Foreign information operations in Sweden, c. 1725–1750

A media system approach

Bodensten, Erik

Published in:
Gender, Materiality, and Politics

2022

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

CHAPTER 14

Foreign information operations in Sweden, *c.*1725–1750

A media system approach

Erik Bodensten

As the Estates of the Realm gathered in Stockholm for the Diet of 1742, an anonymous pamphlet had just hit the streets. It concerned the succession, a pressing question since Queen Ulrika Eleonora died the year before, leaving the country without an heir and mired in a disastrous war with Russia. In a matter-of-fact tone, the author had gone over the pros and cons of the obvious candidates. His conclusion was controversial, though: the Estates should pick the heir to the Danish throne, so uniting the two Scandinavian kingdoms. Only if they joined forces could they win the war and stop Russia's expansion, which threatened both countries. The time had come to put the old bitter rivalry behind them. It was an epistolary pamphlet and typical of the genre: a detailed letter by a sensible, well-informed, and sagacious man, who enlightened and gently admonished his friends and relatives. It was nominally addressed to two young relatives, who were asked to share its contents to persuade the Estates to sound out the Danish court.[1]

In both form and content, it gave the impression of having only Sweden's interests at heart, and the author described himself as a god-fearing, patriotic Swede. The reality was that it was part of a concerted campaign by foreign and domestic actors to influence Swedish public opinion and interfere in the succession. The pamphlet had been printed abroad at the behest of the Danish envoy in Stockholm, Gustav Grüner (1688–1763), and it followed to the letter his secret instructions from

the Danish Privy Council to influence the Swedish Estates. As well as a list of points to make, Grüner had been given a considerable amount of cash, which he used to rapidly establish an extensive network in Sweden. As the opening of the Diet on 20 August 1742 approached, this network set about distributing the pamphlet. As it became apparent that the succession would dominate proceedings at the Diet, interest in the pamphlet increased; its price soared, all sorts of written copies began to circulate, and it was not long before there were German and French translations. The Diet's powerful Secret Committee discussed how best to handle it and whether to complain to Copenhagen. For fear of giving it the oxygen of publicity, however, they decided to do nothing. It is not known for certain who wrote the pamphlet. It was probably a Swedish county governor, Johan von Brehmer (1677–1754), who had Danish connections—he was well received at the Danish court when he spent a couple of weeks in Copenhagen that summer. Later, on 5 October, a satisfied Grüner was able to report home that he had successfully covered his tracks: the author was now widely assumed to have been a much-respected and recently deceased member of the Swedish Council of the Realm.[2]

As the Dutch historian Helmer Helmers points out, there is ample evidence that public diplomacy was an established, even widespread, practice in early modern Europe. It is time to revise the traditional views of early modern diplomacy (characterized as 'cabinet diplomacy', conducted out of the public eye) and government propaganda (for domestic consumption).[3] In the hopes of informing or influencing public opinion in other countries, governments regularly used public diplomacy, including war propaganda, public diplomatic ceremonies, and news management.[4] Their objective was often simply to enhance or protect the image of their diplomats, or the prince they represented, with a message addressed to a more general, European public.

Little attention, though, has been paid to clandestine public diplomacy, best characterized as information warfare of the kind so prominent in geopolitics today.[5] It saw governments try to shape public opinion, influence election outcomes, discredit governments, and generally meddle in the political process and public policy of other sovereign states. Government-sponsored propaganda and information operations were

intended to be subversive, and thus directly targeted other countries' public officials, decision makers, and electorates. By the eighteenth century, European governments knew of this threat.[6] This present essay redresses the imbalance with a case study of early modern information warfare in Sweden in peacetime, between 1725 and 1750.

Lacking any major systematic study, our knowledge of why and how the foreign powers operated in the Swedish media environment in this period is rather sketchy. Nevertheless, the literature offers some important clues, in a few instances even providing us with strong evidence of how foreign powers went about seeking to inform, persuade, deceive, and threaten Swedish audiences, whether overtly or covertly.[7] In what follows, I paint a fuller picture, drawing on previous research and linking the different fragments in a general synthesizing analysis. Empirically, the article focuses on how the actors—both foreign and domestic—utilized the broad repertoire of available media types, and how different media strategies, practices, and technologies were combined to achieve the best effect.

In this, I have been inspired by the recognition in recent media history of the highly complex nature of media systems, of which all media are necessarily part. Now alert to the extent to which media have interacted and affected one another, media historians have abandoned monomedia and multimedia for transmedia perspectives—remediation, for example, or circulation. As a systemic approach, media history covers (or ignores) many political, technological, economic, social, and cultural factors separately; however, all such factors should also be considered an interconnected whole. A full media analysis cannot be limited to the technology, for example. If nothing else, the function and status of all media are determined by what Lisa Gitelman terms the protocol of any given medium—its norms and practices at a particular time and place, whether postal infrastructure, censorship regulations, genre, and so on. Yet this reductionism is common. Too often, the changes in media history have been explained by referring to innovation or novelty, failing to recognize that the media system itself is constantly changing and always comprises both emerging and surviving media features.[8] This criticism extends to Swedish historians, who tend to underplay the changes in Sweden's media system in 1725–50, because, unlike, for

instance, the much briefer period of 1766–72, there was no relaxation of censorship. With a broader systemic approach, the significance of the earlier period is apparent.

When asking what foreign governments' media strategies, practices, and technologies were, it is also essential to acknowledge the inherently transnational character of all media.[9] The Swedish media system neither existed nor functioned in isolation, but was part of the wider European media landscape. The transnational realities and choices made by diplomatic actors when operating from inside and outside the Swedish media system should not be discounted. To combine the scholarship on early modern media and diplomatic practices, this essay thus addresses the question of change. How did diplomatic actors and practices respond to changes in the early modern media, such as the advent of print culture and an increasingly influential public sphere? Conversely, did diplomatic actors and practices serve as agents of change? Did public diplomacy throw open new spaces to public debate and revolutionize the various media in ways the ruling elites did not want, as Helmers suggests?[10]

I will demonstrate how diplomatic leaks were used to shape Swedish public opinion, and focus on the two most widely used media, printed and handwritten pamphlets, before looking at attempts to evade censorship. I conclude with a case study of the media practices, norms, technologies, and arenas involved in one specific foreign information operation in the 1730s. First, however, the historical context, essential to understanding why foreign information operations in Sweden seem to have been both more frequent and more significant in this period.

Media system, political system

The European media landscape was transformed in the early modern period, and with it politics, which was increasingly determined by political opinion in the public sphere.[11] In Sweden, the changes accelerated in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Printed texts now tentatively offered dissenting political opinions, albeit carefully obscured because censorship was still a reality. The printed alternative for explicit, polemic political opinion was anonymous, illegal publications, but they had to be produced abroad and smuggled into the country,

which often proved difficult, time-consuming, and costly. Therefore, most who wanted to influence political opinion chose to make their voices heard anonymously in clandestine, handwritten texts, which were easier to produce and circumvented the censors. Manuscript and printed political texts, which became increasingly common in the late 1730s, complemented one another, transformed the public sphere, and influenced the only officially recognized central political arena, the Diet, Sweden's parliament. As the public sphere gained a more prominent political role, people grew accustomed to the public airing of political opinion and information, and began to view the practice as a right. Finally, the Diet, recognizing that political culture had changed, introduced sweeping legislation in 1766 which made free speech a constitutional right, and gave rise to an array of new political prints.[12]

Driving this process was a new political system, increasingly parliamentarian in nature, introduced in around 1720. Instead of strong monarchs, Sweden was now ruled by the Council of the Realm and, when it was in session every third year or so, the Diet. The political elite, riven by factionalism in the fight for political power, turned to the public sphere for support from an ever-broader section of society. Opposition politics made the struggle for political opinion a national concern, and with it public opinion and an expanding political nation.[13]

This new political and media landscape, however, meant new opportunities for the foreign powers which wanted to influence Swedish politics, most notably Russia, Denmark, France, and Britain. Their financial means of gaining political influence in Sweden—war subsidies, party contributions, and patronage and gifts for individual politicians—are charted in the literature.[14] However, other means, albeit less well-known, could also be deployed.

Leaks of diplomatic documents

Foreign information operations in Sweden in the period seem to have had two aims. The first was to influence Sweden's political superstructure—in the back of everyone's minds was the restoration of strong royal rule. The second was to influence Swedish foreign policy, especially its choice of allies. European states fell into one of two alliance blocs, which at that

point were roughly balanced, but where Sweden could tip the scale.[15] As foreign envoys had an accepted role to play in the diplomatic manoeuvring over the balance of power, they had a natural opportunity to influence domestic opinion by simply publicizing select parts of their negotiations.

Take the twists and turns of Sweden joining either the Hanoverian Alliance or the Alliance of Vienna in 1726–7. On 4 June 1726, the British envoy to Sweden, Stephen Poyntz (1685–1750), sent a memorandum to the Swedish Council that expressed sharp criticism of the slowness in the negotiations for an alliance, the unspoken message being one of support for the Council faction who wished to see Sweden join the British–French Hanoverian Alliance immediately. When the Diet was summoned to decide the issue, written copies of the memorandum began to circulate, clearly in order to sway the Estates. The memorandum had been written in French, but soon was circulating in a Swedish translation to reach a wider readership. Opponents of the alliance, however, quickly put together a response, written by Samuel Triewald (1688–1743), a Swede working for the Holstein–Russian legation in Stockholm, which circulated in manuscript in both French and Swedish. However, to be printed it had to be sent abroad, which proved problematic. Poyntz was relieved to report to London that it only circulated 'very privately', and by the time the printed version finally arrived and began to circulate in early 1727 a decision was already imminent. In a desperate attempt to court political opinion, the Austrian and Russian envoys made written copies of their own memorandum public, and with it the minutes of the negotiations, which spelt out that Sweden had been promised generous subsidies if the Estates rejected the Hanoverian Alliance, and in the same breath threatened that any attempt to join would be seen as a deliberate breach with both imperial courts. The Estates frowned on the fact that these documents were sold on the streets of Stockholm, free to 'dance a minuet around town'.[16]

Another example was the publication of a diplomatic note from the Russian ambassador Johann Albrecht von Korff (1697–1766) to Sweden's new crown prince, Adolf Frederick (1710–71) on 15 November 1746. Korff had read the note aloud to Adolf Frederick in a private audience, telling him he had Empress Elizabeth to thank for his crown and that he should be distinctly more grateful and pro-Russian. According to Korff, the

Empress alone could guarantee him the succession, given it was still contested, and her patience was wearing thin. Korff was obviously meant to scare the crown prince into submission; more broadly, however, he seems to have been instructed to instigate a regime change. By making the Russian government's position public—that Sweden's pro-French, anti-Russian leadership was unacceptable, and made peaceful relations impossible—Korff apparently hoped to frighten the Swedish Estates into choosing a new more pro-Russian government. To make the threat credible, Russia staged large-scale army and naval manoeuvres along the border and into Swedish territorial waters throughout the Diet, which led to widespread rumours. A few days after the audience, Adolf Frederick noted that copies of the note were already circulating in Stockholm's coffee houses. They spread rapidly, as Chancellor Carl Gustaf Tessin (1695–1770) heard from one of his many informants, who, arriving in Malmö, 500 kilometres south of the Swedish capital, found that Korff's text was being passed around. On 5 January 1747, Tessin informed his colleagues in government that the note was not only doing the rounds of the courts of Europe, but print copies were available, and it had even been published in foreign newspapers.[17]

Another possibility was to publish diplomatic correspondence, genuine or false, to compromise one's opponents.[18] For example, in March 1743, as Sweden's succession crisis came to a head, a forgery of that kind was found when the home was searched of a Royal Chancery official, Anders Rydelius (1705–68), who had been agitating among the Estate of the Peasants on behalf of the ruling Hat party. Rydelius protested he had been given the document by Thomas Plomgren (1702–54), a leading Hat and confidant of the French ambassador Marc Antoine de Lanmarys (1689–1749), to translate it from French into Swedish. Plomgren admitted it, but where he obtained the original was never said, nor Lanmarys's involvement. The document was said to be a written copy of secret instructions for the British envoy in Stockholm, Melchior Guy Dickens (1696–1775), from the foreign minister John Carteret (1690–1763), setting out how Britain had intrigued against Sweden and the details of its continuing campaign to persuade the Estates to choose the British candidate as heir to the throne. Carteret ostensibly told Dickens which Swedes to approach, and he cited earlier British diplomatic correspondence. The

document is a typical example of disinformation—intentionally false or inaccurate information, deliberately spread, in this case to discredit the British candidate. Lord Carteret was furious when he heard, especially as copies of the document had soon begun to circulate, and instructed Dickens to go to the Council and demand their promise to get to the bottom of what was 'evidently a contrivance of the French faction to discredit us'.[19]

Printed and handwritten pamphlets

By the 1720s, pamphlets had long been a key means of political communication in many parts of Europe.[20] However, in Sweden, they were only just beginning to make inroads. Between 1725 and 1750, pamphlets, usually as written copies, grew steadily in political importance. It also seems to have been the medium of choice for those who wanted to influence Swedish political opinion from abroad. The fact that so many of the pamphlets in the 1720s and 1730s can be linked to foreign interests indicates that other governments were a driving force in the medium becoming so important so fast.

The leaked documents already described were essentially white propaganda—the source was acknowledged and the information was accurate—but most pamphlets were on a sliding grey scale, although only rarely were they so misleading as to warrant being labelled black propaganda.[21] The Danish pamphlet of 1742, with its ambiguous sources, bias, and half-truths, was a classic of its type. The author was not only anonymous, but hid his identity. It was not spelt out that foreign interests lay behind it, though it was the obvious conclusion to draw, given how clear a political line it followed.

For an early example, there was the Diet of 1726–7. Again, it was Poyntz the British envoy who circulated an anonymous, handwritten pamphlet in Stockholm. As well as the usual epistolary form, the author used the classical rhetorical device of weighing the pros and cons in a (misleading) claim to impartiality. The author was Otto Wilhelm Klinckowström (1683–1731), a Swede who Poyntz said in a diplomatic dispatch had been paid £200 as a fee. Poyntz was pleased with how things went: the pamphlet, which said Sweden should join the Hanoverian Alliance,

spread quickly, and after only a week of being available (in Swedish, French, and German) he could report it had 'made many converts'.[22]

A greater element of disinformation was found in pamphlets intended to discredit. Usually attributed or addressed to political opponents, one example of this type of pamphlet, circulating at the same time as Poyntz's, argued against Sweden joining the Hanoverian alliance: it was addressed to 'Your Excellency Horn', Chancellor Arvid Horn (1664–1742), who was trying to muster the Diet's support for the alliance, and was ostensibly taken from his correspondence with an anonymous confidant that showed several serious allegations to be true, among them that Horn had his eye on the Swedish throne. The friend pressed Horn to change his mind about the alliance, which would only lead to war with Russia, and to stop slandering Duke Charles Frederick of Holstein-Gottorp (1700–39), whose claim to the Swedish throne Horn should acknowledge rather than, as now, obstruct. Of course, it cannot be ruled out that people thought it was a genuine letter, yet it was so obviously partial that few can have been in any doubt that it was a fiction. Publicly, the Secret Committee gave it no credence, ordered the public executioner to burn every copy that could be found, and offered a large reward for the identity of the author.[23]

Considerable effort was put into tracking down the author, but without success. There were guesses, but all of them were wrong, because it was in fact the Holstein-Gottorp court chancellor, Andreas Ernst von Stambke (1670–1739). The surviving correspondence offers an almost unique insight into this foreign information operation. The pamphlet had been written at Duke Charles Frederick's court (then in St Petersburg), on the orders of the duke himself. Particularly illustrative is a letter to the duke dated 3 October 1726, in which the Holstein councillor, Johan von Pechlin (1682–1757), gave a detailed account of what had been done and the measures they had taken to prevent detection. They had been careful not to use the ducal chancery's usual stationery, for example. Pechlin also explained the difficulties of making the copies. The plan was to distribute the pamphlet in Swedish, with only those who could not read it receiving the German version. The trouble was that the copyists did not speak Swedish, so the work had taken longer than expected. Therefore, with the Diet fast approaching, a Swedish officer

in the Duke's service had been brought in to help with the copying. He was also made to arrange distribution in Sweden. Under the pretext of a personal trip home, he had sent off packets of pamphlets from a number of post offices across Sweden in order to make it difficult to trace them. To be on the safe side, each envelope had a different seal and was addressed in a different hand. Several dozen pamphlets at a time were distributed to a large number of political, administrative, military, and church leaders. It was only when a local postmaster became suspicious of what the arrest warrant described as a man 'with black hair and brown clothes' that the authorities learnt of the pamphlet and began making inquiries.[24]

The Holstein pamphlet was hand-copied, a reminder that print was not the automatic choice; in fact, on the contrary, printed pamphlets were still very rare in Sweden. It was only with the abolition of censorship in 1766 that they overtook written copies. The few before then were invariably printed abroad in German and French, although there were a handful of Swedish, English, and Dutch examples.[25] Indeed, it is even rarer to be able to tie a printed pamphlet to a foreign information operation. At best, there were usually only rumours and hints to that effect. There was for example a pro-British opposition pamphlet of 1740 printed in London, where the unusual place of publication alone made contemporaries suspicious and prompted the Swedish government to protest.[26]

The same was true of the anti-government campaign at the Diet of 1746–7, when a number of pamphlets tried to undermine the ruling Hats and their anti-Russian foreign policy with a combination of threats, persuasion, character assassination, and disinformation. The operation was a collaboration between the Swedish opposition and the Russian government.[27] One of the pamphlets insisted that Russia's intentions towards Sweden were always good, that Swedish revanchism was doomed to fail, and that ending the Swedish–Prussian defensive alliance as the Hat government wanted would only provoke Russia; instead, the Estates should oust the corrupt councillors who were responsible for Sweden's desperate situation, otherwise, as the anonymous author warned—and threatened—renewed war was a certainty. Chancellor Tessin (the pamphlets' main target) should pay for his crimes with his life. Soon the Swedish pamphlet was also available in French and German versions,

they too printed abroad and smuggled into Sweden. King Frederick I, the Crown Prince, and Tessin himself were among those who received copies anonymously.[28] Tessin, convinced the campaign was being orchestrated by the Russian embassy in Stockholm, claimed to know which Swedish oppositionists had helped the embassy.[29] In at least one instance we know he was correct: according to a Russian diplomatic dispatch, one of the pamphlets was written by a former Swedish councillor and member of the Cap party, Gustaf Bonde (1682–1764), and printed overseas with Russian help, probably in St Petersburg or Reval.[30]

How to avoid censorship

Foreign diplomats were expected to present their credentials to Kungl. Maj:t, the King in Council, and to interact only with the government and not directly with the public.[31] There were of course ways to circumvent the ban. A common tactic was to approach one of the Dutch or German newspapers which were read in Sweden, and which readers had come to rely on for the politically sensitive information usually omitted by the Swedish press.[32] This was the Danish envoy Grüner's media practice of choice in 1742. In November that year, he heard that Duke Charles Peter Ulrich of Holstein-Gottorp (1728–62), whom the Estates had just chosen as heir to the Swedish throne, had converted to Russian Orthodoxy. The Duke had moved to St Petersburg to be with his aunt, the new Empress Elizabeth Petrovna (1709–62), and it looked likely he would be appointed her successor. His conversion seemed to confirm this, while excluding him from the Swedish throne. Grüner had to find a believable way to inform the Estates that their candidate was out of the running, while shepherding in a Danish candidate. He had heard of a written account that the Danish court had just received from the legation in St Petersburg, and thinking it might prove useful asked Copenhagen to forward it to him to be circulated in Stockholm, and that relevant parts be published in the *Gazette d'Altona*, which Grüner knew had many Swedish readers.[33]

Another way of circumventing censorship was to use legally published material to sway public opinion, with correct information the authorities could not object to being published. During the succession crisis of

1742–3 the various candidates used pictures—portraits, family trees—to illustrate the dynastic relations, and by extension the foreign candidates' claims to the Swedish throne.[34] Another example was Russia's success in discrediting both the Swedish government and its French allies in the autumn of 1739. Russia and Austria had recently concluded a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire, which was a political disaster for the Swedish government, not only because its plans to rewrite its eastern borders were brought to nothing, but because it had inadvertently made the rapprochement possible: egged on by France, it had sent a large contingent of troops to the Finnish part of the kingdom, but instead of making the Russian government more willing to negotiate with Sweden, it had rushed Russia into making peace on other fronts, to be ready to counter the Swedish threat. When word reached Stockholm that France had in fact arranged the peace, it was understood that Sweden had been duped into forcing Russia to the negotiating table in order to save the Ottoman Empire, France's most important ally against the Hapsburgs, from imminent defeat. The news compromised France's position as Sweden's ally and undermined the foundations of the Swedish government's foreign policy. However, there was lasting uncertainty, not only about whether the peace would hold, but even whether the peace treaty had been ratified. Were they in fact still at war and in the field? Was that the reason why no peace treaty had been published? Were the rumours that France had acted as a go-between correct? Into this confusion came the request from the Russian ambassador in Stockholm, Mikhail Petrovich Bestuzhev-Ryumin (1688–1760), that Swedish newspapers print a correct Swedish translation of the peace treaty in question—something the Swedish government found hard to refuse. This leveraging of wholly accurate information was reattempted a few weeks later in December 1739. Because of the peace agreement, the negotiations for a Swedish–Ottoman offensive alliance and subsidies halted; Swedish negotiators in Constantinople were only able to extract a watered-down defensive alliance from the High Porte. To clarify whether this was indeed the case, and, while he was about it, discredit the Swedish government and its anti-Russian allies, Bestuzhev-Ryumin had the treaty printed and distributed to demonstrate it lacked offensive potential and made no promises about subsidies.[35]

Pulling out all the stops

One of the most extensive foreign information operations conducted in Sweden in the period was in the 1730s, following the collapse of negotiations for an alliance between Sweden and France. It would warrant closer analysis if only as an example of the media strategies and methods described above being combined to best effect, but the clear evidence of the Swedish government's countermeasures makes it even more revealing.

The background was the French government's refusal to ratify the treaty it concluded with Sweden on 14 June 1735. Relations between the countries, which were traditionally close allies, were already deteriorating, and when France balked at the treaty its reputation in Sweden suffered serious damage. The episode also undermined the Swedish government, which was partly to blame, because on 5 August it chose to renew a Swedish–Russian defence treaty, which ran directly counter to French interests. The Swedish government was in an especially awkward position, because less than a year earlier it had been instructed by the Swedish Estates to pursue the French subsidy treaty, in order to make it possible to go to war against Russia.

The French ambassador to Stockholm, Charles-Louis de Casteja (1693–1755), received instructions from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Germain Louis Chauvelin (1685–1762), to make sure 'la nation suédoise' knew the Swedish government was entirely to blame, and to plot with oppositionists to overthrow the government and install a pro-French government. Like Copenhagen's instructions for the Danish campaign in 1742–3, so Casteja was told which arguments to use—varied according to his audience's views on France. He was also sent a memorandum to be handed to the Swedish government. This he did on 18 January 1736, but only after he had consulted with his Swedish 'friends' (meaning the opposition, some of whom were members of the government) and accordingly rewrote some passages in even more forceful terms. The memorandum of course defended French policy in recent years, but it was also a blistering attack on the Swedish government for defying a direct order from the Estates, which was grounds for dismissal. It also held up the prospect of more subsidies, provided Sweden had a more

pro-French government. The Swedish government, aware that copies of the French memorandum were already circulating in Stockholm and across the country, took its time to draw up a long, pointed answer, plainly written with Swedish public opinion in mind. Casteja was reminded he was 'accredited neither to the Estates nor to the Nation but to His Majesty', and thus should not attempt to address the public, let alone sway public opinion. Yet the government seems to have hesitated to publish its new hard line, as historically France had been Sweden's most important ally. It settled for the time being on sending copies of the response along with the French memorandum to Sweden's envoys abroad.[36]

It soon became apparent that the leaked French memorandum was part of a larger campaign. When the Swedish government met on 15 March 1736, the king drew the councillors' attention to two handwritten pamphlets that had recently come to his notice, but which had been circulating in Swedish and French since at least December. Similar in form and content, they apparently originated from the same Francophile circles. Both were anonymous and written in epistolary form, with the authors presented as patriotic Swedes who had sat in the previous Diet, and therefore knew exactly what the government had been instructed to do—and had flagrantly ignored. Typically for the genre, the 'letter writers' announced they had no particular insight into the workings of government, but then proceeded to pick over the negotiations in detail, complete with astute commentary and analysis. Blame for the failure of the negotiations fell squarely on the governing majority, who were to be reviled for their 'cringing fear' and for being bought by Russia and Britain. It was similar criticism to the French memorandum, but far more brusque and contemptuous in tone—so much so that the government labelled them pasquils, and ordered the public executioner to burn every copy. They were ostensibly impartial and investigative, but in fact tendentious in the extreme. There were no counter-arguments, no hint of self-criticism. The clearest indication that they were addressed to the Swedish public was the reminder that the country was in dire straits. With no French subsidies, Sweden would groan under new taxes, and 'trade and manufactures throttled', 'the son of toil robbed of his daily bread and his livelihood', 'the serving-men's woeful salaries curtailed'.

There was considerable resentment at government level, and when the pamphlets were read aloud in Council the Francophiles among them found it wise to protest their innocence and their ignorance of the pamphleteers' identities. Despite extensive inquiries and the promise of a large reward, the authors remained anonymous. Few doubted that the French ambassador was behind it all, though. Suspicion fell on Olof von Törne (1686–1745), who was very close to Casteja and was his go-between with the Swedish opposition. Time after time, Casteja described him as indispensable to the French cause, and judging by Casteja's remarks in the diplomatic correspondence and the large sums he paid him, he trusted him implicitly.[37]

At this point in the spring of 1736, the Swedish government was made aware of the leak of several other documents from the Swedish–French negotiations, with written copies now circulating in both Swedish and French. One was a letter dated 10 July 1735 from Chauvelin to Casteja, instructing him to immediately dissuade the Swedish government from renewing the Russian–Swedish treaty, and to present said letter to the Swedish government, which he had done on 21 July. Casteja had circulated copies of the letter that November, apparently to refute the Swedish government's claim that France had advised Sweden against the Russian treaty renewal only after it had been signed on 5 August 1735. The government felt compelled to set the record straight by publishing several documents from the negotiations, including the French memorandum of 18 January 1736 and its response. The versions that had already been leaked were misleading, so Chancellor Horn, the leading figure in the government, was keen to quash them and ensure the public had access to accurate copies, printed for ease and speed of distribution; however, the pro-French minority opposed any form of disclosure. The compromise was to distribute written rather than printed copies, and only to central government officials, provincial governors, regimental commanders, and leading clergy, though the covering letter said that anyone who asked should be given the opportunity to read and copy the documents, so that 'all faithful subjects' could 'separate truth from falsehood' and 'judge' for themselves. Not long after, however, the documents were printed anonymously in the Dutch Republic in both French and Dutch. It could have been Horn, bypassing his opponents in government while

avoiding a complete break with Versailles; it could have been the French, wanting to make the documents public in print in a way that would be read in Sweden. Either way, the French government expressed its outrage and demanded the Swedish government publish a denial in the Dutch newspapers, which it refused to do.[38]

While the Swedish government was considering its countermeasures, the French ambassador and his Swedish 'amis' continued their attempts to sway public opinion. Törne criss-crossed Sweden to rally support. In May 1736, for example, Casteja asked Chauvelin for a large sum of money to cover Törne's travels, which was immediately granted.[39] Handwritten pamphlets were of central importance to their efforts to shape public opinion. Some twenty or so survive from the period. It is not known who the anonymous authors were, but the degree of detail about the diplomatic negotiations indicates they must have been written with the help of the French ambassador and his colluders in the Swedish government. One indication of the intended audience was the language, which was often French. The texts circulated when the Diet convened in 1738 to determine the fate of the government were almost all in Swedish, however. That does not mean they were any less highbrow. The popular pamphlet known as *Castejas testament*, for example, was extremely long, informative, and larded with select passages from government minutes, diplomatic correspondence, and Swedish–French negotiations. Carefully angled, it nevertheless quoted the originals correctly and at length, and rectified much of what had been published elsewhere. Notably, it played up several compromising statements by Horn himself. The pamphlet was obviously designed to paint a full picture of the negotiation process for the Estates, underlining that it was the government's decision to prioritize the Swedish–Russian treaty renewal that led to the break with France.[40]

Texts that had been published legally could also be leveraged. Just as a new session of the Diet began in 1738, a copy of the Swedish–Russian treaty of 1735 appeared, nailed to the pillory in central Stockholm. The corners of the sheet of paper had been burnt away, in a deliberate echo of how the public executioner dealt with libels on the very same spot. A few days later, the charge was repeated in handwritten copies of an anonymous pamphlet found nailed to several of the city's church doors,

an example of how different media forms could interact. The author, who mockingly purported to be the Russian ambassador Bestuzhev-Ryumin, promised a rich reward for the name of the person who had burnt the treaty.[41]

The exact details of this French information operation are obscure, as might be expected—it is impossible to determine how far the French ambassador's involvement went in designing, financing, publishing, and distributing opposition pamphlets, for example—yet it is still an unusually good illustration of how a foreign government might run an information operation in Sweden. It is also plain that the Swedish government was deeply divided about how best to handle France, which remained a potential ally. The government knew what was going on and voiced its concerns, yet it was very slow to act and never took the initiative.[42] It decided to expel Casteja in June 1736, for example, but he was allowed to continue as ambassador and did not quit Stockholm until early 1738.[43] Only then, with the Estates about to assemble in Stockholm, did the government attempt a charm offensive. It was too little, too late. Horn and his Caps were ousted from power at the Diet and replaced by a pro-French Hat government, bringing home to foreign and domestic observers what a significant force public opinion had become in Swedish politics.[44]

Concluding remarks

Foreign interference in Swedish politics in peacetime by using the media is demonstrably not a new phenomenon.[45] In the eighteenth century, several foreign governments sought to shape Swedish public opinion, meddle in the political process, and influence public policy in this way. Unsurprisingly, much of it defies historical investigation—those involved took great care to cover their tracks—but some conclusions are still possible.[46]

There can be no doubt that foreign operators—including Swedish subjects in foreign service, such as Samuel Triewald—played a crucial role, but they did not act on their own. They were always dependent on Swedish political figures with whom they had common interests, and who provided the crucial language skills, political insight, and

distribution channels. They clearly preferred Swedish authors familiar with Swedish politics. Conversely, foreign states assisted domestic actors and shouldered some of the cost of shaping public opinion. Foreign support was key in accessing printing presses abroad, which Swedish political actors were denied at home by rigorous censorship—just one example of transnational entanglement and the interplay of national media systems. To these witting agents we must add everyone who brokered information and disinformation without knowing its foreign origin or purpose.

Both foreign and domestic actors clearly benefited from this type of collaboration, and it proved to be highly successful more than once. With regard to the close collaboration between the Russian and British ambassadors and the Caps during the 1765–6 Diet, Michael Metcalf has emphasized that this was to the advantage of the Swedes, who were able to use foreign funds to mobilize a considerable level of political support. The same can also be said of any media operation, such as the campaign mounted to strengthen Horn's position at the 1726–7 Diet, or the opposition shoring up its position ahead of the 1738 Diet, to name but two. Compared to the vast sums of money spent by foreign governments in the form of subsidies, party contributions, and direct bribes, information operations represented a cost-effective method of exerting influence. Nevertheless, for Paris, St Petersburg, and London, the key issue remained the same: even though the fact of their having supported the ruling faction in Stockholm might result in political influence, there were no guarantees. Their collaboration might be grounded in shared interests, but the Swedish actors had political agendas of their own and were by no means passive subordinates. These campaigns were not directed from abroad. Instead, they seem to have been designed by foreign emissaries in discussion with their closest Swedish partners.[47]

Having said that, such a collaboration was not uncomplicated from a Swedish perspective either. Even the act of shaping public opinion amounted to breaking established norms, something that could have serious consequences for anyone getting caught doing this.[48] To then also engage in relations with a foreign power further upped the ante. The oppositional members of the Council of the Realm who seem to have supported the French ambassador in the 1735–6 campaign clearly

experienced a loss of prestige, not least with regard to the king. However, this paled in comparison to the loss of legitimacy brought on by the Swedish opposition collaborating with the Russian ambassador in 1746–7, something that the Cap Party never fully recovered from. With no regard for his Swedish partners, Korff persisted in using the language of force and aggressively attempting to shape public opinion.

Turning to the different media practices involved, a wide range was used to discredit or bolster key politicians, their agendas, and their foreign allies, and to inform, persuade, threaten, and deceive Swedish audiences. Occasionally, foreign governments operated openly, despite being banned from directly addressing the Swedish public. Far more often, though, they operated covertly, hiding their identity and true motives, and hoping to give credibility to an argument or to discredit an opponent. In their efforts to use the media to deceive, we can see their use of its protocol, manipulating readers' expectations that, say, diplomatic secrets would be exchanged in written correspondence between key players, or that they would find accurate information about foreign affairs in certain European newspapers and magazines and in printed peace treaties.

Although disinformation played an important role, it appears the dissemination of correct information was perhaps even more valued. In the Swedish government's view matters of state were supposed to be a mystery—*arcana imperii*—kept out of the public eye, and enforced by strict censorship. There was thus great political potential in providing the public with the information they demanded but were denied. Foreign governments were well suited for such operations, because confidential documents from diplomatic negotiations could easily be leaked, with crucial information such as politically compromising quotes carefully highlighted. This information was then refashioned by pamphleteers or foreign newspapers and magazines known to have readers in Sweden—again, operating from outside the Swedish media system, circumventing the censors. Official documents, such as peace treaties that were readily accessible in other parts of Europe but not in Sweden, were also distributed to Swedish readers. Alongside this leveraging of information and disinformation, foreign operators also

provided arguments—formulated with great care—with which to sway opinion, usually as pamphlets, whether printed or handwritten.

Strikingly, the best use was made of the media technologies available. Manuscript had the advantage of flexibility and speed: written copies of a pamphlet could quickly counter an argument or leak a memo as a clarification. This was invaluable at critical, often fast-changing moments such as a session of the Diet, when printing abroad would be too slow and expensive. Against that, copying manuscripts by hand was time-consuming, and put a limit on the initial number of copies, while printed texts, with some planning and foreign assistance, could be reproduced in great numbers, promising a greater impact when distributed. Hence, the printed medium was particularly useful at the outset of a Diet—which was announced well in advance—when many hundreds of delegates gathered in Stockholm, and great numbers of copies were needed. This was the case with the Danish pamphlet, although even there the importance of timing was underscored by the envoy, Grüner, who worried it had been released too early when the succession crisis of 1742–3 dragged on.[49] However, when neither speed nor timing was a factor, as in the periods between Diets, written copies sufficed. Copying was decentralized as part of the circulation process, as readers themselves copied a text before passing it on. As stressed initially, the two media technologies not only coexisted, they complemented each other in the 'division of labour' between old and new media found in all media systems.[50] Manuscript was not dysfunctional and archaic, nor was print an absolute necessity for a successful media intervention. The Swedish media system comprised both emerging and older surviving media features, and the actors made full use of them all. Finally, turning to causality and change, it is difficult to determine the information operations' exact effect on political policy in Sweden. French operations in the late 1730s to oust the Swedish government show there was potential. As the resources and effort spent show, all involved, foreign and domestic, recognized it. The evidence seems to support the view that these actors drove change, and did not simply react to the transformation of the Swedish media system and public sphere. As foreign governments and their Swedish counterparts tried to shape political opinion in Sweden, they forced Swedes who had refrained from

discussing matters of state in public to take an increasingly active part. Even the faction controlling the Swedish government had to come to terms with the fact that repression and censorship could not halt the debate, and instead they would have to join in.[51] Foreign interference and, ultimately, international conflict—thus not only party politics and domestic factional conflict—helped transform the Swedish media system, pushing back the boundaries of public political debate, and establishing the pamphlet as the pre-eminent means of political communication.[52]

To summarize, in the Swedish case, public diplomacy clearly went beyond war propaganda, public diplomatic ceremonies, and news management—the main focus of previous research.[53] Here, the foreign representatives, in conjunction with their Swedish counterparts, also turned to a form of clandestine public diplomacy, primarily aimed at domestic audiences, which could more accurately be described as information operations, or even information warfare.[54]

Notes

1 *Een Swänsk uthomlands wistande Adelsmans Breef till sina bägge Syster Söhner I Swärje* (n.p., n.d.); Niklas Tengberg, *Bidrag till historien om Sveriges krig med Ryssland åren 1741–1743*, 2 vols (Lund 1857–60), ii. 130; Anders Fryxell, *Berättelser ur svenska historien*, 49 vols (Stockholm 1823–93), (1866) xxxvi. 59; Olof Nilsson, *Danmarks uppträdande i den Svenska Tronföljdsfrågan, åren 1739–1743*, 4 vols (Malmö 1874–1901), (1874) i. 31, (1875) ii. 17–18; Bjarne Beckman, *Dalupproret 1743 och andra samtida rörelser inom allmogen och bondeståndet* (Gothenburg 1930), 91–2; Ingemar Carlsson, *Olof Dalin och den politiska propagandan inför 'lilla ofreden': Sagan Om Hästen och Wår-Wisa i samtidshistorisk belysning* (Lund 1966), 75.

2 For foreign involvement in the succession crisis in 1742–43, see Tengberg 1860, ii. 126–56; Fryxell 1866, xxxvi. 35–71; Nilsson 1874–1901; Carl Gustav Malmström, *Sveriges politiska historia från konung Karl XII:s död till statshvälfningen 1772*, 6 vols (Stockholm 1893–1901), (1897) iii. 102–104, 121–57, 172–85; Beckman 1930, ch. 5–7; Bjarne Beckman, 'De danska muträkenskaperna för år 1743', *Historisk Tidskrift* 64/3 (1944); Ingemar Carlsson, *Frihetstidens handskrivna politiska litteratur: En bibliografi* (Gothenburg 1967), 73–8.

3 Helmer Helmers, 'Public Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe: Towards a New History of News', *Media History* 22/3–4 (2016); cf. M. S. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy 1450–1919* (London 1993), 136–41 *et passim*; Oliver Thomson, *Easily Led: A History of Propaganda* (Stroud 1999); Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day* (Manchester 2003). For a general introduction to modern public diplomacy, see Michael J. Waller

(ed.), *The Public Diplomacy Reader* (Washington, DC, 2007); Nancy Snow & Philip M. Taylor (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (London 2009).

4 For war propaganda, see, for example, John Shovlin, 'Selling American Empire on the Eve of the Seven Years War: The French Propaganda Campaign of 1755–1756', *Past & Present* 206/1 (2010); David Onnekink, 'The Revolution in Dutch Foreign Policy (1688)', in Femke Deen, David Onnekind & Michel Reinders (eds), *Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden 2011); Meaghan J. Brown, 'The Fragmented Armada: The Transmission of an Armada News Pamphlet', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 53/1 (2015); Erik Swart, 'Defeat, Honour and the News: The Case of the Fall of Breda (1625) and the Dutch Republic', *European History Quarterly* 46/1 (2016). For public ceremonies, see, for example, Jan Hennings, 'The Semiotics of Diplomatic Dialogue: Pomp and Circumstance in Tsar Peter I's Visit to Vienna in 1698', *International History Review* 30/3 (2008); Ralph Kauz, Giorgio Rota & Jan Paul Niederkorn (eds), *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Vienna 2009); Jeanette Dillon, *The Language of Space in Court Performance, 1400–1625* (Cambridge 2010); Peter Burschel & Christine Vogel (eds), *Die Audienz: Ritualisierter Kulturkontakt in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne 2014). For news management, see, for example, Joop Koopmans, 'Dutch Censorship in Relation to Foreign Contacts (1581–1795)', in Hanno Brand (ed.), *Trade, Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange: Continuity and Change in the North Sea Area and the Baltic c.1350–1750* (Hilversum 2005); Ingrid Maier & Stepan Shamin, '"Revolts" in the *Kuranty* of March–July 1671', in Malte Griesse (ed.), *From Mutual Observation to Propaganda War: Premodern Revolts in Their Transnational Representations* (Bielefeld 2014); Malte Griesse, 'State-Arcanum and European Public Spheres: Paradigm Shifts in Muscovite Policy towards Foreign Representations of Russian Revolts', in Griesse 2014; Jason Peacey, '"My Friend the Gazetier": Diplomacy and News in Seventeenth-Century Europe', in Joad Raymond & Noah Moxham (eds), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden 2016).

5 Exceptions are Steve Murdoch, 'The Search for Northern Allies: Stuart and Cromwellian Propagandists and Protagonists in Scandinavia, 1649–60', in Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton (eds), *Propaganda: Political Rhetoric and Identity 1300–2000* (Phoenix Mill 1999); Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford 2007); Russ Castronovo, *Propaganda 1776: Secrets, Leaks, and Revolutionary Communications in Early America* (Oxford 2014); Helmer Helmers, *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics, and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639–1660* (Cambridge 2015). For modern political and information warfare, see Paul A. Smith, *On Political War* (Washington, DC, 1989); Mark Galeotti, *Russian Political War: Moving Beyond the Hybrid* (London 2019).

6 William James Roosen, *The Age of Louis XIV: The Rise of Modern Diplomacy* (Cambridge 1976), 168–71.

7 See Nilsson 1874–1901; J. R. Danielson, *Die nordische Frage in den Jahren 1746–1751: Mit einer Darstellung russisch-schwedisch-finnischer Beziehungen 1740–1743* (Helsinki 1888); Sten Landahl, 'En pamflett mot Arvid Horn vid 1726–1727 års riksdag', *Historisk Tidskrift* 56/3 (1936); Hilding Danielson, *Sverige och Frankrike 1736–1739: Till belysning av Arvid Horns politik och fall* (Lund 1956); Göran Behre, *Underrättelseväsen*

och diplomati: De diplomatiska förbindelserna mellan Sverige och Storbritannien 1743–1745 (Gothenburg 1965); Arne Remgård, *Carl Gustaf Tessin och 1746–1747 års riksdag* (Lund 1968); Göran Nilzén, *Studier i 1730-talets partiväsende* (Stockholm 1971); Bo Hammarlund, *Politik utan partier: Studier i Sveriges politiska liv 1726–1727* (Stockholm 1985); Sophie Holm, 'Diplomatins vakande öga: Utländska sändebuds hantering av rykten i Stockholm under 1746–47 års riksdag', *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* 104/1 (2019); Sophie Holm, *Diplomatins ideal och praktik: Utländska sändebud i Stockholm 1746–1748* (Helsinki 2020).

8 Asa Briggs & Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Cambridge 2002); James Curran, *Media and Power* (London 2002); Henrik G. Bastiansen, 'Media History and the Study of Media Systems', *Media History* 14/1 (2008); Jonas Harvard & Patrik Lundell, '1800-talets medier: System, landskap, nätverk', in eid. (eds), *1800-talets mediesystem* (Stockholm 2010); Marie Cronqvist & Christoph Hilgert, 'Entangled Media Histories', *Media History* 23/1 (2017); also Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

9 Simon F. Davies & Puck Fletcher, introduction to eid. (eds.), *News in Early Modern Europe: Currents and Connections* (Leiden 2014); Nancy Fraser, 'Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World', in Kate Nash (ed.), *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere* (Cambridge 2014); Joad Raymond & Noah Moxham, 'News Networks in Early Modern Europe', in Raymond & Moxham 2016; Cronqvist & Hilgert 2017.

10 Helmers 2016, 402.

11 For a general overview, see David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton 2000); James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge 2001), ch. 1–2; Briggs & Burke 2002, ch. 2–3.

12 Erik Bodensten, *Politikens drivfjäder: Frihetstidens partiberättelser och den moralpolitiska logiken* (Lund 2016), ch. 3 and works cited there.

13 For a fuller argument, see Bodensten 2016, ch. 3. For a general overview, see Michael Roberts, *The Age of Liberty: Sweden 1719–1772* (Cambridge 1986), ch. 2–3.

14 Michael F. Metcalf, *Russia, England and Swedish Party Politics 1762–1766: The Interplay between Great Power Diplomacy and Domestic Politics during Sweden's Age of Liberty* (Stockholm 1977); Michael Roberts, *British Diplomacy and Swedish Politics, 1758–1773* (London 1980); Peter Lindström & Svante Norrhem, *Flattering Alliances: Scandinavia, Diplomacy and the Austrian–French Balance of Power, 1648–1740* (Lund 2013); Svante Norrhem, *Mercenary Swedes: French Subsidies to Sweden 1631–1796* (Lund 2019); Erik Bodensten, 'The Problems with Receiving Subsidies: Sweden and the Lesser Powers in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Svante Norrhem & Eric Thomson (eds), *Economies of Allegiance: Subsidies, Diplomacy and State Formation in Europe, 1494–1789* (Lund 2020); Erik Bodensten, 'Korruption, utländsk påverkan och frihetstidens styrelseskick: En politisk historia', *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* 123/2 (2021).

15 For the major powers' strategic interests in Sweden, see Roberts 1986, ch. 1.

16 *Reflexions d'une Personne des-interssée sur le Memoire, Que Monsieur Pointz …* (n.p., n.d.); *Memoire du Comte de Freytag Envoyé-Extraordinaire de l'Empereur …* (n.p., 1727); Malmström 1893, i. 480, 488–9; Malmström 1895, ii. 13, 19; Hammarlund 1985,

133–4, 173–4. Some were published at the time, for example Jean de Missy Rousset, *Recueil historique d'actes, negotiations, memoires et traitez, depuis la Paix d'Utrecht*, 25 vols (La Haye 1728–1755), (1728) iii. 217 ff., (1728) iv. 160 ff. For transcripts, see, for example, Kungliga Biblioteket (National Library of Sweden), Stockholm (KB), Rålambska manuscriptsamlingen, fol. no. 159; Riksarkivet (Swedish National Archives), Stockholm (RA), Manuskriptsamlingen, no. 35; Carlsson 1967, 20.

17 Danielson 1888, 130 ff.; Remgård 1968, 53–9, 95–8 *et passim*; Holm 2019, 60; Holm 2020, 163 ff. For transcripts, see, for example, KB, Rålambska manuscriptsamlingen, fol. no. 171, 239–43. For a similar episode in 1749, see Malmström 1897, iii. 443–5.

18 See, for example, Jeffrey K. Sawyer, *Printed Poison: Pamphlet Propaganda, Faction Politics, and the Public Sphere in Early Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley 1990), 48–9.

19 Fryxell 1866, xxxvi. 52–6; Tengberg 1860, ii. 156; Malmström 1897, iii. 146–7, 154–7; Behre 1965, 12–13; Remgård 1968, 20. Numerous handwritten transcripts survive of *Instruction af My Lord Carteret för Engelska Ministren uti Stockholm*, for example, RA, Prästeståndets arkiv, V:11. See also Carlsson 1967, 72–3.

20 Sawyer 1990; Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge 2003); Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda During the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot 2004); Vivo 2007; Deen et al. 2011.

21 For white, grey, and black propaganda, see Garth Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks 1999), 20–31.

22 There are numerous transcripts of *Swar ifrån Stockholm uppå en god wäns bref på landet* …, for example, KB, Handskriftssamlingen, D 183. See also Carlsson 1967, 20–1; Rousset 1728, iii. 246–90; Hammarlund 1985, 175–6.

23 Six examples survive of *Een kongl. swänsk ministers bref till Hans Excellence Rijksrådet Herr Greffwe Arvid Horn*, see RA, Riksdagskommissioner, Komm. ö. M. Wellingk vol. 31; see also *Kongl. Maj:tz Nådige Förordning, Huru förfaras skal med ett under Riks-Dagen af en ähreförgiäten menniskia updicktat och kring Riket utspridt Pasquill* (Stockholm 1727).

24 Fryxell 1863, xxxi. 143–4; Landahl 1936; Hammarlund 1985, 174–5.

25 Carlsson 1967.

26 *A Letter from Mr. Gallipillee, To his Friend Severus, Upon the Present Posture of Affairs in the North* … (London 1740); *Lettre du Seig. Gallipillee, à son Ami Severe, Traduite de l'Original Suedois* … (London 1740). A Swedish translation circulated in manuscript, see KB, Handskriftssamlingen, D 899; see also Carlsson 1967, 56–7; Anders Burius, *Ömhet om friheten: Studier i frihetstidens censurpolitik* (Uppsala 1984), 84. For the subsequent period, see Stig Boberg, *Kunglig krigspropaganda* (Gothenburg 1967), 62–4; Metcalf 1977, 122–3; Roberts 1980, 276–7; Marie-Christine Skuncke, 'Medier, mutor och nätverk', in Marie-Christine Skuncke & Henrika Tandefelt (eds), *Riksdag, kaffehus och predikstol: Frihetstidens politiska kultur 1766–1772* (Stockholm 2003).

27 See, for example, KB, Rålambska manuscriptsamlingen, fol. no. 171, 245–58, *Dhen Swenska Sybylla i början af åhr 1747*; *Lettre d´un Gentilhomme d´une Province, Mr. B— écrite à un autre à Stockholm* … (n.p., 1747); *Lettre d´un Gentilhomme Suèdois, deputè á la Diète* … (n.p., 1747); *Lettre d'un Patriote Suedois a un ami en Hollande* (London 1748), banned under *Kongl. maj:ts förordning, huru förfaras skal med*

trenne utkomne förföriske smäde-skrifter (Stockholm 1747). See also Carl Gustaf Warmholtz, *Bibliotheca Historica Sveo-Gothica*, xi (Uppsala 1805), 54–6; Gustaf Edvard Klemming, *Samtida skrifter rörande Sveriges förhållanden till fremmande magter* (Stockholm 1881–83), 384; Carlsson 1967, 85–86.

28 *En redelig Swänsks Påminnelser til sina Landsmän wid närwarande Riksdag 1746* (n.p., n.d.), banned under *Kongl. maj:ts förordning, huru förfaras skall med en på swenska tryckt smädeskrift …* (Stockholm 1747). See also Fryxell 1868, xxxvii. 63–4; Klemming 1881–3, 383; Malmström 1897, iii. 339; Carlsson 1967, 84–5; Remgård 1968, 100, 103.

29 Carlsson 1966, 56; Carlsson 1967, 85–86.

30 *Samtal emellam twenne redelige Swänske-Män, om Tilståndet i deras Fäderneland* (n.p., n.d.); Warmholtz 1805, 51; *Svensk Biografiskt Lexikon*, s.v. 'Gustaf Bonde' by Gunnar Carlquist, sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/; Carlsson 1967, 84.

31 Holm 2020, 147 ff.

32 Carlsson 1966, 51; Hammarlund 1985, 173; Bodensten 2016, 132. The same was true across Europe, see, for example, Bob Harris, *Politics and the Rise of the Press: Britain and France, 1620–1800* (London 1996), 57–8; Koopmans 2005, 221.

33 Nilsson 1874, i. 46.

34 Fryxell 1866, xxxvi. 37, 48, 60, 71; Beckman 1930, 158–9.

35 *Defensiv-Alliance Emellan Kongl. Maj:t Kronan Swerige, Och Then Durchl. Ottomanniske Porten …* (Stockholm 1739); Fryxell 1866, xxxv. 43–4; Tengberg 1857, i. 66–8; Malmström 1895, ii. 367–9, 372–4.

36 Danielson 1956, 60–71, 96; Nilzén 1971, 154. There are several contemporary copies of the memorandum and the responses in both Swedish and French, see, for example, Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek (Uppsala University Library) (UUB), Handlingar till Sveriges politiska historia, F 256. See also Anton Friedrich Büsching, *Magazin für die neue Historie und Geographie*, x (Halle 1776), 72–4, 76–84; Carl Trolle-Bonde, *Riksrådet grefve Gustaf Bonde: Anteckningar om Bonde-släkten*, iii (Lund 1899), 230–46.

37 For *Min Herre: Jag förundrar mig ingalunda* and *Min Herre: Det är swårt för mig*, see, for example, UUB, Handlingar till Sveriges politiska historia, F 256. See also *Kongl. Maj:ts Förordning, Huru förfaras skall med twänne af ähreförgätna, men ännu obekandta Uphofsmän …* (Stockholm n.d.); Danielson 1956, 24–6, 47–8, 71–5, 88, 152; Carlsson 1967, 29–30; Nilzén 1971, 64–5, 150–1, 154–6.

38 *Piéces autentiques, Touchant la derniere Négociation de la Cour de France …* (n.p., n.d.); *Autentique Stukken, betreffende de laatste onderhandelingen tusschen de Hoven van Vrankryk en Zweden …* (n.p., n.d.). Also reported in *Mercure historique et politique* (1736), 105–108; Rousset 1746, xi. 392–427. The letter of 10/21 July 1735 is printed in *Piéces autentiques* n.d., 1–3; Büsching 1776, 53–4. The Council's circular is printed in Trolle-Bonde 1899, 246–8; see also Danielson 1956, 45, 72–4, 102–103.

39 Danielson 1956, 75, 88, 152.

40 Carlsson 1967, 28–40; Nilzén 1971, 143–46; Bodensten 2016, 162 ff. For *Castejas testamente*, see, for example, RA, Enskilda arkiv, Von Nolckenska samlingen vol. 21, no. 4, printed in Büsching 1776, 113–39.

41 *Defensiv-Alliance-Tractat Sluten emellan Kronorne Swerige och Ryssland …* (Stockholm 1735); KB, Rålambska manuscriptsamlingen, fol. no. 171, 179, *M. Best: Instimation på S. Jacobs Kyrkioport. d. 4 Maij*; Bodensten 2016, 168; see also Nilzén 1971, 152.

42 Danielson 1956; Nilzén 1971, 153–64.
43 Malmström 1893–1901, ii. 243, 254.
44 Bodensten 2016.
45 For contemporary Sweden, see Martin Kragh & Sebastian Åsberg, 'Russia's Strategy for Influence Through Public Diplomacy and Active Measures: the Swedish Case', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40/6 (2017); Chloe Colliver, Peter Pomerantsev, Anne Applebaum & Jonathan Birdwell, *Smearing Sweden: International Influence Campaigns in the 2018 Swedish Election* (London 2018); Patrik Oksanen, *Kinas attacker för att tysta kritiker: En genomgång av kinesiska ambassadens uttalanden under ambassadör Gui Congyou* (Stockholm 2020).
46 Carlsson 1967. Thus only occasionally can polemic publications in general, advocating partisan political opinions, be distinguished from political propaganda proper, emanating from a political power centre (foreign or domestic), cf. Peacey 2004, 2.
47 See Metcalf 1977. For a general discussion of agency and the directions of influence, see Bodensten 2021.
48 Burius 1984; Bodensten 2016.
49 Nilsson 1874, i. 31–2.
50 Briggs & Burke 2002, 22–3; see also David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge 2003); Alexandra Walsham & Julia Crick, 'Introduction: Script, Print and History', in eaed. (eds), *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700* (Cambridge 2004).
51 Helmers 2016, 402; see also Vivo 2007, ch. 6.
52 See Holm 2020; cf. Bodensten 2016.
53 Helmers 2016.
54 This study was funded by Torsten Söderbergs Stiftelse, Åke Wibergs Stiftelse, and Stiftelsen Karl Staaffs Fond.