



**Linnéuniversitetet**

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Bachelor thesis

**In dialogue with Africa**  
*A quantitative study on students at  
Linnaeus University from the  
perspective of the Digital Divide*



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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine whether the targeted university students have a more equal picture regarding Africa than what the Swedish society in general has, which by Sida's researches has shown to be an oldfangled picture. The research is based on a quantitative method in terms of a survey that in total reached out to 286 responding students at the Linnaeus University in Växjö. The theoretical framework is based on the Digital Divide, Diffusion of Innovation and The model of Newsworthiness.

The research discusses the oldfangled picture of Africa that remains within the Swedish society, why it remains and what different characters that is to be blamed for the formation, as well as it presents optional efforts that could be used to update the picture of Africa.

The result from the survey shows that neither do Swedish students at the Linnaeus University possesses a more updated picture, even though they are said to belong to a privileged group in the society, in the manner of access to information from both media, education, Internet and other diverse sources. We conclude that there is a gap in the information distribution regarding Africa, what information that is available for the Swedish society is mostly negative and oldfangled. What can be argued to be an optional solution to this remaining problem is a closure of the digital divide, which would provide an important interpersonal communication channel that is missing today. This is further explained in the thesis with support of earlier researches together with theories and result.

## Key words

The picture of Africa, Oldfangled view, Digital divide, Newsworthiness, Interpersonal communication, Diversity, Sida, Journalism.

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## 1. Presentation

The oldfangled picture of Africa has, due to earlier studies, shown to be the general understanding about the continent. Even if Africa have reached progress in their economic and social development the undeveloped picture that Swedes have of Africa seem to remain the same. This assumption is strengthened by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) through a line of researches made on the Swedish population.

This thesis will present different characters that are blamed to be a part of the formation of this remaining view, with one of them being media. How and what they report about Africa creates our view towards the continent. Medias work can be explained by the model of newsworthiness, which highlights the three factors; time, culture and space as the criterions of what daily happenings that make it as news. (Hadenius & Weibull, 2011)

To find optional deviations, this research have through a quantitative method, in use of a survey, researched if the same oldfangled picture remains even if you are a University student, and have all the possibilities to receive information from your education as well as Internet and its different platforms.

A discussion from the chosen perspective Digital Divide, will be held further down and explain how it could contribute to an increasing level of interpersonal communication, which equals with diversity and a greater amount of information. A more updated picture of Africa could thus be obtained due to increased knowledge available.

### *1.1 Disposition*

Followed by this introduction is the background and problematization, which is presented in order to provide the reader with useful information about the topic of this thesis, but also explanations that clarifies and highlights the problem within the topic. Thereafter, in chapter three and four, the hypothesis, purpose and research question are presented, which is followed by previous research, where Sida holds a central position. Other previous researches in this chapter explains the phenomenon ICT and its development over the years. In chapter six, the theoretical frameworks of Digital

Divide, Diffusion of Innovation and the model of newsworthiness are presented and applied to the purpose of this thesis. Chapter seven explains the method of the survey and discusses why certain choices and selections are made together with a description of the execution and collecting of material. The method is followed by the actual result and analysis in chapter eight, which present the findings of our survey and analysis the material on the basis of the result and the theoretical framework. An even deeper and more summarized discussion regarding findings and theoretical stand points is to be found in chapter nine, where we also highlights the most important parts of the survey in a conclusion and closes the loop. Finally, a critical discussion on the method and our own work is presented.

## **2. Background and problematization**

This chapter will present the background, where underlying factors are highlighted in the topic and problematization to be able to define the actual problem. We will partly describe how Africa has been viewed historically, how the Swedish knowledge and picture of Africa looks and what factors that contributes to this view. The chapter ends with a summary of the probelmatization.

### *2.1 Africa, a forgotten continent*

Africa is a continent including over 50 different countries but often talked about as one single country (Sida, 2016). Historically many countries in Africa have been colonized by European countries, and during that time Europeans were considered as superior to Africans, since they held the power over many of the countries. The time of colonization was in general ending around 1960s and from that period Africa has been on its own. (Marks, 2007)

As many scholars have proved, the colonialism has played a central role in the picture of Africa today. The philosopher V.Y Mudimbe who has his roots in the Democratic Republic of Congo means that Africa is summarized with the word abnormalities. He argues that the world was described in term of inequality, as Europe was associated with civilization, rationality, innovation, masculinity and control, while Africa, like other colonies, was described in terms of irrationality, passivity, femininity, lack of control and barbarism. In this worldview the societies were referred to different stages in the evolutionary process. Europe was placed at the top and Africa was drawn over an edge,

placed at the bottom stage of the development and came to be presented as the symbol of the most primitive region. (Eriksson, 2015)

This view of Africa is still living, as surveys done by Sida indicates, Swedish people seem to have an oldfangled picture of Africa left. In the article by Maria Eriksson Baaz she reveals truths about the way Africa is described and in some way discriminated.

Eriksson claims that African scholars do not have the same opportunity to get their research or books published. More often it is a European co-author who gets the name on the research even if it is the African scholars who did the most important work, and has been contributing as the link that supports the research with close and important contacts and facts. This is one of the signs that are still remaining of the hierarchy since the time of the colonization. However, argued to be the most common contributory to the twisted view of Africa is media. African countries are more often presented in reportages from a perspective that focuses on the traditional life, leaving out the modernization of the society. This can be seen throughout reportages about conflicts. Various African countries have had many different conflicts, but all conflicts are not equal presented in media. Media usually just publish reportages from African countries if the conflict is brutal and practiced with traditional African weapons, such as machetes. Conflicts more similar to what it looks like in the western world, such as the conflict in Congo practiced with modern weapons, does not get the same attention. This conflict has despite the extremely high number of deaths almost been hidden in media. (Eriksson, 2015)

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the second worst conflict since the Second World War and was at its worst between 1998 and 2003 when it formally ended. However, an actual end to the conflict has not been reached yet and even though approximately 5.4 million people already lost their lives, not much is done to put an end to the hostilities. (Diakonika, 2016) The lack of information and interest about this conflict has been criticized by many authors and journalists before and has resulted in books debating the matter. (Hawkins, 2008)

## *2.2 The power of media*

As can be understood media plays a huge role in the globalization, they holds the power as an informant, stakeholder, and gatekeeper and affects people how to think and act. Media is in other words important since it is one of the sources that contribute to our worldview and decides what is normal and abnormal, realistic and unrealistic. Studies have been done with the results that strengthen the fact that the power is advancing for journalists. They have the power to select what information they want to share and how they like to present the news (Camauër & Nohrstedt, 2006). As models of media effects, discussed by Scheufele and Tewksbury, shows the presentation of information is important. As been stated by the republican pollster Frank Luntz in 1997 ‘‘It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it’ (Luntz, 2008) which, means that the same information can have different effects depending on situation and presentation. (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007)

Another factor that gives journalists power is the fact that they can in a broad sense shape the picture of the world. This is explained in more sociological thoughts by Goffman, people interpret primary frameworks of situations to be able to understand information which journalists use to construct understandable reportages. (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007)

## *2.3 Article by Sida*

Joachim Beijmo, Communication Manager at Sida, wrote an article 2013, where he gives some general advice for Swedish journalist that could benefit the chances for a more realistic picturing of Africa in media. He argues that Swedish people are interested of their own perspective, they do not have the interest and because of that they have a lack of knowledge about Africa. Their view of Africa is 20 to 30 years back in time, which means that their knowledge is not updated and they have missed the progress Africa has done in their societies. (Beijmo, 2013)

Further he means that it is by first hand media’s and companies words that present and forms our picture of Africa. Possible factors to the lack of knowledge could be that media has a weakness in letting other perspectives thrive. To a large extent Africans do not get heard as experts, company leaders or citizens. Which increase the risk to keep the prejudices that exists of Africa going, because we do not see them solve problems and show progress themselves. (Beijmo, 2013)

As Beijmo argues he means that media and journalist do not carry the whole responsibility to “educate” and inform the society but they are an important actor. Advices he announced for journalists were that they should work closer to the local media office and build a better relationship to make it possible to cooperate and exchange news and knowledge. (Beijmo, 2013)

#### *2.4 Swedish Internet use*

Sweden has one of the world's highest individual accesses to Internet. How Internet is used by individuals in the society is well researched and different arguments have shown both positive and negative effects. Is Internet providing us with knowledge or is it just stealing our time and preventing us from taking part of information that for example journalists distributes through traditional media channels. What can be seen out of the statistics of the research *Svenskarna och Internet*, is that young people use the Internet more frequently than the older people. Further young people have the tendencies to not use the traditional media channels as often as older people in the society. (*Svenskarna och Internet*, 2015)

There is not only a difference in how the internet is used, there is also a difference in terms of a gap between those who have access to Internet or not. The gap is argued to be contributing to an information gap, which means that people do not have the same possibilities to gather knowledge out of Internet as an information source (Eastin et al. 2015). As mentioned Sweden is one of the countries that have the highest individual access to Internet, and who are a part of the so-called information society (*Svenskarna och Internet*, 2015). But they still seem to be uninformed about what is happening around the world, especially in Africa, or at least uninformed about the progress in African societies, if one is to believe Sida’s surveys. If this lack of knowledge has to do with lack of interest or limited possibilities, is still unknown.

#### *2.5 Summing up problematization*

As will be discussed later the digital gap thus hinders a lot of people to participate in the exchange of information that takes place on the web. If people are not able to participate in the digital sector from a specific area, the flow of information from that area towards the surrounding world will be dominated by other media platforms, which is a problem in the striving for diversity.

The diversity of information about developing countries is in other words a little unrepresentative and leads us to the concept of the Information gap and how important it is to be provided with the right information or at least various kind of information in order to create an individual opinion and understanding about the topic.

### **3. Hypothesis**

If most people in the world obtain Internet access, in other words, if a closure of the Digital Divide is achieved, there will be a broader diversity in the information available since more people are able to attend. This in turn means that media, who is argued to be contributing to the oldfangled picture of Africa, will get less space in spreading their information. As previous research shows, interpersonal communication is one way of communicate through the Internet and creates new relationships and exchanges knowledge. Due to this, the oldfangled picture may change over time, when we move closer to the African continent in terms of Internet relations and a closure of the Digital Divide.

### **4. Purpose**

Statistics shows that a wide number of information sources communicate an incorrect and different worldview than what reality looks like, which means that a multiple of information channels with different sources are necessary to get a broader idea of what the African society actually looks like. Therefore, the purpose of this bachelor thesis is to find out how students at Linnaeus University picture, especially about the African continent depending on media habits, meets the reality. Since previous research have been on how the Swedish population in general perceive Africa, a research including the most information privileged part of the population could be a great extension to reveal if education and information access matter or not. Further, a discussion of what possible outcome a closure of the digital divide could mean in relation to what has been found in our survey will be presented.

#### **4.1 Research question**

What picture does Swedish students at Linnaeus University have of the continent Africa?

Where do they find information about the world? And is the perceived picture equivalent to what statistics of the African development actually show?

## 5. Previous research

This chapter will present previous research made by Sida regarding the picturing of Africa throughout various channels of information as well as earlier researches in the area of Interpersonal communication followed by Information and communication technology (ICT).

Africa is the least privileged continent by the digital revolution, where only 1 in 5 use the Internet compared to more than 4 out of 5 in developed countries (ITU, 2015). However, the limited access to Internet is not the only inequality and limitation countries in Africa face, how they are presented in the Swedish society throughout different channels is not always supporting the continent with benefits.

### *5.1 Sida and the picture of Africa*

Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) claims to be responsible for distributing knowledge of development. They are a government agency that works on behalf of the Swedish Parliament and Government to reduce poverty in the world. They are involved in advocacy work for Sweden's priority issues in the development field, and hold a dialogue with other countries and international organizations. With this responsibility follows not only what have just been mentioned, but also, the reporting to the Swedish society of statistics and disseminating information about the progress made within the undeveloped regions. (Sida, 2016)

A qualitative study that Sida made in collaboration with TNS/Sifo of how African countries are portrayed in the Swedish media, school books and fundraising campaigns, will be presented in following short terms, together with another survey made by Sida in collaboration with Retriver which presents the picture of Africa throughout a media analysis.

The result shows that people's view of reality is changing slowly and Sida believes it is due to people's perceptions, beliefs and impressions. When something is not related to people's immediate living it tends to become non obtrusive. Due to this, the image of the outside world may become outdated and based on the circumstances and facts that was reality several decades ago. (Sida, 2013)

Combining these researches by Sida, different patterns could be seen and argued to contribute to the living oldfangled picture of Africa in various ways.

### *5.1.1 Findings of Sida researches*

Africa is often presented in relation to crisis and conflicts, both in pictures and text, whereas news about economic- and social development is more unusual. This becomes clear in schoolbooks, when it comes to political institutions, the global economy, trade and exchange, the media and the Internet's importance, picture and text is dominated by the European and North American illustrations and examples. When it instead comes to poverty, aid, civil wars, refugees, the division of the world into North and South, Africa is used for explanations and illustrations. Regarding the campaigns it was found that they in a high grade also focused on perspectives on conflicts and crises, such as HIV, malnutrition, malaria or the civilian population's vulnerability in conflict zones. (Sida, 2013)

Another factor that was seen through all the channels was that Africa is often prominent as a young continent. Pictures of children, adolescents and young adults predominates, elderly people are not given equal space. In the campaigns and reportages children and young people talk about their lives, what problems they face, what dreams they have, and in many cases how the collections helped them overcome obstacles, such as a disability or how their families could not afford to let their children go to school. In the same way that children and young people is a recurring motif, the rural environment is yet another one. Agriculture and animal husbandry are the sectors that dominate in picture and text and if there is a perception that Africa has not undergone industrialization or urbanization it is strengthened by the collection of campaigns. The perception is also strengthened by the schoolbooks where the pictures are more often of Africa's villages, farms and nature, rather than cities, industry and trade. As the pattern showed more often the urban than the rural perspective is in focus. Also worth to mention is that Africa was more often described from a Swedish perspective. It is not strange that the picture depicted was on the basis of initiative or commitment of example, Swedish companies in Africa. (Sida, 2013)(Sida, 2014)

In the latest research done by Retriever it shows that only 48 percent of the Swedish citizens believe in progresses made in developing countries, and this can be in cause of the picture that is given of the continent. Even if there exists reportages of the economic growth and social development is increasing the oldfangled picture dominates. (Sida, 2014)

In a survey made by the World Bank it appears that half of the African continent now can be classified as countries with a middle-income status. Further, the extreme poverty has decreased from 56 percent to 48 percent since 1990. (World Bank, 2016) Many other examples like this can be presented, but as we should not forget many regions and people of Africa is still in poverty so the picture people do have is not wrong, but is better described as narrow and unambiguous.

### *5.2 Two-way and interpersonal communication on the Internet*

Internet is a kind of communication channel that provides the users with the possibilities to interact, search for information and share information in the global arena. Internet is one possible way to interact with people in a two-way communication manner. The benefits for users are many but one of the most important benefits is that of social interaction. Internet does not only enable an increased level of communication with friends and family but the possibility to find new contacts and relations. Bikson and Paris claims that affiliation is an important part among internet users since it enable people to not only search for information and using internet as mass media but as a possibility to find others with similar interests and be able to discuss and talk about these with someone else. (Mason & Hacker, 2003)

Celalettin Aktas wrote an article 2005, discussing the technology and its possibilities to interact with others around the globe only by connecting to the Internet. In this article he talks about how the increasing number of internet users on various social media is getting to know each other both on a personal level but also get to interact with each other to exchange knowledge and attend intellectual discourses. (Aktas, 2005)

Instead of looking at the impacts media and information channels can have, the focus is now put on the impacts that technology access have in global manners.

### *5.3 Information and Communication Technology*

One of the contributors to the globalization is the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Some actors in the discussion of ICT's role in the society claim that it is a 'key strategic' resource for economic and social development. It is said to be a tool for creating a more equitable place. Some choose to ignore this and argues that it is within an unequal society these technologies are created, and it is through an unequal society these technologies will be used. (Boeri, 2016)

To become an equal and unified world everyone should have the opportunity to participate at this technical platform but it has still despite the digital revolution not yet been reached. As mentioned earlier, Internet is today available for 40 percent of the world's population, which means that the major part do not have access and are still not a part of the so called information society. (World Bank, 2015)

The unequal Internet access is a fact, which means that access to information and free communication is not equal. The Sub Saharan African region is one of the most vulnerable areas when it comes to access information and all other facilities that Internet provides a big part of the world with. (Charbonneau, 2008)

Following chapter will present the section of theories, beginning with the digital divide that stand in close relation to what have just been discussed about the ICT.

## **6. Theories**

Theoretical frameworks are applied to this research as strengthening factors for our argumentations throughout the thesis. In this chapter the theories are presented and explained, as well as connected to our problematization. Why and how these theories are useful in this thesis is presented as well.

### *6.1 The Digital Divide*

A common framing of ICT and development as discussed above is the phenomenon 'digital divide', whereby the focus is on closing the gap between those who possess these new technologies and those who does not (OECD, 2000).

The concept of digital divide became a topic of great interest during the early 1990s as the Internet and personal computers grew in prevalence in the United States (NTIA, 1999). The initial conceptualization of the digital divide was centered on the gap between people who did or did not have access to this technology (NTIA, 1999). Further, the divide is not only within countries, but also a divide between countries and in the wide perspective a divide between developed and developing countries (World Bank, 2015).

The Digital Divide involves the gap between individuals (and societies) that have the resources to participate in the information era and those that do not. Despite rapid worldwide diffusion of the Internet, a disproportionate number of users are concentrated in more developed countries. Some regions in the world have no access to Internet and are because of that unable to participate as information takers or givers through Internet. (Chen & Wellman, 2008)

This theory is interesting for this research since the least privileged continent by the digital revolution is Africa, where only 1 in 5 use the Internet compared to more than 4 out of 5 in developed countries. (ITU, 2015)

What also have been argued is that the Digital Divide will not be closed just because individuals get access, a factor that also needs to be considered is the interest, culture and norms. Why should everyone feel the need of Internet? (Boeri, 2016) This question has also tried to be answered and one theory that believes it is just a matter of time is the diffusion of innovation.

### *6.2 Diffusion of Innovation theory*

In general, Diffusion of Innovation is seen as an important driver for social change and attempts to explain the process and factors through which innovations are spread (Windahl & Signitzer, 2012). For example, the Diffusion of an Innovation model follows an s-shaped curve, which means that for a successfully diffused innovation there tends to be a period of relatively slow take-up by a small proportion of the population (innovators and early adopters), which is followed by a period of relatively rapid adoption by the majority of members of a social system and then by a period of a gradual saturation of diffusion. (Yu, 2011)

*“Several communication theories, including Diffusion of Innovation [...] are applied to the issue of the Digital Divide in an attempt to provide researchers with a useful guide to understanding the implications of the gaps which are widely known to persist. Rather than endlessly debating the demographics of access and ownership, scholars should agree that some people are online and some are not, and concentrate future efforts on understanding the consequences of this difference.” (Mason & Hacker, 2003)*

Mason and Hacker means that some Digital Divide naysayers present this diffusion of innovation theory for eventual and perhaps inevitable closure of Digital Divide gaps. Comparing eventual widespread adoption of technologies such as television, radios and the telephone, they argue that the nature of the marketplace dynamics will eventually close the gap without interference from policy-makers.

This leads to the conclusion of the Digital Divide not really being a problem, rather, it is a natural progression of the market and will resolve itself given time. (Mason & Hacker, 2003)

### *6.3 Theory of Newsworthiness*

A phenomenon that has been studied for over 50 years is that of newsworthiness. The worthy of a happening is thought to be based on three important factors which include time, culture and space. Happenings and information that are close to “the own time, culture and space” are more likely to become news than happenings that are far away from that of daily life. The scholar in communication, Henk Prakke, has developed a somewhat general graphic model of the theory. Even though it was developed in the late 60s, the model is still considered useful. (Hadenius & Weibull, 2011)

The aim of this model is to be able to identify what kind of happenings and information that attracts and capture the public’s interest the most. (Hadenius & Weibull, 2011) Happenings that take place close geographically, with no such cultural distance and with as flashing news as possible have the highest form of newsworthy it is also these kinds of events that dominate media. This in turn may lead to a narrowing knowledge about happenings and events in other parts of the world. Which is possible contributor for the now oldfangled picture of Africa. This theory is therefore usual in our analysis of the result. (Hadenius & Weibull, 2011)

These three theories will be used to explain different assumptions and result from our survey. They will also be connected to each other and strenghten statements and analysis. For example, the way the digital divide is connected to Diffusion of Innovation theory and peoples different adaption time. Furhter, the theory of Newsworthiness together with the Digital Divide explains a potential narrowing of the perceived distance between different continents.

With background, previous research and theoretical frameworks presented, the method will be explained in following chapter.

## **7. Method**

This section presents the methodological approaches used in the implementation of this study to answer the research question and achieving the purpose of the thesis. Initially, a description is following of the choice of quantitative method, thesis population and selection. Following outlines the realization, as well as the methods validity and reliability. The final section ends with a critical discussion of the method and faced challenges.

In this thesis we have tried to relate to an academic depth by starting from earlier researches and problem. Since our topic is very complex to measure, we have added weight to collect the literature and theoretical framework to give us a better basis for our hypothesis to create a deeper understanding of the subject. Further, with help of earlier researches a survey was constructed to collect empirical data to finally be able to reach a conclusion about the problematization.

### *7.1 Choice of quantitative method*

In order to put through a research there is a wide amount of ways to collect the empirical material. Our vision was to see a clear pattern and in order to do that a large amount of data needed to be collected. So in choice of method for this research there were no significant uncertainties between the authors. The quantitative strategy in form of surveys was most relevant since empirical data was wanted from a larger sample to obtain data in numbers. Numbers in percent radiates objectivity and rationality at the same time as it gives a clear result (Ekström & Larsson, 2012). A qualitative research in form of interviews could have been used, but since we needed a wider amount of responders to get a reliable pattern, surveys were the preferable option. It gives straight answers and responders have no reasons to feel any uncertainties (Ekström & Larsson, 2012). Even though the method is predominant quantitative it has its qualitative inputs, as the survey did not only contain questions where the responders had to choose an already existing option. In other words, in addition to the quantitative part of the survey, questions with potential for text analysis were added. Qualitative method gives the

chances to obtain a deeper and more detailed result, which lies within the more easily analyzed data. (Ekström & Larsson, 2012)

## *7.2 Thesis population and selection*

When it comes to the selection group of this survey, this was more or less determined by the factors of earlier researches and geographical region.

Our theory is built upon Sida's earlier media analysis of the picture of Africa and the unseen development in media news, combined with the world development report 2016, named digital dividends, which is discussing the impacts of the Digital Divide in the global world.

Sida's research is presenting a result of the picture of Africa regarding the view of the overall Swedish society. Inspired by this research we chose to break down the method used to construct a research wide enough to be makeable within the time limit for a bachelor thesis. Additional to the picture of Africa we were interested in the impacts of Internet access. From reading the report newly out given by the World Bank it gave us an entrance to the connection between the digital divide and the oldfangled picture of Africa. As found out of earlier researches young people are the most active on Internet and social media platforms which created interesting connections between all four factors, the picture of Africa, Digital Divide, Interpersonal communication and University students.

### *7.2.1 A target group of Swedish students at Linnaeus University in Växjö*

Swedish university students were of our target interest because they could be determined as one of the most information privileged groups in the world. As student living in Sweden you have all possibilities to gather your information, you have access to Internet and you are hopefully updated with information by your lecturer, media and social connections. Most students today use the Internet daily and create new contacts over the Internet. With access to all these different kinds of information sources they have the chance to decide what to believe and not to believe in. These possibilities would reasonably give them a more updated worldview.

*“Knowledge Gap Hypothesis researchers argued that people with higher levels of education have better abilities to gain information, comprehend information, discuss topics with other people, and attend messages that may contradict stored attitudes.” (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien 1970)*

Our target group was formed out of limitations and certain criterions. The target group was Swedish students, but this number of targets were still to large-scale. Because of our location at the Linnaeus University in Växjö we chose to limit ourselves to this region. But also all the Linnaeus University students is a to large-scale target group. To once again limit ourselves and anyway reach out to as large group as possible our first plan was to target and visit classes and from there gather answers for our survey. In this way we would have the possibility to compare the differences between students from different programs. But as this was complicated and to time consuming since we had to get contact with a large amount of lectors and we just got responded by two, we instead chose to go for all students at the Linnaeus University in Växjö and let the targets be chosen randomly. This means that the target group is not strategically chosen more than that the target should be studying at Linnaeus University in Växjö. The survey have been given out in classes as well as to students all over the school, both in digital form using Google drive services and in physical paper form.

Even though a digital survey was used we still wanted to make sure it was only answered by students at Linnaeus University. Due to this fact we chose not to widen the target group and did not collect answers from other Universities in Sweden. If the survey was sent out as a public link, there would be a greater risk of unauthorized responders.

### *7.3 Realization*

The collection of empirical material consists of a survey. The choice was made because the method is simple and when done properly it will not be difficult to see a pattern and get a visual result.

What will be collected more concrete through the survey is what Internet and media habits, beliefs about the surrounding world and beliefs about Africa the Students at Linnaeus University in Växjö have. The survey is introduced with simpler questions such as gender and field of education. The survey continues with questions regarding

the Internet and media use as well as trust, followed by questions regarding the surrounding world, measuring how widespread the Internet availability is and questioning the knowledge level of war and development in the world. The survey ends with a section of true or false statements of Africa. In the analysis these different sections of questions can be used for deeper analysis for potential differences between the segments. The full survey is to be found in the Appendix A.

What knowledge is referred to in this thesis are not the right answers, but rather the general perceived picture. With the questions measuring knowledge or the perceived beliefs, the aim is to understand if the targets picture upon Africa is positive or negative in the sense that it is believed to be more or less developed than what the reality looks like due to statistics. Additionally, the aim is to find out if the targets have more negative thoughts about Africa than the rest of the world, for example that they have higher the west and lower the east.

Regarding the structure of the survey it is thought through well, the order of questions is placed in a way that should create as little pre-understandings about future questions as possible to get as true and exact answers of the respondents. As the survey contains three different chapters (Media habits, world knowledge and Africa knowledge) it was important that the survey kept this structure and were answered from the top. This was important for the measuring, and especially of the measuring on how many that had the knowledge of the Congo conflict. This question was then placed together with the section measuring the knowledge of the world because we did not want the respondents at this phase have any thoughts of Africa if it was not their own knowledge or belief. As Ekström and Larsson argue, questions should not be leading because it gives a misrepresenting result, therefore the questions were in the largest extent designed not to be leading.

The respondents were in the first part of the survey, focusing on media habits, able to choose two alternatives in the survey, which later on was encoded as separate answers that resulted in doubled frequency. The option to choose more than one alternative was given in hopes of not just getting the most common media as answers, but a more personal one as alternative number two. In this way we would obtain more material from our survey questions.

The data collected is analyzed with the earlier researches and theories strengthening the thesis. To get visual and clear result out of the surveys the data were processed using SPSS. After all the data were collected all responses were transformed into numbers to then be inserted into SPSS. This program is used to create charts and graphs which then are used to present the thesis result.

The collection of material in form of distribution of surveys happened during one week, between the 2nd to 6th of May 2016 where 286 respondents was reached. This period could have been longer, which probably would get us a more diverse group of targets and more respondents, but because of time limits we choose to close the survey for more answers. Starting to look at the result we could see clear patterns in many part, which also is a factor that can strengthening the fact that the collected answers was enough.

The loss of material was not that easy to count since we ended up randomly selecting our targets. More students than responders were targeted but the exact number of people who were given the possibility to respond is unknown. The loss of material that can be measured anyway is in the surveys received. In some surveys questions was not answered and some answers was markedly not seriously given and this answers have been encoded in the result as no answer.

#### *7.4 Validity and reliability*

The concept of validity involves the degree to which the surveys design provides relevant insights on the overall question. Reliability concerns if the processing are reliable. High validity and reliability are considered essential to enable the public conclusions of the analysis results. (*Østbye, 2004*)

To strengthen the thesis validity a large proportion of time before the collection of empirical material were given to earlier researches to see what could be relevant to study within the picture of Africa. Regarding the structure of the survey a pilot study was done, the survey was given out to 15 responders. The structure of the survey and questions were then worked through over again to make it as understandable and relevant as possible. To increase the reliability the responders' answers was encoded to SPSS to get it carefully gathered and processed. To be certain of measuring the right

information we tried to come up with the many possible outcomes that our survey could have and adjusted the question to be contributing and strengthening to each other.

### *7.5 Ethics*

There are four basic ethical principles in social science research, which these researcher must fulfill to meet the individual protection, the requirements are in terms of respondents' privacy and autonomy in research. The first principle is the information requirement, which means that the researcher must always inform respondents about the research objectives and what it means to participate. Furthermore, the respondents were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation at any time. The second principle is that the consent requirement means that the respondents themselves decide about their participation and that the researcher is responsible to inform them in writing and obtain consent. The third principle is the confidentiality which means that all respondents will be kept confidential and all materials must be stored safely. The fourth principle is useful requirement which means that materials of individuals may only be used for research purposes. (HSFR, 2010)

### *7.6 Critical discussion*

Summarize the critics, one can say that the main problem for us is that we are trying to measure and categorize something human, which is hard to do fairly (Mats Alvesson, 2011). Another factor that also needs our argumentation is our choice of method using surveys. As Ekström and Larsson advises, it is not preferable to measure knowledge with surveys because it gives the responders possibilities to find out the answers, by for example using Google or ask someone else for the right answer. It also gives the possibility to guess, which can show miss presenting numbers in the result. (Ekström & Larsson, 2012)

Since our survey was divided in different sections and also because a guessing in the questions shows the perceived picture anyway, which is one of the aims of the survey, we chose to overlook these advises. Out of the result we are happy that we believed in our choice of structure and survey, what can be understood no one or at least not many have been using Google or any other source to find the right answer. But what instead can be criticized is the amount of responders in the questions which requires an individual answer that we could use for qualitative analysis. As we understand it some people are too lazy to think for themselves and instead they choose to leave out the

answer in certain questions. Another reason could be that people were afraid of giving the wrong answer. This gave us a lower frequency in some questions, but as our target group was rather large scale a pattern could easily be seen anyway.

Required to mention is that we do not believe that our results can be generalized from the situation and study object in question. This is because our study is so specific in its design and target audience. We asked only student at the Linnaeus University in Växjö and have just targeted a minority of the students studying at the university. New studies must be performed to see if anything more generalizable come out of the study and if so, is this more of a potential indication for future studies so far.

In the following chapter the result will be presented, where table charts and analytical thoughts combines the result with the theoretical framework and earlier researches.

## **8. Result and analysis**

This part of the thesis will present the result of the survey and clarify the findings with table charts. The aim was to obtain insight in the student's knowledge, worldview and media habits, with the hopes of finding a pattern connected to what kind of medium that the responders use and other factors in life that could contribute to a certain worldview. The analysis will be presented in line with the result of each sub-chapter which contributes to a more structured presentation of each table chart and section, and so, a better understanding of the actual result and findings. The survey questions will be presented as single frequency tables but also in relation to each other. People's relation to media and Internet has been researched several times before and the general result of this survey seems to match earlier studies.

### *8.1 Respondents*

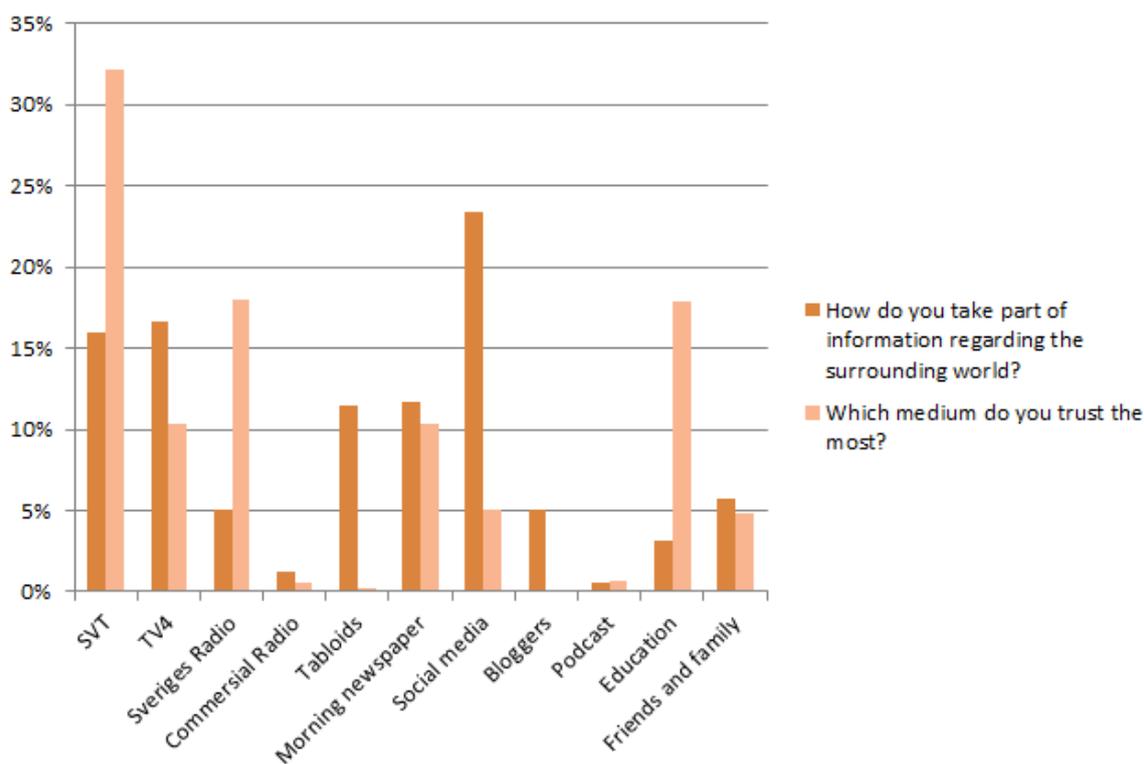
The total number of responders for the survey resulted in 286 individuals. Of the responders 125 (43,7 percent) were men and 161 (56,3 percent) were women. Since the gender perspective was not in our focus, this question is more used to explain the somewhat equal division of men and woman in the target group. The aim was to reveal the students general picture and knowledge about the surrounding world with the focus on Africa.

Another question that was aimed to create possibilities to compare to additional questions was the question of *what program of education you belong to?* But as it showed to be unequal divided between participants from different programs the material could not be used in that manner. However, the major group of targets belongs to economists 35,5 percent (101 individuals), followed by student from library and information science, as well as peace and development students. Additional to these there was minorities of a number of different programs at the Linnaeus University contributing as responders.

### 8.2 Trust does not equal with the chosen media

A combination between the most trusted media and the most used information source showed to differ significantly. The combination was done to understand the value of what is said to be trustworthy information and what people actually takes part of.

Table 1. Medium trust and information source.



As the table chart above shows, SVT is the pile that gains the most trust with 32,2 percent (170 individuals), followed by Sveriges Radio with 18 percent (95 individuals). This can be explained by the fact that they are so called public service channels and

carry the responsibility to inform the Swedish society with objective and quality secured information.

Another distinguishing pile is the responds of education which measures 17,9 percent (94 individuals), which can be connected to the fact that the target of responders are university students who are all in close relation to this category in their daily life. The students did also choose to take on an education by themselves, which may be one of the reasons for the high pile of trust.

As mentioned earlier, the result from Sida's survey regarding schoolbooks showed that Africa were presented in a way that does not favor their already existing position. In other words, schoolbooks contribute to the twisted picture of Africa. Although, since the research generally regarded the younger years in school, the books used at the university may have another perspective showing a more diverse and updated truth of the world. However, this can be criticized due to the facts revealed about Africa by Maria Eriksson Baaz (2015), who argues that African scholars and writers does not have the same chance to share their perspective. Widely speaking this means that even if university schoolbooks do mediate a more diverse picture they are usually written and published by western authors which means we are still stuck in the Western perspective. Worth to have in mind though, is that education is not just obtained from schoolbooks, trust can also be given to professors and teachers.

The same table discussed above also shows how the different responders take part of information regarding the world. One factor that becomes interesting here is that even though the highest trust was gained by SVT, this media platform is not the major source of their actual information obtained. Instead the information is mostly received from various social media platforms, which in the pile of trust only received a number of 5 percent (26 individuals). This means that people know their information sources are not always the most trustworthy once but they still keep on using it as their primary source.

When this result is combined with the question of *what role you take on using social media* it appears that 54 percent (241 individuals) see themselves as spectators as they read, listen and watch others at the platform, which means that the individuals that contributes as creators, 6,7 percent (30 individuals) are given large space where they

can spread their words and statements. Even if this 6,7 percent do not stand for a major number in this group it becomes a large group if it is compared to the total number of people within the society. In other words, spectators are distributed with information and opinions from many different minds which gives you the possibility to take part of diverse pictures of how the world is understood. In this group of creators who distribute their own content at different platforms, private persons as well as media is found. In other words, even if people spend more time on social media they can still be reached by journalists, professional opinions such as politicians and ordinary people, just to mention a few.

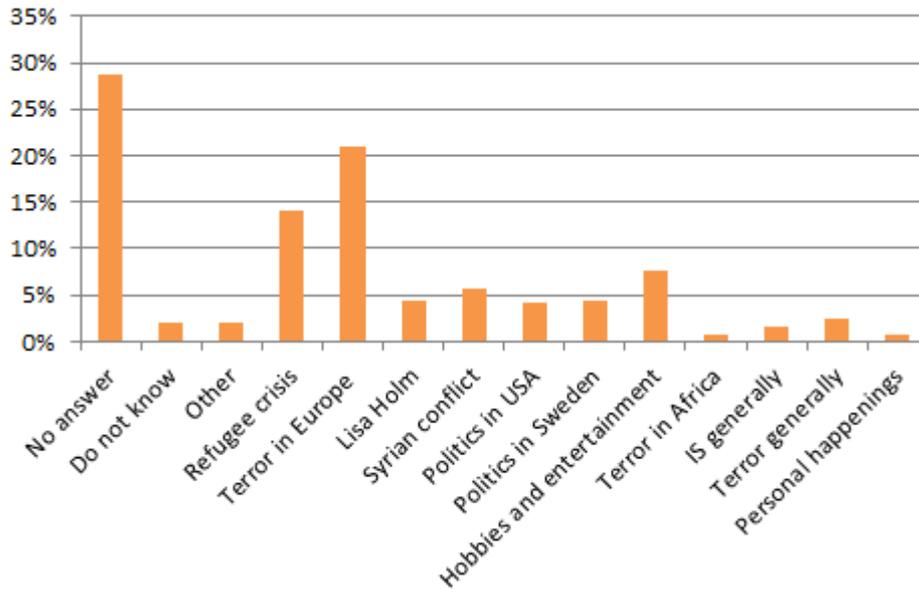
To connect to the theoretical framework of Digital Divide it can be analyzed that the platform that is discussed here as a possible information distributor both as sender and receiver is not equal accessible. As said it provides diverse understandings of the world since the creators are from different positions in the society, but what is still missing is a fair number of local groups in regions such as Sub-Saharan that still do not access Internet in many households (Charbonneau, 2008).

### 8.3 Affecting news

The respondents were asked which of the past years news happenings that did affect them the most and were then free to write whatever news happening that hit their mind. The answers were divided into subcategories to get a better general overview. Some exceptional happenings like the case of the young girl *Lisa Holm* was so specific in the answers that it got its own category while *Terror in Europe* ranges a little wider and includes answers where the respondent have answered, for example, the attack in Paris, the attack in Brussels or sometimes both.

As can be seen in the table chart below, the *Terror in Europe* was the news happening that did affect the Swedish students the most during the past year, as did the *Refugee crisis*. The *refugee crisis* and the *Syrian conflict* were divided into different categories since a separation between news affecting Europe and news outside of Europe (in this case the Syrian conflict) was an important divide in the findings of this survey. As the model of Newsworthiness suggest, we are more interested in happenings close to our own periphery, which in turn makes media, to a big extent, write about closer happenings, which can also explain the focus on Europe in this table chart.

Table 2. Affecting news happenings.



The numbers shown are the percentage of the total response.

The two major columns with an actual answer, *Terror in Europe* and the *Refugee crisis*, can thus be connected to each other since they both refer to news that affects Europe and together their percentage dominates the whole chart.

The number is not at all as high in the column *Syrian conflict* even though it can be very well connected with the *Refugee crisis*. This is yet another result that shows how Europe is being a priority among the students and can once again be explained with the theory of Newsworthiness. The Syrian conflict did not affect us to the same extent until it spread to Europe, it is closer culturally and geographically and it is happening now. The fact that it is happening now is the only category in the model of Newsworthiness that explains the, even if it is low, number of responders in the *Syrian conflict* category. Another example is the category *Terror generally* which does not at all measure as high as the category *Terror in Europe* even though multiple terror deeds have taken place outside of Europe's borders and around the world the recent year.

On the other hand there were a high number of responders that answered nothing which is a surprisingly high number from what was expected out of the survey. Almost 1 out of 3 was not affected by any news happening the past year. These could be because people do not interest enough in the news they read or that the ones that have answered had a closer connection to the happenings throughout the year, in other words a more

personal connection that affected them. Anyhow, to get a deeper understanding to this a psychological perspective is needed, which is why we are not going to go any further in this matter.

Digital divide can be related to the fact that the targets are most active at Social media platforms, which means a big part of the information is written by private persons. When news is available at social media platforms and when people see their friends get active and care for statements and happenings it may be an affecting factor. For example, if you read that there have been accidents you are probably more easily affected if you hear it from someone in your social network. The function of sharing information on the Internet makes news travel even faster than before and makes it easier for you to care about certain happenings, such as personal happenings. Which makes this gap bring inequality since some groups are not able to participate and show their care and affect people in their surroundings.

#### *8.4 A hidden conflict*

*The deadliest conflict the world has experienced in over fifty years, a conflict involving troops from nine countries, spanning a battlefield as big as Western Europe and that has resulted in more than five million deaths, which the world has hardly taken any notice of. (Hawkins, 2008)*

One of the questions in the survey aimed to find out if people were aware of the Congo conflict, which is said to be the deadliest conflict in over 50 years, with the hypothesis that very few or maybe no one would be able to answer that question since it belongs to the category of African news. The hypothesis were also built upon arguments by Maria Eriksson Baaz (2015), as we have presented in the background, who argued that modern African conflicts are not given the same space in media, since it is not practiced with weapons that are usually associated with the mediates picture of the continent, such as machetes. This exorbitant categorizing could also contribute to a nonexistent awareness of the conflict.

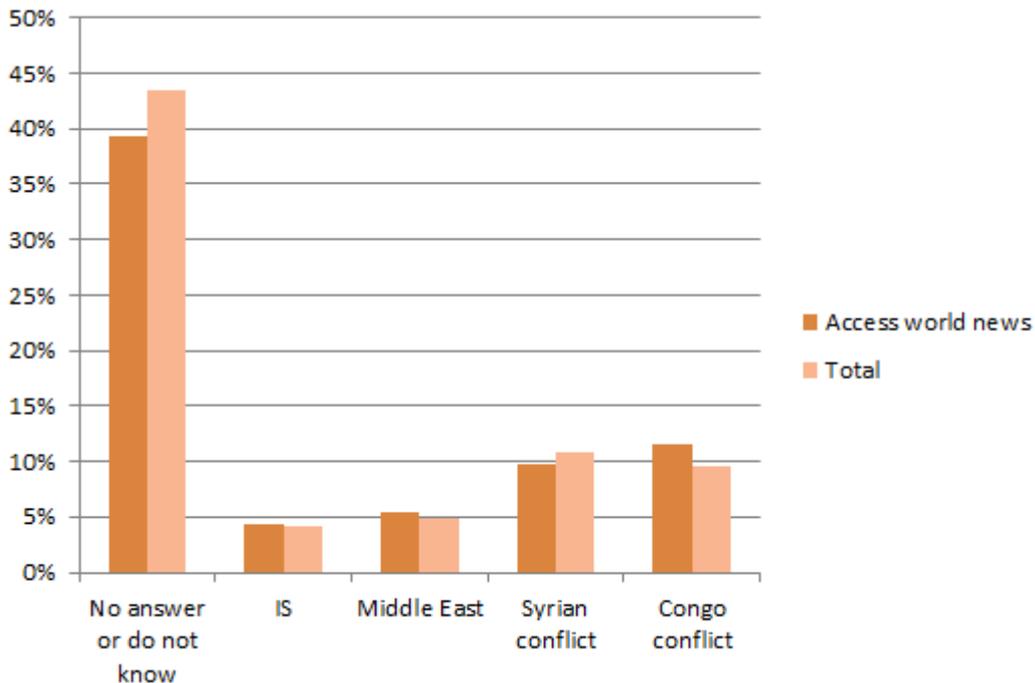
*“Highly educated people are more likely to have paid attention to news topics in past coverage and therefore have an easier time processing current news.” (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien 1970)*

This line describes a reverse believe, that our responders should have knowledge of the conflict, since they belong to a high educational level which should increases their possibilities to pay attention to news and collect more knowledge.

The result from the survey shows that out of 286 participating students, only 9,5 percent (27 individuals) knew the right answer, which means 9 out of 10 were unaware of the conflict.

Below is a table chart of the most common conflict answers among the responders who claim their major news interest lies within World news, together with the most common answer independent of geographical news interest.

Table 3. Geographical news interest and deadliest conflict in 50 years.



*The table chart shows the total number of responders who takes part in World news in relation to the most common answers in the question of the world's deadliest conflict in over 50 years depending or independent of geographical news interests.*

The responders did have the option to choose a specific continent of the world in the question of what news (geographically speaking) that interested them the most. But even though 63,9 percent (183 individuals) of the responders claims to be interested in world news, only 11,5 percent (21 individuals) out of these knew the conflict in Congo described in the survey, which means 88,5 percent (162 individuals) of the responders that take part in world news are unaware, or at least unaware of the size, of the ongoing conflict in Congo, once again the deadliest in 50 years. Another question aimed to find out what kind of news (categorically speaking) the responders were interested in the most. The result shows how 38,8 percent (111 individuals) chose war and conflict as the most interesting, which is yet another example of how media provides us with distorted pictures.

Further, out of the total number of 286 responders, 43,3 percent (124 individuals) answer nothing or that they did not know the conflict described, which is a somewhat high number of no actual answer compared to most of the earlier questions in the survey. Out of these 124 individuals, 58 percent (72 individuals) says that their major news interest lies within World news.

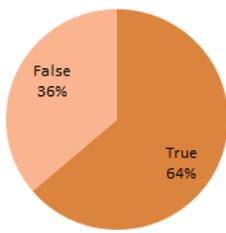
When comparing the answers of the conflict between those who have their major interest in World news and the overall answer they did not differ in any noticeable way. In other words, it does not seem to matter if a person chooses to take part and are interested in world news or not, the information about important African happenings is not fairly presented or highlighted anyway.

### *8.5 Myths and prejudices*

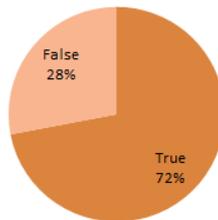
As mentioned above in the question of *what news interests you the most*, War and conflict gained the highest interest rate with 38,8 percent (111 individuals). International development on 30 percent (86 individuals) was another pile that gained a high interest rate. But as noted above, the knowledge of the Congo conflict was low even though the participants say conflicts is within their interest. It shows that a majority of the responders do not have an updated picture of the African society even though they take part in the news category that should be providing information about this matter.

According to this survey there are still some prejudices that do not meet the reality of Africa's general development. 72 percent (189 individuals) of the answering responders believes that the majority of the girls living in African countries are not attending school. 64 percent (176 individuals) believes that the average expectancy age in African countries is lower than 50 years and 62 percent (172 individuals) believes that the majority of the people living in Africa work with agriculture. All these numbers is proof of a twisted understanding about the continent, since these are false statements. Additional, this result can once again be connected to the survey made by Sida as their result showed that Swedes' view of, for example, child mortality and illiteracy are anachronistic and that the picture of development in Africa is overly negative (Sida, 2013).

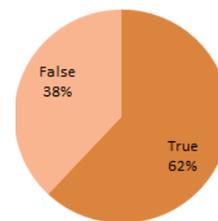
**The average expectancy age in African countries is lower than 50 years.**



**The majority of the girls living in African countries does not attend to school.**



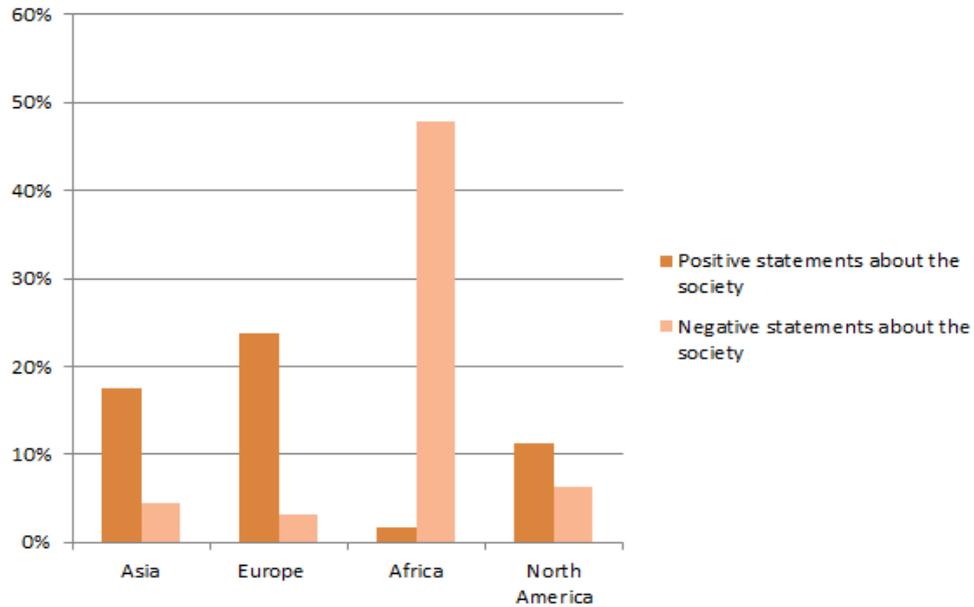
**80% of the people living in Africa works with agriculture.**



### 8.6 Continent associations

In one part of the survey the responders were told to share their associations of the different continents (Asia, Europe, Africa and North America). The results were striking in many categories but one of the most prominent parts was the positive or negative statements about the continents.

Table 4. Positive versus negative statements about the society.



*The total numbers in this table chart do not measure the total percentage since it is only presenting the result of above categories.*

The result shows a clear pattern of how Africa is repeatedly associated with various negative statements about the society. The most recurrent associations were poverty, undeveloped and starvation. A result not that unexpected since that is what is spread from news media. All other factors regarding Africa seem to be forgotten and hidden behind all these notions we see daily in, for example, our newspapers. People seem to forget or ignore the development, culture and happenings in Africa.

What make the associations of Africa even more prominent are the corresponding associations with other continents. The most common association with North America belonged to the category named “Something that strongly symbolizes the continent”. Associations in this category includes for example, elite countries, in this case usually USA, big cities, famous landmarks or perceived attitudes amongst the population and stands for 26,9 percent (77 individuals) of the responders total associations with the North American continent.

When it comes to the most common association with Europe, the category “Positive statements about the society” got the highest frequency with 23,8 percent (68 individuals), not far behind was the category “Something that strongly symbolizes the

continent” where statements including EU or elite countries like France were mentioned.

Further, the most commonly association with Asia was the category “Food and culture” once again together with “Something that strongly symbolizes the continent” which stood for 23,8 percent each (68 individuals) of the responders total associations. Also worth to mention is the response of the category of “Positive statements about the society” where the most common words used were technology and development, a development clearly noticed.

When it comes to the frequency in the category “Something that strongly symbolizes the continent” of the African continent it is not at all as high and stands for only 2,1 percent (6 individuals) of the responders total associations.

To summarize the associations, the result shows how Africa got the most united association among the responders, with almost twice as much frequency on the most common association of the continent. Wherever the information comes from it has succeeded in the establishing amongst people, even more successful than information about any of the other associations in the three other continents. The other continents have, due to our survey, a more nuanced picture among the student, which indicates on a more nuanced reporting from media. A more deeply rooted picture of Africa seems to exist compared to the picture of other continents.

### *8.7 Growing economies*

*China is the fastest growing economy in the world, but which are believed to be the other two countries following today?*

Out of 286 individuals, 141 (49,3%) answered India as the fastest growing country after China which is true. But only 4 responders gave the other right answer, Ethiopia. Other answers with a largely higher frequency was USA, Russia, Japan and Brazil, but not even one of them can be found in the top 10 list, since it is mostly dominated by African countries (The economist, 2011). The response can be discussed in many ways, but since the focus in this thesis lies within the distorted reporting of African countries in news media, the discussion will lean towards the question of why much of the positive information about the African continent is hidden and not talked about. This result too,

can be connected to the model of Newsworthiness, since Ethiopian economics, or the economy in any African country, is not something that directly connects to the daily life of people living in the Western society or any of the three factors in the model of Newsworthiness.

As the earlier presented questions of association shows, Asia was often associated with development which in their case included technological advancement and achievements, which can be an explanation of the high frequency of responders answering India. An interesting result, as it simultaneously is the most densely populated country in the world and described as a divided country with a widely ranging difference between what is determined rich and poor (Globalis, 2016). But even though India suffers from poverty in many regions, their development is at least noted.

As have been discussed in the background on the basis of the studies published by Sida, countries in Africa are usually present in media because of crises and as victims of poverty. Although, Ethiopia is believed to be one of the fastest growing economies in the world today (The economist, 2011), it seems to be forgotten about. This can be explained by the fact that media do not report about economics and social development from developing countries in the same extent as they do about crises, poverty and starvation. (Sida, 2014)

What differs India and Ethiopia in this matter could be explained by the earlier result of our survey where Africa compared to Asia had a much deeper rooted picture among the responders, which could lie within the reporting of the different continents and the fact that Africa is presented in the same way and angle almost every time. The fact that this view have existed in people's life during such a long time and been repeated through school books, media and social constructions, it is not a coincident that the picture of Africa remains the same.

### 8.8 Summary

Once again it is confirmed that the picture of Africa is oldfangled, it seems like it does not matter what information sources that are used or what interests that is within the priority.

In the opening questions regarding media habits the general pattern showed to be trust to SVT event though most activity were given to social media, which means that the students chose to use a medium that they for themselves think are not as trustworthy. With this in mind the result continued and lead in to what media news that were the most affecting between the respondents. Regarding the theoretical framework, Newsworthiness, the result showed to be just as the theory says, time, culture and space are important factors in what becomes valued news. The most effecting happening was Terror in Europe which together with the Refugee crisis created a highly dominating category.

Thereafter, the focus got more centered to the knowledge and picture of Africa. As believed the knowledge of the “hidden” Conflict in Congo, which is the deadliest conflict the world has experienced in over fifty years, was weak, even though the interest of conflicts, international news and international development were all within the top piles in the tables. This strengthening the assumption, that updated information of Africa is not available or at least not affecting people even if they are interested. Moreover, the following statements structured in false and true questions about Africa, such as the majority of the girls in Africa do not attend in school, was overly negative and wrong. In other words the result showed that the general understanding of Africa is inaccurate and the development and progress by Africa is not believed in. This assumption is also strengthened by the question regarding the world’s fastest growing economy, were the most responders had the right answer of India but fell on their knowledge of the second right answer Ethiopia. Why the responders fell on their knowledge of Ethiopian as one of the fastest growing economies could be because there has been less news regarding the growing economy situation in Africa, which is not associated to development and economy in the same manner as for example Asia. This was one of the results that the associations combined with the different continents showed. Out of these questions a clear pattern over the picture of Africa visualized. Distinguishing Africa showed to be dominating the category *negative statement about*

*the society*. The word that was most associated with Africa was poverty, followed by starvation and undeveloped.

With this result summarized it is understood that Africa has not just challenges within the continent, it also needs to influence people to believe in their progress which is something media seems to forget or ignore. However, what can be seen is that our beliefs that university students should have better knowledge of the world's happenings is false and our result is in many ways parallel with the results earlier showed by Sida.

Following is the thesis conclusion presented, with a deeper discussion of impacts and possible solutions for the remaining "problem".

## **9. Conclusion**

In this conclusion and final discussion the result will be summarized and the most important findings will be presented, highlighted and discussed from different point of views to close the loop.

As have been lightly discussed in previous chapters, the Digital Divide does not only create problems for those who cannot participate but also for the ones who actually do participate due to the fact that there is such a big part excluded from the Internet. According to the survey made for this thesis a lot of people claim their interest lies within world news but even though they are interested and choose to take part of these kind of news it seems to be a lack of news reported from the African continent, since the general view can be classified as oldfangled.

Further, beliefs about the African continent according to this study do not seem to be depending on what grade of educational level a person holds. This argues against Mason and Hacker in their discussion about educational level and the ability to perceive and process new information. The knowledge and general picture looks the same as the overall beliefs of the Swedish population and the students at Linnaeus University are not an exception.

As mentioned before, media is not the only information source that provides us with a distorted picture. Schoolbooks provide the receiver with a westerner's perspective which is not an updated and fair description of the continent. This in turn shows how students

with access to all kind of sources risk obtaining the same perspective over and over again in schoolbooks as well as from media, even though it is received from different sources.

So where are we going to get information and news about Africa when it fails even though we are trying to find it? One possible outcome of a closure of the Digital Divide could be the fact that a lot more people would be able to participate at this platform which would make the diversity increase heavily especially from parts of the world where today's Internet access is limited with one of them being the continent of Africa. Not only professionals such as journalists, politicians and various opinion leaders, but also individuals, with individual thoughts and opinions would have a larger arena to spread their information. Going a little deeper in the discussion of politics in this case, there has also been found in previous researches that Internet is an important platform in the manner of democracy, which means that Internet will not just bring possibilities to share information but also increases the possibilities to participate in debates. This could make it easier for Africans to show that they have the strength and knowledge by themselves to reach progress, and that it do not have to be forwarded by Westerners. This is an important bullet due to the Communication Manager at Sida, who argues that this kind of “western overrun” is a negative contributor when it comes to the general view of Africa.

The interpersonal communication between continents and different parts of the world would also gain a much wider reach due to this arena and more personal insights and information could be exchanged in addition to, for example, increased journalism.

The world has already seen the innovation journey of a number of other successful technologies. As Mason and Hacker suggest, the world has taking on the technology of television, radio and telecommunication, why would Internet be an exception? The diffusion of innovation theory claims that it takes time for a new innovation to reach the entire public. One obstacle could be that even if the innovation is available, it does not equal with knowledge in using the, in this case, new technology.

Sida appoints them of being responsible for distributing knowledge of development to the Swedish society. All though, the general knowledge and view seem to match the

picture that media visualizes to a much larger extent. Media's way of presenting and spreading information is of a more imprinted kind of way which makes us receive their view over and over again. As was discussed in the section, the power of media, journalists use the same framework frequently to be sure to inform the audience in an understandable way. With this in mind it does not seem that unexpected that the picture of Africa is not changing. Since a long time back Africa have been seen as inferior to the western world and if journalist continues to keep playing their card as they have been doing now, not trying to change the picture it may stay the same for decades.

Another outstanding result found that also can strengthen what was just said is that of associations with the different continents where the associations of the African countries are extremely strong compared to other continents associations. The result shows upon a deeper rooted and less nuanced picture of the African continent. This means that it will require focus on mediating the picture if change is going to happen in the view of the Swedish society.

Finally, the picture of Africa among the students at Linnaeus University is not wrong but somewhat narrow and structured from a tiny piece coming out of a much bigger picture. Our contribution to the field of media and communication studies is in other words, to increase the knowledge of the lacking diversity in information reported from Western media about Africa.

### *9.1 Further research*

In further researches regarding the picture of Africa it would be interesting to obtain the problem from another angle. Since we were not able to find any connection between interest and knowledge an sociological/psychological angle explaining more in detail why people do not get knowledge event if they have all possibilities may be needed. As have been broadly discussed the problem may be because you have already as a kid been given a picture of the world, and this picture is hard to change. However to take this further and deeper a behavioral discussion would be needed.

Another further research, within the area of media and communication studies, could be a developed and extended version of this thesis, but carried out in 10-20 years from now. In this way, the author would be able to see if any significant our outstanding differences would appear along with the fact that Internet access increases and the

Digital Divide decreases. New kind of media platforms may also be developed and several new ways of exchanging communication could be available.

Finally, further research could be done within the educational sector. Since media is not to be blamed alone for the distorted picture of the Western world a study could be made on how schools are teaching about the contributing topics for the now existing picture of the African continent. Topics such as the African history before colonization and African development both national and on a global level are areas which could be questioned and studied from an educational point of view.

Next section, the final chapter will present critics, taking up precluded material and learning's out of this completed thesis.

## **10. Critics**

To be able to critic your own work is important, and as often is said no one is perfect and neither is a thesis. Following, we are presenting optional flaws in the thesis ending with experiences and lessons learned we bring with us for the future.

### *10.1 Methodological critics*

With the method done, all answers from the survey collected and encoded into SPSS our result took form. As we are happy to say the most material and result was useful and tables could be connected to each other to create interesting analytical discussions. But as usual there are some questions that did not give us any material to work further on. These are the questions regarding the travel habits and the questions referred to how widespread Internet is in different part of the world. The reason this material was excluded from our presentation of the result is because it did not show any useful and trustworthy outcome. The questions regarding the widespread of Internet was aimed to measure if the general understanding was lower or higher than what it actually is, but as the responders could give answers between 1-100 percent it resulted in too diverse answers, were some wrote 4 percent and other wrote 95 percent. In other words no general pattern could be seen and we chose not to present the result.

Finally, thoughts about our own work and accomplishments are presented in the thesis last section below.

### *10.2 Self-critics*

What has been our major challenge was to explain our hypothesis in words, and not just in words but in a way that is understandable and not misinterpreted by the reader. This is seen as a lesson learned and will be used for future challenges. If we were able to do this all over again we probably would have tried to contact Sida for a further qualitative interview to get yet another point of view.

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## Appendices

In appendix you find the survey used to collect our material.

### Appendix A; Survey

# Reality check

Kön:

- Man
- Kvinna

Vilket program går du?

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## Del I

*I det här avsnittet är vi intresserade av att veta vad du har för medievanor.*

Vilka av nedanstående har du högst förtroende för? (Välj de 2 du har starkast tillit till)

- SVT
- TV4
- Sveriges Radio (P1, P2, P3, P4 etc.)
- Kommersiell Radio (Rix FM, Mix Megapol etc.)
- Kvällstidningar (Aftonbladet, Expressen, Kvällsposten etc.)
- Morgontidningar (Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Sydsvenska Dagbladet, Smålandsposten, Göteborgs Posten etc.)
- Mina nätverk på sociala medier (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flashback etc)
- Bloggare
- Podcast
- Utbildning
- Mitt umgänge

Vad använder du internet till? (Välj de 2 främsta användningsområdena)

- Socialt (Sociala medier, chatter etc.)
- Nyheter
- Att hitta information i vardagen (Recept, busstider etc.)
- Att hitta information i kunskapssyfte.
- Nöje (Spel, film, musik etc.)
- Shopping
- Annat

Hur tar du del av information om omvärlden? (Välj dina 2 främsta informationskällor)

- SVT
- TV4
- Sveriges Radio (P1, P2, P3, P4 etc.)
- Kommersiell radio (Rix FM, Mix Megapol etc.)
- Kvällstidningar (Aftonbladet, Expressen, Kvällsposten etc.)
- Morgontidningar (Ex: Dagens Nyheter, Smålandsposten, Göteborgs Posten etc.)
- Sociala medier. (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flashback etc.)
- Bloggar
- Podcast
- Utbildning
- Mitt umgänge
- Annat: \_\_\_\_\_

Hur många gånger i veckan tar du sammantaget del av den typ av medier som du kryssat i ovan?

- Flera gånger om dagen.
- En gång om dagen.
- Några gånger i veckan.
- En gång i veckan.
- Någon gång i månaden.
- Mer sällan.

Vad intresserar dig mest? (Välj de 2 du är mest intresserad av)

- Nyheter som rör min stad/by.
- Nyheter som rör Sverige i stort.
- Nyheter som rör Europa.
- Nyheter som rör Asien.
- Nyheter som rör Afrika.
- Nyheter som rör Nordamerika.
- Nyheter som rör Världen.

Vilken nyhet det senaste året har berört dig mest, varför?

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Vilken typ av nyhet intresserar dig mest? (Välj de 2 du är mest intresserad av)

- Brottn
- Sport
- Kultur
- Krig och konflikt
- Samhällsutveckling nationellt
- Samhällsutveckling internationellt
- Nöje
- Ekonomi
- Annat: \_\_\_\_\_

Vad anser du dig ha för roll på sociala medier? (Välj dina 2 främsta roller)

- Kreatör (Skapar, publicerar och sprider eget innehåll)
- Konversatör (Uppdatera ofta status)
- Kritiker (Recenserar, kommenterar, debatterar)
- Samlare (Samlar, organiserar och arkiverar innehåll)
- Deltagare (Konversationsdeltagare och nätverkare)
- Åskådare (Läser, lyssnar och betraktar andra)
- Interaktiva (Gör inget av tidigare nämnt)

## Del II

*I det här avsnittet är vi intresserade av dina omvärldskunskaper.*

Hur ofta reser du utomlands? (De nordiska länderna räknas ej)

- Flera gånger per år.
- En gång om året.
- En gång vartannat år.
- Mer sällan.
- Reser aldrig.

Kryssa i de olika anledningarna till att du rest utomlands. (Kryssa i alla de anledningar till att du har befunnit dig utomlands)

- Kortare semester. (Charter, weekend ect)
- Längre nöjesresa. (Backpacking, Tågluff etc)
- Utbildning, skola. (Fältstudier, utbytesstudier etc)
- Arbete.
- Besöka vänner och släkt.
- Tillsammans med förening eller organisation (Fotbollscuper, läger etc)

Vilka världsdelar har du besökt?

- Europa
- Asien
- Nordamerika
- Afrika
- Sydamerika
- Oceanien

Hur stor andel av Världens befolkning tror du har tillgång till internet?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Hur stor andel av befolkningen i Europa tror du har tillgång till internet i hemmet?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Hur stor andel av befolkningen i Afrika tror du har tillgång till internet i hemmet?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Hur stor andel av befolkningen i Asien tror du har tillgång till internet i hemmet?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Hur stor andel av befolkningen i Nordamerika tror du har tillgång till internet i hemmet?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Vad tänker du på när du hör Asien?

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Vad tänker du på när du hör Europa?

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Vad tänker du på när du hör Afrika?

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Vad tänker du på när du hör Nordamerika?

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"Den dödligaste konflikt som världen har upplevt på mer än femtio år, en konflikt som involverar trupper från nio länder, som spänner över ett slagfält lika stort som Västeuropa och som har resulterat i mer än fem miljoner döda har omvärlden knappt tagit någon notis om."

Vilken konflikt pratar man om här? \_\_\_\_\_

Kina är sagd vara den snabbast växande ekonomin i världen, men vilka två länder hamnar strax där under? (Inbördes ordning krävs ej)

\_\_\_\_\_ och \_\_\_\_\_

Hur stor andel av jordens befolkning tror du har tillgång till rent vatten?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Hur stor andel av jordens befolkning tror du kan läsa och skriva?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

### Del III

*I det här avsnittet är vi intresserade av hur dina kunskaper om Afrika som kontinent ser ut.*

Världens största slumområde ligger i Afrika.

- Sant
- Falskt

3 av 4 afrikaner lever på mindre än 2 dollar per dag.

- Sant
- Falskt

De flesta flickor i Afrika får inte gå i skolan.

- Sant
- Falskt

Afrika står för majoriteten av världens diamantutvinning.

- Sant
- Falskt

Majoriteten av länderna i Afrika har en medellivslängd på under 50 år.

- Sant
- Falskt

80 % av Afrikas befolkning arbetar inom jordbruk.

- Sant
- Falskt

Tack för att du deltog, finns det något du vill tillägga?

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