Abstract
The digital history project 'The Cultural Imaginary of Terrorism' (2022–2025) examines the cultural meaning-making of political terror in Swedish nonfiction and fiction during the Cold War, a critical period for the formation of the international discourse on terrorism. To explore the Swedish ‘cultural imaginary of terrorism’ is to study how a society makes sense of terrorism and itself in relation to the phenomenon through figures of thought, frames of reference and fantasies in, among other things, national newspapers and periodicals. This paper gives an overview of the project, demonstrating our integrative use of distant and close reading methods through a pilot study of elements of the cultural imaginary of terrorism as represented in the conservative periodical Svensk Tidskrift 1945–1991. Our exploratory analysis focuses on the extraction of relevant texts, the visualization and mapping of the discourse through the development of key terms as well as individuals, places, groups and states associated with political terror and terrorism. We conclude by stressing the benefits of an integrative research design drawing upon complementary perspectives: how our text mining methods allow us to identify significant patterns in the text data and how our historical expertise allows us to single out aspects that call for further investigation.

Keywords terrorism, cultural imaginary, text mining, digital history, mixed-methods

1. Introduction
This scoping paper presents the core approach and elements of a digital history project that constitutes an integrative digital humanities (DH) effort geared towards synergetic and enhanced humanities knowledge production, rather than an investigation of the development, applicability or evaluation of tools and methods. The Cultural Imaginary of Terrorism (2022–2025) combines close and distant reading approaches in an integrative interdisciplinary study of cultural engagement with political terror in Sweden during the Cold War. Here, we present the design of this project, emphasizing how a collaborative approach to the use of standard text mining and data visualization methods can enhance our understanding of a historical process. On a higher level, the paper feeds into the debates within DH about the necessity of pursuing intersections of interpretative and computational analysis through a collaborative process where humanities scholars and data analysts are in a dialectical relationship [1, 2].

The project brings together scholars with proficiency in digital history, DH and corpus linguistics as well as with domain expertise in terrorism studies, intellectual history and media history to answer the overarching research question: How was terrorism depicted in Swedish media and culture during the
Cold War? Our study is augmented with the parallel running integrated mixed-methods project Terrorism in Swedish politics (SweTerror) (2021–2024) [3], drawing upon state-of-the-art multimodal Language Technology (LT) approaches and mapping the parliamentary debate, partly during the same period (1968–2018).

Although Sweden was less affected by political terror than many other countries in Western Europe, terrorism became a cause for national concern in the 1970s (Figure 1), following a number of political assassinations and hostage takings, including the killing of the Yugoslavian ambassador in 1971 and the Bulltofta hijacking in 1972, both carried out by militants associated with the Croatian National Resistance (HNO, Hrvatski narodni otpor) and the historical Ustaše movement. As lethal political violence had been virtually unheard of in postwar Sweden, the Parliament felt compelled to adopt a controversial counter-terrorism law in 1973, directed against foreign citizens with ties to militant organizations. Terrorism remained in the public eye in the following decades, through domestic incidents such as the occupation of the West German embassy, during which members of the RAF (Rote Armee Fraktion) executed two hostages before accidentally blowing up the building, and a foiled retaliatory plot to kidnap former Minister Anna-Greta Leijon, involving both foreign militants and young Swedes. In the 1980s, the protracted ‘municipal arrests’ of a number of Kurds, suspected for involvement in the murders of two defectors from the PKK in 1984 and 1985, as well as the killing of prime minister Olof Palme in 1986, garnered considerable attention in the media.

Figure 1: Search profile for ‘*terror*’ in Dagens Nyheter during the Cold War (tidningar.kb.se). The 1977 peak is primarily connected to West German terrorism.

This paper begins by situating the project within the wider context of research on the history of terrorism. Next, we turn to the integrative DH approach and present our analytical framework, primary material and methodological approach. We describe our scope and focus on tracing the cultural meaning-making of political terror in national newspapers, periodicals, works of fiction and nonfiction, and our use of text mining to map the meanings attached to terrorism in the discourse. This is followed by a more detailed presentation of a pilot study in the form of an exploratory distant and close reading of the conservative periodical Svensk Tidskrift, serving as a prototype for our approach. We conclude by drawing attention to some preliminary results and affordances provided by our integrative DH approach.

2. The Domain: Terrorism in Cold War Sweden

The study of terrorism as an academic research domain goes back to the 1970s, when ‘terrorism’ became the preferred label for a range of acts of political violence, partly as a product of the Cold War [4, 5]. Initially, this field, recently often referred to as Orthodox Terrorism Studies (OTS), suffered from its closeness to state interests, but this changed with its rapid post-2001 growth, the emergence of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) and more self-reflexive and critical approaches [6, 7, 8]. Our understanding of terrorism follows the CTS ‘minimal foundationalist definition’: ‘violence or its threat intended as a symbolically communicative act in which the direct victims of the action is instrumentalized as a means to creating a psychological effect of intimidation and fear in a target audience for a political objective’ [9]. Essentially, CTS analyzes terrorism as discursive processes; how acts and actors of political violence are socially constructed as ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorists’ as well as the role of state terrorism, which
is excluded from many general OTS-definitions [10]. However, only rarely have terrorism scholars studied the conceptual development of terrorism through quantitative and data-rich approaches, cf. [11, 12, 13, 14, 15].

Notably, there have also been few elaborated historical studies about terrorism in Sweden. Some research has covered specific terrorism-related events before the Cold War, including the Amalthea bombing in 1908 and other violent incidents related to the early history of the labor movement [16, 17, 18], or touched on the topic [19, 20, 21, 22]. Political scientists and criminologists have, to some extent, studied Swedish counter-terrorism policymaking, focusing on legislation and intelligence communities [23, 24, 25, 26], but, there are virtually no dedicated studies of terrorism as a theme in Swedish literature, culture and debate (for partial exceptions, see [27, 28, 29, 30]). Consequently, The Cultural Imaginary of Terrorism will contribute to filling a gap in research on the discourse of terrorism in Sweden, empirically as well as theoretically.

Following Stampnitzky’s [4] argument that the modern understanding of terrorism is partly a product of the Cold War, we study the development of the cultural imaginary of terrorism in Swedish media and culture during the period, exploring the significance of the geopolitical tensions between east and west, north and south, left and right, etc. Our scope covers the ‘exceptionalism’ of the Folkhemmet era as well as the political radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s and the period leading up to the end of the Cold War. Central to the study is how Sweden’s ‘Third Way’ policy contributed to a self-image associated with peacefulness, neutrality and rationality in contrast to a conflict-ridden world [31]. We also use a post-colonial lens to explore how geopolitical tensions between the USA and the Soviet Union fed into the struggles for independence in former colonies and the post-1968 emergence of political violence in Western Europe that came to be known as terrorism. Thus, the project will encompass several debates and controversies in Sweden surrounding foreign militant organizations (Ustaše, RAF, PKK, etc.) and struggles (the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Algerian War, etc.), depicted in print media as well as works of fiction and nonfiction on terrorism.

A critical part of the study is devoted to the different, at times contradictory, perspectives on terrorism in Swedish media and culture, including the extent to which terrorism has been framed as a ‘foreign’ or a ‘domestic’ phenomenon and how different forms of terror-related violence have been explained and demarcated by different actors and in different contexts. Our analysis pays attention to the definitions that have been employed for framing terrorism and the alternative terms used (‘resistance struggle’, ‘guerrilla warfare’, ‘state terror’, etc.), also drawing upon the ‘minimal foundationalist definition’ of terrorism (see above) to discuss neglected or ‘downplayed’ events. We also focus on specific stereotypes (martyr vs. fanatic, victim vs. villain, innocent vs. guilty, etc.) and tropes (good vs. evil, East vs. West, civilization vs. primitivism/barbarism, masculinity vs. femininity, rationality vs. madness, etc.) that have been involved in the representation of terror-related violence.

3. Distant History: Mixing Methods

Primarily, The Cultural Imaginary of Terrorism contributes to the methodologically driven field of digital history. While digital history is arguably one of the more vibrant fields within the realm of DH, in Nordic countries, it is primarily Finnish digital historians that have produced major research within the area, see [32, 33, 34, 35, 36], although interest is currently picking up in Sweden [37, 38, 39, 40]. Partly, the project draws upon standard DH approaches, including text mining and distant reading techniques for large-scale analysis of historical phenomena and processes, c.f. [41, 42, 43], but also employs an integrative mixed-methods approach. As previously noted, digital history includes a variety of digital methods with varying degrees of technical sophistication. For instance, while individual historians may use already digitized sources and off-the-shelf pre-programmed digital tools (mainly various search or information retrieval interfaces) interdisciplinary teams that includes technical expertise with programming or coding skills, often use advanced equipment or methodologies (such as GIS, language models, agent-based modeling etc.). This has been described in terms of three different methodological approaches: digital history 1.0, digital history 1.5 and digital history 2.0, depending on the historical researcher’s use and consideration of advanced digital affordances and resources [44].
This project belongs both to the ‘semi-automatic’ digital 1.5, as it includes historical researchers performing individual research on digitized corpora using standard digital search tools and simple concordancers, and digital history 2.0 in that a substantial part of the project consists of collaborative interdisciplinary research by historians and corpus linguists.

3.1. Analytical Approach

The project approaches the cultural sense- and-meaning-making of terrorism in Sweden during the Cold War through the key concept of ‘the cultural imaginary of terrorism’ [45]. Rather than simply being equated with the public discourse, this concept refers to a specific culture’s imaginings about that which is perceived as terrorism. The cultural imaginary has a precursor in the concept of ‘the social imaginary’, which has a long theoretical lineage and concerns the ways in which a society perceives itself, its history and future, see [46, 57, 48, 49, 50]. Notably, the imaginary does not necessarily imply false representations of reality. Rather, to explore the cultural imaginary of terrorism is to study how a certain culture makes meaning and makes sense of terrorism as well as itself in relation to the phenomenon. Hence, to examine the cultural imaginary as a site of both discursive convergence and conflict, we consider the existence of multiple cultural imaginaries of terrorism, c.f., [51, 52].

The specific research questions in the project are grouped into three strands: Imagining terrorism investigates imaginative thinking about terrorism as a transformative force with a focus on the relationship between terrorism, the welfare state and citizens [30]. Drawing further on the concept of ‘the cultural imaginary of terrorism’ [45, 53, 54], we analyze the complex interplay between actual instances of political violence and factual as well as fictional cultural representations that concerns the bearing of terrorism upon Swedish society and its past and future. Key research questions: In what ways have different forms of (factual and fictional) terrorism and acts of political terror been represented as an existential threat, emancipatory promise or politically irrelevant to Swedish society? In what ways have imaginative thinking and ‘what if’ scenarios about acts of terrorism served as instruments for fearmongering, criticism of the existing order or progressive visions?

Domesticating terrorism explores how terrorism is established as a ‘domestic’ and ‘normal’ phenomenon through news, debate, fiction, and nonfiction. Drawing on the concept of ‘terrrormindedness’ [55], we explore the extent to which terrorism in Cold War Sweden is conceived as a phenomenon occurring in Sweden or perpetrated by its citizens as well as an increasingly domestic and decreasingly exceptional Swedish phenomenon (cf. ‘banal terrorism’, [56]; ‘terrorism and securitization’, [57]). Key research questions: In what ways have (factual and fictional) incidents of terrorist violence in Sweden been perceived and represented as ‘unimaginable’ and ‘unprecedented’, ‘familiar’ or ‘recurring’? To what extent have ‘terroristic’ traits of Swedish acts of political violence been repressed and historical ‘Swedish’ acts of political violence (the 1908 Amalthea and 1940 Norrsksensflamman bombings, etc.) been reframed as domestic terrorism?

Exteriorizing terrorism examines the discourse of terrorism as an inherently foreign phenomenon, whether occurring in Sweden or abroad [58, 59]. Drawing on the concepts of ‘othering’ and ‘sameness’, we explore how certain perpetrators of political violence are identified as ‘not one of us’, culturally ‘alien’ and threatening, while others are acknowledged as ‘one of us’, sharing a way of thinking, being and aspiring [60, 61, 62]. Key research questions: To what extent have the motivations and ideologies of foreign citizens involved in (factual and fictional) acts of political violence been represented as ‘terroristic’ on the same grounds as Swedish citizens? How has terrorism been framed in relation to anti-colonial liberation and separatist struggles and conflicts supported military or politically by the Soviet Union or the USA (Middle East, Nicaragua, Yugoslavia, South Africa, etc.)?

3.2. Material

To capture salient aspects of the cultural imaginary of terrorism in Sweden during the Cold War, the project studies different empirical materials that, taken together constitute principal channels for the cultural conversation on terrorism in print media during the period.
We examine different forms of journalistic meaning-making that, to a large extent, are colored by ideologies and agendas. This meaning-making also receives much of its influence and structural coherence from different generic forms [63, 64, 65].

1) Newspaper coverage of terrorism focuses on articles in editorial, debate and culture sections in seven nationwide daily and evening papers: Dagens Nyheter, Göteborgs-Posten, Svenska Dagbladet, Sydsvenska Dagbladet, Aftonbladet, Expressen, and Göteborgs-Tidningen/GT. These newspapers represent a broad ideological spectrum and are also, to some extent, from different parts of the country.

2) The discussion of terrorism in selected cultural periodicals, including BLM, Clarté, Folket i Bild/Kulturfront, Judisk kronika, Marxistiskt Forum, Ord & Bild, and Svensk Tidskrift. These periodicals have been selected based on their centrality or relevance to terrorism in the public dialogue and their representation of a range of political perspectives, from left-wing to right-wing.

We also study the depiction of terrorism in literature as a subject matter for Swedish writers – left, right, and middle; highbrow, middlebrow, and popular; experimental, conventional, and formulaic [66, 67]. Our analysis includes both distant and close reading of the texts and their reception in reviews.

3) The framing of terrorism in nonfiction books on the topic (approx. 20 titles), including titles such as journalist Janerik Larsson’s Politisk terror i Sverige (‘Political terror in Sweden’, 1968), jurist Göran Melander’s Terroristlagen: ett onödigt ont (‘The Terrorist Act: An Unnecessary Evil’, 1975), journalist Hans Hederberg’s Operation Leo (1978) and opinion maker Bertil Häggman’s Moskva och terroristinternationalen (‘Moscow and the Terrorist International’, 1984). Primarily, we focus on books by Swedish authors, but also consider translated titles.


By not only considering fiction and nonfiction as separate realms for imaginative thinking, but also studying how they intersect, the project directs attention to both significant differences and discursive overlaps in the development of the cultural imaginary of terrorism in Sweden. Notably, our analysis pays particular attention to key actors who traverse these different media genres. For example, Jan Guillou and Janerik Larsson wrote journalistic articles in newspapers and cultural periodicals as well as authored nonfiction and fiction on the topic of terrorism.

3.3. Distant Reading

In line with digital history’s integrative approach, this project fuses close reading of empirical sources in their contexts and distant reading, aided by computational methods from DH and corpus linguistics. Text mining of national newspapers and periodicals significantly enhances the scope and validity of the study. These texts are stored at the database of the National Library of Sweden (KB) and accessed in its digital lab (KBLab) or otherwise available in digital formats. This allows us to systematically identify keywords, text segments and larger articles related to the topic of terrorism and creates overviews and analytical visualizations of discursive patterns by studying the development of key terms, such as ‘terrorism’, ‘urban guerilla’, ‘state terrorism’, etc. We will utilize a range of methods from corpus linguistics that enables us to: 1) search out specific persons, places and organizations (named-entity recognition); 2) quantitatively map the associations of terms such as ‘terrorism’, dislocations in meaning and collocations; 3) discover underlying themes (topic modeling); 4) identify changes in conceptual meanings and associations over time and across different publications (word vectors) (see [68, 69]. Notably, this analysis is informed by critical DH perspectives on the use of data-intensive methodologies [69, 70, 71].

The project also draws upon social network analysis (SNA), allowing us to identify actors (authors, reporters, interviewees, etc.) and their discursive networks that have figured prominently in media and culture. Additionally, we use discourse network analysis (DNA) [72] and controversy mapping [73] informed by actor-network theory (ANT) analysis [74, 75, 76]. Notably, we incorporate historical events and book titles in the network analysis, enabling us to establish whether certain concepts, publications
and incidents (e.g., the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, the 1975 West Germany Embassy siege in Stockholm) contributed to defining the meaning-making about terrorism in newspapers and periodicals.

4. **Pilot Study: Distant Reading of a Cold War Cultural Periodical**

One of the central source materials for mapping the Swedish meaning-making about terrorism is ‘cultural periodicals’ (*kulturtidsskrifter*) and in the following we perform a pilot study, using distant reading to explore a corpus created from content of *Svensk Tidsskrift* (SvT) 1945–1991. SvT is claimed to be ‘Sweden’s oldest political journal’ and is a conservative-liberal cultural periodical published from 1911 and onwards [77] with several predecessors. The first predecessor was *Svensk litteratur-tidsskrift* (Swedish literary journal), published from 1865–1869, which in 1870 changed its name to *Svensk Tidsskrift för litteratur, politik och ekonomi* (‘Swedish journal for literature, politics and economy’), published until 1877. The periodical was resumed as *Ny Svensk Tidsskrift* (‘New Swedish journal’), published 1880–1890 and in 1891 it was restarted as the new journal *Svensk Tidsskrift* (published until 1895) and in 1911 with the old name *Svensk Tidsskrift*. The new journal was published until 1932 when it had a three-year interruption after which it was again published continuously from 1936–2004. In 2006, it was, once again, restarted as an online-only journal.

SvT was and still is close to the Swedish Conservative Party (*Högerpartiet* 1938–68, *Moderata Samlingspartiet* 1969–) and is described as the party’s ‘forum for ideas and an ‘independent organ’ for its ‘academic faction’. The different editorial boards have allegedly been ‘united’ in their ‘critique of totalitarian currents – socialist as well as fascist.’ SvT represented an ideology ‘characterized by a strong feeling for the importance of the European cultural tradition’ and with a reformist program based on liberal conservatism. [78, 79] Several of the editorial members were, like most of the chief editors, academics in humanities and social sciences and/or conservative politicians. The chief editors during the Cold War period were as follows; the political scientist and Member of Parliament (MP) for the Conservative, Party Erik Håstad (1936–48); the political economist and former Conservative Party leader and Minister of Education, Gösta Bagge (1948–51); the legal historian Gerhard Hafström, (1951–57); the legal historian, Erik Anners (1957–80); the journalist and Conservative Party MP, Margaretha af Ugglas (1980–90); the Conservative Party MP, Gunnar Hökmark (1990); and the secretary of state in a conservative led government, Odd Eiken (1991).

4.1. **Creation of Journal Article Corpus**

At SvT:s centenary in 2011 a digitized archive was made publicly available on the online journal website *svensktidsskrift.se*. This was in the form of references to digitized versions of all issues from 1911–1932, available at [http://runeberg.org/svtidskr/](http://runeberg.org/svtidskr/) and as searchable files of all articles from 1936 onwards at [https://svensktidsskrift.se/arkivet/](https://svensktidsskrift.se/arkivet/). We used the latter to scrape all articles containing terror-related words into a corpus.

During the Cold War, SvT was published continuously with 8–10 issues per year for a total of some 400–600 pages annually. Overall, the periodical contained two types of articles: signed articles providing perspectives or studies of contemporary and historical issues and unsigned editorial articles as well as shorter articles collected under the heading *Dagens frågor* (‘Issues of the day’) that commented on current events. Articles relating to terrorism were retrieved from the SvT website and through Google advanced search. The query terms used to retrieve articles for the period of 1945–1991 were *terror*, *terrorism*, and *terrorist*.

In total, 189 articles were retrieved after eliminating doubles and separating the terror-relevant articles of *Dagens frågor*, creating a corpus of 416,707 word tokens. While SvT provides both text (txt) files and PDF image files of previously published articles, only text files were used for creation of the corpus. The text files contain small numbers of OCR errors however, these errors were disregarded as inconsequential for this initial pilot and the statistical analysis. The corpus was annotated with part-of-speech tags and lemmatization using TreeTagger [80, 81] with the Swedish language parameter file. TXM [82, 83, 84] and AntConc [85] were both used as concordancers.
4.2. Analytical Methodology

First, we collated a list of all titles inspected for terror-related terms and a list of all author names, inspected for repeating authors, prominent individuals, known authors of terrorist fiction or nonfiction (like journalist Janerik Larsson) and other individuals also occurring in the project’s other materials (like publisher Bo Cavefors).

We used semi-automated Named Entity Recognition (NER) to extract the most frequently occurring individual, organization and place names in the texts. Initially, we started by using search results for nouns beginning with capital letters to get a basic idea of how different types of proper nouns were used in the text. We also used regular expressions to help identify and extract individual person names and organizations with common or predictable spelling variations (for instance, Chrusjtjov, Chrustjof, Chrustjov, Krusjtjev and Krustjev). Likewise, place names were extracted from the resulting list and geotagged through an automated process using the Nominatim API from Open Street Maps.

Lemma searches for terror, terrorism and terrorist were performed and the results graphed as trendlines, using both raw frequency and normalized frequency per one million tokens. Normalized lemma frequency was calculated for each individual article by dividing the raw frequency by total number of word tokens. The average normalized frequency for each year was calculated by averaging the normalized frequency of each article in the corpus published during that year. Trendline graphs were created using Microsoft Excel for both single years and years split into 5-year periods. The most frequent compounds for terror, terrorism, and terrorist were extracted, ranked by frequency, and then analyzed.

4.3. The Article Level – Authors & Titles

There are 189 signed and unsigned articles published from 1945–1991 in SvT containing terror-related terminology. Specifically, we are interested in the changing meaning of terror and terrorism and how use of terror is different from terrorism. We investigated the emergence of the more modern use of terrorism as a term that began to refer specifically to sub-state terrorism and non-state actors. This more modern use of terrorism began in the 1970s, becoming more frequent later during the Cold War period. When examining articles using terror versus terrorism, we found a clear dominance of terror. Terror was used ranging from 1–27 times in 125 articles (on average in 2.7 articles annually) compared to 1–5 times in 27 articles (0.6 articles annually) for terrorism. Figure 2 shows this clear dominance of articles with only terror simplexes and compounds (red) and also from 1975 (new) terrorism (blue and purple) gains traction and increasingly shares the space with terror. The graph also includes the 21 articles (in gray) that only contain terrorist simplexes and compounds.

Figure 2: Division of 189 articles containing terror, terrorism and terrorist. Articles containing simplexes and compounds with terror (red), with both terror and terrorism (purple), terrorism only (blue), and terrorist only (gray). Black frames mark the years containing the 9 terror-titled articles.

2 https://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Nominatim
9 articles containing occurrences of terror are the most prominent where terror or terrorism is used in the title in addition to article text (marked with black frames in Figure 2). They are: ‘Terrorn och den totalitära staten’ (1946), ‘Terrorn – bolsjevikernas politiska instrument’ (1960), ‘Om verbal terror’ (1974), ‘Terroristerna’ (1975), ‘Den revolutionära terrorn’ (1975), ‘Om terrorismen’ (1977), ‘Stats-terrorister och biståndsbanditer’ (1986), ‘Stöd ej ANC:s terrorpolitik’ (1987) and ‘Den lagliga terrorismen’ (1990). The first two articles contain descriptions of state-related terror in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union and the next, ‘On verbal terror’, more than a decade later on metaphorical rather than more literal use describing real-world terror. The new political terrorism of the 1970s is discussed in 3 articles 1975–1977 followed by two critiques of Swedish government policy in the 1980s, discussing how policy relates to terrorism in third world countries. In the last article, ‘The legal terrorism’ (1990), terrorism is again used metaphorically, to critique the Swedish tax system. Overall, the results reflect contrasting, evolving, and expected use of terror and terrorism, relating well to what we know about Swedish and Cold War contextual experiences of terror and terrorism.

The SvT corpus contains 84 authors who wrote 115 signed articles. The authors include several well-known Swedish academics and public intellectuals (such as Kristian Gerner, Sven Stolpe and Anders Åslund), politicians (Anders Bjöck and Jarl Hjalmarsson) and several less known or unknown authors (to be further studied, especially if they are in the project’s other cultural periodicals or other materials). From our preliminary research we know some of these writers will be significant in other project source materials, such as the journalist Janerik Larsson who wrote two of the earliest non-fiction books on Swedish terrorism (Politisk terror i Sverige (‘Political terror in Sweden’), 1968; Ustasja 1972) and two terrorist political thrillers (Attentatet (‘The Attack’), 1975; Massakern (‘The Massacre’), 1976); the publisher Bo Cavefors who published Swedish translations of political texts of members of the West German Red Army Faction (Ulikre Meinhofts förbjudna tänkesätt (‘Ulrike Meinhoft’s Forbidden Thoughts’), 1976; RAF: texter (‘RAF: Texts’), 1977) that generated debate in the mainstream press; and Thede Palm, member of the SvT editorial board (1967–79) and a former director (1947–65) of the military intelligence agency known as ‘the T-office’ (T-kontoret), and according to one of SvT’s chief editors, Palm’s ‘knowledge and judgment’ was ‘not infrequently’ the ‘solid foundation for the journal’s positioning within “cultural politics” [86].

A quarter (21) of the authors were ‘recurring authors’ who each published two or more articles. The top recurring writers are Erik Anners (5 articles in addition to unsigned editorials as chief editor), Tadeusz Norwid (4), Bo Cavefors (3), Birger Hagård (3) Tommy Hansson (3) and Sven Stolpe (3).

4.4. Named Entities - Persons & Organizations

The compilation of the list of the most frequently occurring names of individuals and organizations in SvT terror articles has already shown the potential as well as problems with our distant reading approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Terrorist individuals</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Stalin</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>Afaraf (Yassir)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Lenin</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>Kröcher (Norbert)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Tito</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>Collins (Michael)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Hitler</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>Salan (Raoul)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Chrusťjov</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>Berkman (Alexander)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Robespierre</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Sawinkow (Boris)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Mao</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Begin (Menachem)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Marx</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Mandela (Nelson)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Ehrnrooth</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Meinhoft (Ulrike)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Mathiez</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Amattheamannen (Anton Nilsson)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Terrorist organizations</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 FN</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 EG</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 FNL</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>RAF (incl. Baader-Meinhof)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 APRA</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 PLO</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>EOKA</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 KGB</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Contras</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 SÅPO</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Sternligan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 UNO</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>IRA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 OZNA</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 ANC</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Irgun</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Most frequently occurring terror-related individual (left) and organization names (right).

In Table 1, a distinction is made between names of contemporary or historical individuals most often associated with political terror in the corpus. The leftmost column lists the overall most frequently mentioned individuals in the corpus primarily connected with terror. Those are followed by ‘terrorist individuals’ (in the right column) that are individuals occurring in the corpus known to often be – correctly or not – referred to as ‘terrorists’ in the Cold War debate, with the meaning of being perpetrators of sub-
state terrorism. The former ‘Individuals’ are mostly associated with state terror and terrorism in the original meaning of the word, while the latter ‘terrorist individuals’ are generally associated with the modern concept of terrorism as conducted by non-state militants. Of course, classifying individuals as ‘terrorists’ or not is, to a significant extent, a question of perspective, with different classifications and associations expected, depending on the source material. Table 1 shows how frequently certain individuals were associated with ‘terror’ and ‘terrorism’. At a later stage, we intend to perform a more detailed analysis of the context of the word usage. In the case of the category ‘terrorist individual’, there is also an issue of low frequency, meaning the associations may be less likely to be representative of actual use. Nevertheless, the limited frequency compared to individuals associated with state terror reflects the dominance of state terror/ism in the corpus.

Likewise, the organizations listed as ‘Terrorist organizations’ in Table 1 are sub-state organizations that are included as often being – correctly or not – designated as such by authorities and media during the Cold War. The most frequently mentioned identifiable organizations do not include national governments due to difficulties of identification but could be included in a later analysis. For example, metonymy makes referent identification more difficult, i.e., Washington can refer to the United States government. However, notably, national security organizations are frequently mentioned in the context of terror and terrorism, three of the top 10 organizations being KGB (Soviet Union), SÄPO (Sweden) and OZNA (Yugoslavia). Notably, CIA (USA) or MI5 and MI6 (UK) are not mentioned at all in the corpus, possibly indicating a conservative and/or Western bias of SvT in its conception of terror and terrorism in this context.

Our distant reading of person names provides a broad and useful understanding of the material, but also reveals methodological limitations of the approach. For example, Ehrnrooth sometimes refers to the Finnish General Casimir Ehrnrooth but also to Adelaide, Gustaf and (the SvT contributing writer) Leo Ehrnrooth. Generally, only the surname is explicitly mentioned, making name referent identification more difficult to determine. Another consideration is the distribution of occurrences of a name. For example, Robespierre is used 115 times, but only in two articles, of which one contains 114 of the references. The French historian (Albert) Mathiez is among the top 10 names but occurs in only one article and is unsurprisingly linked very strongly with Robespierre, socialism, and radikalism. In our future analysis, we plan to focus both on distribution frequency of names as well as better referent identification. A more thorough approach would help to better contextualize use and association of names.

4.5. Named Entities - Locations & Countries

The heat maps in Figure 3 show concentrations of place names, cities and countries, mentioned in the corpus with a minimum cutoff frequency of 5. Maps were created using ArcGIS Online. When it comes to continents, Europe has the densest concentrations with a noticeable hot spot in the Baltics. The Soviet Union and the United States are also prominent. Moreover, Figure 3 reflects how African locations, especially Angola and Congo are frequently mentioned in SvT in relation to decolonial violence and terror. As expected, there is also a hotspot in the Middle East due to interest devoted to the Palestinian conflict and in Southeast Asia because of discussion of the Vietnam War.

While useful for a general overview, the place name extraction and geocoding can also produce some misleading results. While most place names were properly mapped to the correctly named entity, for example Ryssland (Russia) and Sovjetunionen (Soviet Union) or USA and Amerika (America), there are limitations. For instance, in some articles Ryssland could refer to Russia within the Soviet Union and in others to the pre-1917 Russian Empire. Likewise, Tyskland (Germany) could refer both to the sovereign state after 1991 or its various historical predecessors. While Amerika generally refers to the USA, in some contexts, it could refer to North America or South America or (both) the Americas. There are also considerations of how to map a referent to an entire country instead of a more exact city location. For simplicity, we opted for mapping country references to a location near the geographic center of the country. However, for larger countries, this approach could Many references to cities also do not refer...
to literal geographic locations. For example, Washington and Moskva (Moscow) often involve metonymy with the city name referring to the government of the USA or the Soviet Union, respectively. We will pursue these distinctions in more detail in the future but do not see these limitations are problematic in the context of the distant reading approach used in this initial pilot study.

Figure 3: Terror locations. Global and European heat map of place names and list of top-20 countries. Maps created using ArcGIS Online.4

4.6. Diachrony - Frequencies of Terror-related Articles and Words

Next, we complemented our analysis of articles containing terror and terrorism with an analysis involving occurrences of the words. We examined both the raw number of occurrences of tokens terror versus terrorism in absolute numbers as well as normalized frequency and distribution. When examining overall frequency, terror occurs roughly seven times more frequently in simplexes and compounds than terrorism (330 to 46 tokens).

Figure 4: Terror vs. Terrorism and Usage Frequency.

An important distinction is whether the use of terror-words is central to the argument of the article or just spurious, something which we estimated according to a cutoff, classifying articles differently depending on whether they had a normalized occurrence frequency of terror or terrorism of above or below 1000 per million tokens. The graph on the top right shows articles containing terrorism by decade with a normalized frequency below 1000 per million tokens (red) and above 1000 per million tokens.

4 Maps were created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license.
Terrorism occurs in 11 articles with low frequency in the 1940s, reflecting use of terrorism with the meaning of causing terror, generally referring to state actors, like Nazi Germany, causing terror during World War II. The use of the word terrorism declines sharply in the 1950s and then increases in frequency from the 1970s and onwards as the modern notion of terrorism, used to describe non-state actors, develops [4, 5].

Figure 5: Terror and Terrorism: Total Token (left) and Normalized Frequency (right) Over Time.

The two graphs above show frequencies of terror (red) and terrorism (blue) over time. The left graph shows absolute token frequency while the right graph shows normalized frequency per one million tokens. Normalized frequency can often be a better measurement as it accounts for differences in article length and variation in the number of total word tokens per year. For example, an absolute frequency can be higher for some years where more terror related articles were published. Some articles are also longer, containing more total tokens. For longer articles, absolute token frequency would be expected to be higher, even if the relative frequency is the same.

Consistent with the previous results, terror occurs with a much higher frequency than terrorism. The initial peak of terror in the 1940s is associated with discussion of events related to World War II, followed by a steep decline in the 1950s. Another increase occurs in the late 1950s and early 1960s, associated with the Cuban Revolution and events related to decolonization in Africa. The strongest peak in the 1970s is associated with the emergence of the modern concept of terrorism referring to sub-state and non-state actors. Notably, terrorism has a higher normalized frequency than terror in the year 1977. This strong spike is associated with one specific article (with 6 mentionings of terrorism) discussing West German terrorism in relation to the plot to kidnap a former Swedish Minister.

Figure 6: 100 most common words in KWIC (50 words window) of ‘terror’ (562 hits), ‘terror’ (170) and ‘terrorism’ (26).

We used AntConc with a modified Swedish stoplist (from https://github.com/peterdalle/svensktext/blob/master/stoppord/stoppord-mycket.csv) to produce word clouds of the KWIC (Key Word in Context) window of 25 words before and after the terror-related key words of terror and terrorism, respectively (Figure 6). These word clouds help contextualize terror and terrorism. For terror, significant contextual words concern the Soviet Union (such as Stalin’s, ryska, sovjetiska, kommunistiskt, Moskva) as well as state terror (makten (‘the power’), befolkningen (‘the population’), militär (‘military’), systemet (the system), förtryck (‘oppression’)). For terrorism, contextual words are instead more related to international conflicts involving the USA and non-European countries (PLO, Israels (‘Israel’s’), Angola, afrikanska (‘African’)) and combating international and domestic non-state militants and criminals.
(poliser (‘police’), bekämpa (‘combat’), kriminalitet (‘criminality’), mord (‘murder’), SÄPO, flygplanskapare (‘skyjacker’), gerillarörelser (‘guerilla movements’)). Whether these characterizations will hold for other Swedish cultural periodicals remains to be seen and will be highly interesting to future study.

We also investigated one of the central ideological tensions of the Cold War. Figure 7 shows a trend-line of normalized usage frequency for kapitalism (‘capitalism’) (blue) and kommunism (‘communism’) (red). Communism is often mentioned in the context of terror, terrorism, and the Cold War, with capitalism being mentioned as a positive contrast more or less during the whole period. However, the frequency of the related term socialism shows a strong increase in the 1970s. One possibility is that writers in SvT often associated terrorism with socialism in order to mount an ideological critique.

![Figure 7](_normalized_frequency_of_kapitalism_vs_kommunism_and_socialism.png)

**Figure 7:** Normalized Frequency of Kapitalism (blue) vs Kommunism (red) and Socialism (right).

### 4.7. Linguistics - Innovation and Productivity

Finally, we examined the linguistic innovation and productivity of different compounds consisting of different terror-related words. The most used lemma is terror, of which there exist 44 different compounds with terror as a compound modifier or head. The 10 most common terror compounds are terrorapparat (‘terror apparatus’) (16 instances), terrordåd (‘terror deed’) (11), terrorsystem (‘system of terror’) (8), terrormetod (‘terror method’) (6), terrorregim (‘terror regime’) (5), terrorgrupp (‘terror group’) (5), terrorhandling (‘act of terror’) (5), terrororganisation (‘terror organization’) (4) and terroraktion (‘terror action’) (3). Of these, 4 (of the top 6) are clearly connected to various forms of state terrorism. The most frequent terror compounds all use terror as an initial modifying noun in compounds with other nouns as morphological heads. Compounds headed with terror exist but are fewer and with much lower frequency, for example polisterror (‘police terror’) (5) and världsterror (‘world terror’) (2).

Terrorist occurs in 22 compounds, of which 16 are used as the modifying noun, such as in the most common terrorist compounds terroristgrupp (‘terrorist group’) (5), terroristlag (‘terrorist law’) (4), terroristliga (‘terrorist band’) (3), terroristorganisation (‘terrorist organization’) (3) and 6 in which it is in the determined element used for specifying different kinds of terrorists, all only occurring once in the material, with the exception of statsterrorist (‘state terrorist’) that are used twice: ambassadterrorist, (‘embassy terrorist’) nykerhetsterrorist (‘sobriety terrorist’), psykoterrorist (‘psycho terrorist’), västterrorist (‘left-wing terrorist’) and yrkesterrorist (‘professional terrorist’). The adjective simplex terroristisk (‘terroristic’) is only used in one compound form, totalitärterroristisk (‘totalitarian terrorist’). Also, it is rather remarkable that terrorism is used only once in a (metaphorical) compound; kvalterrorism (‘anguish terrorism’). That terrorism is so less productive than terror indicates that terrorism is a much less salient phenomenon overall than terror during the Cold War period 1945–1991.

### 5. Conclusions

In this paper, we have presented the integrative approach of the digital history project ‘The Cultural Imaginary of Terrorism’, stressing the benefits of pursuing the intersections of computational and interpretative analysis. By describing the project’s core elements, we have clarified how it contributes to a
broader understanding of the cultural meaning-making about terrorism in Sweden in all its diversities, polarizations and complexities. Furthermore, we have shown how we integrate distant and close reading: through a pilot study of the periodical Svensk Tidskrift. Notably, our text mining analysis allowed us to explore patterns in the data and our historical domain expertise helped us to discern significant aspects in the text material that call for further investigation (issues, names, etc.). In this sense, our indicative results provide important steps in our efforts to investigate how terrorism was imagined and framed in Swedish culture during the Cold War.

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