistan” also uses the term “unaccompanied youth”, it neglects the fact that only unaccompanied youth who were underage when they entered Sweden were covered by the law on upper secondary education (Migrationsverket, 2018b). Not mentioning this fact makes it unclear how old the “men from Afghanistan” could be, other than that they had to be older than 18.
Unaccompanied Afghans, “unaccompanied” Afghans, and Afghans
In a small number of articles, the three terms unaccompanied Afghans, “unaccompanied” Afghans, or simply Afghans were used to refer to unaccompanied youth. Although at least one of each term appeared in all newspapers except Dagens ETC and Dagens Nyheter, they appeared most frequently in Nya Tider. The quote below is, however, from an editorial published in the local social democratic newspaper Gotlands Tidningar.

The Migration High Court is at the same time looking into whether the law on upper secondary education, which would provide unaccompanied Afghans the possibility to get residence permits, has been prepared enough.
(Gotlands Tidningar, 2018-08-27)

In the article above, unaccompanied youth who were covered by the new law are referred to as “unaccompanied Afghans”. However, the law on upper secondary education did not only cover unaccompanied youth from Afghanistan, it covered unaccompanied youth from all countries who fulfilled the requirements (Migrationsverket, 2018b).

AFGHAN "UNACCOMPANIED" young men interviewed by Uppdrag Granskning [Swedish television program, author’s note] said that the reason why so many of them commit rape and sexual abuse are the cultural differences, an explanation model considered to be politically incorrect.
(Nya Tider, 2018-08-28)

By referring to the group unaccompanied youth in terms of Unaccompanied Afghans, “unaccompanied” Afghans, and Afghans, the group is reduced to a stereotypical idea of an “Afghan”, even though unaccompanied youth who have entered Sweden during recent years also are citizens from countries such as Syria, Morocco, and Somalia (Migrationsverket, 2019a).

“Unaccompanied children” and unaccompanied “children”
Similar to the 2015 articles published in Nya Tider, the term unaccompanied children as well as specifically children were questioned in articles published in Nya Tider in 2018, by the use of meta linguistics, as in the quote below.
In Expressen [national liberal newspaper, author’s note] on July 25th, two journalists, Gabriella Ahlström and Thord Eriksson, write that the risk of suicide among the so-called unaccompanied children (9,000) is unparalleled. The Green Party’s Maria Ferm has pushed for letting “the children” stay and study despite their lack of reasons for asylum. (Nya Tider, 2018-07-24)

The expression “so-called” is used in the opinion article above to undermine the legitimacy of the term unaccompanied children. This is further strengthened in the second sentence where “children” is written within quotation marks. In order to fully understand the implication of this questioning of the term unaccompanied children, the various ways of referring to the group as adults needs to be taken into account, as well as the debate on the accuracy of unaccompanied youth’s ages. Only one week before the article quoted above appeared, Nya Tider published a long interview with a dental hygienist claiming that he had lost his job after he had questioned the ages of unaccompanied youth who he had treated as patients: “Bernt Herlitz worked as a dental hygienist and had Region Gotland as employer. When he got clients who were registered as unaccompanied under the age of 18, he could by the help of their teeth development see that they actually were quite a bit older.” (Nya Tider, 2018-07-17). Hence, the questioning of the term unaccompanied children by the use of the expression “so called” and the writing of “children” within quotation marks is not simply a matter of words; it is ultimately a way of constructing the idea of unaccompanied youth as in fact being adult men (from Afghanistan, as seen in previous quoted articles) by questioning the very existence of them as a group who have entered Sweden as minors.

6.2.6 What characteristics were unaccompanied youth associated with?

As in the articles published in 2015, numbers was clearly the most common characteristic associated with unaccompanied youth also in 2018. The characteristic appeared frequently in all newspapers. Age appeared as a characteristic in all newspapers except Aftonbladet and Dagens ETC. Worry and uncertainty was noted as a new category of characteristics, often associated with the law on upper secondary education. While costs was one of the most frequent characteristics in 2015, found in all newspapers except Västerbottens-Kuriren, it was only noted in Nya Tider in 2018. Representing unaccompanied youth in terms of people who have fled from war and violence was found in one article, published in Dagens ETC.
Numbers

*Numbers* was the most common characteristic used when referring to unaccompanied youth during the 2018 period, noticed in all newspaper. However, while the numbers that predominantly were referred to in 2015 represented the numbers of unaccompanied youth who had entered or were expected to enter Sweden that year, the numbers referred to in 2018 consisted of estimations of the number of youth that would be affected by the law on upper secondary education, as in the two quotes below.

The Migration Courts in Malmö and Stockholm and most recently the Migration Agency do not want to apply the law that would give 9 000 unaccompanied youth a new chance to get residence permits.  
(*Dagens Nyheter*, 2018-07-20)

The law on upper secondary education came into force on July 1st and is intended to provide unaccompanied who have had their asylum application denied a new opportunity through studies. About 9 000 people, mainly Afghans, are affected.  
(*Upsala Nya Tidning*, 2018-08-27)

As has been mentioned in the analysis of the 2015 articles above, the repetitious use of numbers as a main characteristic in the representations of unaccompanied youth contributes to establish the idea of them as an anonymous mass rather than individuals.

Age

The characteristic *age* was noted in all newspapers, although it was not as frequently used as *numbers*. The articles that represented unaccompanied youth in terms of their age were often related to the law on upper secondary education, which entitled unaccompanied youth over the age of 18 residence permit if they had entered Sweden when they were underage (*Migrationsverket*, 2018b).

The law applies to all youth who have applied for asylum before they turned 18, but who, while they were waiting for a decision, reached the age of 18 and who are studying.  
(*Dagens ETC*, 2018-08-31)

Another aspect of age was whether or not unaccompanied youth were to be considered as trustworthy. A couple of articles brought up the age of unaccompanied youth in association to
controversial age tests that were used to decide whether unaccompanied asylum seekers were below the age 18 or not (Garcia, 2018). This is what is referred to in the quote below from a news article about unaccompanied youth’s right to upper secondary education.

Unaccompanied asylum seekers who have reached the age of 18 or have had their age written up to 18 are directed to the Migration Agency's asylum accommodations. 
(Upsala Nya Tidning, 2018-09-01)

The extensive use of age as a characteristic for unaccompanied youth contributes to construct the idea of the group as consisting of anonymous numbers, rather than human beings.

**Worry and uncertainty**

While none of the articles published in 2015 represented unaccompanied youth in terms of the characteristics worry and/or uncertainty, these characteristics were frequently used in 2018 in the left-wing newspaper Dagens ETC, and the two local newspapers Gotlands Tidningar (social democratic) and Upsala Nya Tidning (liberal). The quote below is from a news article in which two unaccompanied youths, Mehdi and Zabihullah, are interviewed about the law on upper secondary education.

During lonely evenings and nights, then the anxiety rumbles. Mehdi and Zabihullah both came as unaccompanied refugees to Sweden for almost three years ago. Now they are worried about the election - and for what is to happen if the law on upper secondary education is withdrawn. A law they call their last chance.
(Dagens ETC, 2018-08-31)

The above quote differs from most other representations of unaccompanied youth in the sense that the reader comes close to two named persons. Rather than focusing on how many thousands there are of them or how old they are, the article represents the group unaccompanied youth in terms of two individuals who are worried about their future. Similarly, the quote below is from a news article in which a representative from the organization Save the Children, Eva Harnesk, is interviewed about the requirements that unaccompanied youth have to meet in order to be covered by the law on upper secondary education.
It is a huge frustration for those who do not reach up to them. A boy who lived here for three years had to wait 13 months on the first message. But to be able to apply [for asylum, author’s note] according to the law on upper secondary education, he had to had waited for 15 months. It becomes, as the youths themselves describe it, a feeling of lottery whether one gets to stay or not, says Eva Harnesk.

(*Gotlands Tidningar*, 2018-08-27)

Even though the quote above is not directly from un unaccompanied youth, the reader gets to know specific information about a boy and the frustration he feels. As in the previous quoted article, the unaccompanied boy is represented as a human being with certain experiences rather than as someone belonging to an anonymous mass.

**Costs**

While *costs* was used as one of the main characteristics of unaccompanied youth in 2015, this category was only noticed in three articles published in *Nya Tider* in 2018. The cost that was mostly referred to in these articles was the estimated cost for the law on upper secondary education, as seen in the news article quoted below.

In connection with the bill, the government also allocated a budget to cover the costs expected as a result of the amnesty of the estimated 9 000 mostly Afghans. For the six months remaining in 2018, the expenditure ceiling for the central government budget was increased by just under SEK 692 million, and for the period up to and including 2020, the "extra costs" were estimated at a total of approximately SEK 2.9 billion.

(*Nya Tider*, 2018-07-24)

In contrast to the two articles quoted above that contain the characteristics *worry* and *uncertainty*, the reader does not get to know the unaccompanied youth who are referred to in this article. Instead, unaccompanied youth are represented in terms of the abstract characteristics *numbers* and *costs*. Additionally, while the previous quoted articles reflected on individual unaccompanied youths’ personal experiences and feelings, the one above is using abstract financial terms in its portrayal of the group. Altogether, this depiction results in a distant and cold approach to the group.
Having fled from war and violence

Similar to the articles published in 2015, reporting on the reasons why unaccompanied youth have fled to Sweden was an exception also in the 2018 articles. In fact, the characteristic having fled from war and violence was only noticed in two articles, one published in Aftonbladet and the other in Dagens ETC. In the editorial quoted here below, an unaccompanied youth named Sara is referred to concerning the fact that she will be expelled to Afghanistan.

According to Sara, she was also exposed to threats from her husband and his relatives. "If we find you, we will kill you. If you do not say where you are, we will take your sister instead," they said on the phone.

(Aftonbladet, 2018-08-16)

The quote above is a deviant representation of unaccompanied youth in two aspects. Firstly, the article includes the characteristic that Sara has fled from violence. While this characteristic could be expected to be common in articles about young people seeking asylum, this analysis has shown that that was not the case in neither of the two time periods. Secondly, the quote differs from most articles in the sense that Sara is a girl. By excluding females in representations of unaccompanied youth, the stereotypical idea of unaccompanied youth as only being males is strengthened. The absence of females in newspapers’ representations of migrant groups has previously been noted by Tyyskä et al. (2018), in their study on Canadian newspapers’ representations of Syrian refugees.
7. Concluding discussion

7.1 General patterns

This study has aimed to answer the following research question: *How were unaccompanied refugees represented in Swedish newspapers during the two time periods September 28, 2015 – November 29, 2015 and July 9, 2018 – September 9, 2018?*

As has been shown in the analysis chapter, there was a great deal of variety in how unaccompanied youth were represented in the newspaper articles during the two time periods. They were referred to as *unaccompanied refugee children*, as *youth*, in terms of *water* as a conceptual metaphor, in terms of the characteristic *numbers*, and as *Afghan men*. In this concluding chapter, the findings are discussed and put into a wider context. It ends by offering some advice to journalists, scholars, and others who may be interested in what we can learn from this study.

7.2 Differences between the different types of newspapers

The main difference between national and local newspapers’ representations of unaccompanied youth was that local newspapers tended to have a more local perspective. *Upsala Nya Tidning* focused for example on Uppsala municipality in its articles about accommodations for unaccompanied youth, while national newspapers such as *Aftonbladet* had a more general, national perspective. Having said that, several articles with local perspectives were found also in national newspapers, especially in *Dagens Nyheter*, which reported on the situation in the Stockholm region.

Compared to the newspapers’ geographical spread, their various political stances had greater impact on their representations of unaccompanied youth. Overall, the representations of unaccompanied youth in the six newspapers *Aftonbladet, Dagens ETC, Dagens Nyheter, Gotlands Tidningar, Upsala Nya Tidning*, and *Västerbottens-Kuriren* had more in common than what differed between them, while the nationalist right-wing newspaper *Nya Tider* was clearly different from the rest. *Nya Tider* represented the group in more hostile terms in all analytical aspects. Stereotypes such as criminal sex offenders and binary oppositions such as *unaccompanied youth/Swedes* appeared frequently in the newspaper. While articles that challenged these and other stereotypes were noted in all other newspapers, challenging representations were most common in national left-wing newspaper *Dagens ETC*, followed by *Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet*. Having in mind that the support for right-wing policy has increased not only in Sweden, but in several European countries during recent years
(Mammone, 2019), racial stereotypes like the kinds represented in Nya Tider can be assumed to have become more common also in other countries’ news media. Moreover, the fact that the newspapers differed depending on their political views could be worth taking into consideration in future studies that aim to explore various representations beyond those that appear in news media belonging to the political center.

7.3 Differences between the two time periods

7.3.1 The representations of unaccompanied youth in 2015

The articles that were published in 2015 were mainly about how many unaccompanied minors were expected to enter Sweden that year, how to fix accommodations for all of these people, how other citizens could participate in helping unaccompanied minors, and how to finance the reception of unaccompanied minors. The most common conceptual metaphors that were used to refer to unaccompanied youth were UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WEIGHTS and UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WATER. The most common lexical opposition was unaccompanied youth vs other public expenditures and the most common terms used to refer to unaccompanied minors were unaccompanied refugee children, unaccompanied children, and youth. The most commonly used characteristic in 2015 was numbers, followed by costs, a source of profit, and in need of help.

7.3.2 The representations of unaccompanied youth in 2018

In 2018, the representations of unaccompanied youth were mostly focused on their chances to stay in Sweden. A certain focus was put on the law on upper secondary education, which was seen as a last chance for many unaccompanied youths to receive residence permits. UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH AS WEIGHTS was the only conceptual metaphor that was found during this period. Further, the most common lexical oppositions were unaccompanied youth vs other public expenditures and unaccompanied youth vs Swedes. The terms that were mostly used to represent unaccompanied youth in 2018 were unaccompanied youth, unaccompanied children, unaccompanied refugee children, unaccompanied men, and Afghan men. As in the articles published in 2015, the most commonly used characteristic was numbers, followed by age, and worry and uncertainty.
7.3.3 Differences and similarities between the two time periods

There were three major differences in how unaccompanied youth were represented in the 2015 period compared to how they were represented in the 2018 period. The most obvious difference between the two time periods is that the number of articles that was published in the 2015 period \( (N = 383) \) was significantly larger compared to the number of articles published in the 2018 period \( (N = 114) \). This indicates a diminished interest in unaccompanied youth and their relationship with society; a development that followed the decreased number of unaccompanied minors who entered Sweden as a result of the restrictive policy on asylum and migration that was introduced by the Swedish government in November 2015. The decreased number of articles mentioning unaccompanied youth is particularly interesting having in mind that the period in 2018 covered the last two months of the Swedish general election campaign. Secondly, while the articles in 2015 focused on how to fix and pay for accommodations for unaccompanied youths and people’s willingness to help, the articles published in 2018 were marked by more long-term issues such as unaccompanied youth’s chances to get residence permits and how well they integrated in Swedish society. Thirdly, while unaccompanied youth were represented in terms of *unaccompanied refugee children* in 2015, the terms used in 2018 were more varied, and *unaccompanied youth* was the most common term. These differences indicate that the differences in how unaccompanied youth were represented during the two periods were partly affected by the fact that the number of unaccompanied youths drastically decreased from 35 500 in 2015, to just below 1 000 in 2018 (Migrationsverket, 2019a). During the time between 2015 and 2018, the large number of unaccompanied youths who had entered Sweden in 2015 got older, making it reasonable to start using the term *unaccompanied youth* rather than *unaccompanied refugee children*. At the same time, articles published in *Nya Tider* questioned the term “unaccompanied refugee children” even in 2015, indicating that “the material reality” was not the only factor affecting what terms were used to refer to unaccompanied youth. By referring to unaccompanied youth as Afghan men rather than as children and youths who had entered Sweden as minors without guardians, the group’s need of asylum and help in other aspects was undermined.

There were also some notable similarities between the two time periods. First of all, the most common characteristic associated with unaccompanied youth during both periods was *numbers*. This way of portraying the group contributed to making them appear as an anonymous mass, instead of individual human being as the rest of “us”. Secondly, the binary opposition *cost/source of profit* appeared in various ways during both time periods and contributed to reduce the group to consisting of people belonging to one of the two opposites. Finally, even
though unaccompanied youth have fled to Sweden due to reasons such as war, conflicts, and persecutions, these aspects only appeared as deviant categories of characteristics associated with unaccompanied youth. The lack of representations of unaccompanied youth in terms of why they had had to leave their countries strengthened stereotypical ideas of the group as undeserving young men.

7.4 Future research
There are three topics that I suggest future studies in this research field to explore further. First of all, while the readers’ opinions after having read the articles are what matters the most when it comes to constructing ideas about unaccompanied youth, their perceptions of the articles are not examined in this thesis. Therefore, a study that focuses on readers’ views and opinions on news concerning unaccompanied youth, as well as other migrant groups, would complement this study and offer a broader picture of the construction of unaccompanied youth as a mental concept. Another perspective that has not been explored in this study are the opinions of unaccompanied youth themselves. Even though Herz/Herz Lalander’s (2017) study mentions unaccompanied youth’s thoughts about what is written about themselves in media, that study has a broader approach and look into several aspects of their lives apart from their media experiences. Thus, a study that is more focused on unaccompanied youth’s perception of how they are represented, and how they represent themselves, in media would be of great interest. Finally, in order to achieve a real change when it comes to how unaccompanied youth are being portrayed in news media, one group of certain interest to include in future studies would be journalists and editors. By asking these “producers of news” critical questions about how unaccompanied youth are being represented in articles they themselves have contributed to, they may be willing to apply a more critical approach in their future news production.

7.5 Concluding remarks
Since most Swedes can be assumed to have limited personal experiences of having met an unaccompanied youth, the news media’s construction of the group can be expected to have played an important role in the shaping of people’s mental concepts of this group. Since unaccompanied youth were portrayed during both time periods in terms of large quantities and binary oppositions such as cost/source of profit, these representations can be expected to be what the readers of the news to a large extent base their mental concepts of unaccompanied youth on. At the same time, portrayals of unaccompanied youth as taking part in cultural
activities such as theatre plays and being honest workers challenged stereotypical representations and can be expected to have broaden the readers’ mental concepts. However, these types of challenging representations were exceptions in the newspaper articles. Hence, it can be expected that the stereotypical representations of unaccompanied youth have had the most impact on the readers’ mental construction of unaccompanied youth. Since the dominant representations of unaccompanied youth were characterized by describing them in terms of low status features such as being criminal and in need of help, the readers’ mental concepts of the group can be expected to be characterized of power domination over unaccompanied youth.

As has been stated above, this study has a critical approach to discourse. It is not a “value-free” study without any opinions on societal inequalities. Instead, it takes side against societal inequalities. Therefore, it is critical to the binary oppositions and stereotypical representations of unaccompanied youth that have been published in Swedish newspapers. These representations have a reducing effect on this group of people and contributes to the construction of an “us”, consisting of Swedes, and a “them”, consisting of unaccompanied youth. If journalists and editors who are working on Swedish newspaper are interested in what they can do to challenge stereotypical ideas of unaccompanied youth and other minorities, there are some pieces of advice:

1. Be aware of what ideas of human beings you contribute to shape when you write about certain groups of people. It is of course understandable that all articles do not include personal interviews with individuals belonging to the group that is represented. However, when article after article represent a certain group of people, such as unaccompanied youth, in stereotypical ways, there is a risk that these representations have a great impact on the readers’ ideas of the group.

2. In order to challenge the idea of unaccompanied youth and other groups of migrants as consisting of large anonymous masses, do not forget to represent people who belong to a certain group of people in terms of the individuals they are.

3. If you think that it is of public interest to report that some individuals who belong to a certain group of people are suspected to commit crimes, do not forget to report on what other individuals who belong to this group of people are doing, and how come they left their countries. What are they studying? What are their interests? What were their lives like before they entered Sweden? If the representations in news media do not get broaden, there is a risk that you contribute to the construction of stereotypes that legitimize societal inequalities based on ethnicity.
What could the rest of us do? If our mental concepts of unaccompanied youth and other groups of people who have left their countries are based on either personal experiences (direct or indirect) or what we learn from what is communicated through media, one idea could be to bypass media’s representations and get to know people with various backgrounds, independently whether we happen to belong to a minority group or not ourselves. That way, representations that appear in media would be complemented with challenging representations. Taking it a step further could be to take part in the discursive struggle and contribute with representations that challenge stereotypes as well as binary oppositions, by the use of for example social media or by taking part in a solidarity organization. In any case, news media’s representations of certain groups of people should always be interpreted with a critical mindset.

While this study has focused on how unaccompanied youth have been represented in Swedish newspapers, it may simultaneously have captured a more general change in Swedish public debate; a transition in the discourse on refugees and asylum seekers that has gone from including a willingness to help, to be characterized by a distant and calculating approach towards people who have left their countries. The following opinion piece is a telling reaction to this change, even though it comments a policy decision rather than a change in discourse. It is a reminder to us who believe in solidarity and humanity that we still need to carry on. The piece was published in Dagens ETC, two days after the Swedish government announced its new restrictive asylum and migration policy.

Sad and depressing today. And tomorrow we will start from all over again! Will never stop believing in the good, in humanity and empathy with those who flee from war and injustice!!!

(Dagens ETC, 2015-11-26)
8. References


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