



JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY

*Jönköping International  
Business School*

# How does Military Experience Affect the Perception of Recruiters in Swedish Civilian Jobs?

A Case Study about Swedish Civilian Job Recruiters

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# **Master Thesis in General Management**

Title: How does Military Experience Affect the Perception of Recruiters in Swedish Civilian Jobs?

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## Abstract

Under the United Nations' proposal of downsizing military plans for peacekeeping, countries are continuously decreasing their military personnel size, resulting in a global military personnel decrease of 10% in twenty years, which is equivalent to a decrease of 3 million soldiers. Sweden, on the other hand, decreased its military personnel by 15% in just one year (2020), leaving these military personnel for the quest of new careers in civilian jobs.

The purpose of this study is to understand *how military experience affects the perception of recruiters in Swedish Civilian Job*. This study will be able to help Swedish individuals with military experience who are switching careers to civilian jobs to understand the perception of recruiters on them and provide guidance for successful employment. For recruiters, this study can be used as a measurement model of how to accurately evaluate veterans, which can more effectively translate expertise for organizations, and help to enrich their human resources.

This paper conducts a qualitative study, collecting responses from thirteen Swedish civilian recruiters by the method of semi-structured interviews to ensure effective data collection. Through the analysis of the data by NVivo coding program, and further analysis by the researchers, the theoretical model is established and discussed.

The findings show that military experience does affect the perception of recruiters in Swedish civilian jobs. The effect is overall mirthful and positive because military experience is perceived to affect personality and skills positively. However, the findings also showed that in the eyes of recruiters, military experience may generate some obstacles to employment if the individual did not obtain other qualities or sets, such as education, job experience before their military service, good communication skills, and emotional intelligence.

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# 1. Introduction

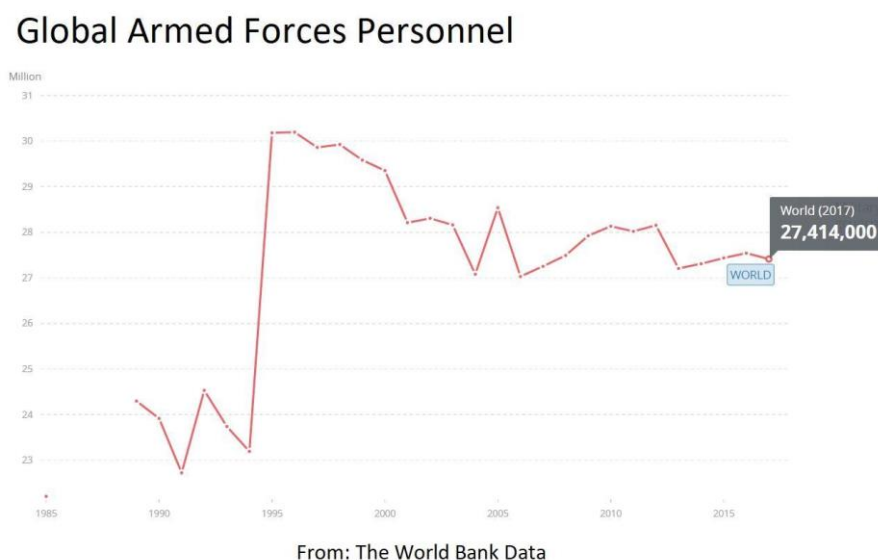
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*This section introduces the background of the research, which is employees with military experience and their global decline in numbers. The process of transitioning into civilian jobs is also discussed, leading to the core topic of this paper, which is the perception of civilian employers on employees with military experience. This is stated in the problem statement and research question are then introduced, and finally delimitations are briefly explained.*

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## 1.1 Background

Modern warfare advancements continue to challenge all previous concepts of war. Due to the progressive modernization of war, the sheer number of military personnel is becoming a less critical victory condition. Under the United Nations' proposal, countries are increasingly introducing military downsizing plans for peacekeeping, countries are continuously decreasing their military personnel size, resulting in a global military personnel decrease of 10% in twenty years, which is equivalent to a decrease of 3 million soldiers (Figure 1).



*Figure 1 Global Armed Forces Personnel*

In China, a recent study (Zhen, 2019) references a special Sunday report by China's official news agency that highlighted a "transformation" in the People's Liberation

Army: “This new data is unprecedented in the history of the People’s Liberation Army. The army now accounts for the total number of the People’s Liberation Army. Nearly half of the non-combat troops have been cut, and the number of officers in the People’s Liberation Army has been reduced by 30%”. In the United States, according to the Veteran’s Population Projection (2018) released by the Department of Veterans Affairs, there were about 18 to 20 million military veterans living in the US between 2015 and 2020, which accounted for almost 6% of the country’s population. And whilst it is expected that the percentage of retiring soldiers will continue rising until 2040 (National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, 2019), the current percentages are still historically considerable.

On the European side, data on some of the continent’s biggest economies illustrate the declining numbers of military employees’ year-on-year, as shown in Figure 2. The global decline in military employment is a direct factor to the increasing percentage of retired soldiers, consequently pushing more veterans globally to consider other career paths in their reemployment.

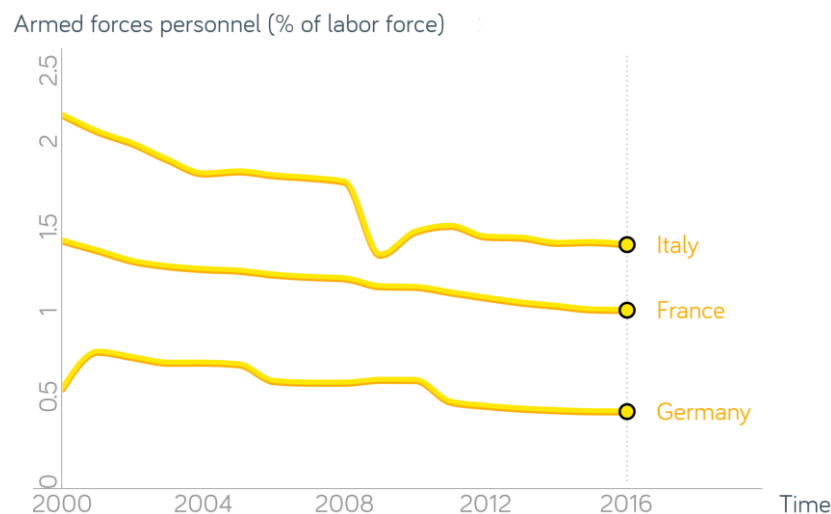


Figure 2 Armed Forces Personnel Percentage Source: Gapminder.org

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The focus of this paper is how does military experience affect the perception of recruiters once the military veterans decide to join swedish civilian jobs.

As the case study is conducted in Sweden, the topic is of particular significance in light of the Swedish Government's recent cuts in the number of full-time employees in Armed-Forces, in which the reduction accounted for more than 15% of staff from 6,750 to 5,700 soldiers in 2020 (Gummesson, 2019). Implementation of this reduction plan will likely result in some of these military staff switching to civilian jobs. This raises questions on whether the military experience of this staff affects their chances of being reemployed in Swedish civilian jobs.

Given Sweden's overall neutral foreign policy and the inexistence of military service as a mandatory requirement, the average Swedish citizen is unlikely to have much military experience relative to citizens of countries that are more foreign-involved in wars outside their borders, such as the US and Turkey, or of countries that impose mandatory military service such as China and Russia. Even Norway - potentially the closest overall proxy for Sweden - imposes compulsory military service on its citizens. In light of the aforementioned considerations, the research question for this paper is: *How does military experience affect the perception of recruiters in Swedish civilian jobs?*

### **1.3 Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Swedish jobs' seekers with military experience are perceived by civilian recruiters in their search for civilian work and, if so, to explore which characteristics of job seekers with military experience and the impact of employers' attitudes towards them on the job search process. Based on this goal, this paper studies the following question:

How does military experience affect the perception of recruiters in Swedish civilian jobs?

### **1.4 Delimitations**

In addition to exploring Swedish recruiters' perception of Swedish military veterans who are looking to switch to civilian employment, this paper also evaluates how such military veterans can add value to their future civilian workplace conditional to the veterans' abilities and past military service. The research will be conducted through 13

interviews with Swedish civilian recruiters. Furthermore, this research will be limited to civilian jobs positions and will therefore discard all else work positions.

## 2. Literature Review

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*This section provides a theoretical framework for this paper's topic by exploring relevant past research and military-related studies. It entails a brief description of the background and the real dilemma, followed by the Scarborough Model and how it is related to military veterans. Then to conclude, the current research gap is stated, which is the inspiration for this research*

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### 2.1 Military to Civilian Transition

A study by Cooper (2016) titled 'Armed Forces and Society' references the British Ministry of Defenses' internationally recognized term - the 'Military to Civilian Transition' (MCT) - which is defined as the period of time it takes a veteran to fully accustomed and readapt from his military background the to the civilian life. The international recognition of the MCT concept assists in understanding the major 'change' process that soldiers must undergo at the end of their military career and relates to motivational aspects of transitioning veterans. A Scandinavian study by Bergman, Burdett, & Greenberg (2014) also assesses how people develop and apply different abilities between military and civilian environments, which may include particular beliefs, communication methods and behavioral attributes, as well as entail distinct criteria of success and life arrangements.

Another research by Woodward & Jenkins (2011) argues that during veteran's transition process, self-identity plays a crucial role in mental stability post the transition. The research reveals how people with military experience maintain a military self-identity by carrying out distinct daily activities in their civilian set up that foreshadow activities they had previously carried out during their military service. For instance, veterans who have mastered weapon handling or equipment maintenance may develop an identity tag as a technician, hence operating equipment in a post-military service environment may reinforce their technician self-identity and smooth their transition to civilian employment. Naturally, Woodward & Jenkins argue that the more specialized a veteran may have been during their military service, the more specific role they might feel fulfilled in their civilian reemployment. Aschcroft (2014) also conducts a MCT-

related study that suggests the advanced skills acquired by veterans during service may not match the needs of the average civilian's life, and therefore veterans must acquire new 'civilian capabilities' in order to successfully transition from their military background and not lag behind non-veterans in the civilian work environment.

Alternatively, research by Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) address some of the struggles of veterans returning to civilian lives. While their work is more dated than other referenced sources in this paper, their work is of particular importance especially to veterans who were involved in foreign soils. They argue that veterans reverting to civilian lives can at times create reality conflicts, labelled as 'hysteresis'. In the context of transitioning veterans, Bourdieu & Passeron define the term as a condition associated with feelings of resistance, fear and anxiety to transition, thereby causing the veteran's psychology and behavior to lag and disapprove of civilian culture norms.

## **2.2 The Real Dilemma**

According to a survey released by the Military Benefit Association, nearly 80% of military veterans admitted that they often struggle in conveying their past experiences and how they can be utilized in a civilian job's requirements (Zogas, 2017). Among those who have already found a job, two-thirds of military veterans believe that they will struggle to find a new job if they were to leave their current one. A key highlight in the study is military veterans' frustration that particularly stems from the difference between their expectations of post-military life and the reality they encounter, which is even more pronounced in the context of their employment (CPA Practice Management Forum, 2014). Furthermore, while the survey showed that around 70% of unemployed veterans initially believed they can use skills relevant to their military experience in a civilian job, almost 60% of those later admitted that they did not use their military skills and had to acquire new skills (CPA Practice Management Forum, 2014).

Alternatively, from the recruiters' perspective, a similar survey showed that nearly half of hiring managers acknowledged that they have a hard time understanding the business implications of a military veteran's experiences based on their resumes. More so, given the stressful requirements for military jobs, more than 70% of hiring managers think that applicants who are military veterans may not find the job they are

applying for to be sufficiently stimulating (CPA Practice Management Forum, 2014). Another study by Minnis (2017) argued that post the recruitment process, misunderstandings and misconceptions between military veterans and their civilian employers occurred more often than a control group of civilian employees with no past military experience.

In order to better understand the recruitment process for veterans, researchers also examine Military.com - a US government-backed effort to better match military veterans with alternative careers. Military.com is a US search engine that takes certain parameters from a military veteran applicant and recommends job vacancies that could fit the applicant's background. Such parameters include specifying the applicant's past job title, hierarchy rank and military branch (Army, Navy, Airforce, etc) and the recommendations are based on an algorithm that looks at where previous applicants have applied and been accepted, i.e. the search engine becomes progressively more robust as more military veterans use it and feed it more comprehensive data.

In one of the rare studies assessing military veterans who had already switched to a second career, Vigoda-Gadot (2010) finds that many veterans opted to stay within highly-hierarchical workplace environments due to their similarity to the military system, such as governmental agencies. Another interesting finding from the same paper is that a considerable proportion of former high-rank military retirees preferred to remain in the defense industry, assumedly due to the industry's prerequisites and the relevance of military background in the industry's operations.

Furthermore, Dillon (2017) suggests that veterans are often constrained by their experience and expectations in the civilian workforce, as well as the skills needed to succeed in a military work environment that most civilian staff may not understand. Dillon argues that while some military positions employed by the military may have similar counterparts in the civilian employment sector, such as a medic veteran working in a hospital, other military jobs may not have similar positions in modern society.

### **2.3 Different Military Experience**

Based on the notion of discrimination economics introduced by renowned economist Gary Becker, Baert (2013) argues that recruiters will inevitably have preferences and biases that play in favor, or against, applicants with military backgrounds. In addition, such biases and motivations may relate to the local post of the veteran applicants and how the recruiter perceives that specific post within the military organizations. Baert also uses early empirical studies by Angrist (1990) and Bryant & Wilhite (1990) on the relationship between military experience and civilian labor market to put forward three aspects that may influence a recruiter's judgment when assessing veteran applicants: war experience, conscription attitude and conventional military work experience. For the first aspect, the impact of real war experience on the popularity and economic status of civilian employment is mixed (Angrist, 1990). Secondly, the study of causal identification finds that if military service is voluntary, it will have a negative impact on perception for reemployment into civilian work. However, if the veteran's military service was compulsory, it would have a positive impact (Angrist, 1990). Lastly, the impact of conventional military work experience on chances of reemployment into the civilian workplace is mixed and seems to vary according to the specific functions of the veteran in question (Bryant & Wilhite, 1990).

### **2.4 Images of Military Personnel**

A Professor of Anthropology in University of Cincinnati proposed a model that summed up the advantages of people with military experience (Jack, 1993). This model (Fig 3) is named The Scarborough Model after him, and consists of 5 factors that shape the experience of military personnel, as explained below.



*Figure 3 The Scarborough Model for Military Experience*

### Loyalty Downward

There is a strong culture in the military where leaders are concerned not only consistently and directly with the performance and development of soldiers, but also with their personal well-being. Young soldiers taught in this environment will likely realize that their first duty is to be responsible for their troops and care for their comrades and subordinates. Downward loyalty instills accountability for the lower chain of the individual's hierarchy, which is thereby reciprocated by subordinates by creating loyalty to superiors and the overall organization. In the context of the civilian work environment, this attribute may be understood as corporate loyalty.

### Communication

Military leaders at all levels will lay down thorough instructions to their personnel in order to keep them informed of both their as well as their forces' roles in carrying out military operations. People with military experience are likely to swiftly comprehend the importance of their appointed task, therefore swiftly grasping the objectives of the task and the requirements to achieve these objectives. Strong communication skills smooth the instruction process by superior and is an upskill of those who have worked in a military environment. Business people also recognize the importance of having everyone in the company comprehend how the company is performing and how individuals fit into the mission and strategy of the company.

### Burden Sharing

Officers associate their fate with their troops, and their survival in battle depends on their performance, which is largely driven by the officers' accountability towards their troops. The officers' actions will depend on real-time assessment of their respective troops' performance, and often strong leadership leads officers to step into the frontlines of their troops to alleviate the burden of their subordinates, receive faster real-time information as well as lead by example to motivate their troops. One may even argue that this is ethical compassion that is driven by downward loyalty. In the context of the workplace environment, this sense of burden sharing might transfer to the corporate culture and play a constructive role in teamwork.

### Sense of Service-Subordination of Personal Agendas

The willingness to sacrifice one's life for a larger purpose shows an impressive selflessness. This selflessness also reinforces teamwork and absolute loyalty. If soldiers value loyalty to the organization, this might reflect in maintaining employee loyalty. This might contribute to positive-subordination corporate culture and inspire pride in its members.

### Cooperation

The effective implementation of military strategy depends on the coordination among the various service functions such as infantry, armor, artillery, air support, naval artillery, and missile support, among others. Cooperation is becoming increasingly important in all organizations, as the broader scope of control requires colleagues to work together without referring disputes to superiors who have spread too little. Various business functions must work together to accelerate product development cycles and produce high quality products efficiently and cheaply. With similar objectives in the military environment, officers are well aware of such needs.

Scarborough's five aforementioned factors that are associated with military experience make the army one of the best institutions when it comes down to loyalty, selflessness and accountability. As such, it may be considered a valuable talent pool. Veterans who leave the army and exhibit Scarborough's five attributes might be well positioned to positively contribute to other industries (Jack, 1993).

## **2.5 Perceived Employer Stigma and Discrimination**

Veterans, however, often face high unemployment, and those with traditional military skills are struggling in their skills transition, feeling unprepared to enter civilian work (Boyle, 2014); (Joseph, 1985); (Mangum, 1987). People generally maintain an affirmative and appreciative attitude toward military personnel, but not all employers like to hire veterans (Kleykamp, 2009)). The relevance of these issues requires contemporary psychological theories to understand how veterans are perceived; why do they easily encounter employment difficulties? It is reasonable to think that people's stereotype of soldiers leads to the employment problems faced by soldiers (Shepherd, 2019)

These stereotypes often contradict reality. In the United States, the government always calls veterans heroes, people have a positive impression of them, and soldiers are typical moral agents (Jordan, 2012). But despite their positive qualities (for example, self-discipline, obedience, efficiency), veterans are often seen as stoic, rigid, unable to learn new tasks, too strict with subordinates and unable to interact with colleagues (Stone, Lengnick-Hall, & Muldoon, 2018). Given the lack of emotion and perseverance in people's dealings with the military, employers expect difficulties in communicating with veterans before even attempting. These expected difficulties are partly due to the hero-worship received by veterans (Dillon, 2017).

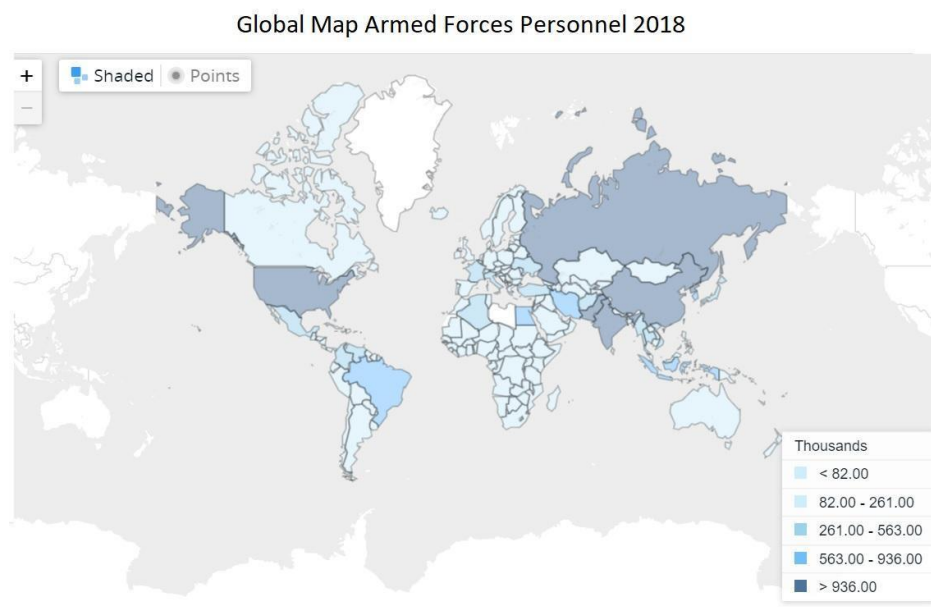
Therefore, it is not surprising that veterans often lack a sense of suitability and a sense of belonging in civil society organizations. Veterans make up a higher percentage of jobs that don't require empathy or social skills, such as manufacturing or maintenance, with a considerably lower percentage for jobs that do require social skills, such as health, education or services, (Deming, 2014). This is a problem for veterans because work increasingly requires relationships, emotional intelligence and empathy (Ovans, 2015).

In a study by Keeling (2016), a case was mentioned in which the employer interviewed two veterans after the September 11th terrorist attack in the US and they said: the employer asked me if I had just joined the fight or served in the navy, and then he made some negative comments about the veterans. Then the employer asked you how long

it had been since you left the war zone. I answered him for three years. And the employer said that's good, but I don't want to deal with people who just got back from the war zone. One in four veterans do not disclose their military experience in their job applications for fear of discrimination (Keeling, 2016). But in other literature, there is no clear evidence that employers discriminate against military personnel.

## 2.6 Research Gap

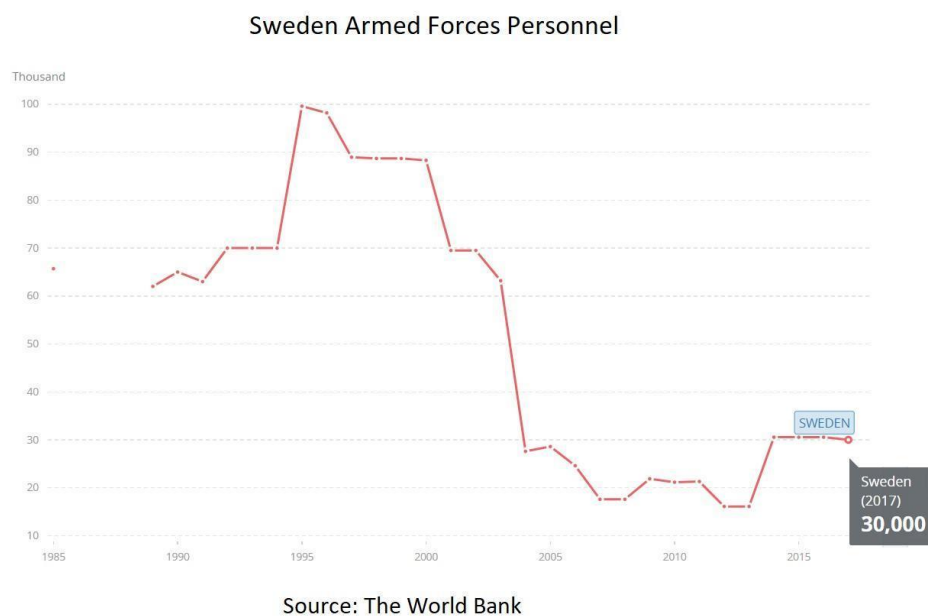
Former research in this topic has mostly been conducted in countries with large-scaled armies such as the United States, Israel, and Turkey. These countries have paid a huge amount of expenditure in the military, and their soldiers have also dealt with military conflicts and peace-keeping missions overseas. Hence, military personnel likely have a glorious image from their society's point of view. In addition, military-heavy governments such as China, the US and the UK have contributed to setting up the Ministry of Veterans Affairs that helps in solving problems which veterans may encounter after retiring, including post-military reemployment. Sweden does not have a ministry of veteran affairs nor does it have high GDP expenditure on military investment. For context, Figure 4 shows a population-adjusted metric for military forces globally.



Source: The World Bank

*Figure 4 Global Map Armed Forces Personnel 2018*

Given Sweden's conflict history, it is natural to argue that the country does not require a high number of soldiers. Sweden has remained neutral in both World War I and World War II, with its most recent conflict being the Sweden-Norway war back in the 1800s - a little over two centuries ago. Sweden has been steadily decreasing its military personnel number, as shown in Figure 5. The absence of war for a long time might have led to people gradually paying less focus on those with military experience. The Swedish government has also not even set up a Veterans Department, hence no considerable organization formally tackles issues faced by veterans after leaving the army.



*Figure 5 Sweden Armed Forces Personnel*

Moreover, the majority of previous research suggests theories and recommendations for military veterans to change themselves in order to integrate into the civilian society, such as by acquiring new skills. When transition problems arise, the research suggests that military personnel would need to introspect and adapt themselves. Nonetheless, regardless of a veteran's efforts to transition to a civilian work environment, the final say always sits with the recruiter. Most previous research assumes for granted that any transition problems are due to issues with the veterans, but very limited research examines transition problems from the recruiters' perspective.

While this paper sheds light on considerations for military veterans looking for civilian reemployment in the Swedish job market, the paper will also assess veteran

reemployment from the recruiters' perspective by assessing relevant behavioral and psychological considerations of recruiters.

### 3. Methodology

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*The third chapter explores the methods used in this paper used, by detailing how the research is conducted and designed. The research approach is elaborated in addition to evaluating limitations to the reliability of the methodology and ethical considerations.*

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#### 3.1 Research Design

A research design is created in order to explain and justify which raw data will be collected, including where and how the collection is done, followed by how the data will be analyzed to address the research question (Easterby-Smith, 2018).

In this paper, semi-structured interviews are conducted with recruiters amongst different industries. The semi-structured questions will assess the impact of officer work experience compared with civilian work experience by asking recruiters directly about their views and perception of military veterans applying for civilian jobs. Interviewees will be asked a series of open-ended questions about their opinion on the suitability of military veterans in civilian jobs. The interviewees will all be Swedish employers who either work directly in the recruitment of their respective businesses or are involved in the recruitment cycle. The participants have volunteered to be part of this experiment and are informed beforehand of this paper's research topic. The interviewees have consented to the data collection and use of the data for this paper's analysis. To put the participants at ease and subject to several interviewees' requests, the data is used anonymously to support this paper's findings. To provide clarity on the research without creating interview bias, the interviewees are only partially informed of variables being measured, i.e. perception of civilian versus military work experience, as well as receive the same open-ended questions. While most interviews are conducted in English, some were conducted in other languages and translated to English.

The data collection method in this paper is partially inspired by research done by Baert (2013) in Belgium, albeit Baert's research is believed to have some research gaps which is accounted for in this paper. Methodology applied in this paper is differentiated

from Baert's research due to the geographical difference, the inclusion of further ethical considerations, as well as the incorporation of qualitative analysis on data collected, as opposed to the Belgian research's strict quantitative assessment.

This paper aims to benefit researchers of the topic by providing better insight on veteran recruitment, including considerations such as cross-cultural differences in the organization, ethical issues, sought after qualities by recruiters, and potential prejudgments about Swedish military veterans. The primary data obtained directly reduces the errors caused by multi-level information transmission, has higher validity, and ensures that the data in the study are credible and honest. Findings from primary data collected from interviews are then assessed in conjunction with previous empirical research and theoretical frameworks in order to arrive at conclusions concerning the paper's research question. Lastly, summary of the findings is presented alongside limitations and suggestions for further research.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

In this study, the researchers use the philosophy of interpretivism. Like critical realism, interpretivism aims to criticize positivism, but they all start from the perspective of subjective meaning. Interpretivisms emphasize the difference between human behavior and natural scientific phenomena, because human behavior creates meaning (Thornhill, 2009).

Interpretivism holds that the study of human beings and their social world is unique, so social science research needs to be different from natural science research, rather than trying to imitate natural science research. Due to the continuous development of society, different cultural backgrounds, different historical backgrounds and diverse social realities are created. The supporters of interpretivism criticize the attempts of positivists to discover universal laws that apply to everyone. On the contrary, they think that if the complexity of human beings is completely reduced to a series of formulas, then human beings will lose their rich insight into human nature.

The purpose of interpretivism research is to create a richer understanding and explanation of the social world and environment. For business and management

researchers, it always says that this means looking at the behavior of organizations from different groups and perspectives. For example, researchers argue that CEOs, managers, suppliers, employees, consumers, and competitors view and experience a large retail company differently, so that they can be considered to have experienced different working environments and multiple realities. If researchers ignore the unique experiences of all people, then the richness of the differences in their respective situations will also disappear.

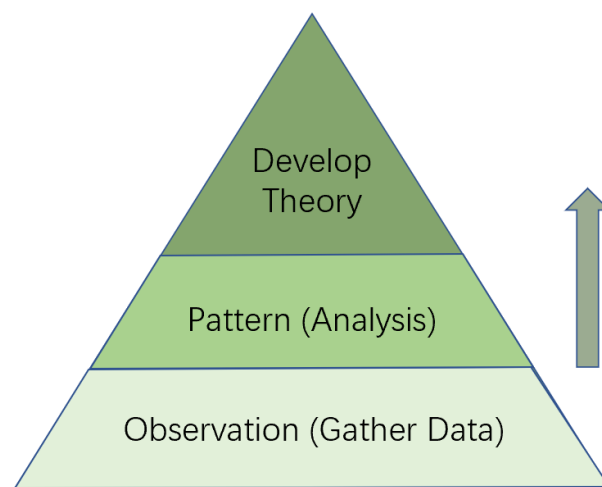
Researchers can investigate the thoughts, values, prejudices, opinions, and feelings through observation and interviews. The researcher creates the questions needed for the interview, sorts out the answers, and analyzes them, which is the keyway to allow researchers to investigate and present things that we cannot observe (Williams, 2000). In our study, the independent variable is whether a person has military experience, and the dependent variable is the recruiter's perception of the candidate. Both military experience and subjective thinking are difficult to measure by numbers or specific indicators. It can be seen that the actual environment encountered in management is not only complex, but also affected by different factors. The data collected will provide better insight to workplace considerations such as culture, leadership and work ethics.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

In this study, induction is applied as a research approach, in which the researcher develops theories based on analysis of phenomena and subject to data analysis. Thornhill (2009) suggested that the small sample conducted for the research is suitable with the inductive approach. Induction, also termed as inductive reasoning, is a reasoning approach whereby a degree of views on specific phenomena are linked to a wider range of views, and general principles of interpretation are derived from individual cases. When researchers explain a relatively large thing, it is necessary to summarize from individual and special things, sum up all kinds of general rules and theories, and finally draw conclusions of individual things.

The first step of the whole process is observation, and the theory is put forward as the result of observation at the end of the research process (Blackstone, 2012). Inductive research involves observing and identifying patterns in order to develop explanatory

theories for such patterns through a series of hypotheses testings. When the research starts with a topic, researchers tend to develop experience summaries and determine preliminary relationships in the research process. No hypothesis was found at the initial stage of the study, and the type and nature of the findings could not be determined until the study was completed. As shown in Figure 6, inductive reasoning is generally regarded as a "bottom-up" cognitive method, in which researchers use observation to build an abstract concept or a picture describing the phenomenon under study.



*Figure 6 Cognitive Method "bottom-up"*

Researchers conducted interviews with Swedish civilian recruiters to understand the assessment methods and considerations for candidates with military experience. This paper summarizes this information, puts forward the relationship model between employment opportunities and military experience, and finally draws a conclusion through analysis.

### **3.4 Research Method**

In research, methodology is a method of studying a topic with the research question at the center. The most commonly used methods in research include qualitative, quantitative and mixed analysis. Although each approach has a unique perspective, they are not viewed as opposites, but as aspects of a continuum of different perspectives. The main difference between qualitative and quantitative methods is that qualitative

methods use words to define numbers, as opposed to quantitative methods using numbers. When both methods are used at the same time, they are called mixed methods.

In this study, qualitative research methods are used. Creswell (2014) defined qualitative research methods as the approaches that researchers apply to define or deal with problems. The main purpose is to observe particular characteristics or behaviors of the object, as well as understand certain causes for its occurrence. A suitable example of qualitative research is the topic of whether people with military experience have greater access to a civilian job in Sweden. The literature review of qualitative research is more based on the quality of data. According to Lynch (2014), qualitative data-based research integrates unique quality and multidimensional types into analysis and interpretation. At the same time, qualitative research efforts examine experiences and translate data into text.

This research will be carried out around the perspective of the recruiter, which involves the invisible and non-quantifiable factors such as personal attitude, experience and behavior. The complexity of the research topics is addressed through data collection using semi-structured and open-ended interviews. During the interviews, the researchers used qualitative methods to explore the recruitment techniques and human resource strategies of organizational leaders and to understand how these factors influence the recruitment practices of people with military experience. This has been judged by the authors of this research as the most appropriate choice for this study.

### **3.5 Covid-19**

The ongoing pandemic of the CoronaVirus (Covid-19) and its global effect has impacted the lives of billions of people. To comply with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations of social distancing, research in this paper has been fully digital to avoid physical interaction with any relevant stakeholders, so all interaction with the recruiters, thesis adviser, and in-between the two researchers was via platforms such as Skype, Zoom, Teams or by normal phone calls. As such, the initially planned in-person interviews were conducted using digital platforms, albeit conducting semi-structured interviews online showed to be a challenge as the conversation did not flow

naturally due to lack of physical interaction. Pursuant to Covid-19's impact, out of the 30 recruiters contacted, 13 recruiters agreed to participate.

### **3.6 Interviews**

Interviews are a work analysis method for researchers to deepen their understanding of employees' work and obtain real-time information through questioning the interviewee. In general, interviews can be divided into three categories according to the extent to which the interviewee controls the interviews: structured interview, non-structured interview and semi-structured interview (Rabionet, 2011).

Structural interview, also known as standard interview, requires certain steps. According to the pre-designed interview survey outline, the interviewer asks the interviewee questions in turn and asks the interviewee to answer according to the specified standards (Edwards, 2013). This type of interview is carried out in strict accordance with the predetermined plan. Its differentiating feature is the standardization of the interview outline by minimizing the randomness of the investigation process and collecting data needed by the research more completely. However, the higher costs of structured interviews include time costs and economic costs. This often limits the size of the survey sample. Respondents may not be able to give accurate answers to certain sensitive issues due to certain concerns.

Non-structural interviews are also called free interviews. The non-structural interview does not develop a complete questionnaire and a detailed interview outline in advance, nor does it stipulate a standard interview procedure, but for the interviewer to talk to the interviewees according to a bold interview outline or a certain topic (Edwards, 2013). This kind of interview is flexible in the sense that it can explore or even change topics, altering the way and order of questions asked, and following up key clues according to the interviewer's needs. But the non-structural interview requires the interviewer to have a wealth of experience to ensure the direction of the interview. Inexperienced interviewers can't control the interview very well. In addition, since the questions are derived randomly, it is difficult to make a cross-sectional comparison of the respondents' answers, thus making the analysis more difficult.

In the semi-structured interview, there are questionnaires or interview questionnaires, which have rigorous and standardized topics. Although interviewers have certain control over the interview structure, they allow some room for the interviewees to express their perspectives (Newcomer, 2015). Throughout the interview process, the interviewer can adjust the previously prepared outline at any point in time according to the requirements and progress of the interview. Semi structured interview has the advantages of both structural and non-structural interviews. It can not only avoid the limitations of structured interviews, such as the lack of flexibility and the difficulty of in-depth discussion, but also avoid the defects of non-structural interviews that are time-consuming, laborious and difficult to convert into quantitative data. Newcomer (2015) also stated that all the groups suitable for participating in the semi-structured interview evaluation can be divided into three types; namely program recipients, interested parties and administration. As a kind of human resource managers, recruiters belong to one of the groups.

By comparing the pros and cons of the three interview types, this paper uses semi-structured interviews as means for data collection. Prior to conducting the interviews, the following design principles were taken into consideration:

1. Focus on open-ended questions and try to avoid asking questions that are right or wrong, or with strong guidance. The right and wrong questions are too simple, the subjects often only need to answer yes or no, and the mechanical mode of question and answer cannot achieve the goal of making the subjects talk more. In addition, a number of follow-up questions should be set after a major question.
2. The overall order should be reasonable. An important part of the interview etiquette is how the interviewer introduces themselves to the interviewee (Rabionet, 2011). At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer should make reasonable preparations and chat with the interviewees, such as introducing our topic or confidentiality statement. Declarative questions are best placed in front (less thinking, direct narration), questions that require further thinking are placed at the back, and design privacy issues are placed at the end.

3. Avoid the concentration of difficult and boring problems. Simple questions should be interspersed to ensure the active thinking of the interviewees.

4. Avoid technical terms in order to break any language or cross-industry barriers.

5. Maintain basic empathy, respect, friendship and sincerity. Don't use words and problems that violate these basic principles in order to avoid the interviewee becoming displeased or non-cooperative in the interview.

The participants in the interviews all share the fact that it is in their job description to recruit employees in civilian Swedish jobs. The following (Table 1) shows the current job title of the recruiters, their age, gender, interview duration and the way the interview was conducted

*Table 1 The Participants in the Interviews*

Participant Number	Participant	Age	Gender	Duration	Interview Method
1	Laboratory Quality Leader	38	Male	45 minutes	Phone Call
2	Biology and Environmental Systems and Societies Teacher	47	Female	45 minutes	Zoom interview
3	General Doctor	36	Male	45 minutes	Phone Call
4	Investment Bank Sales and Trading	26	Male	45 minutes	Skype interview
5	Marketing and Management Director	55	Female	45 minutes	Teams interview
6	Chemical Engineer	32	Female	45 minutes	Phone Call

7	Head of Ventures & Corporate Development Company	46	Male	45 minutes	Teams interview
8	Restaurant Chain Manager	53	Male	45 minutes	Phone Call
9	Real-Estate Agent	67	Female	45 minutes	Zoom interview
10	Laboratory Technician	26	Female	45 minutes	Teams interview
11	Salon Owner	44	Female	45 minutes	Phone Call
12	Kindergarten Teacher & Recruiter	30	Female	45 minutes	Zoom interview
13	Business Consultant & Recruiter	39	Male	45 minutes	Skype interview

For the above mentioned interviewees, there were six and 7 males and females respectively. The split was deliberate to offset any gender-specific bias. The interviewees have an age average of 41.5 years, which is evaluated to be suitable to reduce age biases, as these interviewees are middle-aged. For these interviewees, a series of eight open-ended questions were asked in the form of a semi-structured interview, and their answers were voice recorded to later be transcribed. The interviewee transcripts are attached in Appendix A.

Before each interview started, the researchers read to the participants the following text to inform them about the nature of the interview and their right. The text is as follows:

*Hi,*

*First of all, we would like to thank you for accepting to participate in this interview, it will be recorded but of course anonymous, we hope that is ok with you.*

*Now the plan of this interview is that First we will tell you a little about the research we are doing, then we will ask you 8 open-ended questions which we would like you to answer as thoroughly as possible, then we are done. This process will take approximately 45 minutes. Any questions so far?*

*Then we start*

*The research is about “How does Military Experience Affect the Perception of Recruiters in Swedish Civilian Jobs?”, we are interested in how the recruiters -like yourself- view job applicants with military experience. The reason why we are interested in this is because Sweden has reduced the number of military employees by 15% for 2020, so we are wondering how us civilians who once recruited an employee view these military veterans who will be joining the civilian market.*

*What we mean by ‘Swedish military employee’ Definition: Member of the the swedish armed forces (army, navy, marines, air force, etc)*

Then, the online interview began following the structure of reading each question as it's topic rose during the conversation.

*Table 2 The Interview Questions*

#	The Question
1	Do you know anyone in/was in the military in Sweden? Yes- Could you describe him? No- What is your impression of swedish military veterans?
2	How do you think a military veteran would be different from a civilian one?
3	What advantages/disadvantages do you think that military veterans have in the job market more than those without that military experience?
4	Are there jobs that are more suitable for military veterans to work in than others after they are no longer in the military?
5	What do you think is the hardest obstacle that swedish military veterans face once they want to start working in civilian jobs?

6	Did you ever get a job application from a military veteran? Yes- Did you accept him? No-
7	Do you have any advice for military veterans who will be joining a civilian job? For example, what they should focus on or improve in themselves.?
8	Any more thoughts or ideas you would like to share?

### 3.7 Data Collection and Analysis

#### 3.7.1 Primary Data and Processing

Through a series of interviews, first-hand raw data is obtained. First-hand data is often more reliable as a source in order to get as close as possible to an understanding of what actually happens and participants genuinely think. This data is then transcribed in order to convert it to text form, which then allows for critical reasoning to assess the underlying meaning and assumptions in the data.

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews is then analyzed by coding, which is an analytical process of categorizing data. The program used to examine the qualitative data in this instance is NVivo. Coding in Nvivo is the process of gathering related material into a container called a 'node. When a node is opened, one can see all the references in the project coded to that node (NVivo, 2020).

The interviews' transcripts are analyzed by grouping answers into themes. This is followed by weighting the strength and counting the occurrence of such a theme. The themes are then manually categorized in order to ease the identification and assessment of patterns.

#### 3.7.2 Grounded Theory

The analysis relies on grounded theory, which is a qualitative research approach that utilizes multilayer coding methods to establish a theoretical framework based on the

empirical data. Beginning with practical observations, underlying experiences from original data are drawn and subsequently translated into a systematic theory. This is a bottom-up approach for constructing the theory of entities. In other words, on the basis of systematically collecting data, one can find the core concepts that reflect the essence of phenomena and then construct the relevant social theories by linking together such concepts. In the context of this paper's methodology, interview recordings are transcribed to represent empirical data, which one can extract from concepts and themes through three steps: open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

Starting with the first level of open coding, researchers should aim to have an open mind and suspend "prejudices" both on personal and wider research community levels. In the process of this operation, the researchers first import the collected interview transcripts into the system and decompose the interview on every sentence or even every word in the transcripts. A concept is then given, which can be a short sentence or a word. The purpose of coding is to identify conceptual categories from the data, determine and name the categories, then link the categories to the phenomena studied. The open coding process is a funnel that starts with a wide set of inputs that gradually get filtered down into useful analysis materials. To illustrate an example of how this is done, consider the below transcript taken from one of the interviews conducted:

*"I guess the "military" stereotype comes to mind at first. Of Course, it differs from person to person but overall, you can say those with military experience are more disciplined, more accepting of authority, healthier physically than the average person etc."*

The interviewee mentions that soldiers are more disciplined, more accepting of authority, and have better physical fitness. Therefore, researchers can group the first two adjectives under a "discipline" category and place the latter adjective under "physical health". In this example, a basic level of open coding is applied and simplifies a two-line text into two categories. Through hundreds of open coding iterations, the full interview transcripts are fully decomposed on the first coding level into numerous grouped up categories.

Moving on to second-level coding, known as axial coding, the main task is to find and establish various relationships between concept categories so as to show the organic

relationships among various parts of data. These relationships can be of different natures, including but not limited to causal relationships, structural relationships, and process relationships. With deepening analysis, generic relationships between each category progressively become more specific. When analyzing such relationships researchers should consider the conceptual relationships between categories in conjunction with the underlying intentions and motivations of each category. If necessary, the researcher might even factor in the underlying meaning of certain words in light of the interviewee's cultural, economic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

In the context of this paper's analysis, after the completion of the first level coding, a large number of categories about the characteristics of soldiers are obtained, including disciplined, structured, goal-oriented, stereotyped, straightforward and so forth. While considering the tone and underlying sense of each characteristic obtained from first-level coding, these are then reclassified again under three higher-level categories: advantageous, disadvantageous and neutral characteristics of military veterans. This illustrates the completion of two-level coding that sums up several different subclasses into few characteristics. Again through numerous iterations of second level coding, the interview transcripts are now grouped into few characteristics that can be assessed in respect to their generic relationships. The following table illustrates some categories grouped under Disadvantageous characteristics.

Disadvantages	Inadequate education
	Lack creativity
	Unable to make decisions independently
	Lack emotional intelligence
	Poor communication
	Short-tempered
	Stereotype

Third level coding, known as selective coding, refers to determining a "core category" after a systematic analysis is conducted for all conceptual categories identified and continuing to focus on the analyses of the above categories with the code number

related to the core category. At this stage, the advantages, disadvantages and neutral characteristics are attributed to the key-term "military characteristics", which is one of the core categories of this research.

Military characteristics	Advantages
	Disadvantages
	Neutral characteristics

In addition, selective coding requires researchers to use storylines to describe clear theoretical paths and details. By definition, storylines are conceptual stories built around core categories. For instance, an underlying storyline of the key-term "military characteristics" is that military experience endows individuals with new characteristics, and arguably even particular personality traits, that to a certain extent impact the perception of recruiters when assessing veteran applicants for job roles. In analyzing the interview transcripts, three-level coding iterations were performed and identified seven core categories that are described in later sections.

### 3.8 Research Ethics

Ethics are the moral principles that a person must follow, irrespective of the place or time. Being ethical means doing the right thing at the right time. What research ethics focus on is the moral principles that researchers must follow in their fields of research. When it comes to planning and conducting research, a researcher often assesses individuals, organizations and phenomena, then collects and analyzes the data that is then reported as new findings. This whole process will raise ethical concerns that need to be addressed (Batra, 2015).

Within the context of research, ethics relate to the behavior of the researchers, the means of obtaining the data for the research, and most importantly the implications of the findings. What is appropriate and what is correct to the subjects within the research greatly depends on the justifications of the research to those affected by it. This is because research ethics cannot be clearly defined, but rather the principles of best practice and ethical theory develop over time (Swedish Research Council, 2020). Moreover, research ethics relates to how the researchers formulate the research topic

to design, assess, collect and examine the data, as well as present the findings, all in a responsible and moral approach (Thornhill, 2009).

Given this paper's focus on military experience's effect on future employability, research ethics are a key component and entail considering how to manage the ethics of this paper. As such, the research must be made clear and has been discussed together with the ethics committee in the university in order to continuously improve its methodology as well as bear in mind the ethical implications of its findings. To ensure that all of this research's participants were aware of the research aim, all interviewees were read their rights and were informed of the data collection method before the interviews started. The interviewees were guaranteed to be fully anonymous, and since all the interviewees preferred not to meet in person given Covid-19's impact, it was decided that all the interviews are to be conducted online and voice recorded. The interviewees also consented to having their job titles, ages and transcripts to be disclosed in this paper so long it remained anonymized. Further, the recordings and transcripts were limited to be accessible only to the researchers in order to ensure remaining anonymity.

The ethical concerns in this research have been acknowledged and brought to consideration for full transparency towards those who are subject to this research. Moreover, those ethical concerns stated in this section will be managed through a morally and responsible approach. Due to the interdependency of the research it is possible to argue that there have been no associations that could affect the findings, as the research is not in collaboration with any specific organization.

Investigating how the findings of this research might shape the strategy of job seeking for military veterans joining the civilian market emphasizes that the ethical implication must be evaluated as the findings may influence individuals' lives. Since this paper examines how military experience affects the opinion of recruiters, and due to the sensitivity of this topic to veterans and the lack of research concerning Swedish military veterans' employability in civilian jobs, findings of this paper might have an effect and hence this is kept in mind and results are evaluated based on their effect on the current knowledge in this field of research.

## 4 Finding

In this Chapter, all the experimental findings from the interviews outlined in Section 3.7 are presented and examined in detail. The effects of the qualitative data analysis and variables coding on the obtained findings are explained, and various implications for design are discussed. The raw data, which is the interview script may be found in Appendix A

The findings were categorised into 7 sections depending on topic, each of these 7 sections is then further analysed and sub-categorised into smaller categories. The following graph gives an overview of the categorise (Figure 7)

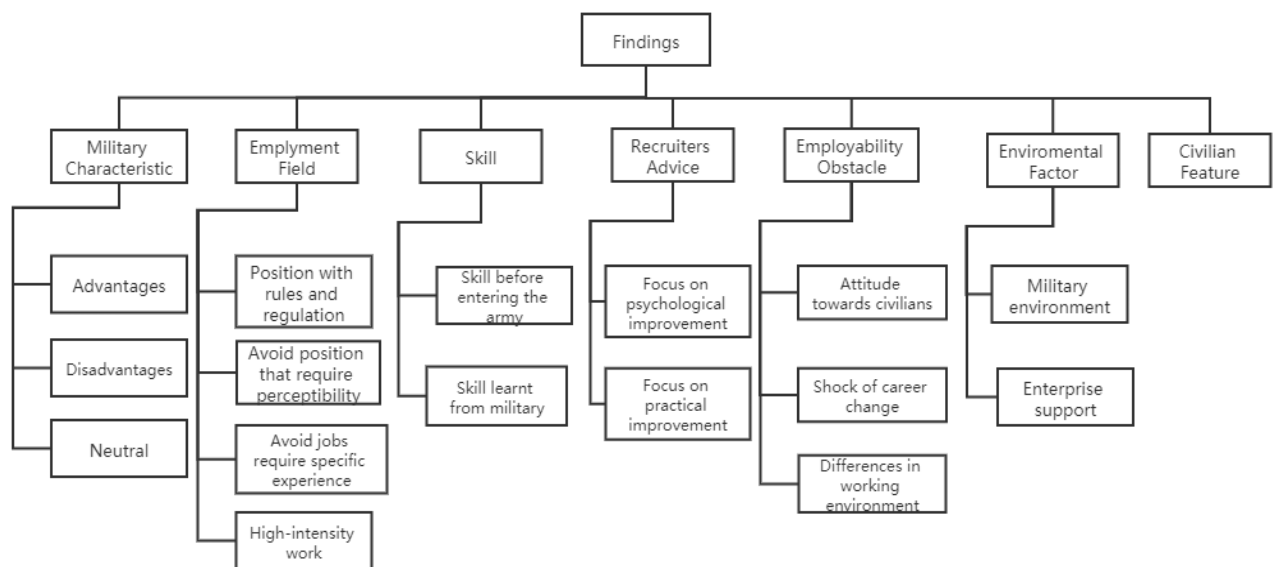


Figure 7 The Findings

### 4.1 Military Characteristic

According to the grounded theory and multi-level coding method mentioned in the third part, researchers integrated all the keywords describing the image of the military from the interview materials. This is known as first coding. Afterwards, researchers define keywords as three different generic advantages, disadvantages, and neutral characteristics based on the emotional color of the words (positive or negative). This is the second coding researchers performed. Finally, researchers define them as the characteristics of military personnel. In other words, how have the characteristics and personalities of civilians changed under the influence of military experience.

Table 3 Military Characteristic

Military Characteristic	Advantages	Trusted
		Loyalty
		Country's hero
		Healthier physically
		Adaptive
		Disciplined
		Efficient
		Focused
		Goal oriented
		Hard working
		Logical
		Punctuality
		Responsible
		Teamwork
		Structured
		Motivated
		Stress proof
	Disadvantages	Inadequate education
		Lack creativity
		Unable to make decisions independently
		Lack emotional intelligence
		Poor communication

		Short-tempered
		Stereotype
	Neutral characteristics	Less ambitious
		Short vision planners
		Realistic
		Straightforward
		Strict
		Value the things they lost
		Sensitive

Through the code table, it can be clearly seen that in the eyes of Swedish recruiters, the advantages of military personnel are more than the disadvantages of military personnel, so it can be inferred that recruiters are more willing to see the highlight of military personnel in the recruitment process. In the process of two-level coding, researchers find that some characteristics with slight negative feelings show a neutral image in the interviewer's real description. For example, in daily life, people will think that the word "less aggressive" is often associated with people who are not motivated, but respondents think that veterans have more practical experience, they are very clear about their ability ceiling, so they will not set ambitious goals. This shows that recruiters have higher tolerance for people with military experience and researchers infer that the impact of these characteristics depends on the requirements of the specific work of the military personnel.

Through the statistics of data by software, researchers know that "structured" and "disciplined" are the two most mentioned positive keywords in the interview. However, stereotypes and poor communication skills are two of the most frequently mentioned negative keywords. researchers can think of these characteristics as the recruiter's first impression of Swedish soldiers. Interestingly, out of all our respondents, only one non-Swedish recruiter came up with the concept of loyalty and country's hero.

Therefore, it is reasonable that military experience changes recruiters' perception of veterans by creating different military characteristics

For the neutral characteristics, the interviewees did not show an obvious attitude in the interview. researchers infer that the impact of these characteristics depends on the requirements of the specific work of the military personnel.

## 4.2 Employment Field

As mentioned above, the characteristics of military personnel are closely related to their employment field. When researchers first coded the interview materials, researchers marked the industries in which the interviewees thought the servicemen should work and the industries in which the veterans they knew were successful. In addition, respondents also suggested which industries military people should avoid. Finally, researchers have identified four categories and defined them as the field of employment.

*Table 4 Employment Field*

Employment Field	Position with rules and regulations	School management
		Security sector
		Supervision
		Factories and Production
		Planner
		Management positions
	Avoid positions that require perceptibility	Art and fashion
		To be a boss
		Creativity-base job
		Psychology
		Get along with young kid

	Avoid jobs require specific experience	
	High-intensity work	

It is clear that the field of military employment suggested by the respondents and some fields that already have veteran's employment are closely related to the advantages of the veterans. For example, school management, an interviewee mentioned that she hired a veteran as a school teacher. Firstly, the school, as an environment with a certain degree of discipline, matches the characteristics of veterans. Secondly, the recruiter hopes that teachers can set an example to encourage students to learn or imitate the advantages of teachers, such as punctuality, efficiency and goal-oriented. When teachers or school managers have a good sense of rules, students will do well. Similarly, in factories and producing enterprises with strict rules and regulations and production operation procedures, people with military experience are also suitable, because they leave the first impression of recruiters as "disciplined" and "organized".

In addition, although the respondents didn't mention specific occupations, they still think that veterans can cope with those high-intensity jobs, because most of the respondents mentioned that veterans have better physical fitness. Interestingly, recruiters think that the security sector is also very suitable for veterans, because they are very strict, but the strict is classified as a neutral characteristic. researchers find that neutrality is also an advantage in some specific field of employment. For the employment areas that the military personnel should avoid, they often have higher requirements for the emotional intelligence and perception ability of the practitioners, which is precisely the defect of the military personnel.

Therefore, researchers can think that the characteristics that military experience endows people with have a directive role in the field of military employment.

### 4.3 Skill

Researchers classified the first-level coding subcategories into two parts in the second-level coding phase, although our research is about the perception impact of military experience on employment, however, one interviewee suggested that she had recruited

a young veteran as a teacher because that veteran received a bachelor's degree in biology before joining the army. This advantage of educational background, which he had before joining the army, also affected the soldier's employment. This does not fall within the scope of our research, but based on the facts, researchers decided to encode it, which is a breakthrough in this research.

Most of the respondents mentioned a range of skills that soldiers learned in the military, and some respondents said that most of the veterans they interviewed showed their skills.

*“But generally speaking, applicants with military experience show impressive qualities such as leadership, resilience, quick-thinking, among others, which certainly grants them an advantage relative to the average applicant.” -Interview 4 (Appendix A)*

Recruiters are impressed by these skills that meet their requirements, so they are willing to give veterans job opportunities. Therefore, researchers can see that the abilities of military personnel have a great impact on whether they can succeed in employment in specific fields.

Table 5 Skill

Skill	Skill before entering the army	Education background
	Skill learnt from military	Resilience under high pressure
		Quick-thinking
		Planning
		Leadership- officers
		Communicating quickly and succinctly
		Consider on others vision
		Easily fit in structure-soldiers

#### 4.4 Recruiters Advice

When researchers asked our interviewees at the end of the interview if they had any other advice, most of them gave some suggestions to the veterans. They want veterans to make some changes through these suggestions in order to increase their employment opportunities and make them more positive in the eyes of recruiters. One interviewee said:

*“They should also take it easy and not stress in their new jobs as it's a completely different environment than the military.”* -Interview 3 (Appendix 3)

Indeed, after leaving the army, veterans should try to get rid of the high tension lifestyle. Similarly, the interviewees also think that veterans need to improve their emotional intelligence, strengthen communication and understand their pursuit. researchers find that this kind of advice always revolves around the mental, emotional and self-awareness aspects. Researchers define it as psychological self-improvement. Correspondingly, there is a practical self-improvement, one interviewee mentioned:

*“I think that military veterans need to re-experience many things so that they can integrate into society again, so I advise them to go to as many parties as possible, to meet new people, to go to public places and do regular activities to get back at ease.”* -Interview 6 (Appendix A)

This kind of concrete practice behavior also includes paying attention to one's own appearance, elaborating one's own ability and showing oneself actively. researchers sum up these two kinds of self-improvement into the core word of "To Do", which can help veterans to break the obstacles of employment to some extent and improve their competitiveness by making up for their disadvantages, so as to create successful employment.

Table 6 Recruiters Advice

Recruiters Advice	Focus on psychological improvement	Learn emotional intelligence
		Learn how to relax
		Focus on communication and creativity

		Know what they want
	Focus on practical improvement	Re-experience many things to reintegrate society
		Elaborate skills
		Focus on appearance
		Actively demonstrate strengths

#### 4.5 Employability Obstacle

In the first-level coding of this part, researchers find that the frequency of words and sentences with negative emotions has increased. Recruiters are not optimistic about the employment barriers faced by veterans. One interviewee said:

*"I had a comment from a soldier and when he left service and started working with civilians, he said oh I want to go back to the military, I hate working with civilians."* -Interview 1 (Appendix A)

The negative emotion shown by veterans makes us realize that civilians cannot be as punctual, responsible and purposeful as veterans, which interferes with the work of veterans, which may lead to his boredom. Researchers believe that the emergence of this emotion has a lot to do with the fact that veterans are unable to communicate deeply with their colleagues, and some veterans may have a negative attitude towards employment because they are worried that they will not be able to get along with their colleagues. However, researchers know that poor communication is one of the characteristics of military personnel, which is inevitable. In the second-level coding, researchers classify this subcategory as the attitude of soldiers towards civilians.

Respondents also mentioned that when soldiers enter civilian jobs, they are unable to translate their skills in the military into civilian work skills, which is troubling many veterans. In addition, veterans also lack relevant experience in certain fields of employment, because they have chosen to join the army, they have to give up the opportunity to spend the same time to cumulate work experience. In secondary coding, researchers define it as a shock of career change.

Another category of axial coding is the difference in the working environment. Researchers think it is an objective factor, such as the work atmosphere, the rules and regulations at work, which will not be changed for veterans. One interviewee said:

*"A more open and casual atmosphere is required and would be contradicted to the strict army environment."* - Interview 5 (Appendix A)

*Table 7 Employability Obstacle*

Employability Obstacle	Attitude towards civilians	Hate working with civilians
		Not know each fully
		Not good at communicating with colleagues
	Shock of career change	Lack relevant field experience
		Military skills cannot be applied to civilian work
	Differences in working environment	Different thinking mode
		Different regulation
		Different atmosphere

Researchers find that a large part of the obstacles to employment are fundamentally due to the disadvantages of the military, and veterans set limitations on themselves, but if they change themselves through the self-improvement methods mentioned above, some of the obstacles can be eliminated.

#### **4.6 Environmental Factor**

Compared with the core words above, environmental factors appear less frequently in the interview materials, and the chart shows that there is only one first-level coding subcategory in the secondary coding. With regard to the military environment, one interviewee said:

*“I think the Swedish military veterans have it much easier than the rest of the world as Swedish military is not heavily active in wars where the employees are affected by trauma as much.”* - Interview 6 (Appendix A)

This factor stems from Sweden's long-standing foreign policy of international neutrality, and Sweden has avoided almost all armed conflicts. The impact of this factor will be described in detail with the reference object in the discussion in the next chapter.

In addition, two respondents said that their companies had actively or frequently interviewed veterans, although this kind of enterprise support accounted for only a low percentage of all respondents' expressions. but what is certain is that the Swedish labor market at least does not exclude veterans.

*Table 8 Environmental Factor*

Environmental Factor	Military environment	No war
	Enterprise support	Recommend veterans to companies

#### **4.7 Civilians Features**

In order to answer the interview questions, it subconsciously made the interviewees differentiate between civilians and military employees, this meant that both positive and negative qualities of both parties were analyzed. Now comes the negative stigmas of civilians.

All the recruiters said in one way or another that civilians when compared to military employees is that the civilians are in comparison non-disciplined, this also explains that some of the recruiters have talked about that civilians are more prone to making excuses to avoid tasks, whereas military employees would not even have this as an option.

It is essential to keep in mind that these civilian features are generic and not facts, this means that not all civilians possess these features, just like not all the military employees would possess the above-mentioned features.

Table 9 Civilians Features

Civilians Features	non-disciplined
	make excuses to avoid to do
	aimless

#### 4.8 Theory Model

According to a study by Mian (2011), manufacturing recruiters have a stronger preference for people with military experience, who they believe can bring technical skills to many manufacturing industries. This theory supports the researchers' assumption that military experience has an impact on the employment field. Another theory is that recruiters are willing to hire military personnel, as long as they have suitable knowledge and skills. This theory is similar to the relationship between military experience and skills in this study. Based on previous principles, the researchers analogized it and developed a model regarding the recruiters' perception of personnel with military experience (Figure 8) via a study of the findings and the analysis of their relationships within each other. This model is based on the military and social environment in Sweden, as well as reflects how civilian recruiters perceive the path for military veterans to successful reemployment.

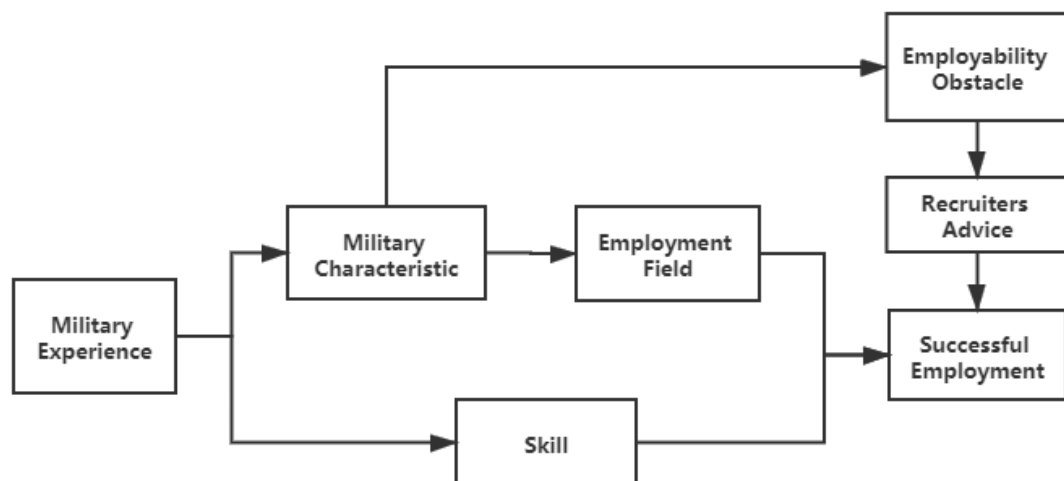


Figure 8: Recruiters Perception of Personnel with Military Experience

Starting at the first left box in the diagram (Figure 8) Military experience is perceived to affect both *military characteristic* and *skills*, these two key words have been used by the recruiters interviewed in this paper. This impact of the military experience gives the individual positives and negatives personality characteristics that differentiates them from civilians. The positive military personality characteristics have a great impact on the military people's choice of suitable employment field when they are re-employed. While the negative personality characteristics are perceived as a hindrance in the path to successful employment. After determining the negative effect caused by the military experience, recruiters believe that soldiers can solve these problems through some measures, which can greatly improve their employment opportunities. Therefore, the veterans are advised to take action and work on themselves to overcome that obstacle. When succeeding, this leads to a successful employment.

When it comes to the military experience effect on the individual's skills, this effect has been perceived by the civilian recruiters as only a positive effect and adds to the skills of the employee.

Finally, an overall comparison of military veterans vs civilians, recruiters believe that those with military experience have a certain degree of advantage in the appropriate field of employment.

## **5 Discussion and Conclusion**

### **5.1 Discussion**

In this study, researchers analyzed interviews with 13 people to understand how military experience affected the recruiter's perception of the candidate during the hiring process. Seven factors were identified and explored throughout the impact process, among which military characteristics, skills, employment fields, employability obstacle, and recruiter's advice were all direct factors derived from military experience. Civilian features and environmental factors are indirect factors because they are not directly related to military experience. In the eyes of recruiters, this affecting process is specific to the skills and military characteristics that military experience endows with people. Military characteristics also affect the employment field and employability obstacles. Employment field and employability obstacle combine skills and recruiter's advice to affect employment.

Previous studies explored the impact of military experience on employment by interviewing and investigating soldiers. It is confirmed that people develop different capabilities in military and civilian environments, and that military experience determines future employment for military personnel through its impact on skills. Previous studies have also found that most soldiers want to apply the skills acquired in the military to civilian work when they are seeking jobs, but the fact is that it is difficult to transfer military capabilities to civilian work. Previous theory is in agreement with a part of the theories proposed in this study. This study also found that skill is one of the factors affecting the successful employment, but it is not the only one. The researchers do not think that once military personnel have completed the transition from military skills to civilian skills, they can be recognized by recruiters. Another direct factor is military characteristics. Previous studies have also investigated the image of soldiers. It has confirmed that military experience gives soldiers many advantages that civilians do not have, which gives them a good reputation in the labor market and thus increases their employment opportunities. However, the researchers of this study think that the previous study is not comprehensive about military characteristics. The researchers found that the positive characteristics of military personnel could direct a suitable employment field. The combination of appropriate employment fields and skills can create successful employment, rather than relying solely on skills to find jobs.

In addition, in the interview materials of this study, some negative characteristics were found. These negative characteristics will develop into employability obstacles. For example, recruiters think that military personnel often do not have a high emotional intelligence, which will affect their communication with managers or colleagues. Because the previous research is to interview the soldiers, the soldiers tend to express their own advantages rather than their shortcomings, which leads the previous research to ignore the two sides of military characteristics— both having positive and negative effects – being ignored.

Moreover, compared with the previous study, this study has stronger applicability. The researchers summarized the recruiters' advice for people with military experience from the interview materials. The recruiter, as an observer in the recruitment process, has the right to decide on the recruitment of the candidates. Their advice often comes from the perception of military personnel. Military personnel can make changes through these advices to eliminate employability obstacles, which can help them gain more favor from recruiters. Instead of focusing too much on the transition from military skills to civilian skills as mentioned in former studies.

Although environmental factors are not direct factors, the researchers chose to retain them in consideration of credibility and objectivity. The subjects of this study were recruiters in Sweden, while previous studies were conducted in some military powers. The results of some data analysis make researchers realize that the impact of military experience on the perception of recruiters is related to the environment. There has been no war in Sweden for more than 200 years, which was Sweden's last active war that took place in 1814 Swedish–Norwegian War. Even during WWI and WWII, Sweden strictly remained neutral, and Sweden's overseas military operations are also very few. In fact, military conflicts or wars will add more positive characteristics to the soldiers in the country, because soldiers have to face greater danger of death during the war, which highlights the great image of soldiers. For example, American soldiers are often referred to as national heroes. In this interview, few Swedish interviewees mentioned concepts such as national heroes or defenders of national security. Hence, researchers think that veterans in the eyes of the Swedish people are not special or that they do not have a high social status.

The innovation of this study is to take Swedish recruiters as the main body of the survey, which was not done in the previous study and there are few similar studies in Sweden. This study enriches the relationship between military experience, recruiters and

reemployment, clarifies the specific connection between the various factors and concretizes the impact process.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The purpose of this study is to explore how military experience affects recruiters' perception of candidates. Veterans are a group of people widely distributed in Swedish society, and both business managers and veterans need to understand this influence process. This study is a qualitative study that incorporates responses from thirteen interviewees via semi-structured interviews to ensure effective data collection. Through the analysis of data, the theoretical model is established and discussed. These findings confirm that in the eyes of recruiters, although military experience may generate some obstacles to employment, positive impressions still outweigh any negative perception, hence military experience is a positive factor in the employment of veterans in Sweden. In addition, the Swedish society does not show a clear favoritism towards veterans, as they are treated as equals to civilians when it comes to employability.

This study is aimed to assist Swedish veterans switching careers to civilian jobs to better understand the perception of recruiters of military experience in order to potentially guide for better recruitment chances. On the other hand, for recruiters, this study can be used as a reference to evaluating veterans, which can more effectively select excellent staffs for organizations, and help to enrich their human resources.

## **5.3 Limitation**

This study did not consider the length of service. Will there be any difference in the reemployment of soldiers who retire after long service and those who retire after short service? Long-term service veterans have more military skills but their shortcomings will also be magnified, such as the difference from civilians. Short-term service may maintain civilian-like characteristics such as good emotional intelligence, but the military skill level is lower.

This study also did not consider different military fields such as army, navy, marines, air force, etc. Instead, they were summed in the group *armed forces*, which is referred to in this paper as *military employees*.

#### **5.4 Future Studies**

The topic of perception of military employees by civilian recruiters and their military to civilian job transition has shown to be of high interest as no previous studies tackling this topic have been done in Sweden. However, just like this paper has filled a research gap, it also paved the path for future research that can be based on the limitations of this study.

A future research that takes into consideration the length of the military service might shed light to interesting findings that were not discovered in this paper. Or, a research that uses a specified military field such as marines, air force, army in their focus for the military personnel.

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## **7. Appendix A**

### **Interviewee 1 : Laboratory Quality Leader, 38 Years old, Male.**

1. Yes I know someone who is in the Swedish military, and one who was. Both are team players, Actually really good team players, focused, and goal oriented, they are very clear and articulate when they speak, they are motivated and motivate, and strict sometimes.
2. In my opinion, I perceive military persons to be very structured and organised, that's the thing with the military, they have hierarchy and military persons know what it is expected of them and what the others should do, while civilians are in grey zone, they don't always know what they want, what they should do.
3. Well, it depends on their position in the military, if they were just soldiers or infantry, we can say that they can easily fit in structure, and if they were leaders in any way, then they sometimes have an advantage as I believe they are used to not thinking in a specific way, but sometimes they tend to focus on others' vision, not their own, and also some of them might lack Emotional Intelligence. But they are also goal oriented.
4. Yeah something with leadership and planning, but of course it depends on what they did in the military.
5. I think it is dealing with civilians, I had a comment from a soldier and when he left service and started working with civilians, he said "Oh I want to go back to the military, I hate working with civilians."
6. No I did not.
7. I think that soldiers should read about emotional intelligence, and they should definitely learn how to relax and be at ease.

### **Interviewee 2 : Biology and Environmental Systems and Societies teacher | Sciences, 47 Years old, Female.**

1. Yes I know 2 people, both have very similar characteristics which I think is because of their military training, so both are very structured, very disciplined, both morning people, hard workers, there is no need for micro-management with these employees as they know what to do and how to be efficient.
2. Again I think that military experience makes individuals more responsible, and more dedicated to work more structured and self-disciplined. Of course, I am not saying that all military individuals are like that, but the ones I know were like that at least. They would not miss a day at work unless they are very very sick, and I liked their dedication.
3. I can not speak about all military personnel as all are different, but from what I have noticed, the military people are more disciplined, more focused, and more dedicated to work than civilians. Another thing is that military personnel are used to working both individually and in a group, they are trained to be able to work effectively, whereas civilians learn that from experience only.

4. Well of course that depends on their qualities and what background they had, for example a soldier should not start working in a hospital if they are not educated for that, so it depends on their background before the military, that's why I think they should continue building themselves and study and educate themselves on what they want to do after they leave the military.
5. To be honest I Don't think there are any extra obstacles that the military veterans face that the civilians would not face , in contrast , I think they have an advantage because of their characteristics and job position. I think the hardest thing for them is once they start working and have to work with people who are not disciplined and not clear, and easier going. Because that will bother them.
6. I had a teacher who was irish who was in military, I recruited him and he started working with us as a biology teacher, He was suitable for th position as he studied biology in University before he joined the military, and he was disciplined and was not hard for him at all to wake up in the morning, as he was waking up even earlier in the military, or stay up late at nights.I accepted him because he had all necessary education in biology, he also related what he learned in the military to how it will help him as a teacher, that I liked and made me offer him the position as I valued his education and experience
7. I think that the military employees should focus on their education and prepare for their life after the military, not just focus on their time in the military. Once they leave, they are not educated enough to get any decent job. So it is important that they focus on their education. For example my husband was in the military, he was a military ambulance driver, and once he left the military, he chose to study more about mechanics and now he is working with Volvo, so it is very important that they study.

**Interviewee 3 : General Doctor, 36 Years old, Male.**

1. Yes, an old classmate back in highschool enrolled in the military soon after highschool. He was the class comedian type so it was very surprising. He was laid back and a little careless back in highschool so I suspect he decided to join the military for self-improvement? Or maybe he just wanted to.
2. Hmmm, I guess the "military" stereotype comes to mind at first. Of Course it differs from person to person but overall you can say those with military experience are more disciplined, more accepting of authority, healthier physically than the average person etc.
3. Advantages would be they are accustomed to stress, and are able to adapt to changing surroundings. They are also usually adept at management and have above average organisational skills. It's hard to name disadvantages because people who take the military almost always improve. Only notable disadvantages are on paper like being in the military doesn't support their CV much or that employers might prefer if that time was spent as experience in the relevant field. In terms of ability or "character" disadvantages there are barely any if at all.
4. I guess, like mentioned in the previous question, they are better suited for positions which put emphasis on rules and regulations. An example would be

in the healthcare industry where laws, rules-for-practise, and regulations are a daily part of the work. I try to avoid painting everyone with the same brush but perhaps they are less suited/disadvantaged in professions where they are their own boss like in the art industry. But that's something that differs highly on a person to person basis.

5. The hardest issue is being able to reintegrate into the new field of work. It's possible in many cases the veterans will feel they are underqualified compared to their peers who have worked in the field for longer. Knowing the stressful routine of the military, the veterans might also be prone to overworking or overloading themselves. They might also have the issue of getting along with coworkers because the military usually has a big impact on one's personality, so other normal people may not be able to relate or fully understand the veterans and vice versa. But normally they shouldn't have any big issues.
6. Yes, right now I can think of 2 that I have accepted that were in the military, I don't remember how many that I didn't accept though. I believe we also have another who began working here the same time I did and they also were ex-military
7. I don't have much advice because I don't believe they really need it. They Are fine as they are but I can offer some words of encouragement. They shouldn't feel discouraged because they served in the military and it doesn't hurt their CV as much as they think it does. In fact most of the time it's usually positive. They should also take it easy and not stress in their new jobs as its a completely different environment than the military. So good luck and go get 'em

**Interviewee 4 : Sales and Trading employee + recruiter, 26 years old, Male.**

1. Yes, I had a teacher who transferred to the military. A friendly guy but thinking back, his character suits the army. Early bird, strict and very structured in his way of thinking.
2. Just thinking out loud: the veteran is an early bird, follows a strict schedule, adheres to orders and takes in guidance. Most likely physically fit and methodical in their thinking. Would think had a certain routine to his life that civilians would struggle to follow. Would also think veterans might be less ambitious than the average career-oriented civilians, maybe due to the veteran's potential field experiences.
3. I think there have been multiple initiatives to support veterans fit into the workplace. I work in financial services and we actively market opportunities strictly for military veteran applicants. Once in the workplace, this is my thinking out loud, veterans are likely to respect the hierarchy, follow orders without question, adhere to internal compliance and rules, pay due respect to colleagues - you know, just the usual characteristics we would typically see in the army. The biggest disadvantage of recruiting a veteran in my opinion is how detached they might be from 'normal' life, particularly those that might have had field experiences abroad. I would think they might struggle to apply their skills to any job. Also I would think they might be too rigid in their way of

thinking; sometimes you need someone who is creative and willing to challenge your opinion on how to do things. I struggle to see an ex-military doing any creativity-based job like marketing.

4. I do think so. Ideally I'd like to say everyone is capable of applying for whatever they like, but the reality is that everyone has certain skill sets which are not applicable everywhere. I work in Sales and Trading in an investment bank so I'll stick to my field: ex-military applicants show characteristics that would certainly help in my environment. Demonstrating mental and physical resilience under high pressure and extremely tight timelines, adhering to hierarchy and communicating quickly and succinctly - I think these are attributes that are needed particularly within my field. We recruit frequently from the military, but then again, I'm not sure other corporate jobs might be suitable for veterans.
5. I'll be honest and say I'm not sure how it exactly works for the Swedish veterans recruitment, but I would assume the biggest difficulty is translating your military experience into meaningful skill sets for the jobs the veteran is applying to. And I'd this is a twofold struggle: 1) they have to clearly convey it in their resume; 2) they have to elaborate on their skills in any interviews.
6. Yes, we receive plenty of applications from applicants with military experience, usually from international applicants from countries that dictate everyone must go to some military training. I've only been involved in assessing some resumes, but our application process is extensive and has to bypass multiple people before we accept anyone, so I wouldn't know whether the applicants are eventually accepted or not. I can't really discriminate between applicants just based on their military experience, as I have to look at the overall resume. But generally speaking, applicants with military experience show impressive qualities such as leadership, resilience, quick-thinking, among others, which certainly grants them an advantage relative to the average applicant.
7. I can't speak from any experience here, but I would say they should think hard on what soft skill sets they have developed from their military experience and focus on emphasizing these skills to their recruiters. Use examples, illustrate how you handled different situations, and how your application could be translated into the workplace. It's never easy, but if you get it right, it will make you stand out from the rest.

**Interviewee 5 : Marketing and Management Director + recruiter, 55 years old, Female.**

1. Yes I do. A social and kind guy. He was the teacher of my kids at high school. I was surprised when I learned that he was an ex-army officer because he was an excellent communicator and was very creative. The exact two qualities that I believe most army veterans score low in because of the strict and heavy training they receive which require them to obey orders as a crowd and not as individuals.
2. Because of the special training they receive, I think that a military veteran will be different from a civilian. He/she will acquire many personal skills and qualities that only a military education will give. Organization, punctuality,

discipline, alertness, and the ability to quickly adapt to circumstances are only a few. While a civilian may acquire these qualities too, this would most probably be through personal development and personal effort and not through professional education and training, as the case in military education.

3. Advantages:

- Discipline.
- Punctuality. Whether in submitting reports or arriving to work and meetings on time.
- Respecting the rules.
- Obedience. The Boss is the Boss.

Disadvantages:

- Communication problems. A military veteran is mostly used to obeying orders and not discussing them, and therefore may face communication problems when working on equal levels with work colleagues.

- Rigidness and lack of creativity. Due to the strict education and training, I assume that a military veteran may have difficulties thinking outside the box.

4. Any job that requires extra alertness, punctuality, and discipline would be suitable. The Security sector would be the first choice. However, many other sectors would be suitable, for example management positions in big companies or school management, where you have many employees who work under your supervision and where you are required to lead by example. This means that when you show your discipline and respect to rules, all your employees will follow your behavior.
5. I think the hardest obstacle would be the work environment. In Army the person is trained to strictly follow the rules, together with a crowd. In modern jobs, contrarily, an employee is required to think creatively outside the box and come with genuine ideas and solutions to problems. Another problem would be communication with work colleagues. A more open and casual atmosphere is required and would be contradicted to the strict army environment.
6. No
7. My advice would be to focus on communication and creativity. Showing the recruiter that you have the soft skills will increase your chances because they know that, being an army veteran, you already have all the hard ones.

**Interviewee 6 : Chemical Engineer, 32 years old, Female.**

1. Yes I do. A colleague of mine who works as a planner in the oil refinery has been a military officer for 20 years before switching careers and choosing to work in a civilian job as a planner. He is very quiet, reserved, well spoken, strict and straightforward. He is also a very hard worker and always on time.
2. I believe the biggest difference between a military person and a civilian is that military employees have self discipline. They do what they need to do no matter the circumstances, whereas civilians might find excuses not to do it. I also think that military employees are more realistic and short vision planners, they would not plan their life for 20 years ahead, whereas a civilian is most

likely to do. The last difference I think is that military employees value the things they lost more than what civilians take for granted, for example spending time with family, or having a phone with internet all the time, or hot showers.

3. Advantages:

Discipline, hard workers, risk takers, good communicators

Disadvantages:

Non-flexible, short-tempered, not educated enough in general knowledge

4. I think jobs in factories or production are most suitable for military veterans, they are systematic, non-verbal, and routine. I don't think a military veteran should work for example in psychology, with young kids, or in fashion/arts.
5. I think the Swedish military veterans have it much easier than the rest of the world as Swedish military is not heavily active in wars where the employees are affected by trauma as much. However, I think the hardest thing that the military veterans will face is the shock of career change, the majority of military employees probably imagined their death on the field, whereas when changing to civilian jobs, this painted image is no longer possible, and this might give them an identity crisis.
6. No personally I did not, but a colleague of mine who is working in the refinery before I started is a military veteran.
7. I think that military veterans need to re-experience many things so that they can reintegrate into society again, so I advise them to go to as many parties as possible, to meet new people, to go to public places and do regular activities to get back at ease.

**Interviewee 7 : Head of Ventures & Corporate Development Company, 46 Years old, Male.**

1. Yes, I actually have my brother working with the military now. To be honest I'm not sure if he was that different before he joined compared to now. Or maybe I don't even remember. He has 2 sides to him. One side is the stern and serious side where he gets work done and the other is his more relaxed one where he smiles a lot usually when he's fishing (his hobby)
2. A veteran usually develops, whether they like it or not, the qualities required to survive in the military. Things like leadership, decisiveness, following orders and authority etc. Otherwise they wouldn't become veterans in the first place. But of course it doesn't mean they are only that. They all have their own different personalities but the mentioned qualities is how they differ from normal civilians
3. Well it depends on the job to be fair. I don't think a military veteran will have much advantage when applying as a chef. But they will certainly have the advantage when applying for example to the police. I can't think of much disadvantages compared to regular people but maybe the time spent in the military could prevent them from joining advanced level jobs in other fields
4. My brother always wanted to work somewhere near a lake but I'm not sure it's suitable. In the end it depends on the person's interests. Overall I'd guess that

they are more suitable for physical jobs as a rule of thumb. Police, martial arts, personal trainers, athletes, firemen are all jobs where military personnel would excel at overall compared to the average person. But I don't know any jobs they would be LESS suited for aside from ones that require a huge CV or experience to admit to

5. The hardest obstacle would be now that I think about it like I mentioned before when they try to join jobs with strict education or experience requirements like professors or researchers. Obviously even normal people would struggle with those but military veterans especially usually have a criteria disadvantage. I don't think they'll have many social issues because they know how to adapt to new environments
6. Yes I did, many actually. I don't count but at least over 40 from the past few years, of course not all were accepted but I definitely accepted some of them
7. My advice depends from person to person. For some people it's better to quickly climb the corporate ladder as soon as they leave the military and for others it's better to take it slow and just take a part time job for a while. It really depends but they definitely have to think about what they really want and their future after the military really hard because they will surely face some difficulties

**Interviewee 8 : Restaurant Chain owner, 53 Years old, Male.**

1. No, I don't know anyone personally well to describe them. I think they're the country's heroes so I have a positive impression as would most people. We should appreciate their contribution and try to help them for the service to their country.
2. The veteran has serviced their country and will have a much better understanding of politics. They also hold strong personality traits that they have honed from their experiences. Traits like leadership, self-discipline, loyalty and honesty. This is my perception of military persons relative to your normal civilian, but I think the term is a bit generic and we get all sorts of civilians.
3. Going back to what I said, I think veterans have inherent personality traits that they have developed from the military academy and any field experience. They have important skills such as teamwork, leadership, resilience, self-discipline, and so on. I think these would be valuable relative to the average person in society.
4. I'm not a fan of the idea that people with certain backgrounds should work in particular fields. I used to work in a supermarket chain before I saved up some money and opened up my own family restaurant. Now I have three restaurants in three cities in the country, and already looking to open my fourth hopefully soon. If a military veteran is a good cook or has passion for food and wants to open up their own restaurant, then so be it. I guess some jobs require very specialized skills which a military veteran, or your average person even, cannot perform. But then again so many people work in the military before changing to something completely different, it's just that I don't know anyone personally well to speak on their behalf.

5. Honestly not sure, I wouldn't know. Maybe figuring out exactly what they want to do? I guess that's a difficult question for everyone, but the military is such a specific organization and if someone is switching, whatever they're going to do instead might be radically different.
6. I do remember having an application from someone who worked in the army for a job opening - we needed a new cook. I can't recall his resume much, but I don't recall anything particularly useful for the job. Maybe I should have given them a chance, but it was difficult to choose them if they had no restaurant experience. Thinking back, I guess I might also be concerned about any problems that could happen in the kitchen between this person and other cooks. But guess I'll never know.
7. Again not sure here as I can't share advice from any relevant experience. But I guess try and focus your application so that it brings out your skills that are useful to the job. You can take this advice for any job application really. You never know, someone of military background might be fun to have as they will share a potentially different perception and personality in the workplace.

**Interviewee 9 : Real-Estate agent, 67 Years old, Female.**

1. No I don't. My perception of a Swedish veteran is a strong and tall person who is physically fit and with a lot of talents and discipline. A person who probably received a lot of military education and practical field training but who probably did not have the chance to put all this education to practice as he/she did not participate in any war during the past years.
2. A military veteran is trained to be alert all the time. His awareness of his surroundings is more sensitive than a civilian person and his reactions are definitely quicker. He would also be more strict in his behavior and daily acts, and with a high sense of responsibility.
3. Advantages would be that they have a lot of education and training in the soft skills needed in most careers, such as punctuality, discipline, organization, team-work ability, respect to rules and authority. Disadvantages would probably be inability to make independent decisions as they are used to obey rules as crowds. Another disadvantage may be that due to spending most of their time in military camps they may become socially isolated or distanced compared to civilian ones.
4. They may work in any field according to personal qualities and previous experience, but some jobs may be more suitable than others. Any job that requires a lot of discipline and punctuality, organization, respecting the hierarchy, and alertness, would be suitable. A job that requires creativity may not be a good choice for a military veteran, unless he is creative by nature.
5. I think it is deciding what they should work with, It all of course depends on what their experience is, but I think they will get a career dilemma on deciding what they should work with.
6. No I have not
7. I think they should focus on their looks, to show personality in their clothes and hair styles. It is common for the military to have short hair and standard clothes.

So once he/she leaves the military, I think they should focus on building an image for themselves.

**Interviewee 10 : Laboratory Technician, 26 Years old, Female.**

1. Yes I do, a previous boyfriend of mine is in the military. He is physically fit, strict with law, very smart, handy with tools, and very knowledgeable in tactics and planning. He is also a sensitive guy and very good to our dog.
2. I think a military veteran is more quiet than a civilian, a military person also probably is physically healthier, and cares about their physical strength more than an average civilian. I also think that in general, civilians are more creative and imaginative, whereas military veterans are usually more strict and narrow thinkers
3. I don't think that military veterans have a huge advantage/disadvantage in Sweden compared to civilians. I think all recruiters are educated to have prejudice or ideas about people before meeting them. But one thing I think is a slight advantage for the military is that military veterans are perceived as heros, and people to be trusted. It is normal to trust a military veteran than a normal person.
4. I can't give a specific answer to this as different people are suitable for different jobs. It all depends on how they are as people and what they have for education
5. I think the hardest obstacle is to be themselves, to act like they want, not like what their supervisors want them to act. To show their personality, whereas in the military they suppressed their personality.
6. No I have not, I have received about 50 applications to 2 jobs that I have recruited for as a laboratory technician, but none were in the military.
7. I can't think of any advice right now, but from my experience with my previous boyfriend, I think that military veterans should learn to open up about their feelings.

**Interviewee 11 : Salon Owner, 44 Years old, Female.**

1. No, I don't know anyone who is in the swedish military, but I think they are tough, strict, middle-aged, and tattooed. I also think that they are physically and mentally strong.
2. Military veterans know what they want in life, they probably accomplished a lot despite young age, whereas civilians change their careers often and don't know what they want in life
3. Advantages: They have work experience, they are better looking, they talk better and clearer. Disadvantages: They are not educated much, they are not romantic, they are not good at giving advice.
4. Yes, I don't think military veterans should work in low income jobs or simple jobs. I think veterans need to feel like they are needed, so any job that is not important for life then I don't think they should work in it as they will get bored.

5. Hmmmm, the hardest obstacle is probably deciding what they want to work with and try to translate their work experience in the military to civilian work experience
6. Yes, I always recruit people to work with me in my hair and nails Salon, I once got someone who went military training. I don't remember exactly what he worked, but anyway I did not hire him because he was overqualified, I did not want to train him and then he would leave for another job in a few months.
7. I think they should focus on finding a job that suits them, so if they were leaders they should work as leaders, I don't think they should experiment with new jobs, maybe after working for a few years then they can try another job, but not immediately.

**Interviewee 12 : Kindergarten teacher + recruiter, 30 Years old, Female.**

1. Yes, the closest person I know from the military is actually my father, he was enlisted for about 12 years with them which is quite some time. He got married after he left. He was quite a strict parent but he always had a soft side for my little brother and sister. Maybe because I was the oldest he was strict but generally he didn't express himself too much. But that's expected from a veteran I guess
2. Ummm I'm trying to not use my father as the main comparison because he might be a special case. But from what I understand the military training usually just makes everyone more objective oriented. The Americans have an expression they use called "bullshitless" meaning they say only what they're thinking and are straight to the point. Don't small talk much, know what they want, you know things or that nature.
3. Oooh this one's tough. To be honest I don't know. I personally gauge the person individually. They're all suited differently for different jobs. Possible advantages you could say is their training itself which could be important that most people don't have. But that wouldn't be important overall, just maybe in specific cases I guess. As for the disadvantages I can't think of any... Yeah I'm not sure it's for the person themselves to know
4. Oh yeah for sure. The first ones that come to mind are security jobs like guards or police and stuff. But it definitely won't make much difference with us here. Maybe if someone breaks into the store then it would become important but that's very rare.
5. Probably getting out of the military mindset. My dad talks about it a lot nowadays so I understand how it is. It's a completely different type of environment. It's not that the new jobs after the military would be harder, but just the veterans will struggle to adapt back because it's changing a big part of your lifestyle. For my father it took him an entire year to really feel comfortable in his new work at the time. But that's also because he spent such a long time in the military
6. No I haven't. Not any that I remember actually but maybe I just forgot. I don't think people in the military would think of applying here either. I know

everyone that works here as well and I'm quite sure none of them were military veterans either

7. Advice? Not really. Most of them can usually figure it out themselves because they're good at that kind of thing. But for those that need the advice maybe it's better to apply to jobs that require or will help a lot if you had military experience. That's what I would personally do

**Interviewee 13 : Business Consultant + recruiter, 39 Years old, Male.**

1. Just a few, my brother Matt worked as a medic trainee for several years. My grandfather and cousin were also in the military for a while, but I'll continue with my Matt without being too biased. He's very strong willed, stubborn in a good way. Has a strong sense for justice, and in my opinion sometimes too good for his own sake. That's why he joined as a medic - he wanted to do good for his colleagues.
2. I guess you can compare me to my brother. We share similar values since we were raised together, but very different personalities. Matt has a will of steel and can be very stubborn to change his opinion. I like to think of myself, or at least I'm told, that I'm much more pragmatic, although he thinks I'm a bit on the soft side. He's also hasty at times, so rushes on some things that I would like to sit down and think better on. We have our differences, but I think what we share the most is a strong sense of duty to family. We take care of each other, no matter what. I don't know if that's something you'd have for other families, but maybe this is the case for our family since few of us come from a military experience.
3. To be honest with you, I'm not sure ex army people have an advantage. If anything, I think they're actually disadvantaged. It depends on which division you've trained under and what you're applying for, but overall I think employers may not always be keen to hire ex army people. They anticipate problems. My brother struggled a bit after he retired from the military. He was unemployed for a while, before he joined an office job at a government tax agency. Wasn't easy getting there, but he eventually made it and is satisfied with the job.
4. It's a difficult question. I'm tempted to say yes there are, but I can't speak from experience. If you trained under a Strategy & Planning division, you might be better for a business management role. If you were on frontline troops, you might be better equipped for a physical job, maybe even in security. But then again you do have ones like Matt who totally change to something different.
5. Not sure about Swedish veterans but I can speak on behalf of my family. I think the biggest struggle is always finding a role where you can apply your skills to. And that's tricky, but also you can say this is the same for any job. Sometimes you're also unlucky with some people who are hesitant to hire an ex army. They just associate them with trouble and kill any chances. Long story short I think the difficult obstacle is joining the role that fits you.

6. Yes, definitely. I'm a business consultant so don't actively work in recruitment, but we do get resumes sent to us by HR to screen candidates. We get thousands of applications each year, including those with military backgrounds.
7. I guess my advice is generic for any career. Try and enjoy what you do. Doesn't matter whether it is military or a boring office job. There are things that you'll appreciate once you transfer to another job or place and you miss those. Also keep learning and invest in yourself. You become more valuable the more you do so.