Liberalism or Barbarism -

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Swedish state's discourse on the matter of 'violence affirming extremism'

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Abstract

The term 'violence affirming extremism' has become the dominating way of describing political violence in Sweden. This thesis aims to analyze the construction of the discourse that centers at this term, how it affects the social context in Sweden and what possible purposes could found for this discourse for the Swedish state. The material of this thesis is therefore primarily governmental reports, on which a framework of Critical Discourse Analysis is applied. This method is used in order to analyze the discourse on both textual, social and abstract levels. The theoretical framework applied on the material is of Marxist and Marxist feminist character that conceptualize agency, antagonism and state ideology. The theoretical framework underpins and complements the methodological implementation. This thesis finds that that the construction of the discourse centers at legitimacy, essentialism, politics and moral. These notions emerge in the material as part of the construction of the dichotomy that places liberal, rational society on the one hand and irrational disorder on the other hand. The thesis therefore concludes that the purpose of the discourse for the Swedish state can, through a Marxist perspective, be understood as the sustainment and cementing of the liberal status quo.

Keywords: political violence, Critical Discourse Analysis, antagonism, agency, moralizing discourse

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Political violence is a common feature in most societies, and has been discussed and framed in using different terminologies. The most prominent framing of political violence today is in terms of extremism, a historically and culturally specific phenomenon (della Porta 2006: 2). The notion of extremism contains different elements depending on who defines it, but generally extremism holds negative connotations of violence and terror - however, the construction of the term extremism may say something about the person who defines it as well. This thesis will look into a specific case of the construction of 'violence affirming extremism' in Sweden by looking into the how discourse regarding the notion is constructed in recent governmental reports.

At this moment in time, Sweden finds itself in a situation in which political extremism is a reoccurring topic in media and politics. Only since 2010, there has been a suicide bombing on a crowded street in central Stockholm, a fascist attack on a peaceful demonstration in Stockholm in 2013, a brutal stabbing as part of the counter attack, and the attempted murder on people celebrating International Women's Day in Malmö 2014 (Sydsvenskan 2014). These events are only a few examples of events that were highly covered by media, in Sweden as well as internationally, and that contributed to making Sweden appear as a breeding ground of violent political groups. To this background, where political violence had become more reoccurring and noticeable, the Swedish government made it clear that in defense of democracy, political violence was now to be dealt with thoroughly (Dagens Nyheter 2014). Political violence had always been a matter of importance for the Swedish state, but was now emphasized and given larger resources. In 2013, the report *När vi bryr oss - förslag om samverkan och utbildning för att effektivare förebygga våldsbejakande extremism* (When we care - proposals for collaboration and education to effectively prevent violence affirming extremism, from hereon only 'When we care') (SOU 2013:81) was published - a report that demanded serious efforts in the work against extremism and political violence. The findings of the report suggested that a new governmental organ, a coordinator, should be appointed to struggle against 'violence affirming extremism'. It also proposed the creation of a interactive

website that could spread knowledge about political violence easily and understandably to a bigger audience.

The coordinator, appointed in 2014, came to be named *The national coordinator against violence affirming extremism* and is meant to function as a hub in the collaboration between e.g. municipalities, the judicial system, the Security police and other instances. They were granted significant resources and Mona Sahlin, a former leader of the Social Democratic party, was appointed head of this newly installed coordinating organ, and in February 2015 they released the interactive learning website in the work against political violence. This website is called *The dialogue compass*, and is directed towards teachers, social workers in order for them to be helpful in the work against extremism (Samtalskompassen 1).

These developments prove to be historically interesting. Public discussions around the state's role in monitoring and policing radical politics is not new to Sweden, but the terms are rapidly changing. The discourse has changed from approaching e.g. political violence or violent extremism to instead circle around 'violence affirming extremism' (in Swedish *våldsbejakande*), which in its turn is built upon the term 'radicalization' (SOU 2013:81). These two terms have been quite debated as they indicate a new way of understanding this problem of political violence, and a new way of framing it (Hörnqvist & Flyghed 2011:2). The discourse has previously included concepts such as 'political extremism', 'political violence' or 'violent extremism'. Recently a shift towards the term "violent affirming extremism', an umbrella term that encompasses all of the above is instead used. Thus, I will use this term through out this thesis as a description of the phenomena but I will also discuss it as a discursive construction in my analysis. The term 'radicalization' comes from a post 9/11 approach of framing terrorism, and I will present its discursive roots more closely in section 1.3. Apart from the discursive shift, the focus of the governmental work has changed. The report and The Dialogue compass are not only directed towards SÄPO or law enforcement, but primarily to other officials within the state or municipality. This indicates a shift in understanding of how to approach and deal with the issue of political violence, which now is called 'violence affirming extremism'. I am interested in what the term entails, how it is constructed and how this reformulation influences the relation between the Swedish state and radical, violent groups.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

Departing from this background, this thesis will look deeper into material that represents how the Swedish state currently understands 'violence affirming extremism', and how the discourse that centers around this term is constructed I will look primarily at how the discourse within the governmental reports presents 'violence affirming extremism' in order to gain deeper knowledge of how this discourse is constructed, how it is operationalized and what possible political purpose it may have. The aim of this thesis is thus to investigate and deconstruct the discourse at hand, while analyzing it in order to find its key elements, to whom it directs itself as well as why the discourse is constructed as such. I do not wish to limit my analysis to the written text, but rather aim to connect the underlying political and ideological assumptions found in the text to larger societal structures. Thus, my research questions are:

How does the Swedish state construct the discourse that centers at the therm 'violence affirming extremism?
How is this discourse operationalized and sustained in a social context?
What could be understood as the political purpose of this discourse?

I plan to find possible answers to these questions by looking into the material that is produced by the Swedish state that regard 'violence affirming extremism'. I will critically analyze the material with the aim of finding how the discourse is constructed, how the discourse is operationalized and therefore influences the social context and lastly, analyze what the findings of the analysis tells me about the possible purpose this discourse may have for the Swedish state. Since my research questions call for analysis on all societal levels, I will use a Critical Discourse Analysis (from hereon CDA) as my method due to its ability to connect micro discourses in text to larger societal structures, with the aim of uncovering power structures reproduced through discourse (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 61). In this thesis, my goal is not to reach objective truths about the state's approach to 'violence affirming extremism', nor do I believe that objective, un-ideologically biased truth in this matter exists. With reference to my third research question which aims to discuss the possible purpose of the discourse, my aim is not to uncover or prove intentional purpose from the remitter. This is in accordance with the tradition of discourse analysis in which

> [t]he purpose of research is not to get 'behind' the discourse, to find out what people really mean when they say this or that, or to discover the reality behind the discourse. The starting point is that reality can never be reached outside discourses and so it is discourse itself that has become the object of analysis (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 21)

The tradition of discourse analysis instead emphasizes the examination of how discourses play in to structures of political power, and my aim is to analyze and examine how this discourse is produced, sustained and what possible purpose it may have in a political context by the Swedish state. In order to be transparent, I will be clear about my choices throughout this thesis, present my reasoning by motivating the choices I have made so that there is no confusion.

The theoretical framework I have chosen will, as in all research, affect the possible answers to my research questions. As my research questions urge me to investigate the construction of the discourse of the material, the sustainment of it on a social level and what possible political purpose that this discourse has, they demand theories that allow me to analyze and interpret on different societal levels. This has lead me to find theories that go well together, but also that encompass many different levels of societal analysis. Therefore, a point of departure which is (post) structuralist Marxist and Marxist feminist provide me with a wide and useful set of theories, concepts and ideas that go well together with the aim of a CDA of uncovering power in discourse. Both Marxist and feminist traditions focus highly on power and how power is sustained and reproduced, often in relation to the state. As both Marxism and feminism are wide fields that encompass many different, and sometimes contradictory theories, I will limit myself even further. By focusing on Marxist feminism rather than any other strand of feminist scholarship, I will have cohesion within my theoretical framework. By using (post) structuralist Marxist scholars that focus their concepts around state and discourse, I will be able to conceptualize how the discourse and state relate to each other. I have therefore chosen to include political agency, liberal discourse and antagonism and state ideology as my theoretical framework. The first concept discusses how individuals in a political context have access to notions of self-determination and legitimacy and therefore show how discourses shape relate to the individual level. The second concept of antagonism describes how discourses function on social and political level, whereas state ideology describes the relation between discourses and state power on a large, abstract level. I believe this choice of theory is suitable and relevant for the questions I have asked. These theories will thus provide me with one possible answer to my research question, which will have clear relations to my theoretical framework.

1.3 Etymology of 'violence affirming extremism'

To analyze this specific discourse and terminology, one must first be aware of the research and the interventions in the discursive framing that relates to this specific discourse. The work of Magnus Hörnqvist and Janne Flyghed presents a similar discursive analysis (2011). Their discussion takes its start in the framing of the problem of terrorism, globally and more specifically in Europe (2011). They show how the framing of terrorism changed in 2005, with the EU counter terrorism document (EU-Commission 2005). The authors call this the 'radicalization document', which points to its primary contribution to the debate - the document presents an understanding of terrorism as something a social problem, and that the way to stop terrorism is to prevent 'radicalization' among individuals (ibid). This document led to a debate amongst experts and academics regarding terrorism, as this document now promoted a preventive 'anti-radicalization' agenda rather than a solely repressive approach to dealing with terrorism. The document suggests that there are close links between social marginalization, exclusion and unemployment and 'radicalization', and in length terrorism. The key term in this document was 'violent radicalization' which pointed to the process that may lead to the use of violence among the individuals within the 'possible terrorist environments' (EU-Commission 2005). The 'violent radicalization' translated to Swedish into 'våldsbejakande radikalisering' (SÄPO 2010: 29), which was when the term 'våldsbejakande' found its way into governmental documents. The translation of these terms are important. In Swedish, the term 'våldsbejakande' does not in fact correspond to 'violent', but rather to a position in which someone affirms, or promotes, the use of violence. It does not imply direct use of violence by that individual, but it could. The term is therefore vague and I have not found any direct translations to English, why I have chosen to translate it to 'violence affirming' instead of just 'violent'.

What is worth noting regarding this terminology, is that it implies a new understanding of extremism as a phenomenon. The shift had gone from looking at ideologies or examining already violent organizations in the pursuit of stopping them, to an approach that presents the problem as inherent to social and structural issues such as marginalization, unemployment or to the feeling of being left outside established society (EU 2005; Flyghed & Hörnqvist 2011: 8). In Sweden, the idea of 'radicalization' began to be applied in the work against islamist extremism with documents such as *Rosengårdsrapporten* (Ranstorp & Dos Santos 2009). After this report, the focus on 'radicalization' expanded and came to include all kinds of 'extremism'. The term 'radicalization' is defined in a report by SÄPO in 2010 as "the process that leads to that person or a group begins to

support or exercise ideologically motivated violence to promote a cause" (Säkerhetspolisen 2010: 9). The terms 'radicalization' and 'violence affirming extremism' were from hereon applied to more than just islamist terrorism, but to the term 'extremism' generally. The idea that 'radicalization processes' takes place in all kinds of extremist environment were from hereon the dominating view (DN 2011). The framework that had been used to encounter terrorism is now used in Sweden to encompass islamist extremism, right wing extremism and left wing extremism - all of these being 'violence affirming extremism' (SOU 2013:81). This is the context that we find ourselves in today.

1.4 Previous Research

Regarding the case in the center of this thesis - the particular use of the term 'violence affirming extremism by the Swedish goverment - while it is currently discussed in media, by political organizations and parties, not much academic literature is to be found. This of course expected since many of these publications are quite recent, and the Dialogue compass was published only in february this year. It is therefore important that research with a critical perspective in this influential government driven discursive project, that follows academic rigor and thoroughness, is conducted. In this chapter I will present research and topics that help me realize this thesis, by providing me with knowledge and background. As mentioned, this work draws heavily on Flyghed & Hörnqvist similar critical engagement with discursive shifts around terrorism, and I will here present other works that comparably frame the academic context.

Research on political violence and violent movements has been conducted in various academic disciplines. This field is often called *Contentious Politics Studies*, which is a term that aims to locate the place where collective action, contention and politics overlap (Brink Pinto et al 2015: 97). The word contentious marks demands of change, often presented through practices that are radical or violent. The term violence is analyzed with depth within this field, see for example Charles Tilly in *Contentious Performances* (2008). This field aims to study how confrontative, collective radical acts are shaped in the encounter with the state. The state is in this aspect a central actor, since it negotiates the political landscape in which the collectives act, how they confront each other and how they confront the state (Brink Pinto et al 2015: 98) This framework has attempted to, in contrast to earlier social movement research, construct collective confrontative acts as acts a a part of the political field rather than 'mob mentalities' or 'random acts of violence' (Brink Pinto et al

2015: 98). Within the anthology *Violent Protests, Contentious Politics and the Neoliberal State* (2012), we find how this field of research has been conducted on cases with empirical examples of collective violent protests. The anthology seeks to identify the social contexts and characteristics previous to collective violent actions, with a continuous focus on how state and state discourses influence them (Seferiades & Johnston 2012).

Contextualizing social movement research in the Nordic countries, there are a few important contributions in relation to political violence. Recently Jan Jämte presented his dissertation *Antirasismens många ansikten* (The many faces of antiracism) that describes all kinds of antiracist initiatives and networks in Sweden during the last century (2013). This work presents movements that use violence as method in their struggle against racism, and discusses their relation to legitimacy and support within 'majority society' (Jämte 2013: 253). These groups are in the material presented as left wing extremists, which is a term he discusses with his informants to find how this discursive construct affects their legitimacy in their struggle. From Denmark, René Karpantschof contextualizes discourses of (de)radicalization on on the radical left that occupied a youth center in Copenhagen. He discusses the term and looks for possible factors for (de)radicalization, in which he finds that the context of threat, opportunity and access to political forum are underlying factors that specifically deradicalize squatting youth (Karpanstschof 2015). Relevant to mention in relation to radical left wing groups is also Salka Sandéns *Deltagänget* (The Delta Crew). This book is fusion of autobiography and fiction, but holds a special place in this context since it is the only manifestation of female experiences in Swedish antifascist movements (2007).

Regarding feminist scholarly work, the field of 'women and terrorism' has also been important as background for this thesis. The anthology *Female terrorism and militancy: agency, utility and organizatio*n edited by Cindy D Ness presents both empirical and theoretical work on how women negotiate and construct themselves in violent, terrorist organizations (Ness 2007). The articles in this book seek to investigate how and why women participate in violent act and terror organizations, without reproducing stereotypes about femininity as passive or masculinity as violent. They argue that women are often portrayed as following the lead of boyfriends or spouses, or having a natural reluctance to violence. Their actions are often described as a result of 'love for the family' or as stemming from their motherhood. This is denied by the authors in this anthology, who instead show complex patterns of why women become militant, and how motivations differ and what elements are crucial in how 'radicalization processes' take place (ibid). The authors negate the fact that only

men participate in violent groups and argue that we must take women' agency in violent context seriously. One of the prominent reoccurring themes is that women tend to be more active and hold higher positions in leftist and progressive organizations since the ideology is more prone to include women as equals, but that this phenomena also may spread to the growing jihad-movement.

With relation to previous research, I aim to contextualize and analyze how the state's discourse in effect in Sweden today affect, shape and construct the space in which radical groups of all ideologies act. This relates to the field of Contentious Politics Studies, since this field posits a large focus on the relation between state and violent groups. This field presents the actors and participators of collective confrontative acts as political rather than social, which is an aspect of framing which I will carry with me while analyzing the discourse of the material. I relate also to the feminist works of women in terrorist, or extremist groups which has a critical stance towards the downplay of female political violent participation, which I will conceptualize in my theoretical chapter as well. This research provides me with background and framework that will help me answer my research questions.

This field of research also relates to the disciplines I pertain to. Within political science, the topic of political extremism and political violence is addressed is continuously addressed as issues of order and societal arrangements is interesting to the field. This topic relates highly to parliamentary democracy, as these are often understood as dichotomies. By immersing in the specific topic of 'violence affirming extremism' in Sweden, I hope to contribute to this field with this thesis. As I study a gender focused program, there is a necessity to understand how this thesis relates to the gender field as well. I see the largest benefit in the gender studies in the scrutinizing studies of power relations - which is the aim of this thesis. As I will investigate how the term 'violence affirming extremism' is constructed, I will look into the gendered aspect of is as well, since violence and political agency has been historically connected largely to masculinity. As the material I am working with discusses groups that are feminist and antiracist, this thesis also sheds light on the relation between the Swedish state and the Swedish feminist movement. This thesis therefore makes a contribution to this movement, that in its turn has close links to the gender scholarly sphere.

1.5 Key Concepts

In this part, I will shortly introduce some of my key concepts and present the definition that I depart from when using them in this thesis. Some of the concepts I have already presented such as agency, antagonism and ideology, will be discussed in detail in my theoretical framework. The concepts I have chosen to present here are meant to be understood as backdrops with the aim of clarifying what definitions of the concepts that I subscribe to in this thesis.

State

The Marxist understanding of the state that I in this thesis depart from is that the state holds the same interests as the ruling class and aims to maintain these interests. Other understandings of the state exist within Marxist tradition, but Marx himself described the capitalist state in The Communist Manifesto by saying that "The executive of the modern state is nothing but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx & Engels 1990: 32). The state is thus an involved actor with interests as well as understandings of phenomenas and events. I will use the term 'state' rather than 'goverment' in this thesis, as this is a term that signals ideological construct more than 'government' does. However, this term will also be used in the instances where I need to point to the specific form of actually performing acts of administrative power. As customary in Marxist tradition, the term 'liberal' is also used to describe states with a parliamentary, liberal democratic structure. Thus, the term 'liberal' is not used to describe parties that subscribes to 'liberal ideology', but is rather seen as a hegemonic way of organizing modern society. Therefore, the term liberal applies to all different kinds of parliamentary practice, independent of what party rules at that specific time (Marx & Engels 1990: 33). The concept of 'state ideology' will be further developed in chapter 2.1.

Hegemony

The term hegemony is related to the state in many instances, as this term describes the way that a state maintains power through ideology. It was conceptualized by Gramsci, who means that power is constituted by domination (or coercion) and 'intellectual and moral leadership'. It is the latter that constitutes societal hegemony (Femia 2011: 3). Thus, hegemonic power does not necessarily force citizens to act a certain way - hegemony is rather a specific language that forms ways of acting and has you following and replicating social order. Thus, the construction of a 'common sense' that entail what is commonly good, how one as a citizen should act and how society should be ruled is

often included in this term (Gramsci 1997). Hegemonic power is exercised by the state in capitalist society, but the term can also describe the dominating force in other contexts. Hegemonic discourses are one example of this. Hegemony in this case must therefore not be confused with international hegemony, which is a discussion that reflects power relations in an international arena. Within this thesis, the only understanding of hegemony is the Gramscian one, in which hegemony is understood as a power relations within a state.

1.6 Disposition

This first chapter aims to give an outline to this thesis, to present the social and academic context in which it figures, and to lead the reader into my aim and research questions. The first chapter should therefore be read as an entry point to the rest of the thesis. In my second chapter, I will present the theories I will use. The theoretical framework that I have chosen should not be read as universal, all-encompassing theories but rather as concepts from the Marxist and feminist tradition that operate on different societal levels and therefore provide me with relevant tools when attempting to answer my research questions. In my third chapter, I will explain how I will conduct the research that I need for this thesis, but also how I position myself epistemologically. This in turn brings me to my method, which will be specified and motivated. Chapter four where I will conduct my analysis and present the findings of my methods on the material. I will analyze these in relation to my theoretical framework and present themes and conclusions. Chapter five is where I conclude and summarize the findings and suggest further research.

2. Theoretical framework

The choices I have made regarding theories have been grounded in the need for theories that can be combined, that conceptualize phenomenas on different societal levels and that connect these phenomenas to state power. These notion were therefore those that I found most useful as tools to answer my research question. My first notion of agency is described from both a Marxist, and Marxist feminist tradition. I chose to include the Marxist understanding as a departure point to conceptualize how this tradition generally views political agency in liberal state. I also chose to include a feminist understanding of the term agency since it conceptualizes the relationship between individuals and structures, and how political acts are interpreted and gendered. I hope to relate this to the material by looking into whether political agency is constructed as a part of the term 'violence affirming extremism' or not. Secondly, I chose Chantal Mouffe's conceptualization of antagonism, and how this relates o liberal society. The use of her theories is relevant since they conceptualize how discourses shape and limit political acts within a liberal state. I mean to include this because this discusses liberal states relate to groups that do not comply with liberal ideas. Lastly, I have used Althusser's theories of state ideology. These are meant to conceptualize how a liberal state functions, reproduced and sustains itself. This is relevant since it can help me to understand what use the specific discourse of the material may have for the state.

2.1 Agency

2.1.1 Marxist Agency

The term in itself refers to the extent to which individuals or groups can act in specific context and situations. Agency is often contrasted against structures, that shape the context and societies in which individuals or groups act. Within Marxism, the relationship between societal structures and human agents has been extensively debated and nuanced, but traditional historical materialism is prone to understand human agency as essential in any revolutionary ambition. This strand is most often described as Marxist humanism, as it focuses on the human element of moving society forward (Thompson 1966: 10). Agency, actions and human interventions are seen as 'the makers of

history', rather than abstractions as structures. The agents of change, the makers of history are therefore seen as human beings, acknowledging class relations and reacting to them (ibid). Other notions such as 'class consciousness' are therefore closely interlinked with agency, since Marxism generally understands class society as the primary structure that shape and limit the scope of any individual's agency. Therefore, the notion of agency has been important for Marxist and is often discussed in relation to the working class and understood as acts of resistance and struggle. Agency is therefore a political element, and the inclination of understanding all acts as political rather than 'neutral' has been essential for Marxism (Gramsci 1997).

2.1.2 Feminist Agency

The notion of agency is one that has been debated by many feminist scholars, the debate is continuously active and has many contributors (Butler 1997; Mahmood 2005). I will not be able to give account to all theories and discussions regarding the term, but have instead chosen to focus on Marxist feminism and the notion of political female agency. This concept as developed by Wendy Brown and will be preceded with a brief introduction to feminist scholarship regarding political agency.

Feminist scholarship has typically rejected liberal philosophy when it comes to agency. The classical liberal scholars emphasize principles of 'free will' or 'nature of the self' (Kant 1990) as overarching concepts, but feminists of all strands has generally rejected these notions in favor of a more nuanced social analysis that attempts to combine complex structural inequalities with the ability to self-determinate and autonomous actions. Thus, the commonalities regarding agency in feminist scholarship are the investigation on how subject positions are negotiated against power structures such as norms, discourse, historiography or hegemonic power.

Historically, ascribing agency to women has been of feminist scholarships most acute interventions. Acting, in the subject position of a woman, has been largely left out of historical narratives in which women are passive or absent, and clearly left out of political decision making. Feminist political scientist Maud Eduards state that "the ability to act politically within the frame of the national order of bodies has primarily been ascribed to men" (2007: 243). Women have either not had access to political context, or has been seen as unimportant in them. As the concept of 'politics' in liberal

tradition was seen as something that happened in parliaments, court houses or in other formal environments, feminist scholarship linked the ability to act politically to their personal circumstances. "The personal is political" is one of the most widely known mantras ever since second wave feminism, and the politicization of women's lives has been key in the process of dissolving the dichotomy of private and public (Gemzöe 2002: 46).

The prevalent understanding of women as private and men as public and political, constructs ideals of politics and political agency as inherently masculine, with 'hard politics', such as violence and war at the very core (Brown 1988: 3). In her book *Manhood and Politics*, feminist political scientist Wendy Brown scrutinizes some of the most influential (male) political scholars of the last centuries whilst showing how they all center and praise the masculine ideals of doing politics. The underlying assumption of liberal thought is that the political actor is male, has property and is acquisitive by nature (1988: 4). She states that "the historical relationship between constructions of manhood and the construction of politics emerges through and is traced upon formulations of political foundations, political order, citizenship, action, rationality, freedom and justice" (Brown 1988: 4). Women are therefore largely constructed around what they historically have occupied themselves with: reproductive work. This distribution of labour, Brown argues, is the base upon which these normative understandings of men as public, political and productive and women as caring, private and family bound stands upon (Brown 1988: 7)

These normative assumptions have shaped the social context in which women need to fight harder than men to have their political agency acknowledged. As ideas of masculinity are currently and historically constructed around violence and war, femininity has as its dichotomy stood for the opposite: peace, care and non-violence (Brown 1988; Enloe 2014). Thus, the idea that women could be political actors collides with the assigned labour roles, but that women could be violent political actors, Brown argues, departs extremely far from how the capital posits women. Therefore, women's agency in a traditionally masculine context is in direct collision with liberal societal politics. The idea that women, who have been constructed as caring, as mothers, as family-bound, would commit violent political acts is therefore unthinkable, and violence is continuously connected to masculinity (Brown 1988: 67). The political agency of women is therefore connected to the division of labour, in which the assigned roles shape and limit what women can and cannot do as political actors.

2.2 Liberal Discourse & Antagonism

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx & Engels 1990: 2). As probably one of the most famous widely know quotes in Marxism, Marx and Engels establishes the importance of antagonism already in the first paragraph of The Communist Manifesto. This is not a coincidence but a crucial departure point for all Marxists, and the key understanding that separates Marxist scholars from liberal scholars that rather perceive society as a result of deliberations and consensus. In this part, I will discuss antagonism as Mouffe understands it in in order to place it in a societal and political contemporary context.

Mouffe posits antagonistic thinking in a clear opposition to liberal thought by arguing that

> [p]roperly political questions always involve decisions which require us to make a choice between conflicting alternatives. This incapacity to think politically, is to a great extent due to the uncontested hegemony of liberalism. [...t]he typical liberal understanding of pluralism is that we live in a world in which there are indeed many perspectives and values and that, due to empirical limitations, we will never be able to adopt them all, but that, when put together, they constitute a harmonious ensemble. This is why this type of liberalism must negate the political in its antagonistic dimension (Mouffe 2005: 10).

Mouffe understands antagonism in opposition to liberalism - namely as a way of understanding and recognizing that there are underlying conflicts in society that are political. She argues that we must understand these conflicts as political rather than ignore and overlook them. If one were to look politically and antagonistically on liberal society, the flaws of this society and its institutions would become clearer. She means that discourses and practices that are now considered as 'common sense' or decisions that seem 'un-political' within liberal hegemony could thus be understood as what they are - consequences of liberal political ideology. Thus, she means that liberal society needs to construct discourses, processes and institutions that discredit antagonistic thinking (2005: 25).

She uses ultra conservative political theorist (and supporter of nazi Germany) Carl Schmitt to present how liberalism negates antagonistic thinking on both sides of the political spectrum, left as well as right (Mouffe 2005: 10). Her point of departure is the 'post-political society' - meaning society after the Soviet fall - in which she argues that liberal democracy has become a hegemonic idea which is rarely questioned by neither citizens nor scholars (ibid). She considers this a serious

matter since she argues that liberal democracy is unable to handle the underlying antagonistic conflicts in society, and instead distorts them to questions of 'good and evil' (2005: 23). This, she argues, are part of the failure of liberal institutions. Mouffe means that institutions in liberal states cannot guarantee their ability to function for all citizens since they are built on the premise that they are 'un-political and morally superior'. One example of this is employment; since it is in the interest of any liberal state to keep a number of people unemployed, the institutions of employment will not be able to serve these citizens. This fact, Mouffe argues, is clearly political (2005: 26). However, these institutions will instead fail to see the inherent inability in themselves and instead choose a 'moralizing discourse' towards those that it excludes.

The moralizing discourse is important as an element among the liberal institutions, but also as an element in constructing legitimacy and illegitimacy. A moralizing discourse enables liberal society to make sense of those outside hegemonic acts and language by constructing them as 'evil'. These images of 'evil enemies' rather than legitimate political opponents undermines the legitimacy of the opponent, which is key for the discourse. All agency, ideology and rationality are therefore dismissed and the opponent becomes ridiculed and belittled. Subject positions of either 'evil' and 'irrational' are created within this 'moralizing discourse', which are ascribed to the political opponent to create an opposite in one self; namely, the rational, enlightened liberal (Mouffe 2005: 19). This belittlement and 'dehumanization' as Mouffe describes it, fuels the reactions that to destabilizes the state itself. Since those that become reduced and dehumanized will not remain calm under such attacks, they instead increase polarization by striking harder against the liberal discourse and liberal society. Thus, moralizing discourse recreates a never-ending circle of 'good vs evil' and in fact promotes polarization (Mouffe 2005: 23).

While the moralizing discourse delegitimizes all those that falls outside of the construction of the 'good', legitimate ways of doing politics, it centers among the liberal way of doing politics. Legitimacy is often constructed around ideals such as democracy or human rights, but may not always be as universal. Mouffe instead argues that legitimate political acts are legitimate because they sustain liberalism, rather than any universal 'good' (2005: 23). Mouffe inscribes the moral self-righteousness into liberal ideology's basic concept. She thereby means that it cannot be seen as an unfortunate consequence but instead must be understood as a centrality to liberal rule itself. She means that liberal democracy is based on a notion that it is the only ideological concept that can in fact establish legitimacy and legitimate regimes (2005: 34). This is in length based upon the idea of

rationality, that under ideal circumstances, all liberal institutions would be elected by rational individuals and therefore hold the outmost legitimacy. Therefore, the rejection of all other political ideas as illegitimate is intimately connected to the own self-righteousness.

2.3 State Ideology

The Althusserian notion of ideology builds from the notion of hegemony. Key notions within his theory of ideology is ideological state apparatuses (ISAs), repressive state apparatuses (RSAs) and the reproduction of the conditions of productions (Althusser 2001: 85). I will discuss how Althusser understands the different state apparatuses, and give special focus to the school system as one of these. Mainly because Althusser himself posits this specific institution in a privileged position, but also because it has clear linkages to my material since the school system is prominent in the material as well.

To begin, one must depart from Althusser's primary question. How does the reproduction of the means and relations of production take place (Althusser 2001: 85)? He argues that this is the core question to understand state power, since a state needs to both ensure the relations of production as well as the maintenance (reproduction) of these. Thus, he argues that social formations 'arises from a dominant mode of production' (Althusser 2001: 86) and must therefore reproduce the productive forces as well as the existing relations of production.

There are two kinds of State Apparatuses to Althusser. The first is called Repressive State Apparatus or simply State Apparatus (from hereon RSA), showing that this is how he understands the primary function of the state. The purpose of the RSA is to repress and push back any resistance towards state power, but also to punish and discipline the state's citizens. The RSA thus functions primarily by force and violence, and Althusser regards institutions as the government, the administration, the army, the police and prison system as belonging to the RSA (Althusser 2001: 92) This apparatus constitutes state power, and violence monopoly is a highly important dimension within it since the state needs to control repression and violence to maintain itself (2001: 94). The RSA is described as a contrast to what he describes as the pillar of ideology; the Ideological State Apparatuses (from hereon the ISAs).

The ISAs differs from the RSA since they mostly function in the private sphere of the citizens' lives. He makes a list over the most influential ISAs that point out:

the religious ISA (the system of the different churches),

the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'schools'),

the family ISA,

the legal ISA,

the political ISA (the political system, including the different parties),

the trade-union ISA,

the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.),

the cultural ISA (literature, the arts, sports, etc.)

as important actors in the enforcement of state ideology (Althusser 2001: 99). The function of the ISAs in a state is a response to Althusser's primary question - to maintain the relations of production and reproduce capitalist society through the state. The ISAs are the ideological part of state power, which means that they operate by soft power and instead of penalizing those that have broken the law, they aim to create citizens that will voluntary stay within the boundaries of the law. The construction of a 'good citizen' is therefore key to Althusser. The ISAs aim to shape, and limit, the boundaries of how citizenry is acted. Being a good citizen includes practices such as employment, staying inside the boundaries of the law and living in a nuclear family. If one fails to act as a good citizens, you might suffer suspicion, marginalization, ostracization or even repression, depending on how far away from acting like a 'good citizen' you are (ibid).

Even though he distinguishes between the RSA and the ISAs, the connection between them is also highly important to Althusser. He argues that

If the ISAs 'function' massively and predominantly by ideology, [...] which is the ideology of 'the ruling class'. Given the fact that the ruling class in principle holds state power (openly or more often by means of alliances between classes or class fractions), and therefore has at its disposal the (Repressive) State Apparatus, we can accept that this same ruling class is active in the Ideological State Apparatuses insofar as it is ultimately the ruling ideology which is realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses, precisely in its contradictions (Althusser 2001: 98).

Hence, the connection between the state apparatuses are clear as they all sustain the same ideology.

Althusser also elaborates the categories of the state apparatuses and show how they all have function both as repressively as well as ideologically. Even though the ISAs 'function massively and predominantly by ideology' they may also punish and penalize (e.g. school suspension, historical religious penalizing of sin or heresy) and the RSA need ideology to legitimize the violence they exercise against its citizens. This is interesting to Althusser since he believes that in this overlap, a very productive way of governing lies. By creatively arranging new ways of combining ideology and repression, the state can ensure itself of its sustainment. One example in which the overlap and the connection between an ISA and the RSAs is essential is in the construction of a benevolent, legitimate violence monopoly. As the violence monopoly must be seen as the only rightful use of force, all other kind of violence must be completely rejected, to contrast the benevolent violence towards the unrighteous (Althusser 2001: 98). But an RSA can only be legitimate if its is motivated and authorized by ideology.

In order to describe how the ISAs actually function, Althusser describes in detail the importance of the church and the school system. He states:

> The mechanisms which produce this vital result for the capitalist regime are naturally covered up and concealed by a universally reigning ideology of the School, universally reigning because it is one of the essential forms of the ruling bourgeois ideology: an ideology which represents the School as a neutral environment 'purged of ideology' (Althusser 2001: 100).

In this argument, he places the ruling ideology within the school system and shows how the schools are represented as a neutral environment, but in fact shape children ideologically already from their early years. This is key to the normalization of ideology, and the impressions that children receive during their school years are decidedly shaping them as individuals throughout the rest of their lives. This is why Althusser sees this specific ISA as key to the reproduction of the relations of production since it begins the normalization of the bourgeoise ideology and the production in the most impressionable years of any individual (2001: 103).

3. Method and Material

This chapter will be a presentation, discussion and a delimitation of my method and material. This thesis applies a Critical Discourse Analysis when analyzing the material, and departs from a critical realist perspective on reality and knowledge. I will begin with a brief epistemological discussion that is concentrated on connecting my theory to my methodology. I will thereafter present and motivate the specific methodological framework I have chosen and present the process of analysis, and thereafter present the material that I will analyze. I will motivate the choices I have made in the process, and discuss shortly how these choices bring me closer to answering my research question.

A discourse is "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)" (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 1). This description is quite general, but necessary as it points to the common traits of the term discourse. As there are many different approaches to both discourse as a concept and to discourse analysis as a method, I will here present the specific understanding that I depart from in this thesis. Methods of discourse analysis are often difficult to separate from the theoretical understanding of discourse, why it also is important that my method, epistemology and theory all converge without colliding.

3.1 Critical realism

The stance of a critical realist could shortly be described as an interface between social constructivism and materialism. Within critical realism, one is allowed to make claims about objective reality, but also acknowledging the effect of social constructions (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 117). The critical realist therefore acknowledges the underlying materiality of society while they still do not underestimate the impact and effect that discourse has on social context (Brown et al 2002). Thus, a discourse is not understood as constitutive for reality but comes from the power structures that are created in society. This may be compared to discourse theory, in which one does not separate discourse from other dimensions of reality, since all elements of reality is considered socially constructed. In critical realism however, the aim is to map out the underlying mechanisms that constitute social structures, but at the same time realizing that these structures are indeed

inconstant. Agency in relation to the structures is highlighted and since we can be aware of, resist and challenge structures (ibid).

3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is quite a broad term that can encompass epistemology, theoretical departure points as well as specific methods. The common elements that are reoccurring in all applications of CDA is that it does not limit itself to only text analysis, but rather goes beyond that and incorporates social analysis as well. This is described by Jorgensen and Phillips as such:

> The research focus of critical discourse analysis is accordingly both the discursive practices which construct representations of the world, social subjects and social relations, including power relations, and the role that these discursive practices play in furthering the interests of particular social groups (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 63).

CDA therefore analyzes in three steps; text on a micro level, social context on a meso level and social structures on a macro level (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 62). A CDA makes no claims of political objectivity, but rather acknowledges that there are power relations in society that affect us differently. When conducting a CDA, it is therefore common to takes sides against the exercise of power (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 63). The departing point for a critical discourse analyst is that discourse is both constitutive and constituted (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 61). This means that it understands discourse as a social practice that is shaped by other social practices, yet that it still shapes these practices in return. In this tradition, the analysis does not limit itself to text only, but also aims to analyze the social context (van Djik 1995: 19). This also means that according to CDA, discourses, words and meanings can change over time and be negotiated from both those that exercise power and those that are oppressed. A hegemonic discourse is flexible and can take on different forms in different times and contexts, why it is crucial to analyze the written word as well as its social context (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 62).

This brings us to the 'how' of CDA. In order to bring all three dimensions - micro, meso and macro - together, a critical discourse analysts must analyze surrounding elements as well as text itself. Thus, in the application of CDA as a method, it is usual to have more than one step of analysis. The first step is to conduct a text analysis, as is done in most discourse analysis methods, and also to

identify the practices that surround the text and make it what it is (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 68). This has been made into a three dimensional model by Fairclough, from whom I will draw inspiration. The three levels are described differently depending on who describes them, but share the common aim in all instances - to "explore the links between language use and social practice" (Jorgensen & Phillips 20002: 69). Fairclough describes the three dimensional model as a way to connect these elements of society. He describes the first step as a way to pinpoint and mark the presence of discourses in the specific text, the second step as a way to analyze the medium through which it is communicated and the last to posit it in a macro level of how the text functions within societal power structures (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 70). This makes CDA highly reliant upon a theoretical framework that conceptualizes power structures and societal processes in one way or another, and that this theoretical framework criticizes and examines the use of power (van Djik 2001: 354).

3.3 Process of Analysis

There are multiple ways of carrying out a CDA. Different scholars utilize and make use of CDA differently, while maintaining the aims of the method. As this is the case, I will in this thesis not apply any CDA model strictly, but rather use the essence of the method with inspiration from Fairclough to construct an analysis process that suits my research question. In this section I will outline how I will structure the analysis in this thesis. This will also incorporate the application of theory, as CDA is highly reliant on a strong theoretical framework. I describe the method as a three step process of analysis here, and even if this is guiding through my analysis, it is important to remember that Fairclough emphasizes the overlaps of the analytical steps in CDA. This means that the steps may overlap, may relate to each other and at times be inseparable. With this in mind, I will here present the three level analysis that will be utilized in this thesis.

3.3.1 Construction

I will conduct a textual analysis of the material that I have, and outline what themes are present. This is inspired by thematic analysis which is sometimes used in combination or within CDA (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 69). In a thematic analysis, codes and categories are distilled from the

material by identifying reoccurring concepts, notions and meanings from the text. This is used in my case in stead of a strictly linguistic analysis of grammar and wording, which is often done when using CDA on e.g. media material. Thematic analysis is not occupied with counting phrases or words, but rather aims to find themes that are relevant to the question at hand. Thus, during my text analysis part I will go through the text with the aim of finding themes that relate to the construction of 'violence affirming extremism'. This may be specific definitions, key concepts but also silences regarding what are considered important elements in the construction. I will thereafter place these themes into specific categories that I will present in my first part of my analytical chapter. The process of finding themes and placing them into categories is a working process, and will therefore not be presented. I will structure the analytical chapter from the categories I have placed the themes into, and thereafter go into the different reoccurring themes. As CDA is highly reliant on theory in order to connect the written text to structures on higher levels, I will continuously analyze the findings against the theoretical framework I have chosen. This part of the method aims to find and present how the discourse around 'violence affirming extremism' is constructed, thus answering the first research question.

3.3.2 Operationalization and Social Context

I will also analyze the relation between social context and the material, why this step aims to interpret how the dialectic relationship between discourse context expresses itself. As my material consists of governmental reports and a website, I will not address how governmental reports are produced and consumed generally as it is not the aim of this thesis. Rather, as I understand discourse as constitutive, I will look at how the discourse is operationalized by investigating to whom the remitter seeks to convey its message. In this step, I will therefore look into the material to seek its target groups, and how this target group relates to the construction of 'violence affirming extremism'. I will analyze why the target group is constructed the way it is, and to this end I will analyze my findings against my theoretical framework. This part of the method aims to answer to some extent the first question, as this step may also contribute to the understanding of how 'violence affirming extremism' is constructed, but primarily to the second research question. As this question aims to investigate how the social context is affected by the discourse, this step mainly corresponds to that since this step helps to look into specifically the social context.

3.3.3 Concluding analysis

As a mirror of the third step, I will analyze what connection the written text has to structures of state power. Fairclough calls this step 'explanation' since it aims to answer 'why' the discourse is constructed the way it is, always with support of theories (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 83). This step will be a meta analysis that will gather the discussions and conclusions of the previous chapters. The aim of this step is to explain the material and its contents in a broader sense, why this discussion will aim more towards building theoretical concepts and analyzing the theoretical framework and the discursive constructions in the material. Thus, this step corresponds to my third research question, as it will discuss the possible use that this discourse has for the Swedish state. This analysis is as mentioned, not aimed at proving intent from the Swedish state but rather to see how this discourse could have a political purpose for the state in this specific context.

3.4 Material

The material I have chosen is primarily policy documents presented by the Swedish goverment. The three main documents that I will use are 'When we care' (SOU 2013:81), 'Violence affirming extremism in Sweden - current situation and tendencies' (DS 2014:4) and 'Action plan to protect democracy against violence affirming extremism' (Skr 2011 12:44) I will also use the Dialogue Compass combined with these documents. These reports are issued over a four year period and contain the term 'violence affirming extremism', which is why these specific reports are chosen. The material is is already limited since there are only a few governmental reports that use the term 'violence affirming extremism', but the material has quite a full content when it comes to constructing a 'violence affirming extremist' as they only approach this subject and nothing else. These reports are paired with the website Samtalskompassen, and together they make up a stable ground, which makes me confident it will bring me close to a potential answer to my research questions. As my research questions aim to look at the Swedish state, these documents are the clear choice of material. I will, however, make references to newspaper articles in order to strengthen the argument. These are not my primary sources, but function rather as additions to my material.

I have also chosen to look at older documents in order to make myself familiar with how earlier presentations of 'political extremism' were constructed. This allows me to make comparisons

regarding representation of the groups and methods of combating the issue, but this material will function as a backdrop and as comparison rather than being at the centre of analysis. I will translate the sections of the material that I use to English, as it is all in Swedish. I will use clear references to the original material in order to be as transparent in the translation as possible, but still realizing that some nuances and phrasings may be lost in this process. To approach this potential problem, I will provide also the Swedish text in a footnote if I am dubious in regards to the correctness of the translation.

4. Analysis

In this chapter, I will go through the analysis as presented in section 3.3. I will firstly present the themes I have found to be important in the construction of the discourse that centers on 'violence affirming extremism'. This part will be divided into subchapters that place these themes into broader categories of discursive construction. I found that many of the defining themes could be placed in the following categories: social issues, structural issues and political issues. These categories are not fixed, but overlap and relate strongly to each other. The division however, is important for structure and clarity why I have chosen to present the categories this way. This part of my analysis aims to answer my first research question, since this one asks how the discourse is constructed.

The second part of my analysis will be where I look at operationalization and social context. This means that I will shed light on the target group that the material is directed towards and the methods that is meant to operationalize the discourse. By looking at methods and target group, I aim to see how the discourse is sustained in a social context, why this part of the analysis aims to answer my second research question. This section might also add to answering the first research question since the social context highly relates to how the discourse is constructed, but aims primarily at the second research question. Lastly, I will analyze the findings that the first two sections have provided me with in order to find the possible uses of the discourse for the Swedish state. This corresponds to my last research question. My theoretical framework will be used continuously through the whole chapter, but the last section I will use it more extensively.

4.1 What is 'violence affirming extremism'?

This part of my analysis will aim to answer the first research question, which demands a definition of how the Swedish state constructs the discourse around the term 'violence affirming extremism'. I began with looking for definitions and key concepts in the material. Firstly, I will present a few defining quotes of the term in itself in order to present the concept as it is constructed in the material. Within this chapter, I will use Mouffe's theory of antagonism and theories of agency. I will

use these two concepts since they operate on a level of individuals and discourse, which relates largely to how the discourse is produced and constructed since the material constructs the term around individuals who join these movements.

An extremist deemed 'violence affirming' is someone who "is assessed to repeatedly having displayed a behavior that not only accepts the use of violence but that also endorses or exercises ideologically motivated violence to support a cause" (Skr 2011 12:44: 9). As I have already mentioned, it is not to be confused with violent extremism since "a violence affirming behavior can be a long-lasting support for violent act committed by others, even though the individual herself never commits any violent acts" (Ds 2014:4: 20). Thus, the specific use of 'violence affirming' means that no violence is necessarily committed, but violence is not rejected either. As the term violence is very central to the construction of the term 'violence affirming', I searched for a definition of what constitutes as violence according to the material, but found none. Instead violence were at times interchanged with 'crime'.

As discussed, the term 'violence affirming' is recently coined and points to a position rather than actions. It aims to encompass extremism from all corners of the political spectra and bring these together by pointing to the common denominators in all three examples. The focus of any 'violence affirming extremist' is thus the use of violence rather than ideological conviction. The term is fluid, and the short definitions that do exist in the material show no clear limitation of the term, why it is also difficult to understand who may be included and who may not be. Flyghed & Hörnqvist take a very critical stance towards the term 'violence affirming' since they fear it is unnecessarily arbitrary and will therefore be used too loosely (2011). The arbitrariness is clear also in this material and due to its vague definition, it would be quite difficult to deny or resist if one is already labeled 'violence affirming' - since there is no definition of what 'violence' is. This is quite remarkable, since the term violence has been developed by innumerable scholars, from philosophers to sociologists to peace and conflict theorists. The overlap with the term crime does not help either in the pursuit of understanding what the state considers violence in this context. Spraying graffiti or posting stickers can be deemed as violence against property and is punishable by law, but is quite far from attempted murders on feminists (Sydsvenskan 2014). The lack of clear definitions therefore shows a very relativist view on what acts, crimes or misdemeanors are understood as violent. It also does not show how one may display "a long-lasting support" (Skr 2011 12:44: 9) for these acts, which makes the act of 'affirming violence' difficult to pinpoint.

When the website The Dialogue compass was launched it described a large number of left wing groups as 'violence affirming' that previously had been left out of the discussion on left wing extremism. This caused debate as to the limitations of the term and how the label was defeating its own purpose and cast suspicion on 'democratic left wing groups' (Dagens Nyheter 2015). This shift in discourse shows just what CDA points to - the fact that words can be interchangeable, filled with different meaning and language can be adjusted to uphold power relations (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 62). We se here that terms such as 'violence affirming' are easily adjustable, and follow and enable a delegitimization of all movements that may be considered as antagonistic (Mouffe 2005: 19). The usage of the term is unquestioned, but the definition is very limited. Flyghed & Hörnqvist argued that the term 'terrorism' could be used in order to cast suspicion on the political enemies of choice due to the vagueness of its definition and the forcefulness of its discursive impact (2011: 9). The usage of 'violence affirming extremism' has definite parallels to it, as it can be used in accordance with power relations and cast suspicion on an increasing number of groups. What is clear in relation to the definition of the term is that it shows elements of essentialization of what it means to 'affirm violence'. When comparing this against the tradition of Contentious Politics Studies, we can clearly see that the aim of this field - to present collective violent acts as political - is undermined within this discourse. Instead, the definition implies lack of moral through the describing a 'bad' behavior rather than political conviction.

4.1.1 Social issues

Much of the construction of the concept 'violence affirming extremism' revolves around social problematics. The concept in itself is mostly built upon explanations and definitions of the background and circumstances of the individuals that enter a process of 'radicalization'.

The first thing that is maintained throughout the material is the construction of the 'violence affirming extremist' as a young person. Youth is emphasized as essential in the radicalization process towards 'violence affirming extremism'. The report 'When we care' states that "the extremist environments attract especially young people" (42) as well as that the whole purpose of the report is to investigate "[...] what constitutes violence affirming extremism, why and how it can attract young people" (12). Youth is an underpinning factor of radicalization. In the 'Action plan' it

is stated "that there are tendencies of anti-democratic attitudes among some youth groups. These individuals may be attracted to violent extremist environments" (Skr 2011 12:44: 5). Over all, these type of quotes occur throughout the material and it is even stated that the over all purpose is to understand how 'violence affirming extremism' can attract young people. Youth is also mentioned as a social factor in terms of family and work, since it is deemed necessary to have a lot of time on one's hands to be a 'violence affirming extremist' (SOU 2013:81: 37). There is no mentioning of older participants (apart from one mentioning regarding the higher average age of islamist extremist) and the impression one gets is that either all 'violence affirming extremists' are under 25, or that the material only focuses on the radicalization of these groups. This construction is important since it shows clearly which people are presented as 'violence affirming extremists', and the youth aspect tells us that the material considers youth to be a prominent factor of importance.

The youth in risk of radicalization can be placed into two groups according to the material; either as troubled and lost, or as inclined to violence and criminality. The first groups is described as "seeking friends and maybe substitutes for parents and family that they feel have let them down" (SOU 2013:81: 38). The fact that people have "failed social relationships" (SOU 2013:81: 38) is emphasized as a possible catalyst towards radicalization. This groups is described as "lost and searching" and may "seek comfort within the sphere of violence affirming extremism" (SOU 2013:81 38). Much emphasis is placed on the emotional reasons of radicalization, such as feelings of desertion and the lack of a sense of belonging. These individuals are often radicalized and enter extremist groups through gate keepers and charismatic prominent figures (SOU 2013:81: 37). The argument is that this group is prone to radicalization in order to find meaning in their lives, built on phrases such as "[t]he extremist environment is often a context of fulfillment for individuals with low self esteem" and is based on a "need for power or control, status, social kinship, friendship or identity and belonging" (Skr 2011 12:44: 17).

The other group that is presented as vulnerable to radicalization are those already somewhat criminal and prone to violence. These individuals are described as people with "complicated and heavy backgrounds" and may become "very active because they are often prone to violence and may already have criminal experience from other environments" (SOU 2013:81: 38). The process of joining clear cut criminal networks are equalized to joining a 'violence affirming extremist' group, why previous criminality is essential (Ds 2014:4: 34). These individuals may therefore become radicalized with incentives such as excessive use of violence, drugs and knowledge of

criminal activity. These individuals may join since they are "thrilled by the excitement of new challenges and feel the need to test their own boundaries by seeking out "dangerous" environments" (SOU 2013:81: 38). What unites these two groups is the emphasis on emotional triggers, feelings and experiences. It is stated that "the strive to join a violence affirming context is rather described as an emotional incentive by the individual" (Skr 2011 12:44: 17).

By presenting the extremists as young, lost or prone to criminal behavior, the discourse takes away all political agency based on from the individuals, as this is understood as making rational and enlightened decisions. A picture of a lost and struggling youth is painted, and their personal and emotional circumstances seem to be key to understand why the enter a 'radicalization process'. These people seem unable to handle their environment in one way or another. More importantly, they are presented as almost gullible and drawn into whatever community close to them that may seem enticing since they may "seek comfort" or "dangerous environments" (SOU 2013:81: 38). In this case, the acts that are carried out are being presented as unpolitical, whereas a Marxists would understand all acts as highly political and stemming from structural injustices such as class society (Thompson 1966: 10). Here, the focus lies rather on emotional traumas rather than conscious decisions made from material circumstances.

Mouffe means that in a 'moralizing discourse', belittlement and reduction of political opponents is key (2005: 19). The discourse that presents itself in this text shows how these people are in fact not making rational, enlightened decisions but rather that we should see them as unaware of their context or seeking emotional confirmation. The youths in risk of radicalization are thus not only belittled in age, but also in emotional and rational insights. It is very easy to dismiss their actions as 'a phase' or 'a revolt against their parents' or other kinds of agency-reducing explanation model. Mouffe's description of the creation of a subject position is just this, when a political actor becomes depoliticized and ascribed characteristics of irrationality. The point of a 'moralizing liberal discourse' is according to Mouffe to reduce any position outside the liberal hegemony to irrational and chaotic, which in this case is done by highlighting the irrational, emotional and confused decisions these youngsters are making. This moralizing discourse can be seen as the very antithesis of the Marxist understanding of agency. The moralizing discourse 'neutralizes' the agency and centers it around decisions that sustain the liberal model, why the individuals in the material are not granted political agency. The neutralization process aims at making some political decision neutral, or common sense, whereas other decisions are constructed as irrational or confused (Gramsci 1997);

(Mouffe 2005). It is the latter part of the neutralization process that is present in the material at hand.

A final social theme that becomes quite prominent throughout the reading is that of masculinity. In many instances, masculinity is described as a uniting element of the communities. It is stated that "within the right wing and the islamist extremist environments there are a large amount of material [...] that suggests male fellowship and male ideals. Also within the autonomous extremist environment there is an aggressive masculinity that expresses itself in how the violent fight is taking place" (Ds 2014:4: 55) even though the autonomous movement fight "against racism, sexism and homophobia" (SOU 2013:81: 50). It is stated that the all of the environments are "male dominated" and that women tend to commit fewer crimes, occupy less prominent positions and have less influence in theoretical and ideological context (Skr 2011: 15-16). It is mentioned that women are to a larger degree active in the left wing organizations, but this statement is left without further discussion as to why this may be. The violence aspect is clearly masculinized, and it seems that masculine ideals are underpinning the cohesion of all the groups, by also functioning as a common denominator in all of them. A subject position of young, angry men is constructed in many placed throughout the material, apart from in 'When we care', in which gender is not mentioned at all. As the other texts depart from an explicit understanding of men as the prototype for any 'violence affirming extremist', the assumption is that the same goes for 'When we care' as well - or that this report views the extremists as genderless. Women as agents in this context, however, are not mentioned.

As discussed by scholars, women are indeed not as prone to join islamist movements as they are to join leftist, progressive movement (Ness 2007: 7). When the material admits that the leftist groups indeed fight sexism and homophobia, which the other groups support, a separation and a recognition of the difference in aims between the groups would have made the conclusions closer to a more nuanced presentation. Apart from the violence aspect, women are yet again discursively denied agency. We do see an acknowledgement of female participation within all of these movements, but mostly as passive. 'When we care' states that within the right wing movements, "white women are considered to have an important role as child bearers and family mothers" (SOU 2013:81: 34). This representation negates women's participation as politically convinced actors, and reproduces the image that they act out of love and compassion, in opposition to men who act in accordance with masculine, violent ideals.

Feminist scholarship has emphasized women's right to be recognized as political agents (Brown 1988). This material is very gendered in the sense that it explicitly and implicitly connects violence, extremism and crime to men (with emotional problems). This assumption may be true, especially in regards to islamist and right wing extremism, but it undermines and neglects women's participations and furthers the idea that politics and violence is essentially a masculine phenomena (Ness 2007); (Brown 1988). As in many other instances, the presentation of the conclusions are not problematized to any extent in regards to masculinity. Why men would be more prone to join extremist movements is never discussed, but rather silenced. Since the material is meant to present a societal and theoretical analysis of social relations that constitute the issue of violence affirming extremism, this silence is remarkable and a connection between masculinity and an essentialist inclination towards violence is therefore suggested. From what Wendy Brown suggests, we can see a continuing placement of all things political and specifically politically violent among men. This phenomenon is clearly present in the material as well since women are clearly left out, and their participation in these movements it left unmentioned. Brown means that the gender roles in relation to political agency fill a function, in which capitalism reproduces itself through the assigned roles and acts that the binary gender system applies to the individuals subsumed into it. This essentialization, in which the construction of 'violence affirming extremists' are young, angry men independent of what group they belong to is one of the most prevalent elements in the construction of the discourse.

4.1.2 Structural issues

Much of what is described in the section 'Social issues' also touch upon structural explanations of 'violence affirming extremism'. By structural issues I mean issues that are described as connected to society on a larger scale, such as collective tendencies in Swedish society.

One of the themes that reoccur in the material is that of unemployment. The material states that "[i]ssues of socioeconomic exclusion and alienation are frequently reoccurring in the discussion about the driving forces of extremism. Circumstances such as perceived discrimination and unemployment can drive individuals into anti democratic movements" (Skr 2011 12:44: 17). Unemployment is often described as such, as a corner stone in an exclusion process from

'established society' alongside issues such as "economic injustice [...], lack of housing, environmental destruction, corruption and increased diversity" (Samtalskompassen 3). As already mentioned, unemployment is used as an explanation of radicalization processes on a social level, in which one needs time and dedication in order to commit to extremism. However, it is also presented as a structural underlying phenomena that may be a catalyst and a driving force of 'violence affirming extremism'. Another term that is perhaps not as evident as unemployment is the term social exclusion (in Swedish 'utanförskap'). This term is vague, but used quite frequently to describe general phenomena of how certain groups end up outside 'established society'. As seen in the quotation above, social exclusion is posited within 'the driving forces' of 'violence affirming extremism' (Skr 2011 12:44: 17). The image of Swedish society that is created in this part of the description of the underlying premises is one of socioeconomic injustice, large differences between groups inside or outside established society and a general lack of integration (Skr 2011 12:44: 28). The process of social exclusion is therefore something that stems from a structural societal process in which certain groups become particularly vulnerable to radicalization. Therefore, the material argues, it is important to look in socially neglected areas to find these people in time in order to conduct dialogues regarding 'democratic values' with them (Samtalskompassen 1).

Thus, the material constructs an image of socially neglected youth, coming from a working class background. They may also 'perceive' discrimination, and lack access to general institutions. The tone in the material is not judgmental - these circumstances are rather described as structural deficiencies in which society, rather than the individual, has failed. These issues are seen as 'driving forces' of radicalization, which implies that under these circumstances, individuals are less eager to stay within the realms of liberal democracy. These issues should therefore be understood as quite prominent in the material, and in the state's analysis of radicalization processes. When the state and its institutions fail, those that are left behind will revolt and turn against the state itself - in this case by becoming 'violence affirming extremists'. Mouffe means, however, that all liberal institutions have an inherent inability to handle the political differences that exist in society (2005: 26). Both Mouffe and the material recognizes the failure of these institution, but the contrast between them is how they understand it. When the material describe how these structures may push individuals into radicalization, the focus comes back to the individual and the choice he makes. This phenomenon goes through this whole chapter, as the material presents what is easily understood as structural, or institutional issues, but come back to the emotions and perceptions at individual level. There is a sense of inconsistency here, as structural issues are in fact emphasized but are later quickly shift, by

focusing on individuals again. This is part of the moralizing discourse which demands individuals to make the 'right' or 'good' decisions that society demands of them, even when society itself admittedly fails them (Mouffe 2005: 26). Therefore, it becomes interesting to continue this discussion in relation to the suggestions of possible solutions that the material presents, which are the abovementioned 'dialogues'. I will reengage in this discussion in section 4.2, in which I present the social context and operationalization of the discourse.

4.1.3 Political issues

The framing of the political aspect of the material turned out to be somewhat difficult, since the material presents the groups as highly unpolitical and un-ideological, which clearly relates to the post-political condition that Mouffe discusses (2005). As I still understand this framing as a part of a political discourse, I decided to describe this under the headline 'political issues'.

A 'violence affirming extremist' is according to the material either a right wing extremist, a left wing extremist or a islamist extremist. Thus, the uniting factors of these three groups are based on the argument that

> [e]xtremism is about intolerance of opinions and interests that are not consistent with one's own. Extremists claim to stand for what is right and good. Anyone who has opinions that differ from theirs is wrong and stands for what is evil (SOU 2013:81: 15).

Thus, the differences in ideology among the three groups are superseded by the elements that unite them. This is motivated by the argument that "[a] unifying link for the type of extremism that is of interest to the inquiry in are the rule of law and democratic governance is rejected and that politically motivated crime is considered a legitimate way to influence society" (SOU 2013:81: 33). Individuals in the radicalization process are described as having "initially none or a very weak feel for the ideological appeal" (Samtalskompassen 3). It s also argued that 'violence affirming extremism' is as much as any other youth subculture dependent on social elements of unity:

> [t]he extremist environments does therefore not constitute political movements in any traditional sense. Instead, the extremist environments instead are constituted by a limited number of adolescents

that provoke and attack without any realistic political aim. The unity is as much built upon age, friendship, music and clothes as it is upon ideology (BRÅ 2009: 44, quoted in Ds 2014:4: 54-55).

Thus, the presentation of the 'violence affirming extremist' is that the groups rather function as subcultures than as political actors. This is consolidated with the presentation of "conspiracy theories" as elementary for 'violence affirming extremists' (Samtalskompassen 3). Ideology, on the other hand, is presented in the material as secondary in the radicalization process; often, the social community or a sense of belonging comes first. The understanding is that ideology "must be there and must be perceived as inciting to individuals in order for them to be drawn into a process of becoming a violence affirming extremist" (SOU 2013:81: 37). It is also stated that "ideology is rarely the decisive factor" (SOU 2013:81: 37) in an individual's radicalization process, and that it is common that certain individuals "have been engaged in various extremist environments with greatly differing focuses" (Ds 2014:4: 56). Clearly the material considers violence as the primary focus of all of these movements and ideology as having very little influence, as it is "essentially the same social mechanisms that motivate individuals to join violence affirming extremism, regardless if it is a movement that promotes a classless, an ethnically homogenous or a islamist society" (Skr 2011 12:44: 4).

Another theme that becomes prominent is the dichotomization of the political tendencies of the extremist groups. The material presents the three groups as comparable unities even though their methods, goals and beliefs differ. The reason for this is described as such: "[a] unifying link for the type of extremisms that are of interest to the inquiry, is that the rule of law and democratic governance is rejected and that politically motivated crime is considered a legitimate way to influence society" (SOU 2013:81: 33). 'Violence affirming extremism' is also presented as the antithesis of liberalism, democracy and security. Regarding the relationship between liberalism and extremism, the material makes it very clear:

> The best way to challenge radical ideas is to take on a liberal attitude towards disagreements, radicalism and antagonism. That way, extremism can be de-mystified and de-glorified without having large groups feel excluded. But, the liberal attitude also entails a responsibility to deliver powerful arguments against and alternatives to the ideas of the extremists (SOU 2013:81: 34).

Apart from liberalism, 'violence affirming extremism' is posited in stark contrast against openness since they "do not accept the foundations that our open society rests upon" (Skr 2011 12:44: 4).

This shows that the material considers extremism as unnuanced, narrow-minded and the very antithesis of what is considered open, including, democratic liberal society.

One thing that stands out in the description of left wing extremism, is that it seems to have a larger influence outside their own groups. Since they fight against "racism, nazism, sexism, homophobia and for asylum seekers rights" (SOU 2013:81: 50), they can "periodically count on support for their campaigns far outside their own realms from people who actually don't sympathize with political violence, but that do not realize that these campaigns ultimately are driven by such purposes" (SOU 2013: 50). The fact that the left wing groups have larger support in 'majority society' is directly contrasted with the statement that left wing groups have a larger violence capital and impact since "their violence acts are often more prepared and planned for than those committed by right wing extremists" (SOU 2013:81: 50). This is accompanied by a reassurance that this part of extremism in fact seem to conduct more violent crimes than any other. The nature of the crimes are not specified.

Related to the political issues described in the material is the reoccurring unification of the three different groups. The unification is clear from the start, as the "the purpose of the inquiry was to propose how violent affirming extremism can be prevented, irrespective of what ideological motives may be behind it" (SOU 2013:81: 15). I have attempted to present the unification element throughout the whole analysis, as it is underlying and essential for the whole material. As this is a departure point it colors the whole presentation and framing of the problem with 'violence affirming extremism', and all of the above mentioned themes and categories build upon the notion and understanding that there is more that unites than that separates the three groups.

The groups are clearly presented as violence-focused rather than ideological, political organizations. Thus, the three different groups are presented as essentially alike, their aims and goals are downplayed, and they are described as irrational and unrealistic. The youth subculture parallel is once again highlighted, and the political ideologies are compared to "conspiracy theories" (Samtalskompassen 3). Mouffe argues that depoliticization is an important element in liberal moralizing discourse (2005: 22). The depoliticization element in the material has been shown in previous chapters, and proves present here as well. The comparison, which can even be read as an equation, between conspiracy theories and the ideologies which the extremist groups subscribe to is one clear example of this. Conspiracy theories are associated with irrationality and paranoia

rather than with balanced political analysis - and by presenting these groups as subscribers of conspiracy theories, they are yet again presented as anything but political.

There are also de-legitimization aspects at play here. Mouffe means that this process is important for liberal society in order to remove legitimacy from political ideologies, groups and acts that stand opposed to liberal societal order (2005: 23). This way, the groups that criticize a liberal way of doing politics can be discredited and their critique will therefore have less impact. The delegitimization in this case centers primarily on the methods that these groups use. The use of violence is, as mentioned, presented as the number one characterization of these groups, as the overarching aim and goal. Since no political rationality is ascribed to them, violence is all that is left. What the use of violence entails is, as mentioned, not described. The centrality of violence is thus one part of the delegitimization problem, which is of course connected to larger moral standpoints. The material makes a clear distinction between established society, which is liberal, tolerant, respectful of human rights and rejects the use of political violence. This distinction is also part of the unification of the three groups, since they have nothing else in common, what unites them is that they do not act within the limits of liberal society. "Liberal attitudes" are therefore also seen as the only reasonable approach to people in radicalization processes (SOU 2013:81: 34). This is an example of what Mouffe would describe as liberal self-righteousness, since it posits liberal attitudes as morally higher and as a representation of a 'general good' that must convince anyone with different opinions on what in fact is better for them, and better for society (Mouffe 2005: 23)

However, the delegitimization takes different expressions depending on the groups in one instance in the material. As presented, the material does recognize that left wing extremist groups tend to receive support from others outside their realms, thus indicating that these groups are in fact seen as more legitimate in 'majority society' (SOU 2013:81: 50). The fact that these groups fight against e.g. nazism and homophobia, which are not very popular phenomena even outside leftist spheres, seemingly makes this group harder to delegitimize than the others. Thus, for this group, the process of unifying leftists with the other 'violence affirming' groups can be seen as delegitimizing. When the Dialogue compass was launched, debates erupted specifically regarding leftist groups, and scholars meant that the discrediting of these groups was problematic specifically due to the comparison with right wing and islamist groups (DN 2015). The unification of these three groups was seen as unmerited, and the leftist groups were described as a pillar in democracy rather than a threat to it. In the material, the statement that leftist groups often receive support is since others do

no realize what they are supporting, followed by strong statements regarding leftist groups' violence capital. Ascribing cluelessness to the supporters is a very clever way of arguing, since its is difficult to prove otherwise - as well as maintaing illegitimacy among the leftist groups. The fact that these statements in the material is closely followed by statements about the leftists groups violent criminal behavior is also very telling. The ambition to delegitimize this groups must be way harder and more thorough, since it receives relative support from majority society.

The common concepts that emerge as important when constructing the discourse around 'violence affirming extremism' is legitimacy, essentialism, politics and moral. As shown, there are delegitimization processes at play which indicates that the groups presented cannot be interpreted as legitimate actors. The use of violence is the common denominator, illegitimate factor but there is no definition of violence is, which indicate that the argument is built on unstable assumptions. This relates to the essentialization, which is the notion of creating a certain essence which the groups all share. The essence of the groups is irrationality, and has little to do with the ideology they subscribe to. This process would not be possible without depoliticizing the groups, thus rejecting their ideologies as unrealistic or just as a factor that justify the violence that define the groups. The depoliticization is built on notions of moral, pointing to how their ideas conflict with democracy, human rights or tolerance. These concepts are not constructed as politically ideological, but rather as moral, overarching concepts that all humans (should) subscribe to. I will reengage in analyzing this construction in my concluding analysis, and will now continue with an analysis of the operationalization of the discourse.

4.2 Operationalization and social context

This part of the analysis aims to find an answer to my second research question. This question looks to investigate how the discourse is operationalized, and how it through its operationalization shapes a social context. However, as my first two research questions may overlap and relate to each other, this section may also contribute to the analysis of how the discourse is constructed but this is not this section's primary aim. As discourse and societal context have a dialectical relationship between each other, the assumption here is that the discourse through practical operationalization shapes and influences the social context that surrounds it. I will therefore present the intended target groups of the material, which relates to a large extent to what methods of combating 'violence affirming

extremism' are proposed. To not repeat myself, I will not go in to the construction of the subject position 'violence affirming extremist', but rather look at how the target group relates to the construction of the term 'violence affirming extremism'. Within this chapter, I will use Mouffe's term antagonism and Althusser's understanding of ideology, as this chapter demands analysis on a slightly more abstract level than the previous chapter. Mouffe's conceptualization is still useful since it discusses construction of a political and social landscape, and Althusser's theory is apt since it relates social context to larger concepts such as state power and ideology.

Looking at the purpose of the reports is a relevant starting place. It is stated that the purpose "is to contribute to increasing the awareness amongst relevant professionals by sharing knowledge of what constitutes violence affirming extremism, why and how it can attract young people" (SOU 2013:81: 99). The relevant professionals are thus supposed to be able to "interpret the needs, motivations and behaviors of young people in order to identify who or which are at risk of being drawn into one of these environments" (SOU 2013:81: 99). The professionals in mind are e.g. "the local police, social secretaries, counselors, school nurses, teachers, educators, youth workers, youth leaders and the like" (SOU 2013:81: 100). Thus, this material is meant to reach professionals that often meet youth in risk of radicalization. The school system is therefore mentioned as the primary place of contact in this aspect. It is stated that "the school system holds a central role and has clear mission when it comes to creating awareness and understanding of the principles of democracy among the young" (Skr 2011 12:44: 25) and therefore "in the long term mission of furthering tolerance and openness, the school system has a key role" (Skr 2011 12:44: 37).

The focus on youth in potential trouble seems to continue in this part of the material, as the methods of combating the problem are focused to the 'radicalization process'. The material proposes different ways of 'reaching' the youth in question, which has lead to new methods that are meant to in fact reach those that work with young people. This relates to one of the important elements I highlighted in the end of chapter 4.1, which is essentialization of these groups. They are all to be handled the same way. Part of the proposal of combating extremism was as mentioned to assemble a coordinator that would function as a centre of knowledge, spreading this to concerned parties, such as municipalities or local authorities (Samordnaren 2015). The second part of the ambitious project of reaching relevant professionals was the already mentioned Dialogue compass. This website has the purpose of giving "[t]he target group such as teachers [...] increased knowledge about how to prevent violence affirming extremism" (Samtalskompassen 1). The material on the

webpage "aims to prevent radicalization among youths by, with the help of supporting and preventing dialogues, strengthening their resistance against extreme messages" (Samtalskompassen 1). The webpage thereafter lists a number of indicators of radicalization such as "risk behaviors", opinions that clash with "democratic values" that need to be met with "care and empathy" (Samtalskompassen 1). It suggests cooperation with families, if possible, and with other instances such as local police or social services.

This website is a communication channel through which the state expresses its ambitions of combating 'violence affirming extremism'. It is clearly directed to professionals who meet youths, and it dictates how this should be dealt with. The 'dialogues', which is the website's primary focus, have the aim of deradicalizing the person in question, through moral arguments that "demystify" radical views (SOU 2013:81: 34). These dialogues are meant to take place after the individual in question has expressed 'risk behavior' in any form. These dialogues in schools, in youth centers or in similar environments are the primary operationalization of the discourse. Comparing this to the works of Karpanstschof (2015), we see that the ideas in the material does not correspond to research on the matter. He argues that it is not ideas, but rather material circumstances such as having no place to meet, physical repression such as police interventions or jail or the lack of opportunity to organize that deradicalize people (2015). The ideas or deradicalization within the documents can therefore be understood as idealistic rather than materialist, since they argue conversations about values or morals that is meant as the deradicalizing factor, which relates to the moral discourse that I have highlighted as one of the important elements of the construction of the discourse.

When looking at how the target group is constituted in this material, it is clear that the aim is to educate relevant professionals in order to have them conduct 'dialogues' with youth in risk of radicalization. These dialogues are meant to strengthen the democratic values and convictions in this person, thus preventing and combating 'violence affirming extremism'. It connects largely to the idea of 'radicalization' as a social process, that must be prevented by dialogues which will help individuals to stay out of 'destructive environments'. The target groups and the methods of combating 'violence affirming extremism' are thus clear extensions of the shift in discourse which posits the issue at a social level and therefore proposes social methods of combating it. This is, as mentioned, the largest noticeable difference that the use of 'violence affirming extremism' rather than 'violent extremism' or any other description of the issue has had before. The fact that the last report before the discursive shift was published by BRÅ, the Crime prevention council and SÄPO

(2009: 15), the indications of this issue used to be understood in terms of crime, delinquencies and juridical repression. That problem formulation would presumably show different operationalizations, thus having a different impact on the social context.

The nature of the 'dialogues' that are meant to deradicalize youths, are not specified in the material. It is not clear if they are meant to be voluntary, if parents or family should be present, if they should be obligatory with repercussions if missed or at what age they should start. Clear is that they should be practiced after 'risk behavior' has been displayed. Even if Althusser (2001) understood the school system as primarily ideological, the relationship between ideological and repressive state apparatuses is not clear cut. Rather, he discusses how they at times overlap and how repression can have ideological elements and vice versa. Specifically the school is seen as one of the apparatuses in which these are commonly overlapping. In the case with the 'dialogues', we do not know to what extent these may be repressive. However, we know that teachers and other personnel are meant to look out for potential 'risk behavior' and that this behavior is meant to be reported to and kept record of (Samtalskompassen 2). It remains unclear if these dialogues are meant to stay at this level, or if their potential failure should be reported to other instances. However, we know that the goal of the coordinator was to encourage collaboration between municipalities, local police and other instances. This has in the medial debate been called 'thought-policing' (DN 2015), and the goal is to strike preemptively against extremism with methods that have elements of social repression. Thus, these dialogues represent perfectly how ideology and repression here are combined with the aim of reproducing state ideology through the correction of individual's behavior.

The prominence of the school system is quite interesting. It is implied that the school is useful in combating this issue in two instances: to teach how values, rights and social responsibility function, but also as an area in which radicalization processes can be noted and dealt with by teachers and others. Althusser understands the school system as an ideological state apparatus, an ISA, as one that appears to be "purged of ideology" (Althusser 2001: 100), but in fact sustains bourgeois ideology through its teachings and socialization processes. In this case, we can see that the school is described in very general terms but as a social instance that promotes and teaches democratic values and human rights - buzzwords that we already know from Mouffe can be interpreted as a part of liberal discourse rather than universal 'good' values (Mouffe 2005: 23). This presentation seems indeed quite 'purged' from ideology, but we can also see how the school system is used as a tool to prevent 'violence affirming extremism'. This is, in Althusser's word, clearly an ideological act. He

means that the school system is the first instance that children encounter, in which ideology is normalized. Thus, the ideological interest of the state is here communicated through the school. The state operationalizes the discourse by applying it on the school system, in which ideology is neutralized and presented as 'common sense', thus reproducing itself through the individuals that are subject to it (Althusser 2001: 100).

Going back to the discussion regarding liberal institutions in part 4.1.2, I would here like to look at how consistent the problem formulation in the material is. The material presents clearly how the state and its institutions has failed the individuals who find themselves in social exclusion, and are therefore drawn into violent environments. The fact that the material presents the problem as at least partly structural, would logically lead to at least partly structural change as suggested to combat extremism. However, there is no such analysis. Instead, it is stated that "work that aims to prevent discrimination, socio-economic injustices, unemployment and social exclusion should not be confused with work directed against the prevention of violence affirming extremism" (SOU 2013:81: 34) The problem may be structural, but the proposed solutions are highly individual. Thus, the failure of the institutions is not to blame (anymore), which clearly points to the moral responsibility of the individual - thus once again centering the discourse around morals and values.

Here, agency is suddenly ascribed to these people, and even seen as the key to prevention since the individuals "need to want" to change (Samtalskompassen 4). This shapes the social context by placing disproportionately large emphasis on individuals' approaches rather than looking at how to adjust the structural problems that were seen as "driving forces" to begin with. This a clear example of how liberal discourse prefers to place the problem among individuals rather than seeing systemic errors. As the proposed solutions are not to redistribute power and resources thus changing the system, but rather to talk about individual values. This inclination indeed shows how the self righteousness that Mouffe argues for may at times be an obstacle for the development of liberal institutions (2005: 23).

Therefore, we can conclude that the discourse is operationalized through using the school system, or the school ISA as Althusser would call it, and it is therefore primarily within this context that the discourse is sustained and given practical meaning. The use of this specific institution should not be surprising, as the construction of a 'violence affirming extremist' is highly reliant on the radicalization process that take place when the individual is young and socially excluded to some

extent. Therefore, a place such as the school which most young people attend, is clearly a relevant context for operationalization. The ideas of schools as 'purged of ideology' would from an Althusserian perspective, be refuted by this fact.

4.3 Concluding analysis

Until now, I have primarily discussed how the discourse in the material is constructed and operationalized, with connections to the theoretical framework. This part will instead lift the conclusions made in the previous analytical chapters to a more abstract level in which I will look primarily at the possible purpose of the discourse. I will here discuss the notions of essentialism, depoliticization, delegitimization and moralizing discourse through the different theoretical concepts. I will look to the theoretical framework to find possible purposes, which means that I will be using all my theoretical framework. This chapter aims to connect the findings and theorize them further with the aim of answering the third, and last research question.

When looking how the discourse essentializes these groups, its relates to how the subject position of a 'violence affirming extremist' is constructed. The image is of a male individual without the ability to think and make rational choices that has to be drawn out of dangerous processes. This process relates the creation of an essence that the groups all share, which constructs them as comparable actors. The notion of agency has been applied on the material, and the conclusion of the findings is that the discourse maintains that political agency is at best given to men, but still do not acknowledge their personal ideological conviction. In order to understand the purpose of not admitting agency to these political groups, I would like to compare the understanding in the material with Marxist and feminist understandings of agency. The use of agency in Marxism is to highlight how individual, and collective, acts come from a consciousness about class society, which in essence makes them political due to the underlying political circumstances that surround them (Thompson 1966: 10). "The personal is political" has been the mantra within feminism, aiming to highlight the same thing (Gemzöe 2002: 46). Thus, if the aim of understanding agency in Marxism and feminism is to reveal the element of politics in all instances, one could argue that the rejection and dismissal of agency aims to do the exact opposite. Once again, we see how a denial of political problems emerge in the material. Looking at what different groups see as the "motor" of society, we can conclude that 'the makers of history' are in the liberal consensus narrative debates, idea(l)s

which all make up a harmonious ensemble of thoughts. In Marxism and Marxist feminism it is instead those that act upon what they perceive unjust and demand politics that restructure their lives. This idea rejects the construction of an 'violence affirming essence' and rather gives emphasis to the actions as political acts of resistance against hegemony. This relates again to Mouffe and her idea that liberal democracy has an inscribed 'self righteousness' - if someone claims that liberal society is unjust, it must be with them the fault lies, not within liberal society (Mouffe 2005: 23). Thus, one of the useful elements of not ascribing agency to these groups is to cement and stabilize a post-political landscape in which liberalism is the sole possible source of state power.

I would also like to focus on the denial of female agency with regards to 'violence affirming extremism'. Extremism is according to the findings in the material, highly gendered. Women are not portrayed as active participators in these movements, but as absent or passive. They are clearly not part of the essence that is constructed around 'violence affirming extremism'. What could be the purpose of this passivization of women? According to Wendy Brown, the dichotomization of women as private and men as public served the state since it upholds the binary gender roles necessary for the division of labour. This way, men are productive and women are reproductive, which are both necessary for the sustainment of the state that distributes labour (Brown 1988: 7). This way, one could understand the purpose of denying these subjects agency in two ways; for the purpose of denying underlying political (class) conflicts in society, or in order to maintain the gendered division of labour also necessary for the sustainment of the state.

The depoliticization and delegitimization of the groups in the material is reoccurring throughout the analysis. The construction of the discourse presents unpolitical, unrealistic groups without legitimate, political goals. This construction has been presented in relation to Mouffe, who conceptualizes these kinds of depoliticization processes (2005). So what purpose could this element of the discourse have? Mouffe argues that if a liberal state belittles and delegitimizes groups who reject liberal democracy as the only possible societal order, liberalism does not have to address the flaws and inherent problems in its own system. By mocking those that aim for anything else, whatever it may be, the unquestionability of liberalism is cemented. In this case, the depoliticization relates in many regards to the thought of rationality. Using violence, supporting violence or believing in the ideologies that the 'violence affirming' groups subscribe to is clearly constructed as irrational and almost foolish (as it is compared to conspiracy theories). Thus, the clear dichotomization that is constructed with rational, tolerant liberals on the one hand and irrational

supporters of random violence on the other makes it clear which side is meant to be most appealing. This could also be seen as the purpose of the unification, which is one of the departure points of the material. The element of 'lumping these groups together' is thus a way to reject the differences in political aims and ideologies as if it did not exist between them. As they are depoliticized and presented as a social issue rather than an ideological issue, adds to the element of rejecting these ideologies as having any real influence on the groups.

The depoliticization therefore plays into larger processes of dichotomization, which have the purpose of constructing liberal ideology (whilst still denying that it is in fact a political ideology, rather ideas of a 'common good') as the only rational alternative (Mouffe 2005: 23). The underlying premise on which liberalism is built is that it is the only rational political order, which is dominant for the post-political context that Mouffe argues that we currently find ourselves in. This is moral argument that the discourse is built upon, in which these groups are places in a clear dichotomy against tolerance and openness. Here, we see again that legitimacy of political acts are ascribed those that act in accordance with liberal hegemony and how all other groups are constructed as the antithesis of this. The moral dichotomies could therefore be understood as having the purpose of strengthening the political acts which sustains the liberal hegemony, while centering 'good' universal ideas around liberal ideology.

I would also like to relate this to the depoliticization of social conflicts, that in fact are acknowledged in the material. Issues such as unemployment and social exclusion are discussed as structural push factors of 'violence affirming extremism', so the acknowledgement of problems are there, but these are left undiscussed. The depoliticization of these groups can therefore be used to in length depoliticizing the social problems that may lie behind this issue. Combined with the focus on the individual in the following discussion in the material which negates the problems as structural (implying that they are inherent to the system), the unwillingness to make structural, systemic changes continues. Relating this to the theories of Mouffe, it would be unwise to think that this unwillingness and the focus on individual solutions to the problem are a coincidence. Rather, this is a process in which the fault and the blame is located far away from inherent problems in liberal democracy (the inability to serve and include all citizens) and are therefore not an indicator of any political problems in Sweden. This part of the discourse therefore glosses over structural, material inequalities by constructing them as individual issues rather than political issues. The discourse is

thus useful in a process that cements and stabilizes a post-political condition in which liberal rule dominates.

The element of depoliticization and delegitimization can also be understood through an Althusserian perspective. Althusser does not discuss specifically how discourses function within a state but rather how different state apparatuses function as producers/reproducers of discourse (Althusser 2001: 98). What is interesting here, is therefore the use of the state apparatuses as a result of depoliticization and delegitimization. As mentioned, the construction of this problem has traditionally been directed towards police and juridical instances - in Althusser's words, RSAs - but are now clearly sustained by the school system and other social instances in which young people are present. I would like to look more closely at how this functions, and the possible political purpose of constructing a discourse which tends towards ideological rather than repressive elements. The school system is according to Althusser an important apparatus in the reproduction of ideology, since it can help shape citizens from the early stages of their lives (Althusser 2001: 99). The discourse on the school as a medium of democratic values is highly present in the material, and the use of specifically the schools as the forum for finding individuals in radicalization processes is emphasized. The description of the problem is related to social and structural issues, which Althusser would describe as lack in ideological discipline among the individuals that become 'radicalized'. The school system is one of the strongest apparatuses when it comes to the socialization of ideology, which is clearly something that the authors of the material agree upon - albeit, presumably with other intentions than Althusser. His argument is that the school system, like all ISAs, aim to maintain state power by socializing individuals in the state ideology. It is interesting that the schools are specifically emphasized also in the material, even if the material does not have a structuralist Marxist perspective. In the material, the purpose of using specifically the school system is of course not presented as a method of sustaining state power, but rather as a way to keep the youth out of trouble. However, when posited in an Althusserian perspective, one finds that the ideological apparatus that he favors as one of the most important, is also the same one that is used when the Swedish state needs to deal with people who have not been able to assume the position needed from them.

Developing the ideas of state ideology and repression, it has already been discussed how these different apparatuses overlap in the discourse of 'violence affirming extremism'. After having been directed more towards the repressive systems, we now rather see ideological methods of dealing

with the issue. Althusser meant that all state apparatuses have elements of repression and ideology, and focuses on the overlap between the two. Within this overlap, we find the discourse on 'violence affirming extremism' as presented in the material. The first thing that is interesting is that Althusser spent time and emphasized how the two combined are highly effective in the purpose of reproducing state ideology (Althusser 2001: 100). Furthermore, it is interesting to see how the discursive construction of 'violence affirming extremism' successfully incorporates both. If the focus only lies on how the state should repress and penalize those within 'violence affirming' groups, the regrowth continues. However, by combining ideological apparatuses with repressive ones in order to create an awareness of how this behavior collides with 'democratic values' while at the same time punishing those that already are criminals, we find that state ideology is effectively reproduced with all means available. The discourse now entails both ideological and repressive elements, and the so called 'dialogues' are one example of where those two coalesce seamlessly. As mentioned, the dialogues are of an unclear nature but are predominantly ideological, without clarifying how they will be carried out. However, the aim of having schools and the local police collaborating closely gives indications. Thus, there is some forcefulness behind the historically most 'kind' approach to extremism, which Althusser would understand as a very effective way of the state getting their will through.

I would like to place the scholars I have used in my theoretical framework in dialogue with each other, with the base of the findings in the material. The aim of the last research question was to look at the purpose of the discourse, which is what this last chapter intended to do. By looking at the most prominent elements in the findings of the material, I can conclude that in one way or another, the discourse helps to maintain the post-political context in which the Swedish state and the violent groups act. This would, for Althusser be clear as it is his departure point that the modern state (and in length capitalism since that is the interests of the ruling class that the state defends) needs ideology and repression just for the sake of its own reproduction (Althusser 2001: 101). Mouffe describes the same process but focuses more on the notion of liberalism as self-reproduction through its own ability to present itself as unpolitical, by negating social and political conflicts through specific discourses (Mouffe 2005: 21). In relation to political agency, we can see that those who lack it are meant to not be perceived as political actors acting due to material circumstances and ideological conviction. Thus, they all describe what they have conceptualized as part of the reproduction, stabilization and cementation of state power and as liberal ideology being the only realistic bearer of such power. Antagonistic thinking and the refusal of acting like an ideologically

acclimatized individual must therefore be completely rejected and the phenomenon marginalized, which is precisely what happens in the discourse constructed around 'violence affirming extremism'. This rejection could therefore have a specific purpose in a post-political society, where it can articulate social issues and cover up their political element while remaining, self declared, conflict less.

This thesis has found that the discourse that centers on the term 'violence affirming extremism' rejects inherent political conflicts within the liberal system, and maintains that the Swedish state acts from notions of democracy and inclusion - while positing the creation of conflicts among the extremist groups. As these groups are seen as irrational and dogmatic, their overarching political goal is dismissed as unrealistic, thus cementing the idea that these groups are not political opponents but rather a social problem that must be contained. This is the notion of essentialization, which construct the groups with a violent essence, rather than as political actors. The recognition of these groups as political actors would not, as suggested in the material, be a threat against democracy but rather against liberalism. The liberal state defines itself by defining and rejecting those outside it, and this process is discussed through the terms depoliticization and delegitimization. However, the moral dichotomies constructed in the material reject the understanding of these groups as political. In this case, we have seen how these groups have lost their political legitimacy due to their position as 'violence affirming', an unsubstantiated statement. I am still none the wiser as to what 'violence' entails. The loss of legitimacy could instead be understood as related to the fact that these groups reject liberal hegemony, and the moral aspect is a way to maintain that illegitimacy. Therefore, the purpose of the discourse constructed around 'violence affirming extremism' can be understood as cementing and stabilizing the liberal status quo through notions of essentialization, depoliticization and delegitimization and finally by moralizing.

5. Conclusive remarks

This thesis has hopefully contributed to the academic literature that address 'violence affirming extremism' as a discursive construct. The questions I asked myself to begin with was how this discourse is constructed, how it is operationalized and what purpose this discourse may have for the Swedish state. I have through a critical discourse analysis showed what elements are key in the construction of the discourse on 'violence affirming extremism' as well as how this discourse is meant to be operationalized. The analysis showed that the construction of the discourse often centers around notions as legitimacy, essentialism, politics and moral. These notions emerge in the material as part of the construction of the dichotomy that places liberal, rational society on the one hand and irrational disorder on the other hand. The conclusive analysis therefore shows us that the purpose of the discourse for the Swedish stae can, with a Marxist perspective, be understood as the sustainment and cementing of the liberal status quo. I have arrived at this conclusion through analyzing the material on both a textual, social and abstractly theoretical level, which was the aim of the method of choice. The conclusion and analysis post a number of interesting questions for further research on the topic of the discursive construct on 'violence affirming extremism, as well as relating topics.

As we live in a 'post-political' context with increasing racism and neo-fascism, further research on how liberal society deals with this and what effects this relation has on the political central current (liberal democracy) is suggested, in order to gain a more nuanced image of the relation between 'extremism' and liberal states. This subject calls for acute academic interventions since it shapes the political landscape in which we operate as individuals and academics, and relates to the field of Contentious Politics Studies, which I find both interesting and relevant within this academic field. Another subject, one that is heavily under-researched, is that of female participation in Swedish radical movements and how agency is negotiated and located from within these groups. As women are still not granted agency but rather looked over, is a phenomenon that more research with the aim of giving voice to these women and portraying them as political actors can help to break. The relationship between extremist groups and political legitimacy is another subject that I have

analytically encountered during this thesis. I suggest further analysis on how political legitimacy is given, sought after and negotiated. Moreover, I hope that the conclusion drawn in this thesis from the construction of 'violence affirming extremism' shows to some extent that the groups who do not comply with liberal democracy are not necessarily logically unified to one single subject. If the state of Sweden is not able to distinguish between class struggle, fascism and islamism, there is an acute need for politicizing conflicts and restructuring the whole political landscape.

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