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## Fundamentalist Separation or Extremist Indoctrination: Salafism in Contemporary Society

*A study of preventative practices' adaptation to Salafist Radicalisation in  
Sweden*

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## **I. Abstract**

Salafism is a fundamentalist belief of Islam and its believers strive to live like their forefathers did. In Sweden, the group aim for peaceful segregation and isolation among their believers, rejects modernity and avoid socialisation with Western society and its inhabitants. Salafism has recently acquired more attention due to the terrorist organisation ISIS which justifies their actions based on the Salafist jihadist doctrine, and hundreds of people left Sweden to fight for their cause. The divide between peaceful isolation and warfare is vast and it raises questions of what Salafism really is. As presented by academic research Salafism is complex and how to live accordingly to their faith is divided between different actors. With Salafism's complexity, its increased presence in Europe, and its wide-reaching online preaching and propaganda, it raises further questions of how authorities are up to date with this topic, and more importantly, how does the relevant authorities work to prevent radicalisation that leads to Salafist jihadism and potentially recruitment to terrorist organisations?

This thesis offer knowledge of what Salafism is, how Salafism is portrayed in Sweden by academic research and the societal debate, how Swedish local police and municipalities are working preventively with radicalisation, as well as a theoretical analysis of Salafism from the perspective of legal pluralism. The study concludes that there is consistency between academic research and the societal debate in regards of discussed content and problematic occurrences of Salafism in Sweden. Those working preventively with radicalisation does on the other hand have a minor knowledge of Salafism and are not targeting Salafism specifically in their efforts. Therefore, there is a limited understanding of the specific mechanisms in the Salafist belief that can contribute to the radicalisation process. Lastly, I discuss how legal pluralism can be used in future efforts to gain a better understanding of the Salafist community and Salafist radicalisation.

**Keywords:** Salafism, Purist Salafism, Jihadist Salafism, Radicalisation, Prevention, Deradicalisation, Violent Extremism, Legal pluralism, Sweden.

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### **III. Abbreviations**

ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

SÄPO – The Swedish Security Service (Säkerhetspolisen).

Brå – The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet).

SFS 1974:152 – The Constitution of Sweden (Regeringsformen).

SFS 2009:724 – Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages (lag om nationella minoriteter och minoritetsspråk).

SFS 1962:700 - The Swedish Criminal Code (Brottsbalken)

SFS 2010:299 - the Swedish Act on Criminal Responsibility for Public Provocation, Recruitment and Training concerning Terrorist Offences and other Particularly Serious Crime (lag om straff för offentlig uppmaning, rekrytering och utbildning avseende terroristbrott och annan särskilt allvarlig brottslighet).

SFS 2001:453 – The Social Services Act (Socialtjänstlagen).

SFS 1990:52 - The Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (lag med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga (LVU)).

### **IV. Glossary<sup>1</sup>**

*Al wala' wal bara'* – Loyalty and disavowal. It means that a true Muslim should love what God loves and hate what God hates.

*Aqida* – Creed.

*Bida* – Innovation.

*Da'wa* – Literal translation means “invite” to Islam. Missionary.

*Fiqh* – Islamic jurisprudence.

*Hadith* - Prophetic tradition (Hegghammer 2014, p. 249).

*Halal* – Permitted according to Islam.

*Haram* – Forbidden according to Islam.

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<sup>1</sup>All the words in the glossary are cited from the study by Ranstorp, Ahlin, Hyllengren & Normark (2018) if not stated otherwise. They translated the words from Arabic to Swedish, and I translate them here from Swedish to English.

*Ijtihad* - Individual interpretation (Meijer 2014 p. 4).

*Jihad* – See definitions.

*Kufr/kuffar (plural)* – Apostate.

*Kafir* – Disbeliever (Kaati 2017, p. 34).

*Manhaj* – Method/methodology (application).

*Madhahib* - The four canonical law schools (Meijer 2014 p. 4).

*Salaf* – Forefather.

*Shirk* – Big sin.

*Sunnah* – Tradition of the Prophet.

*Takfir* – Declare an individual as unfaithful or as a non-Muslim (*kufr* or *kafir*), of which was previously considered a Muslim.

*Tawhid* – The belief of an inseparable God (monotheism). Opposite to *shirk*.

*Ulama* – The learned of Islam (Afsaruddin 2019).

*Ummah* – The religious Muslim community.

## **V. Definitions**

*Violent extremism* - “(...) advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives” (RUSI 2016, p. 6).

*Radicalisation* – “(...) the social and psychological process of incrementally experienced commitment to extremist political and religious ideologies. It does not necessarily mean that those affected will become violent. However, when a decision is made that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change, radicalisation to violent extremism occurs” (RUSI 2016, p. 6).

*Jihad* – “(...) exists in different versions. Greatest jihad (*jihad akhbar*) is the daily strive to be a good Muslim and to fight inner evil. The smaller jihad (*jihad asghar*) is the fight against injustice which includes everything from oppression to the right to practice you own religion which can transcend to defensive war. Distinctions are made between offensive *jihad (jihad al talab)* which covers warfare against other states and defensive *jihad (jihad al-daf'a)* which



prescribes all Muslims to fight if their territories are attacked.” [my translation] (Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 32)

## 1. Introduction

Salafism is a branch of Islam that is founded on the first three generation of Muslims, dating back to the 600's. It is a fundamentalist belief as its followers should live according to how their prior ancestors, the *salaf*, where living their lives, which is considered the purest way of living according to Sunni Muslims (Haykel 2014, p. 33-39). To make sure that they are living accordingly, the Salafists are strict to follow the literal words of the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*, which are books that describes what is allowed in life (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 208-210). How to follow these texts properly has been interpreted differently by different Salafist actors, and the Salafist faction called the jihadist supports the use of violence in their efforts to live accordingly (Poljarevic 2016, p. 488).

The interest in Salafism in media and academia staggered with the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001 and additionally increased with the establishment of the Islamic State (ISIS) in 2014 (Hamdeh 2016, p. 407; Ranstorp, Ahlin, Hyllengren & Normark 2018, p. 15). Since then, Salafism has been studied from different approaches: research in criminology and conflicts focused on the extremist and jihadist perspectives and its relation to violence (e.g. Bencheikh 2016; Cottee 2010); theological and historical studies went deeper into the religious branch to understand the theological background, aspects and concepts of the belief (e.g. Lauzière 2010); the sociological and anthropological fields focused on Salafism as a social movement where identity formation and cultural clashes are frequent phenomenon's in postmodern secular societies in the Western world (e.g. Sedgwick 2012; Poljarevic 2016). Studies of Salafism has been made in different regional contexts all over the world, alongside with its increased presence (Karoui 2018, p. 57). Global research in the topic has showed us that with increased geographical spread, there is an increase of complexity and fragmentation (Meijer 2014, p. 29).

Ranstorp et al. (2018) have published a thorough study of Salafism and Salafi jihadism in Sweden. The research presented that Salafism has several aspects that are of concern in different aspects, such as issues with social segregation, discrimination, and clashes with fundamental Swedish values. It also presented that Salafi jihadist networks and actors in Sweden are problematic in regards of radicalisation that leads to violence or recruitment to terrorist groups such as ISIS (ibid, p. 17, 40). This is of particular interest as we can identify different branches within the Salafist religious community, where the peaceful Salafist purists opposes violence and the acts made by jihadist terrorists and their organisations (ibid, p. 8, 139). Still, in regards of the purists, the geographical area where they are active had the

highest number of people that travelled to ISIS from the Stockholm region (ibid, p. 142). Questions arise how this peaceful group can have connections to radicalisation, when they promote nothing else than non-violence and peaceful religious isolation.

It should be duly noted here that Salafism is a small minority of the Muslim world. This study is solely focusing on this small minority and does not reflect the Muslim community, faith, values or attitudes in general. This thesis is exclusively focusing on Salafism and should not be seen as a generalisation for Muslim communities, for Muslims in Sweden or Muslims somewhere else.

### **1.1 Defining the problem**

Salafists are active in their preaching both in the real world and online. Their preaching consists of several aspects where one of the most occurring topics is guidance of how to live your everyday life as a Salafist and a true Muslim (Karoui 2018, p. 67-68; Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 115-125). As their belief includes avoidance of non-Salafist behaviour and believers, they struggle to keep their group divided from the rest of society, causing the sought-after segregation and isolation. This creates a sub-culture that exists separately within the society they live in, such as in Sweden (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 219; Olsson 2012, p. 83). They are strictly bounded by their rules and normative behaviour (Olsson 2012, p. 80-81), and the reach of Swedish laws and norms are therefore most likely restricted. Since they have formally written rules that everyone should abide to (their religious texts), which is enforced and sanctioned by the members of their group, they have established their own normative system. Living by your own set of rules is not an issue in itself and is lawful, but there are potential issues as Salafism has connections to problematic behaviour, such as the promotion of anti-democratic values and attitudes and connections to radicalisation processes that leads to *takfirism* and recruitment to terrorist organisations (Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 39-42, 45-48, 65-66). What also is important is if, and how, the peaceful Salafist purists have connections to the radicalisation process. This could provide insight into the use of purist Salafists in the process of deradicalisation, which is considered an effective tool (Amin 2017, p. 80-84).

Since 2013 about 300 people left Sweden and travelled to Syria or Iraq, of which most went to contribute in the establishment of ISIS (Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 15; SÄPO 2019a, p. 63). The number of Islamic extremists is currently bigger than ever before in Sweden and they are considered the largest terrorist threat according to SÄPO (the Swedish Security Service) (SÄPO 2019a, p. 20-21). Consistently with this, Salafism's presence in Europe is increasing

(Karoui 2018, p. 57). This raises question of the how the Swedish preventative strategies and practises to reduce radicalisation and violent extremism are formed, if they are considered effective, and if they are adapted to radicalisation related to Salafism.

## **1.2 The relevance of sociology of law**

Sociology of law is a multidisciplinary field that can offer new perspectives when studying societal behaviour, through the investigation of norms or normative systems that lies outside of the scope of other disciplines. It looks beyond the normative function of the official legal system as the moderator of conformist behaviour and looks at societal differences of behaviour and how the upholding of norms occurs. Normative systems can be upheld by different systems and functions of society where morals, values and culture make a difference (Hydén 2012a, p. 15-41; Hydén 2012b, p. 19, 267-317). As Salafism in Sweden seems to have discrepancies with both the official legal system of the state and normative behaviour of Swedish society, and with strong religious legitimacy and wide-reaching presence and influence of preachers, this topic is suitable to study from the perspective of sociology of law.

## **1.3 Purpose, objectives and research question**

The main purpose of this thesis is to contribute with knowledge of how and why Salafism is problematic in Sweden in regards of radicalisation and investigate how municipalities and local police work preventively with Salafist radicalisation. The sub-purposes are to investigate if their practices are considered suitable and effective according to academic research and debates in society, and how municipalities and local police can use the concept of legal pluralism to increase the understanding of how to work effectively with Salafist radicalisation. This will produce new scientific knowledge of how socio-legal theoretical frameworks can contribute to prevent radicalisation in fields where the official law of the state lacks legitimacy.

This will be conducted by completing the following objectives:

- Understand what Salafism is and how it is problematised in Swedish society by performing a literature review and analysis of Swedish media.
- Understand how the strategies are formed by reviewing national strategies and relevant laws, as well as interviewing participants that have direct experience from the field to see how these strategies are executed in practice.

- Investigate if and how the preventative work and efforts of the municipalities and the local police are founded in the substance of Salafism, and how the level of knowledge of Salafism is among those working with radicalisation.

Based on the purpose and objectives presented above, the research question for this thesis is:

*With regards to radicalisation within the Salafist community: to what extent and how does academic socio-legal knowledge and/or societal debate contribute to preventive practices in Sweden within (a) the judicial system and (b) the welfare system?*

To clarify my research question, the *academic socio legal knowledge* will be demonstrated by the literature review as well as the theoretical framework of this thesis, the *societal debate* will be represented by the media, the preventive practices within the *judicial system* is the work of the local police and the practices within the *welfare system* is the work of the municipalities.

#### **1.4 Delimitation**

This thesis will investigate how municipalities and local police adapt their preventative practices to academic research and societal debate. Since interviews have been conducted in two of Sweden's many municipalities, this thesis is not representative for all of them. Even though that is the case, all municipalities share the same national strategies and have the same national coordination which is tasked to provide knowledge of current research of contemporary issues to the municipalities (see chapter 3.2). This thesis will therefore provide an example of how strategies are executed in practice.

This study does not include empirically collected ethnographical data from Salafists or their community to further research Salafism's relation to radicalisation. The thesis relies on previous research in this regard, as well as information from my interviews (see chapter 2 and 6).

#### **1.5 Disposition**

This thesis has resulted in eight chapters. The first chapter define the problem and present the research question of the thesis. The second chapter consist of the literature review, which will describe what Salafism is, Salafism's presence in Sweden and internationally, attractions to Salafism, its relation to radicalisation, deradicalisation and Salafism's presence online. The third chapter presents the legal aspects in relation to radicalisation, as well as Swedish national and local strategies to reduce violent extremism. The fourth chapter will present the theoretical framework of legal pluralism that will be used in the analysis of the thesis. The

fifth chapter describes the methods that has been used to collect and analyse empirical data. The result of the empirical data gathering is presented in the sixth chapter. This is followed by the seventh chapter, the analysis, which consist of an analysis of the empirical data and relevant literature, connection between legal pluralism and current practices, and how legal pluralism can be used in the future. The final chapter offers the conclusion, current and future concerns of Salafism in Sweden and future research.

## 2. Literature review

The literature review was conducted on the research engine EBSCOhost for literature in English, as well as the university-based search engine Lubsearch for mainly Swedish literature. The results were filtered down to only include research with direct relevance. A snowball effect was used as well, where relevant references within articles and books of the literature review were included as well.

### 2.1 What is Salafism?

Defining Salafism is not an easy task as it is used, described and presented in different contextual settings (Høigilt & Nome 2014, p. 34-36; Hegghammer 2014 p. 244-266; Račius & Norvilaitė 2014, p. 39-41; Hamdeh 2016, p. 407; Sedgwick 2012, p. 60-61). The foundation of the word *salafiyya*, its meaning and its consistency through time is a discussion that is widely debated as well (Lauzière 2012). My explanation and definition of Salafism is based on my literature review and how it is most often presented. By using the most frequently used explanations and concepts related to Salafism I adapt to the current discourse of Salafism in the academic debate, and I will therefore not dig deeper into the discussion of detailed specifics related to the topic.

Salafism has its religious foundation in the earliest version of Islam. *Salaf* means forefather and refers to the three first generations of Muslims, which are considered to have lived the most authentic Muslim life according to the Sunnis. A Salafist should strive to live his or her life as their forefathers did, to prove to themselves and to God that they truly worship his will (Haykel 2014, p. 33-39). Salafism's reach and popularity increased as a response to the colonisation of Muslims countries, and the will to return to a proper and pure Islam. It has its strongest foothold in the Middle East and especially in Saudi Arabia which developed a relationship between the state and the purist Salafist community (purist Salafism will be explained below). During the 1960's the state started to spread their beliefs internationally, and by the 1970's the country acquired a growth in economic capital and the religious export gained momentum (Steinberg 2014, p. 115-116). Saudi Arabia has most likely played a key role in spreading Salafism/Wahhabism<sup>2</sup> internationally, not the least in Europe (Karoui 2018, p. 58).

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<sup>2</sup> Wahhabism is a Salafi orientation and it is founded on the ideology of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab that lived in Saudi Arabia in the 1700's. For more, see e.g. Bin Ali & MSAS Sudiman 2017.

Due to Salafism's authenticity and purity to Islam, Salafis claim to belong to the only group that will be saved in the afterlife. Their purity comes with a certain lifestyle where some aspects are vital. Due to their belief that they should live like their forefathers, their sources of guidance lie with the *Quran* and the *Sunnah* (and authenticated *hadiths*), which covers all aspects of life (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 208-210).

Salafists are literal followers to their religious texts which means that metaphorical interpretations are prohibited (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 208; Olsson 2014, p. 177). Interpretation is a human innovation (*bida*) which is not accepted in the Salafist belief as their guidance of life should be solely by the words of God. A purist Salafist does also reject the four schools of Islamic law (*madhabib*) due to *bida* and instead promotes *ijtihad* (individual interpretation) (Olsson 2014, p. 177; Haykel 2014, p. 42). Instead of following the schools of law, they follow educated preachers that perform *ijtihad* and explains the *hadiths* (Mårtensson 2012, p. 116-117). Their words are not considered to be innovations, but rather an explanation of the literal words from the original sources (which could be troublesome to understand without education in Islam).

Salafism strongly emphasise *tawhid*, which means that God is the only one to be worshipped and worshipping someone or something else than God is forbidden (*shirk*). Strictly following the sacred texts is important because every act of life is an act of worship (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 208-209). Not pursuing the sacred texts is on the other hand deviant behaviour. This gives the Salafists a very limited recognition to legality, since the only law that is produced by God and accepted to be followed is *sharia* (not to be confused with the schools of law, *madhabib*, which acquires human jurisprudence through *fiqh*) (ibid.).

Another important theological element is *al wala' wal bara'* which means loyalty and disavowal. *Al wala' wal bara'* is crucial as it is separating the world in a hard distinction between good and evil (also connected to *tawhid*). Loyalty is proven to God by living by the rules set by him which includes basic principles of everyday life such as how to greet other Muslims, celebrating certain feasts, and the rejection of man-made laws (Wagemakers 2014, p. 92-93; Wagemakers 2016, p. 12-13). It also includes five daily prayers, distinguishing yourself from non-Salafists/non-Muslims by using certain clothing and appearance such as *qamis* for men (a long robe) and beard and *niqab* for women (a veil that covers the face), and not supporting or take part of any politics (Haykel 2014, p. 40; Meijer 2014, p. 16, 24; Wagemakers 2014, p. 86; Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 218, 220). The principles of living are vital and must be followed to live an authentic and pure life and every other aspect of life that is



not mentioned in the books are considered unlawful. This covers many aspects of everyday life in Western societies, such as in Sweden. Some examples of this is rejection of Swedish laws, avoid socialisation with non-Salafists (only accepted if the purpose is to convert them), avoidance of public spaces where “*haram*-activities” occur (such as drinking alcohol and listening to music), and to not take part of Jewish or Christian festivals (Olsson 2017, p. 118; Dogan 2014, p. 97-100, 103, 108; Wagemakers 2014, p. 85-86).

Finally, the concept of *takfir* needs to be addressed and its relation to *jihad*. *Takfir* means excommunication of a person or group that does not fulfil the tasks as a Muslim or is unfaithful (*kafir/kufr*), and it “legitimises the use of violence against the person or entity that is deemed to be non-Muslim” (Haykel 2014, p. 50). The concept is often confused with the concept of *jihad*, which is used as a synonym, even though *jihad* can also be used to describe e.g. the individual’s everyday struggle and discipline to live faithfully (ibid). *Takfir* or *takfiri jihad* is used in the jihadist doctrine (Paz 2014, p. 270), and should not be seen as a concept of Salafism as a whole.

## **2.2 Differences within Salafism**

The most common distinction of different branches within Salafism is made by Wiktorowicz (2006). He separated Salafism into three different factions: the purists, the politicians and the jihadist (ibid. p. 208). The creed (*aqida*) to follow the religious literature mentioned above are shared among the three branches (ibid, p. 208-210). All of them acknowledge themselves as the only true Muslims/Salafists, that their method (*manhaj*) of living is the only right path to paradise.

It should also be said here that Wiktorowicz’s model to distinguish the Salafists is one of many. It is recognised to hold certain limits, due to the overlaps across the branches, possible negative consequences when categorising groups as different when they are very similar, and geographical differences of Salafism (Bangstad & Linge 2015, p. 179-180, 191; Mårtensson 2012, p. 117). Even though that is the case, the separation into three branches is useful in an analytical sense and brings greater depth into the understanding of Salafism.

### **2.2.1 The purists**

The purists perceive the Western society as the enemy with the intention to eliminate Islam. The solution is not to fight the West in war, but instead to reject Western society and live by the laws and beliefs of Salafism. Using e.g. Western terminology is a form of deviant behaviour, as these are innovation of humans (*bida*), and adapting to a society using these is a

first step of integrating to a lifestyle that is unfaithful. Focusing on a micro-level, the purists' devoted ambition is to protect *tawhid* and hold purity to Islam as well as to share their call (*da'wa*<sup>3</sup>) by e.g. performing invitational missionary tasks (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 218; Olsson 2014, p. 182; Poljarevic 2016, p. 488). By living true to their beliefs and performing *da'wa*, society will eventually turn into an Islamic society. This creates a situation where the purists live in isolation in Western societies and integration is very limited, as one of their beliefs is to not integrate with non-believers, and "Salafi ghettos" (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 219) is therefore common in European countries (ibid).

The purists perceive the politicians and the jihadists as unfaithful and portray them as: "rationalists driven by human desire" (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 220). What constitutes their differences is in their *manhaj*, which means their method of putting their belief into practice and action. While the purists are withdrawn and peaceful, the politicians and jihadist on the other hand believe political engagement and sometimes violence (*takfir jihad*) is the proper *manhaj* to be faithful. The purists perceive the politicians and jihadist as a result of influences of the Western world, where "mass protest and overt, public opposition to government leaders" (ibid) is a part of the Western world, and not a part of the Salafist belief (ibid).

### 2.2.2 The politicians

The politicians share the same creed (*aqida*) with the purists but consider isolation to be ineffective, and on a meso-level they are trying to start collective actions based on religious authority (Poljarevic 2016, p. 488). Influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood's<sup>4</sup> (and Sayyid Qutb<sup>5</sup>) political engagement, they generated a political Islam in Saudi Arabia (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 220-223; Weismann 2017, p. 53). They agreed with the protection of a pure Islam but disagreed with staying silent in political issues which threatens its purity. The *manhaj* of the purists, such as prayer and worship, was questioned as the Muslim world was under repression and attack in different parts of the world (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 222-223). Their popularity, especially among younger generations, did not arise from their religious knowledge but rather from their knowledge of political analysis and engagement.

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<sup>3</sup> Many Muslims tend to not use *da'wa* in the context of missionary actions, but as stated in Olsson (2014) *da'wa* activities in Sweden are missionary.

<sup>4</sup> Islamic political group that was established in Egypt in 1928 and has later on spread elsewhere in the world. For more information see e.g. Weismann 2017 p. 48-53, and for a Swedish context see e.g. Carlbom 2018.

<sup>5</sup> A leadership member of the Muslim Brotherhood. He promoted a radical approach of politicized Islam, which included jihad through armed rebellion. His methods are called Qutbism. For more information see e.g. Weismann 2017 p. 51-53.

### 2.2.3 The jihadist

The jihadist is supportive of using violence (*takfir jihad*) in the establishment of Islamic states, focusing on macro-level geopolitics and conflicts (Poljarevic 2016, p. 488). Trained by the Americans in the battlefield in the Gulf War in the 1990's against the Soviet Union and inspired by the political Islam of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Qutbism (Cottee 2010, p. 336-338), a group driven by political warfare was created. As the criticism to the purists grew stronger in Saudi Arabia, the state started to imprison politicians and silence their preachers (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 225-227). The jihadists gave the purists the benefit of the doubt, that they have been blinded or misguided by the Saudi regime, but as the years went by it went clear to them that the purists were part of the regime (which included letting the Americans into their soil). The purists also refused to support the 9/11 attack in 2001, which further supported the jihadists argument that the purists were no longer on their side, leaving only the politicians and the jihadists as uncorrupted (ibid.).

### 2.3 Salafism in Sweden

Ranstorp et al. (2018) has made an extensive study of Salafism in Sweden, mainly focusing on the Salafist jihadist environment. They show that Salafism is widespread geographically throughout the country with core areas in the biggest cities and their surroundings, and it has developed from the 1990's until today (Ibid, p. 48, 57). The geographical spread is partly made through a small group of preachers that travels across Sweden and performs *da'wa*. The preachers have a good charismatic relationship with their audiences and talks in a "youthlike manner", and the topics are most often "theological, very conservative and rarely promoting violence" [my translation] (Ibid, p. 57). Due to the preachers distancing from violence the study cannot prove causality between the preaching and Salafi jihadism, but the persons of interest have concerning connections to violent environments in Sweden and abroad. Their preaching does not promote or support violence, but they are supporting and encouraging troublesome "anti-democratic" behaviour and attitudes such as homophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Shiism, restricting the freedoms and rights of women, separation of Muslims and non-Muslims, and rejecting democratic processes (e.g. voting) (ibid, p. 17). By referring to other similar examples abroad, they argue that the content of the preaching is within the law in regards of constitutional protected rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion, but it is considered a troublesome dilemma as they are using *their* constitutional rights to promote the limitation of the constitutional rights and freedom of *others* (ibid, p. 39-42, 45-46), such as equality between the sexes and freedom of sexual orientation and religion.

Purist Salafism in Sweden has been studied by Olsson (2012; 2014; 2017). The purists reach out in a friendly manner through *da'wa* activities on the streets, where they speak of truth and share informational material and religious literature (Olsson 2014, p. 178-179). They are trying to confront the negative stereotypes of Islam regarding freedom of women (such as wearing hijab, which should not be perceived as a symbol of oppression but instead the opposite - that women do not need to show their body to attract attention) and rejection of extremism and terrorism (ibid, 189-190). Within the purist group the preachers are referring to religious material of how a Salafist should live their life in Sweden, creating norms from the basis of Islam. The content often refers to an apocalyptic scenario, where those living as true Salafists will go to paradise. The world has become worse with westernisation, modernisation and materialisation (*bida*). Separation and distancing from the rest of society, from *kuffar*, is important. The Salafists are right, and all others are wrong, and the increasing Islamophobia in society further supports the notion of isolation from the westernised impure society (Olsson 2017, p. 112-115; Olsson 2012, p. 80-90).

Dogan (2014, p. 93-95) argues that to become a Salafist the individual needs to create a new type of moral subjectivity and shared habitus among the group. To do that from a religious perspective in a secular society like Sweden is challenging. Dogan describes how a group of purist Salafists live their life in Sweden, which includes avoidance of certain public spaces during certain parts of the day due to behaviour of others that is considered immoral and corrupted. Examples of these are nightclubs, parks, streets and public squares, which are places where alcohol is consumed, music is played, and the sexes are mixed freely (ibid, 102-103). As most of the informants were born in Sweden, or migrated at a young age, they had adapted the Swedish lifestyle and values at young age, but these are now considered an immoral lifestyle with the adoption of the Salafist belief (ibid, p. 97-100, 103-105).

## **2.4 Salafism internationally**

In European studies Račius & Norvilaitė (2014) researched Lithuanian converts to Salafism. The study identifies different motivational experiences for conversion and the most common factors were relational (e.g. marriage), adventurers (stumbled upon Islam online or abroad), and spiritual seekers. Mårtensson (2012) and Bangstad & Linge (2015) studied Salafism in Norway, following a Salafist group with an unusual open mind to non-Muslims. The group abide their members (mainly youths) to engage with non-Muslims and follow the laws of Norway, since they essentially correspond with *sharia*. Even though that is the case, they reject homosexuality, freedom of religion and gender equality.

In African research, Drevon (2016) studied individuals that were raised in Salafist families in Egypt. He examined the transition from the purist to the jihadist branch, where the transition were connected to failure to adapt to challenges of modern society, Salafi jihadist presence and literature online, and the shared creed. Bencheikh (2016) discusses Algeria where a Salafi branch monopolised *ijtihad*, transforming youths and people of minor religious belief into “soldiers of Islam” to re-establish justice on earth through violence. In Ethiopia (Østebø 2012), the officials of the state portray Salafi extremists as actors that pursue political power with the intent to create an Islamic state. The author cannot find evidence that proves this statement and argues that the negative stereotype of Salafists could create a self-fulfilling prophecy, steering Salafists into the very thing they want to avoid.

## **2.5 Attractions to Salafism**

The reasons why people are or becomes a Salafist are many. In a non-Western perspective, such as in Egypt, a simple explanation can be that you are born and raised in a family with Salafist religious practice (Drevon 2016). On the other hand, that situation is not common in Europe, and still we see an increase of Salafists in several European countries in the latest years. According to Karoui (2018, p. 57), the number of Salafist believers and mosques have tripled in the latest decade in regards of France, United Kingdom and Germany. A big contributor to this is considered to be Saudi Arabia and its proselytising through its religious organisations which has built, or contributed to building, thousands of schools and mosques worldwide (*ibid*, p. 49).

In Sweden, the purist Salafists mainly consist of young males. Identity formation seems to be a strong motivational factor that has a pan-Islamic approach which ignores the ethnicity of the individual. The identity formation lies instead with your religious beliefs and truthfulness to Islam. Olsson (2017) also identifies that it has connections to people experiencing socio-economic difficulties and possible alienation in Swedish society, where the stigmatized identity seems to be of importance and meaning are found in their faith (Olsson 2017, p. 111).

Ranstorp et al. (2018, p. 30) agrees to Olsson’s argument of the importance of a stigmatised identity. They also refer to other researchers which argues that Salafism’s attraction is a contextual phenomenon where relevant factors are the resentfulness of cultural local manifestations, the belief in the one true faith and the liberation from parents’ perspective of religion. Salafism holds a special power and force to transform the suppressed individuals of society into the chosen group, where their differences are turned from something negative to

something positive (ibid). They also argue that it is considered important for Salafists to educate their children at young age in “Quran schools” (religious and Arabic language education outside of school), which is considered to be more or less obligatory for Muslim kids and youths in social-economic deprived areas in Sweden. Parents should also teach their children about *tawhid* and *bida* at home (ibid, p. 30-31, 153-154).

One explanatory reason for the attraction to Salafism, among some Muslims, is that they are filled with different distressing emotions, often in relation to their identity formation and limited social-economic or political possibilities, in which the Salafism movement can responds to these feelings (Svensson 2012, p. 187). Apart from that, Svensson identifies important micro-factors which is contributing to Salafism’s attraction. The religious purity of Salafism, the separation of pure and impure through *al wala’ wal bara’*, and a will to live according to *tawhid*, creates a unified essence within the group (ibid, p. 188). This is supported from a psychological perspective of human cognition, through the concept of *psychology of disgust* of why Salafists perceive themselves as morally superior, and *general copying bias* can explain why the group has such a strong unity (ibid, p. 193-202).

## **2.6 Radicalisation and Salafism**

King and Taylor (2011) have studied different theoretical explanations of radicalisation, to see differences and similarities between them. The theories that are included are not specifically targeting Salafism, but Salafism jihadism is mentioned as one possible outcome of the radicalisation processes (ibid, p. 607). Two of the most occurring commonalities between the theories is relative deprivation and identity crisis. Relative deprivation means that the individual identifies their own group in a disadvantaged and unjust position among other groups in society. This could be both true and incorrect, but the belief and perception that this is the case is what matters. The reasons for this could be through discrimination and issues with unemployment, which is turn open the mental capacity to start questioning previously accepted believes and provides an openness to other perspectives and answers to your issues, and this is where extremist groups provide alternatives (ibid, p. 609-610). One empirical example of this is in the Netherlands where Muslim women experienced relative deprivation due to discrimination and the banning of the burqa, which in turn led to frustrations and the strive for a strong counter identity (de Koning 2014, p. 405-406).

Issue with identity crisis is considered especially applicable with radicalisation in a Western context. It is described as an individual struggle for people (especially youths) with a

background in a foreign country, living in a Western society with different religion, and cultural and social norms. The individual is dragged between the identity from their family (such as ethnicity and religion), experiencing discrimination based on these factors, and simultaneously living in and trying to adapt to a society that is widely different (King & Taylor 2011, p. 611-612). This creates a middle ground where the individual does not fit in, in any social context, which creates a reaction to search for strong beliefs and attitudes into one of the possible identities. Some branches of e.g. Islam (Salafism) offers very clear-cut differences of what is right and wrong, which makes the identify formation a simple task (for once) (ibid.). An empirical example of this is from the Netherlands in regards of radicalised Dutch Moroccan youths. Experiencing discrimination from the Dutch society, and disagreements with parents in regards of belief and traditions, they created a “Muslim identity” where it did not matter if you were Dutch or Moroccan. They were just Muslim (de Koning 2014, p. 407-408).

It should also be mentioned here that even though there are empirical support that identity crisis and relative deprivation have connections to radicalisation, there are an outstanding amount of people that experience the same situation and does not get radicalised. These are therefore just one important factor in the process of radicalisation (King & Taylor 2011, p. 612).

Bencheikh (2016) and Cottee (2010) are discussing radicalisation from a social psychological perspective. Bencheikh (2016) follows the same line as King and Taylor (2017) and argues that identity issues, experienced injustices from other groups, belonging to a group and the glorification of the causes of that group is of importance. The process starts peacefully with invitation to exile and promotes how to live a better life, but slow and steady it constantly staggers into more and more acceptance of hatred and violence to other groups (Bencheikh 2016, p. 30-39).

Cottee (2010) agrees with Bencheikh (2016), that the dehumanisation and the justification of violence of moral grounds is vital for extremism. He argues that we adapt ourselves in socialisation processes to fit into the normative and moral standards of the group and punish ourselves if we fail to do so. The outcome of this is that we in some cases perform acts that we normally would not, to fit in the specific group. This could further lead to more advances processes where the disengagement of moral control and responsibility is (perceivably) taken away from the individual, which justifies immoral acts. Some of the more frequent processes are blaming and dehumanizing the victim, performing the immoral acts in a group (no single

person feels responsible for the act), and recategorizing the act from something wrong to something “good” or legitimate (ibid, p. 330-333).

Ranstorp et al. (2018) are mentioning several different important factors for radicalisation, of which a few are social factors, social-psychological factors and identity issues. They further state that preachers in radical environments (in real life and online) and group dynamics could accelerate the radicalisation process, and they emphasise the role of isolation of groups.

Isolation leads to failed integration and alienation, which in turn could lead to criminality and radicalisation. They also mention relative deprivation as a factor in relation to Salafism, where the West is perceived as the enemy to Islam and Salafism holds the solution to this threat by solidarity, religious belief and commonalities of norms (Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 35-36, 179).

The last section of radicalisation is the process from purist or politico to jihadist. The purists are in their practices not performing harmful physical acts to others, and the politicos are mainly struggling to change political topics and ideas (could be violent in in some cases, but not to the same extent as jihadist). From a violence perspective, the most troubling branch of Salafism is therefore the jihadists. Ranstorp et al. (2018, p. 190) described shortly, based on German intelligence services, that the purist perspective of Salafism could be the first step of transmission to the jihadist. Youths are often recruited to non-jihadist Salafist communities, but due to the similarities between the branches it is an easy path to transcend between them (ibid.). Poljarevic (2016) is discussing from another perspective, that the individual’s personal traits, lifestyle, acceptance, religious engagement and risk management is a contributing factor to the “choice” of branch (ibid, p. 499-500).

## **2.7 Deradicalisation of jihadists**

To see past the violent parts of Salafism and look to the alternative perceptions and its believers is the right way to counter radicalisation, according to Amin (2017) and the case of Pakistan. By using purist Salafists with their great knowledge of doctrinal sources and recognition through the *ulama*, you can counter the narratives that are used by the jihadist from a theological perspective. This could be through e.g. breaking down and presenting an alternative discourse to verses that are used by jihadists to justify *takfir jihad*. This should be performed in combination with the narrative’s relationship to e.g. social, political and cultural values, to create a “critical bridge” between the extremist perspective and their society (ibid, p. 81-84).



This counter narrative as a deradicalising effort has been used in Sweden as well, where a group of purist Salafists are providing online lectures that are rejecting *takfirism* and terrorism from a theological perspective (Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 139-140, 220). Even though that their work resulted in fewer people traveling to fight for ISIS (according to an interview in the study), the area where they are active has the highest number of travellers to ISIS in the Stockholm area (ibid, p. 142, 220).

## **2.8 Presence of Salafism online**

Karoui (2018) has made extensive research of Islamist and Salafist presence online, focusing especially on social media. His study shows that Salafists have established a monopoly on questions concerning faith, both in the main country of the research (France) and worldwide, where different social media are targeting different audiences. The Salafist preaching consist of guidance to questions of everyday life, such as questions related to family, appearance and social practices. In the creation of commonalities in aspects of everyday life, the rejection of non-Salafist societies and communities, through citation of their sacred texts, they create and uphold a unified community that transcends ethnicity, nationalities and blood - a unified *Ummah* (ibid, p. 67-68).

There is a similar social media presence in Sweden, of which the Internet provides another arena to perform *da'wa*, that is made through theological references by charismatic preachers that holds credible reputation (Ranstorp et al 2018, p. 31-32, 113-115). Firstly, the content in the different sites addresses religious or faith related questions. Secondly, they discuss and provide guidance to questions of everyday life such as how to live in a Swedish society, the upbringing of your children, and the roles of men and women (behaviour and clothing). The strong Salafist presence on social media is used to uphold the rules set by the Salafist doctrine. The authors also present two social media channels that promotes violent extremism, more specifically propaganda, sympathy and recruitment for ISIS and Al-Qaeda (Ibid, p. 115-125).

According to Paz (2014), jihadism online, or *e-jihad*, provides an arena where questions related to jihadism can be discussed by anyone with access to the Internet. The online jihadism is taking place in forums that could be reached worldwide. There is a pluralistic discussion of the topics, where people take a stand from different viewpoints of e.g. an extremist or terrorist group, creating a democratic virtual jihadi state (ibid, p. 271-280). The indoctrination into jihadi-Salafism and self-radicalisation in the forums is a concern, where

the radicalisation can start from home without any direct contact with extremist or terrorist organisations (ibid).

ISIS is a Salafist jihadist terrorist organisation and they have had a prominent role of Islamist (online) radicalisation in the latest years. They use citations from the *Quran* and *hadiths* to legitimatise their actions in their propaganda. This is to provide religious legitimacy, purity and authority for their cause. They provide arguments that Muslims in general would not disagree with, such as the role of the *ummah*, or the central and important role of the Prophet. By using accepted arguments, they try to create an “us versus them” scenario to distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims, where the degrading of the outside group facilitates a stronger identity in the inside group (Kaati 2017, p. 22-25, 47-48).

Self-radicalisation is an alarming phenomenon, but simply getting exposed to online propaganda is more or less never the sole factor that leads to radicalisation (ibid, p, 38). There is generally a need for interaction with others where the propaganda can confirm the radicalised belief or opinions (which they support by research from social-psychology and theories of confirmation bias). They further argue that present day propaganda offers possibilities from the audience to be active in the propaganda process, such as commenting and sharing the material that is published. People that are actively doing this, are more likely to adapt and conform to the messages (Kaati 2017, p. 22-25, 39, 47-48).

ISIS propaganda is targeted for youths. Youth extremism is not a new phenomenon and they are particularly accessible for alternative solutions for their issues from a scientific viewpoint, through e.g. social and biological differences with adults. In a modern secular society, the freedoms and liberty that society offers might be restricted in low socio-economic areas, and the individual is drawn between the divided culture of the family and society. This could create a feeling of being lost, and strict authority and guidance is something that is longed for (Kaati 2017, p. 71-74). Research show that young members of ISIS usually are ordinary youths with little knowledge or interest of religion, with a high prevalence of criminality, and with a nihilist and self-destructive personality. This makes them appropriate targets to the methods of extremist recruitment (ibid.).

## **2.9 Research gap**

Research of Salafism has been made in several different areas, of which some is presented above. Even though that is the case, there are gaps that I have identified of which I will research further in this thesis.

In regards of Salafism and radicalisation in Sweden, purist Salafism is presented as a possible first step into Salafist jihadism, and radicalisation processes and risk factors are discussed as well (Poljarevic 2016, p. 499-500; Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 35-36, 179; King & Taylor 2017; Cottee 2010; Bencheikh 2016). A gap in this field is how the preventative actions in Sweden are formed and its effectiveness. This is the first gap I would like to investigate further. Founded on the research question of my thesis, this will be done by acquiring a better understanding of Sweden's preventative strategies and how the police and municipalities is working preventively with Salafist radicalisation.

The presence of Salafism online is extensive, and they have a global reach. International studies correspond well with Sweden in regards of methods of using social media, the content and the targeted audiences (Karoui 2018, p. 69; Ranstorp et al 2018, p. 31-32, 113-115). The propaganda of ISIS has also been studied thoroughly and their material is directed to youths (Kaati 2017, p. 71-74), and there are sometimes hard to differentiate between purist and jihadist content due to their shared theological foundation (Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 45, 225). Also, as the ISIS propaganda is directed toward youths, and the majority of Salafists in Sweden seems to be young men (Olsson 2017, p. 110), there is even further a need to understand how the online content matters in process of radicalisation. Since Salafism and online propaganda is portrayed as problematic, I will investigate further in this thesis how the police and municipalities consider this an issue and if they are working preventively with this.

The last gap I would like to investigate is mentioned in the literature review as a topic that needs further research. The subject is to understand how Salafism work as the normative source for Muslims in a post-secular society, like Sweden (Poljarevic 2016, p. 499). Salafist texts are more than words that needs to be recited according to Olsson (2012, p. 80-81), as Salafists needs live explicitly by these standards, and they are therefore acting as normative standards of living. People living in deprived socio-economic areas are approached by Salafists which argues that state authorities (police and teachers) has no power or legitimacy in their areas, and issues should be taken to an influential imam (Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 217-218). My contribution to this research gap will be to add a discussion of how you can use socio-legal theoretical concepts to understand how normative sources can be identified and understood in the social field of Salafist communities.

### **3. Legal aspects and strategies in the work against violent extremism**

This chapter starts with the legal framework that is available for the municipalities and the

police when they are working to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. It is followed by a presentation of current national strategies to prevent and reduce violent extremism.

### **3.1 Legal framework**

Extremist views is something that is lawful in Swedish society. Everyone has the lawful right to have their own opinion and to express it. This is protected in the Constitution of Sweden under the clause of freedom of expression (SFS 1974:152, chapter 2, § 1). Even though that is the case, there are some limitation of what you can say and to whom, and it could be unlawful to express some views in certain situations. Restrictions are for example if you discriminate someone based on their religion, sexual orientation, gender or ethnicity (see SFS 1974:152 and SFS 2009:724).

From a legal standpoint in regards of radicalisation and violent extremism, the Swedish municipalities are responsible to make sure that people below 18 years old is living a healthy life (Agnevik 2016, p. 6), and the police has the responsibility to identify and punish criminal actions.

#### **3.1.1 The police**

There is an extensive amount of possible legal interventions that can be applied to individuals that has committed an offence that is related to violent extremism, both in regards of “normal” crime such as assault as well as terrorist related offences. Laws that regulate offences like this cover a wide aspect, and all of them cannot be discussed here. What is of relevance of the topic in this study is the legal aspects that can be applied to situations or actions that is related to the radicalisation process that could lead to violent extremism, which in this case are situations where extremist views are expressed to others, or in the attempt to coerce your opinion to others.

Racial agitation is criminalised in the Swedish Criminal Code (SFS 1962:700, chapter 16, § 8). The law states that someone who speaks, or in other ways expresses, of disparagement directed to a group of people of colour, race, national or ethnic background, religious belief or sexual orientation should be sentenced to prison or pay a fine (depending of the seriousness of the crime). The law can be applied to statements made in general terms, such as in a case in the supreme court (NJA 1982, p. 128) where a camping area put a sign at their entrance stating: “Gypsies are not allowed”. The act was considered unlawful as it was made in a degrading manner.

The second law of relevance is the Swedish Act on Criminal Responsibility for Public Provocation, Recruitment and Training concerning Terrorist Offences and other Particularly Serious Crime (SFS 2010:299). It criminalises the act to urge or attempt people to commit serious crime (SFS 2010:299 § 3), or to recruit people to participate in serious crime (SFS 2010:299, § 4).

### **3.1.2 The municipalities**

The municipalities are responsible for the social services in their region, and the social services should operate to the best way possible to let all kids grow up in a safe and healthy environment, according to the Social Services Act (SFS 2001:453, chapter 5, § 1). The social services should strive to help kids and youths that are raised in an unprosperous environment, and if needed apprehend and replace the child to another home. This can only be applicable if there is a considerate risk for the physical or mental health of the child (Agnevik 2016, p. 4-7). A few examples of legal cases where apprehension has been legitimate is when youths has been living in environments with parents or close relatives that sympathises or supports terrorist groups and their ideologies (such as Al 'Qaeda and ISIS) (ibid, p 7-9).

The Social Services Act (SFS 2001:453) chapter 11 § 1, states that the social services should conduct an investigation concerning a child or youth if an appeal has been made. The investigation should examine if the child is in need of (immediate) care. Every case needs to be addressed individually where you should see to the best of the child and the factors of the specific situation (Socialstyrelsen 2016, p. 33).

The Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (SFS 1990:52) can be applied to youths or kids that are in need of care, and can result in the apprehension of the individual if there is an immediate risk for the health or development of the person (Agnevik 2016, p. 7). It should mainly be used for those under the age of 18, but in some cases under 20 years old. It should be from the perspective of what is best for the child (SFS 1990:52 § 1, section 2,3 and 5). SFS 1990:52 § 2 can be issued in case of physical or mental abuse, insufficient care or other eminent risks for the health of the development of the child. If the youth's put themselves in harmful social environments that could harm their development or health, such as criminality, drug abuse or depreciatory normative behaviour, SFS 1990:52 § 3 can be issued.

### **3.2 The national strategy to prevent violent extremism**

The Swedish national coordinator for prevention of violent extremism was in June 2014 assigned the mission to establish better cooperation and development in the work against

violent extremism. In 2015, the coordinator was tasked to develop a national strategy which resulted in a strategy with three dimensions: the promoting, the preventive and the prohibiting dimension (SAM 2016, p. 4-6).

The promoting dimension focuses on creating an inclusive democratic society which will increase societal resilience. This is made by promoting social skills, critical thinking and democratic knowledge in regards of rights and obligations. One major institution for this process is the school, where inclusive relations and a stable environment will reduce the attraction to extremist groups. Another area of relevance is the relationship between public institutions and civil society, where people involved creates solidarity and reduces polarisation in the local society. This is founded upon trust, transparency and democratic principles, which has the intent to increase the democratic values of the individuals. (ibid, p. 12).

The preventive dimension focuses on those individuals or groups that are in risk of being eligible of recruitment to violent extremist groups. This can be identified through several factors, such as “glorification of violence, deprecatory values, and lauding of anti-democratic actions and ideologies” [my translation] (ibid, p. 15). By sharing knowledge of radicalisation and violent extremism to relevant actors, individuals of concern can be identified and approached. It is the responsibility of the local coordinators that relevant knowledge is acquired by the actors in the field. If there has been an (possible) identification, the individual can be treated in different ways according to the specific situation, such as having a dialogue, contacting and including the social services, family support and consultative discussions. (ibid.).

The prohibiting dimension is focusing on individuals, and their close family, which are currently in a violent extremist environment. The objective is that the individual leaves their violent environment, and the main role of the municipalities is to offer credible possibilities for those who want to leave. This requires cooperation with judicial authorities as well as cooperation with close relatives and civil society, to create a sustainable situation for the person who want to leave (ibid, p. 16).

### **3.2.1 The role of the national coordinator**

The national coordinator was established in June 2014 and was active until January 2018 (Justitiedepartementet 2014, p. 1; SAM 2016, p. 35). The coordinator should be a supportive and an inducing pillar to all relevant actors in the work against violent extremism, such as

municipalities, administrative authorities and civil society organisations. A major focus is to support the municipalities as they have the local responsibility to work with these issues. The support could be counselling of how to develop their activities and efforts, and how to establish and develop cooperation with relevant actors. The national coordinator should have an overview of how the work is conducted in the municipalities, and also make sure that everyone is updated in regards of knowledge of current preventive practices, not at least by sharing knowledge and experiences from international cooperation's and organisation such as the EU. An example of education issued by the national coordinator is a university-based course about practical experiences and knowledge in the work against violent extremism (SAM 2016, p. 27-28; Lunds Universitet 2017).

### **3.2.2 Local strategies – the role of municipalities**

The actions of the municipalities are important in the preventive work of violent extremism. The work has been limited if we are looking back, mostly due to lack of information of how to work with these issues, what their role is and by acting too carefully due to distress of doing the wrong thing. This has been getting better with time, and increased assistance from national level to local level is vital (SAM 2016, p. 19).

The role of the municipalities is multifaceted. First, a local coordinator, or several coordinators, with the function of preventing violent extremism and increasing democracy should be appointed. This is to keep track of the current situation in the region, and to not let extremist groups thrive unnoticed (SAM 2016, p. 21). The coordinator should create an action plan that is adapted to the local challenges. The plan should clarify which responsibilities that is tied to the municipalities and the police. They should also establish, maintain and support preventative actions and cooperation between actors of relevance, such as the Swedish Police, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, schools, faith and sport communities and the social services. Another important part to work effectively is to share information among actors (with respect to confidentiality). They should also offer support and practical possibilities for those who want to leave an extremist environment (ibid, p. 21-26).

### **3.2.3 The Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism**

The Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism was established in January 2018 by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå). The centre will continue to work with the mission that was tasked the national coordinator, learning from former experiences and challenges, and share and develop knowledge by national and international cooperation. All this will be founded on the current criminal policy. It will also develop a handbook for

municipalities to develop functioning preventative work (Brå 2018, p. 1, 5-7). The centre is still establishing and is expected to be fully operative in 2020.

### **3.3 Strategy for the police**

The police does not have a strategy that targets violent extremism specifically but they do have a strategy against terrorism, in which terrorism is considered an extreme version of violent extremism. The strategy consists of three dimensions where the first dimension, prevent, is of relevance in regards of violent extremism as its purpose is to reduce radicalisation that leads to violent extremism and recruitment to terrorist groups. The second and third dimension is focused to reduce the risk of terrorist attacks through sharing of information among authorities, identifying financial support of terrorism, making sure there are legal tools to fight terrorism, and protection of civilians and critical infrastructure (Justitiedepartementet 2015, p. 9, 15, 21). The dimension that is in the scope for this thesis is therefore only the prevent dimension.

#### **3.3.1 Prevent**

The purpose of the prevent strategy is to reduce the possibility and intent of people to commit or support terrorist attacks. This is made through the establishment and use of preventative methods that can avert radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism. Similar to the strategy of the national coordinator, they call for a whole of society approach where all relevant actors from local to national level needs to be included. This is conducted by identifying possible risk factors, people that is in risk of radicalisation, and driving forces in the process of radicalisation. What differs from the national strategy is that the police focus on the prevention of crime and recruitment of terrorism, while the strategy of the national coordinator emphasises other topics as well, such as democratic values and a healthy social environment (Justitiedepartementet 2015, p. 9).

A focus is located at cooperation with municipalities, as they in turn establish cooperation with other relevant actors such as the social services, schools and faith communities. By combining the knowledge of the local police and municipalities, they can together establish action plans that fit the local challenges. The police will also provide information to local actors, if approved in regards of confidentiality, of people in need of assistance to leave a violent environment (ibid, p. 11-14).

### **3.4 Challenges identified in the strategy of the national coordinator and the police**

When the strategy of the national coordinator was published in 2016, there were several



aspects identified as in need of development by providing stronger cooperation and more research. Some highlighted topics were the motives of people who travelled to Syria (especially in regards of women), risk factors of radicalisation that can be identified within psychiatry, and the function of online propaganda as terrorism recruitment strategy (SAM 2016, p. 29-33).

In the prevent dimension of the police strategy, the role of the Internet in regards of radicalisation is an alarming phenomenon. While considering the fundamental rights of the individual (such as freedom of expression), online propaganda and other material will be countered through increased knowledge and resilience of the potential audience (Justitiedepartementet 2015, p. 10-11).

## **4. Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework that will be used in this thesis is legal pluralism. This section gives a descriptive explanation of the framework and its relevant parts, as well as short contextual discussion for this thesis.

### **4.1 Legal pluralism**

There are several definitions and usages of the concept of legal pluralism. The concept can be used to understand the hierarchy of different kinds of state or supra-state laws (the judicial perspective), as well as to describe and understand unofficial normative law that is not (solely) issued or enforced by the state (the social science perspective) (Griffiths 1986, p. 5, 8). When there are different coexisting systems there is a possible clash of which legal system that is holding the highest validity, both in concern of judicial and normative validity (de Lange 1995, p. 105). A short definition of legal pluralism that works for both of these perspectives is “that state of affairs, for any social field, in which behaviour pursuant to more than one legal order occurs” (ibid, p. 2). A common example of legal pluralism in the judicial sense is made in colonial studies, where both European and African law are used simultaneously within the country but applied differently to the citizens based on their ethnicity, religion or geographical area (Merry 1988, p. 871). This is based on the notion of legal centralism, which differentiate the two perspectives of legal pluralism.

Legal centralism is considered an ideology, of which it finds the only form of ordering from the official systems of the state and judicial system, such as the courts, lawyers and prisons (ibid, p. 874). From a social science perspective, that the only source of law is generated and issued by the state, caused limitations in the fields of study where social behaviour different from the official law. Judicial legal pluralism is therefore sometimes called “legal pluralism in the weak sense” (Griffiths 1986, p. 8).

The second perspective, the one of the social sciences, problematises legal centralism and widen the scope of the framework. Legal pluralism does no longer require multiple official legal systems to identify the plurality of law, but merely identify different behaviour of different groups in society. Griffiths (1986, p. 12) define it as “an attribute of a specified social group”. It does not have to be formally written into text, but simply unspoken rules and guiding behaviour which causes predictability of the specific group (ibid). He argues that every society consist of different groupings that holds different kinds of compositions and behaviour, and all of these have certain rules of what is accepted (of which he calls a legal

system). In these grouping there are other forms of coercion than those of the state (and the official legal system) that guides you into conform behaviour, such as through social sanctioning. Since this is an addition to the coercion issued by the state, this contradicts the notion of legal centralism (ibid, p. 15, 26). It does not reject that the state does have a mechanism of coercion, but simply that it is the sole actor of that function. Reality is a disorganised coexistence between different groupings, social structures and functions, of which the conforming behaviour and its coercion overlap between the state, the formal and the informal groupings of society (ibid, p. 27).

#### **4.2 Semi-autonomous social fields**

To identify different systems within society, semi-autonomous social fields are used as a concept and as a method of identification. These systems are defined as “social organisations that generate their own norms and values. But norms are also legislated by governments or created through judicial decisions. Their norms impinge on the semi-autonomous social fields which already have their rules” (Hellum 1995, p. 16). As the social fields exist in a larger society with wide reaching presence and coercion of the state, the fields have influences both from the official legal system of the state as well as generating their own unofficial law based on norms and values (Griffiths 1986, p. 29; Merry 1988, p. 883). Semi-autonomous social fields can be a useful tool to identify social fields in society, its rules and norms, and to see the interplay between legal, illegal and non-legal norms. In this sense it can provide an understanding of the potential absence and effect of the official law in the particular grouping (Griffiths 1986, p. 30).

#### **4.3 How do we define law?**

If the state is not the sole issuer of laws, then how do we define it? Griffiths approaches this discussion with a short definition: “self-regulation of a 'semi-autonomous social field’” (Griffiths 1986, p. 38). With this definition you can differentiate between different forms of law, where for example state law can be defined as official (legal) law and the laws of semi-autonomous social fields can be defined as unofficial (social) law (ibid.).

Zahle (1995, p. 197-198) on the other hand problematises the possible acceptance of unofficial laws (social norms) as a form of law. Not because of the functioning or relevance of the norm in regards of validity, but rather in the inclusion of social norms into the official legal systems. He argues that if social norms are considered law, that they would be valid enough to be considered equal with official law, then how do we implement it into the official

legal system (which is an important part of the public system of authority)? This further problematises the function of social norms. Which norms should, and which should not, be considered valid enough to be included in the official legal system? A clear definition of law is therefore needed (ibid.).

#### **4.4 My considerations on the definition of law**

Griffiths and Zahle differs in their definition, mainly because of their discrepancies of legal centralism. Zahle's points are valid in the sense as it raises new problems to consider social norms from local groupings as valid as official laws of the state, and how they are to be included in the official legal system. Griffiths holds a wider and abstract perspective of what is considered law and does not put much focus of unofficial laws usage and implementation into the official legal system and its functions. What is of relevance here, and for this thesis, is that the laws of social fields exist regardless if we do, or do not, identify and implement them into a system founded in legal centralism. The unofficial laws of social fields are as valid in their context as official laws of the state, as the unofficial laws affect their social settings. As mentioned before, the judicial perspective limits the scope for social sciences, and therefore the operationalisation of law in this thesis will be founded in the definition of Griffiths.

#### **4.5 Why legal pluralism?**

As it has been presented in the literature review, Salafists rejects Swedish laws and society as their source of legitimacy is found in their religious texts and educated preachers. Legal pluralism and its concepts can be a useful theoretical framework to access better knowledge of their laws and how their normative system differentiates from the rest of Swedish society. By gaining further knowledge of their semi-autonomous social field we can increase our understanding of if, and how, different parts of their social field potentially act as facilitating factors in the process of radicalisation. This can be beneficial while creating preventative practices. Using this socio-legal framework is therefore suitable in answering the research question of this thesis.

## **5. Method**

This chapter presents the methods and methodological considerations that is included in this thesis. It is divided by the two main data collection methods, interviews and content analysis, and explains how these are conducted, as well as related ethical considerations.

### **5.1 Interviews**

The main empirical data in this research will be collected through interviews. Interviews are useful to gather information about an individual's experiences, opinions and understanding of certain questions or topics. It is particularly useful when there are specific and detailed questions that needs to be addressed in a qualitative manner, of which the information is not accessible or approachable in any other way (Denscombe 2009, p. 232-233; O'Reilly 2009, p. 125-126). The best suited interviewing technique for this study is the semi-structured. It is recognisable as the theme or the topic is strict, but the questions of importance are not. This is suitable for my interviews as the interviewee's are the ones that knows what specific information that is of most importance in relation to the topic. By letting the informant lead the direction of the interview, and adapting to a passive and neutral stance, there is a lower risk of subjective intervention from me as an interviewer in regards of important matters. Intervention will only be made if the interviewee leads the conversation outside of the topic of discussion (Denscombe 2009, p. 234, 245-246; O'Reilly 2009, p. 126).

Quotations from the transcriptions of the interviews will be included in the thesis, to prove particular topics or important statements that have been mentioned. As the interviews were conducted in Swedish, and this thesis is in English, I have to translate the citations. These will be translated in the best way possible to represent the meaning of the citation as well as the words that are used. In some cases, direct translations present a faulty image, such as if words are used idiomatically. These will be translated to correspond with the meaning of the sentence, rather than the words, and keep a similar idiomatic explanation of the description if possible.

#### **5.1.1 Participants**

Three interviews were conducted for this research with participants that work with violent extremism. Two of the interviewees are municipality workers and one is a police officer. They will be referred to in this thesis as municipality worker 1, municipality worker 2 and police officer. All of them work as coordinators in their municipality, where different sections of administrative authorities collaborate to synchronise the preventative and operational work

that is related to violent extremism. They are all employed in two different municipalities in Sweden, of which one is a big and one is a medium sized municipality. The interviews were held at the workplace of the participants and the interviews were between 60 and 83 minutes long. The interviews mainly focused on how they are working with different issues or situations, and what parts of their job that they considered effective, hard or problematic in regards of violent extremism and radicalisation. As mentioned in the section above, the interviews were semi-constructed which mean that the interviewee led the conversation in regards of directions and specifics. Me, as the interviewer, had prepared questions to keep the interview to the topics of relevance for this thesis.

The purpose of these interviews was to acquire knowledge from people that have experience from the field and practical working methods and its operations. The coordinators are very fit participants as they have an overarching perspective and understanding of the whole process in the fight against violent extremism. They have a coordinating role with all the relevant administrative authorities and civil society organisations that experience and work with these issues (SAM 2016, p. 21-23, 26. This gives a deeper understanding of their working methods and its foundations, as well as direct information and difficulties that is experienced in the field.

## **5.2 Content analysis**

To extend my empirical data and to widen the scope of this thesis, I will use content analysis as a quantitative method of media analysis. The data that will be analysed is newspaper articles that is published in the editorial pages of several of the biggest newspapers in Sweden. This will provide information of what the public discussion consists of and how Salafism is portrayed in the media.

### **5.2.1 What is content analysis?**

The method is used to gain a deeper understanding and meaning of different kinds of medias of communication, such as texts, to see commonalities between different texts and codify them according to selected categories (Krippendorff 2013, p. 27-28). By gaining further understanding of the text the researcher can identify the underlining meaning of it, such as what the text is meant to say even though it is not typed out explicitly. This can be visible through identifying reoccurring themes, possible agendas and commonalities between texts, as well as differences within the current discourse.

Another reason to use content analysis is that text is read, understood and interpreted differently. Depending on the background of the reader, regardless of the field, the meaning of the text can be understood differently. Texts do therefore not consist of a single meaning that could be found by an analyst, but instead changes depending on the perspective of the reader (ibid, p. 27-28). Because of the subjectivity of the understanding of texts, there must be clarity of the contextual situation. When this has been made, the researcher can analyse the texts according to his or her context and present the inferences that have been made accordingly. By providing the possible biases of the researcher, the reader gains a better understanding why the texts are interpreted the way they are. The context should be explained to the reader to provide transparency, which contributes to replicability and validity (ibid, p. 24-25, 30-31, 38).

### **5.2.2 Why content analysis?**

This method is useful in this thesis as it provides a wider scope of empirical data. By using content analysis to collect and analyse information of how Salafism is perceived in the media, it will provide an additional dimension of Salafism in the Swedish context. This will help me understand if the societal debate differs from the other dimensions of the study. The content analysis of this thesis will from now on be referred to as the social debate analysis.

### **5.2.3 Method of analysis**

There are many different methods within content analysis that are available, suiting different kinds of studies. The method of analysis that suits the criteria for this research is an assertions analysis, which can simply be described as a thematic analysis where the occurrences of the themes are counted (Krippendorff 2013, p. 50). The analysis is not as simple as counting of words but is rather the contextual understanding of the text, described as “e.g. references to German foreign policy as dishonest” (ibid). These themes will be narrowed down into more specific sub-categories, called unitising. The unitising results in units, which is a coded representation of the meaning of the texts. The occurrences of the units in the texts will be counted and assist in the answering the research question (ibid, p. 98-99, 108-109).

### **5.2.4 Research question for the societal debate analysis**

Research questions are used in content analysis to keep the researcher to the topic of the study and could assist in accurate categorising, as well as to protect falling into abstract categories. The questions could provide quantifiable data, such as the occurrence of a certain word or theme (ibid, p. 38). Using a research question is therefore considered useful in this study.

The research question for the societal debate analysis is not the same as the research question for this thesis, as its focus is to present how Salafism is presented in the media specifically, which is different from the purpose of this thesis. This method is a tool to assist in answering the research question of the thesis, which can be done more effectively by using an adapted question for this method and data collection. The research question for the societal debate analysis is:

*How is Salafism presented in relation to violent extremism and radicalisation in the media?*

### **5.2.5 Contextual situation**

The context of this analysis is from the perspective of this study and research question of the societal debate analysis. I have extensive background knowledge of the topic regarding possible issues, which is a potential bias. But since the research question is designed in a wide sense (how Salafism is presented), I do not search for specific issues that I have pre-constructed in my mind, but rather look at the topics that is presented in the articles. The context that might differ my understanding from others is that I read the articles from the perspective of radicalisation and violent extremism.

### **5.2.6 Research sample**

The sampling method I have used for the societal debate analysis is relevance sampling. It is identified as a sub-population from a bigger sample, which is based on certain criteria that the researcher has identified as relevant. This creates a sample that contains data that of high significance and is manageable. Limits to this sampling is that it cannot represent the whole population, but it is better adapted to answer the specific research question of the study (Krippendorff 2013, p. 120-121).

In this research I have used editorial articles from six newspapers. These newspapers were chosen due to their popularity, as well to provide geographical spread of the agencies. These newspapers are: Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter, Expressen, Göteborgsposten, Svenska Dagbladet and Sydsvenskan.

The reason why I chose to only include the editorial pages of the newspapers is because of the content of these articles. The editorial pages express opinions of the editor and does often problematise a phenomenon in society with a critical viewpoint and tries to spark a debate. It differs here from e.g. a journalistic article that offers investigation and explanation of current events or phenomenon. This could be interesting and differ from academic research, but as I



have presented extensive research and explanation of Salafism this is not directly needed. Due to this restriction I get a sample that is manageable for proper reading.

The articles that I have selected to this analysis was gathered from a media archive called Retriever Research. In this archive I filtered my search to the restriction of newspapers from the date 2010-01-01 to the day of the search (2019-03-20). The reason why I started the search on 2010-01-01 was to create a limit of a timeframe, and almost ten years of articles is an extensive amount. This seems to be a valid limitation as very few articles were made between 2010 and 2013.

Further, the search string that I used to find the relevant articles were with the Swedish search words “salafism”, “salafister” and “salafistiska”. These were chosen to include different forms of the word Salafism in Swedish. The search string included articles that mentioned these words anywhere in the text, which gave a bigger sample, but also some irrelevant articles which was filtered out after reading (see chapter 6.3).

### **5.3 Mixed methods**

This thesis will use mixed methods. Interviews is the qualitative method and the societal debate analysis is the quantitative. One of the main reasons and perks of using mixed methods is the possibility to develop and widen the scope of the analysis. By using mixed methods data that would otherwise not be accessible, due to limitations of the methodological restrictions, can be obtained (Denscombe 2009, p. 154-155). In the case of this study, societal debate analysis provides me the possibility to gain quantitative longitudinal data from newspapers, which would not have been possible by using qualitative methods. The perks of this is that I can get another perspective of Salafism, which is the societal debate.

### **5.4 Ethics**

There are several different ethical considerations that needs to be addressed during a thesis like this. There are many different guidelines to follow in this regard, and I will follow the ethical guidelines provides by the International Sociological Association (ISA, 2018).

To keep unbiased to the biggest extent possible in this thesis is the ultimate goal, but there is always subjectivity in some regards. My bias will affect the outcome of the research, as how things are interpreted, valued and sought out is a subjective process. By providing transparency and to show possible biases I am keeping the study as transparent as possible in regards of literature, articles and empirical data that is gathered, and by providing this data to

the reader to the biggest extent possible without risking the anonymity of the participants of the study.

Protecting the personal interests and information of the participants in the study is an important role of the researcher (Denscombe 2009, p. 195). All personal information and details of the interviewees have therefore been anonymised. The names of the interviewees are therefore changed, specific locations are renamed and specific references or details that possibly could erase the anonymity are not included. Quotations that are used in this thesis are from records and transcripts of the interviews, and these recordings were agreed to be made by the interviewees. The transcripts and the recordings will not be shown to anyone but the examiner of the thesis (if needed) and will be deleted when the thesis is completed.

## **6. Empirical findings**

This section presents the findings from the empirical data collection. The first section presents the findings from the interviews with the municipal workers and the police and followed by the result from the societal debate analysis.

### **6.1 Interviews with municipal workers**

Two interviews were conducted with municipal workers for this thesis and the same interview guide were used for both interviews.

#### **6.1.1 Individualistic approach**

Both municipalities hold a strong individualistic approach to the prevention of radicalisation that leads to violent extremism. This approach means that you should see to the individual and his or her specific situation. This is carried out to understand which personal issues, problems or situations that has led the person to lean into extremist attitudes or environments, which they in turn can work with. A common working method is to conduct a meeting with the individual where representatives from relevant authorities and organisations attend.

“There are methods for different kinds of challenges, but the assessment of what an individual need is always made on an individual level in the social services.”

Interview with municipality worker 1

“The family gets appointed a coordinator form the social services, and then we invite everyone that is close to the child. A representative from the school, one from the police, one from the field, a child psychologist if they have one, a doctor (...) and the football coach which he really likes.”

Interview with municipality worker 2

#### **6.1.2 Factors of radicalisation and preventative measures**

Why people radicalise is a very complex phenomenon that differs between individuals and the context they live in. When asked about this the interviewees stated that it is hard to generalise between the different brands of extremism (left-wing, right-wing and religious extremism), and also between individuals, but municipality worker 1 mentioned one particular thing as an important factor in case of Islamic extremism, and its relation to right-wing extremism:

“Injustice. I do not see anything else than that (...). You feel misunderstood, excluded, treated unfairly. And the other ones, I can see that they strengthen each other and cannot exist without one another. Because the louder the right-wing extremists screams and are

visible, the more they [Islamic extremists] feel that they are in the danger zone and does not have a place here, and vice versa.”

Interview with municipality worker 1

Municipality worker 2 says that it is not possible to point out one specific factor that is crucial for radicalisation. There are so many different possible risk factors that might be important when put together with other factors. One possible important factor is to find your identity in an extremist group.

“Yes, well I do not know the tipping point, it is hard to say... I don’t want to say anything specific, because it is like... just like with criminality, which says that if you live in a socially deprived area that is a great risk, if you don’t attend school then that is a great risk, if you feel that you are not seen by others then that is a great risk factor, come from bad social relationships then that is, live with one parent then that is a risk factor. In itself it does not have to be, but in combination with others it could be.”

“(…) or you might feel that if you enter this environment, the right-wing, left-wing and so on, then I will be seen and will feel fulfilled ... I will become someone in this context.”

Interview with municipality worker 2

Because of the many possible risk factors, it is very hard to cover all possible aspects that could lead to radicalisation. Effective programs are also not yet in place as research is split of how to properly work with preventative measures. The municipalities do not know for sure how to work with these issues.

(…) and what we do then is that we look for effective programs. In the case of questions of radicalisation, it does not exist yet. (...) There are actually very few tools that have proven to be efficient in the problematic outcome of radicalisation or extremism.

Interview with municipality worker 1

### **6.1.3 Working with Salafism**

Both of them have the same working methods and structures for all kinds of extremism and does not separate Islamic extremism (Salafism) from any other kind. Since the approach is to understand the individual’s needs and issues, Salafism or Islamic extremism is touched upon indirectly if needed.

Interviewer: “Would you say that you have specific working methods for Islamic extremism? Do you work the same way with different kinds of extremism?”

Municipality worker 2: “Yes, all extremism goes under the same.”

Interviewer: “(...) Do you have any work focusing at Salafism or Salafists?”

Municipality worker 2: “No. It is included as well.”

#### Interview with municipality worker 2

Interviewer: “If we talk more specifically, if you work specifically, how does your work look like with Islamic extremism or Salafist jihadism? Is it something you work with?”

Municipality worker 1: “Both yes and no. Again, we always work individually. We seek understanding, we try to understand.”

#### Interview with municipality worker 1

Knowledge of Salafism among people who work on the field is considered low in general according to municipality worker 2. In regards of cooperation with mosques or religious communities, they do have cooperation to some extent, but if the communities do anything to prevent extremism is not clear.

Interviewer: “How do you think the general knowledge of Salafism is specifically, or Jihadist Salafism?”

Municipality worker 2: “(...) I don’t think there is like, a super good knowledge about Salafism, the extreme part, but at the same time I don’t think it is totally, totally unknown for all of us.”

Interviewer: “(...) do you have a cooperation with imams or faith communities in your work to prevent radicalisation? “

Municipality worker 2: “We have a good connection with them. And we could include them, if needed.”

#### Interview with municipality worker 2

Municipality worker 1 emphasises that their good relations with religious communities and the work that they do, by themselves, could be one of the most important reasons why there are relatively few people that went from their area to fight for ISIS. If the municipality cooperate with Salafists is not certain, but most likely they do not.

Municipality worker 1: “(...) relatively few has travelled from X [the municipality], if you compare with other parts. Maybe it is because the civil society has made a very good

job (...) It is not thanks to us, its solely because of them [religious communities]. They talk about societal questions and how to live accordingly, from a religious perspective.”

Interviewer: “(...) do you have a cooperation with Salafist imams or mosques? Or anyone from that community?”

Municipality worker 1: “No, but at the same time they don’t come with an ID-badge that says I’m a Salafist, so I don’t know for sure.”

#### Interview with municipality worker 1

When asked about the role of ideology in case of Salafism, Municipality worker 1 says that they have learned what Salafism is, but does not focus on it more than that. Participant two says that ideology has a minor role in the process of radicalisation. Other factors such as social and psychological situation matters more. In a situation of radicalisation, whatever ideology, value, perspective or other ways of looking at the world that are present at that time, is a possible path. The ideology does not matter in itself, but rather the situation it is presented in.

Interviewer: “(...) have you focused anything on the ideology of the ISIS-returnees?”

Municipality worker 1: “Well yes, by the time when we put together our action plan we had educational seminars where we had a jurisprudential imam that went through the theological parts and described what kind of person a Salafist is. It is very important, the way they have twisted some formulations which justifies what they are doing in Syria. Or did (...). The problem is that those who have interpreted it do not have the deep knowledge they actually need... in some ways. And that is all I need to know.”

#### Interview with municipality worker 1

“(...) I think that whoever that is present with a tempting bait when you are feeling your worst, can pull you pretty far. (...) if you really are at your lowest... I think it is very possible to end up there [with extremists], and then later wake up and realise that this is not me (...) I imagine that it is some kind of extremely destructive safety mechanism.”

#### Interview with municipality worker 2

### 6.1.4 Short summary

Similarities between the municipalities are that there should be an individualistic approach to the persons of interest and cooperation with religious communities. The knowledge of Salafism in their municipalities are low and they agree that social factors are more important

than ideology in the radicalisation process. Major factors of radicalisation are hard to point out and there is a lack of effective programs.

## **6.2 Interview with the police**

One interview with a police officer was conducted and the interviewee will be referred to as police officer. The interview was discussing the same topics as with the municipality workers, and it had the same interview guide in regards of prepared questions.

### **6.2.1 Working methods**

If they identify a person that is radicalised, the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO) gets involved. They are responsible for the upcoming and future steps of how to work with the individual. They determine if themselves, the intelligence service or the local police is suited for the case. How this is concluded is restricted to SÄPO, and they work disclosed and confidential. If the local police are assigned to work with a case, different kinds of extremism are not treated differently, they are all approached the same.

Interviewer: “If you identify a radicalised person, or a group, what do you do then?”

Police officer: “If we do see these signs and if we can see something hands-on where we see what they are doing, then we hand everything over to SÄPO (...) They are the ones mainly working with this, and they can say that the regular police can work with this case. Then we simply contact the ones that are of interests and simply ask them what they are up to.”

Interviewer: “(...) Do you work differently with different kinds of extremism?”

Police officer: “No, not really.”

Interview with police officer

### **6.2.2 Lone actors and Internet radicalisation**

To work preventively with lone actors is one of the biggest challenges in regards of radicalisation. Most of them are introvert and do no actions that raises suspicions among the police or people in their surroundings, which makes them almost impossible to identify before they act.

Police officer: “These ones, lone actors as we call them, do not engage with others, it is almost a hopeless job to find them. Unless we by a coincidence visit their home if the neighbours complain (...) but usually they don't, persons like this live their lives by

themselves and stares into their computers (...) when the lone actors appear and act, you can identify afterwards that the radicalisation has occurred through the Internet.”

Interviewer: “(...) How can you work preventively with this?”

Police officer: “You can’t. It is very difficult.”

Interview with police officer

The interviewee also says that online preaching is a problematic phenomenon, which should be restricted if it calls for anti-democratic values. In the most extreme cases, it should even be classified as instigation to crime, if it calls for violent actions.

Interviewer: “And with online preaching, which promotes anti-democratic values. How should you work with that?”

Police officer: “Shut it down. We just don’t have the time. We don’t have the resources for it, to scan the Internet and so on. It is almost comparable with encouragement of crime...instigation. It is a bit of a long haul, but still. In the most extreme cases it could be instigation to genocide (...) if it calls for the murder of all unfaithful, for example. “

Interview with police officer

### **6.2.3 Islamic extremism, Salafism and ISIS**

As mentioned earlier, they do not work differently with different kinds of extremism. But they have gone through some training in extremist ideologies (right-wing, left-wing and religious extremism) which includes ways to identify signs of possible radicalisation. There is also another group among the police that holds more deeper knowledge about the ideologies that can be included in their work if needed.

Interviewer: “Would you say that there is good knowledge in general among those who stumble upon it [signs of extremism]?”

Police officer: “Yes, absolutely. Especially after we did the educational efforts. It was a three-hour seminar that everyone did, interactively, in groups (...) so everyone is able to identify if someone has flags on their walls or other strange things, and that you are able to identify these things when you are patrolling.”

Interview with police officer

I asked if they have specific persons, groups or places that are central for jihadist radicalisation, and how they work with these if they have made this identification. The



response was that they put extra focus on these persons or places, to find more information about it, but there is a lack of resources.

“We try to enter these organisations in these cases, just like regular people, not like infiltration, we just go there and talk to them and try to understand what is happening, which is not always that easy. And the thing is that, we do not have any police officers working specifically with this, it is a task that you should try to work with when you have some extra time. “

Interview with police officer

The interviewee looks critically at the role of the mosques in regards of radicalisation and deradicalisation. If they have a role in either of the processes is hard to say for sure.

Interviewer: “(...) What about mosques and faith communities, what role do you think they have in the work against extremism?”

Police officer: “I think that, if you ask anyone in there, they will say that they are working with it, the Quran says that you should not be mean to anyone and so on, so everyone would say that they work against extremism and radicalisation.”

Interviewer: “What do you think?”

Police officer: “No, they do not. I do not know for sure, but I think so. They can shut the door some evenings when they are fewer (...) You do not get access to these situations, that is the issue (...) But they are pretty public. We have a strong cooperation with several Muslim communities, and they say that everyone is public and cooperative, so nothing is wrong there. But! I believe that it has to be somewhere, it has to grow somewhere, but I cannot point my finger at one place or another, because I do not know for sure.”

Interview with police officer

#### **6.2.4 Current and future concerns**

The interviewee sees several problematic issues within this topic. Lone actors, Internet radicalisation, and priority of resources has been mentioned above. Another issue is the legal possibilities to intervene when someone is in the process of radicalisation. This is not a simple task, as it is very hard to draw the line between democratic freedom of believing whatever you want, and when it turns into unaccepted extremist attitudes.

Police officer: “And what legal means of coercion exists, that includes radicalisation? None.”

Interviewer: “(...) if you continue to see an increase of this phenomenon [radicalisation], and you still have the same legal boundaries, would you then call for other interventions?”

Police officer: “(...) You could do that, for sure. But I think we need a new legislation to reach everyone. As I said before, we are never able to stop the most dangerous ones, the lone actors (...) They publish their things online and then they leave. Before anyone has seen it and are able to react, it is too late.”

Interview with police officer

To fully understand radicalisation in these areas, they need to be a part of their world, as we are currently living in two separate spheres. Parallel societies in social deprived areas is hard to interfere with, where old men interfere with the looks and behaviour of local inhabitants.

Interviewer: “For example, it is a discussion about parallel societies in these derived areas, people who live according to different rules? How should you work and intervene in these areas?”

Police officer: “We need to take over these areas geographically. (...) We need to enter the areas and overtake control from the criminals. The family clans and others are ruling these areas, but it has to be the police who is in charge (...) Structures of a parallel society can still be there, under the surface. We know that there are old men that walks around and looks at young girls to make sure they follow sharia, wearing the veil and so on, and if they do not, the men contact their parents and tell them they need to do it. It exists, but no one is talking about it in public.”

Interview with police officer

### **6.2.5 Short summary**

The police officer gives a problematic view of the current situation. There are several occurrences that is hard to deal with, such as lone actors and internet radicalisation, parallel societies, lack of resources and legal means to act. The officer is also undecided of the role of mosques in regards of enforcing or reducing extremism.

### **6.3 Findings from the societal debate analysis**

This section starts with a presentation of the results of the unitising process. This will be followed by the answering of the research question for the societal debate analysis, to provide more useful data for the analysis chapter of this thesis.

### 6.3.1 Result of unitisation

The empirical data gathering resulted in a total of 77 articles. These were properly read through and those articles that were irrelevant or duplicated were left out, and the new number was 56. The main reason for exclusion was because of irrelevant topics such as election and politics in Egypt (where there is/was a Salafist party), current political situation, militant group or ideologies in Algeria and Libya (Salafism is mentioned as an example, but not discussed specifically) and Salafism as an example of fundamentalist beliefs abroad.

Following this was the thematical analysis of the articles, the unitising. This was made by reading the articles and identifying reoccurring and relevant units, based on the research question of the societal debate analysis. To be identified as a unit it had to be mentioned in at least three articles. This created 14 different units. To not limit any article to only discuss one unit, which would have been a problem of subjectivity, the articles have the possibility to touch upon several different units, but they had to mention at least one unit to be included in the study. The result of the unitizing can be seen in Figure 1 below.

	Aftonbladet	Dagens Nyheter	Expressen	Göteborgsposten	Svenska Dagbladet	Sydsvenskan
<b>Total number of articles</b>	2	17	21	13	14	10
<b>Number of articles after reading</b>	1	10	19	8	13	5
<b>Themes</b>						
Associations/extremists acquire grants			6	1		
Salafist ideology		2	7	6	3	1
Salafism, promoting violence		1	3		1	
Prevention/deradicalisation	1	1	2	4		1
Salafism and ISIS	1	4	6	4	3	1
Radicalisation	1	3	3	4	5	2
Oppression of women		3	4			2
Obstructed integration			1	1	2	1
Late or non-effective interventions			3	1	1	2
Political changes (In Sweden)			11	3		
Multiculturalism (socially, legally)				1	2	
Reject fundamental values, hatred*		2	5	2	3	
Foreign influences (economics)			3	1	2	1
International perspectives on Salafism	1	4	2	2	3	
*Anti-semitism, anti-shiism, homophobic, freedom of sexual orientation and religion						

Figure 1.

### 6.3.2 The units

Salafism was discussed generally in a negative manner by highlighting negative aspects of the belief. There were zero articles mentioning Salafism in a positive way, which is noticeable when you are looking at the units and the topics they touch upon. The negative and problematic aspects were both directly and indirectly expressed in the articles. The most reoccurring units were; the Salafist ideology; Salafism's connection to ISIS; radicalisation and deradicalisation; foreign economic influences and state grants; and the rejection of fundamental values and hatred. Another reoccurring topic that indirectly criticises Salafism is

the unit “political changes” in regards of extremism related to Salafism, which was mentioned in particular by one newspaper (Expressen). To further understand what these units include I will present them one by one, except for foreign economic influences and state grants as they are not of relevance for this study.

The Salafist ideology is presented as problematic in its fundamental values of what is right and wrong, accepted or not accepted, and how it clashes with different aspects of Swedish society. Situations where the ideology is mentioned are several: the 2018 Swedish election when Salafists were waiting outside poll stations and approaching Muslims, stating that it is *haram* to vote; the role of women according to Salafist preachers is frequently mentioned, such as the use of hijab to live accordingly to their faith; reoccurring mentioning of a Swedish school that separates boys and girls in the classrooms and excludes certain classes such as sex education; the threat for other orientations of Islam in Swedish society, such as Shia, and how Salafism is not seen as a possible perpetrator for hatred (authorities solely focusing on right-wing extremism).

Salafism’s connection to ISIS is presented in several different ways, both in regards of the ideology and in a Swedish context: the spread and reach of ISIS ideology in Swedish mosques and online, and the lack of knowledge and reaction from Swedish authorities; a specific mosque and preacher which expresses sympathy to ISIS is a reoccurring topic; the fall of ISIS in Syria, but the returnees ideology exist and thrive back in Sweden; and extensive *da’wa* activities online.

Radicalisation is mentioned in different contexts, highlighting different kinds of phenomena which is considered problematic: Denmark is presented as an example of effective work with deradicalisation (frequently reoccurring topic), alarming examples of Salafist preaching in mosques (death sentences for certain actions), and how Danish youths are torn between the conservative Salafist beliefs and modern society; mosques with potential facades that makes them look better than what they are, citing former speeches of Salafist preachers with anti-Semitic arguments; disinformation and online propaganda contributes to radicalisation in Europe, alongside with a growing sub culture among Swedish youths; the unwillingness to look into the Salafist ideology in the work against violent extremism and solely focusing on social factors, and the naivety of Swedish politicians in these questions.

The rejection of fundamental values and hatred are seen in several of the topics mentioned above. Anti-Semitism, anti-Shiism and homophobia are identified through cited speeches of

preachers. Death penalty for homosexuals, the life of a Muslim is worth the lives of a million Jews, and Shia Muslims are Muslims disguised as Jews are some examples. Rejection of fundamental values are identified through the attempt to shame people into not being able to vote, and hatred to other religious groups. Oppression of women could be categorised into this topic as well but was separated due to its single reoccurrence and that it was mentioned specifically in several articles. The mentioned topics in this regard is the limited role of females as subordinated to males, separation of males and females, and the obligatory wearing of hijab.

The call for political changes was founded on many of the arguments related to the topics mentioned above, such as anti-Semitism, homophobia and the role of women. The criticism concerns the naivety to Salafism's ideology and its role in the radicalisation process, too soft and ineffective preventative measures, and the handling of ISIS-returnees.

### **6.3.3 Research question for the societal debate analysis**

Below I will answer the research question for this analysis, which is:

*How is Salafism presented in relation to violent extremism and radicalisation in the media?*

In regards of violent extremism, these words are rarely used specifically in the articles. They talk about extremist attitudes, opinions and potential places of radicalisation which has connections to Salafism, but as you can see among the units, the articles mentioning Salafism's relation to violence are very few. Salafism is portrayed as a problematic ideology in regards of others' right to believe and act the way they want to. The future of Salafism in Sweden is perceived as a potential big problem in regards of ISIS returnees, if they start spreading their ideology. Even though that violent extremism is not mentioned directly, it is strongly connected to articles about radicalisation and ISIS, of which radicalisation is a process that could result in violent extremism or joining a terrorist organisation.

Radicalisation is probably the biggest issue from the media's perspective. All the newspapers have at least one article discussing the topic, and the interventions and preventative work by the state and its administrative authorities is not presented in a positive manner. There are many different aspects of the critique and there is a call for change, often referring to the situation and methods used in Denmark.

## 7. Analysis

The analysis will start with a comparison between academic research, the societal debate analysis and the interview, followed by a discussion of cooperation with faith communities, an analysis of how legal pluralism can be applied to current and future measures, and finally a discussion of the current legal framework and strategies.

### 7.1 Academic research, societal debate analysis and interviews – differences and similarities

When comparing how Salafism is perceived and described from the perspectives of academic research, the societal debate analysis, the local police and the municipalities, there are both some differences and similarities between the perspectives. If we start with academic research and the societal debate analysis, we can identify similarities in the topics that are presented as concerns or problematic. Reoccurring topics in the societal debate analysis is the Salafist ideology, ISIS, radicalisation, deradicalisation and the rejection of fundamental values and hatred. These are presented in relation to situations in Swedish society, which prove to some extent that these issues are (perceived) problematic occurrences in Sweden. What gives it a stronger foundation is that the same issues are presented as problematic in academic research. The Salafist ideology and its relation to radicalisation, extremism or *takfir jihad* is mentioned in Bencheikh (2016), Cottee (2011), and Wiktorowicz (2006), ISIS is mentioned with online propaganda by Kaati (2017), how to work with deradicalisation is discussed by Amin (2017) and Ranstorp et al. (2018), and the rejection of fundamental values and hatred is mentioned in Ranstorp et al. (2018) and Cottee (2011). Since there is consistency between societal debate and academic research, it raises the question of if, and how, the preventative work by the police and municipalities is adapting to these issues. This is especially interesting since the role of the national and local coordinators is to keep themselves updated to knowledge and information accordingly to the national strategy (see chapter 3.2).

By reviewing what was said in the interviews it is clear that their practices are not adapted to the issues presented in academic research and the societal debate. The major reason why I make this statement is because there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of what Salafism is and how the community operates. This, in turn, makes it harder to work effectively with Salafist radicalisation, as it is difficult to understand the underlying factors and motivators in the radicalisation process if you do not understand the specific mechanisms that arises from the Salafist beliefs and way of life. This differs a bit between the municipalities and the police as they work differently. The police had a training seminar to

identify signs of radicalisation, and if they do identify persons of interests SÄPO will take over the case and determine how to go further. If and how SÄPO works with Salafism specifically is unknown (as their work is confidential). The coordinators of the municipalities express that they and the people in the field have some knowledge of what Salafism is, but they are not working with it specifically. I believe the main reasons for this is because of the individualistic approach. If they work from the perspective of an ideology it could diminish the individual's specific situation and issues, which is regarded as vital to consider, and instead see to the content of the ideology. Even if I do agree with that there should be an individualistic approach, I believe that they should increase the knowledge of the mechanisms of Salafist radicalisation - if they have identified an individual that is in the process of radicalisation. But there seems to be a disagreement to this as municipality worker 1 states that minor knowledge about Salafism is enough, and municipality worker 2 states that the role of ideology has a minor effect in the radicalisation process (other factors are more important). The reason why I disagree with them is because they do not see the mechanisms of Salafism and how it can contribute to the radicalisation process, because of their limited knowledge of it. To exemplify, I will start with the study by Svensson (2012) which thoroughly explains, from a psychological perspective, how different parts of the Salafist belief has an effective way of creating meaning for those that experience an identity crisis, especially if you possess certain risk factors (such as limited social and economic possibilities). The identity formation is based on the Salafist belief (e.g. *tawhid* and *al wala' wal bara'*) and creates a unity and isolation among the group. The potential risk of this is if purist Salafism is a first step into a process of radicalisation (Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 190; Bencheikh 2016, p. 30-39), as well as identity crisis and relative deprivation are two of the most reoccurring theoretical aspects of radicalisation (King & Taylor 2011; Bencheikh 2016). The identity crisis can be identified by the example above, and the relative deprivation can be identified through *al wala' wal bara'* which contributes to creating an us-vs-them scenario where the Salafist community is threatened by westernisation and modernity (*bida*) (Cottee 2011, p. 330-336; Svensson 2012, p. 187-188). The last piece of the puzzle is that online ISIS-propaganda uses general concepts of Islam belief, which is mixed with extremist content, and enforces the us-vs-them scenario where Islam is portrayed to be at war with the west (Kaati 2017). This could enforce both the Salafist identity of the individual and the relative deprivation. This is of course not a universal process of radicalisation, but it gives an example of how the process could occur, and why it is important to be able to identify signs that relates to Salafism. Radicalisation is a complex

phenomenon that is difficult to understand, and this is the exact reason why we need to start at the bottom of the chain and grasp the available knowledge that lies before us.

Another point of interest here is that factors of radicalisation mentioned in the interviews corresponds quite well with factors in the literature review. Municipality worker 1 says that injustice is an important factor in radicalisation. This goes in line with the theoretical aspect of relative deprivation, where the individual identifies with a group that is (at least perceived) disadvantaged in society (King & Taylor 2011, p. 609-610). Municipality worker 2 say that it is hard to identify a sole major factor for radicalisation but entering an extremist environment can make you feel fulfilled as you become someone in that context. This goes well in line with identify crisis, where you find your identity in the extremist environment. As is stated in research, radicalisation in Western context is especially applicable with identity crisis's, as individuals are dragged between different cultural and social contexts (ibid, p. 611-612).

The last similarity I want to mention is the role of the Internet in the process of radicalisation and violent extremism. It is mentioned in the national strategy and in the police strategy as a growing concern (see chapter 6.2 and 6.3), it is presented as problematic in academic research (Kaati 2017; Paz 2014) and it was mentioned in the interview with the police officer (see chapter 6.2.2). Even though that was the case, there is no clear suggestions of how to limit the problematic online content.

## **7.2 Cooperating with faith communities to prevent radicalisation**

Municipality worker 1 and the police officer said that it is difficult to work with Islamic or Salafist extremism as there are no effective working methods, and the work they are currently doing is not very effective (according to the police). Additionally, municipality worker 1 expressed that their region had a relatively low number of travellers who went to ISIS, potentially because of the work of the Muslim community. The municipalities have a wide spectrum and reach of their work through collaboration with administrative authorities and civil society, and they are educated and experienced of how to work with issues of radicalisation and violent extremism. Even though this is the case, with all these tools to succeed, the Muslim religious community does on their own succeed better than the municipality. The difference between the municipality and the religious communities is that they have a better normative, cultural and religious understanding of Salafism, which lays the basis of the success. This goes in line with the efforts that has been used in Pakistan and in Stockholm, where they have conducted deradicalisation efforts to extremists with the



assistance of purist Salafists, which has resulted in positive results (Amin 2017, p. 81-84; Ranstorp et al. 2018, p. 139-140, 220).

The police officer is more critical to the work that is made by the faith communities, specifically the mosques. The officer argues that it is hard to know what they are actually doing, since they do not know what is happening behind closed doors, and that there is a possibility for a facade that shows a different and better picture of reality than there is. There is a lot of uncertainty in this statement, which is clarified by the interviewee, but since there is inconsistency with the openness of the mosques and “it has to grow somewhere”, the role of the mosques is not clear (both in the sense of radicalisation and deradicalisation). The officer also problematises lone actors that radicalises at home through Internet, and as described by Kaati (2017, p, 38), lone actors rarely gets radicalised exclusively by themselves but rather needs confirmation from somewhere else. Where this confirmation occurs is not specified.

Based on the information presented in this thesis from academic research, the media and my interviews, it is hard to say with full certainty that there are solely positive aspects to cooperate with faith communities. Even though that is the case, I would argue that it is better to have a cooperation with Muslim communities, and also potentially with Salafist communities, in those cases where it can be concluded that it is a purist Salafist community. I also think that the process should start with the foundation of gaining better knowledge of Salafism within the municipalities and the police. The first reason for this is if the faith communities’ work is less effective than we have hoped, and if there are things happening under the surface that the police officer is worried about. The second reason is if the communities would withdraw from the cooperation, if there is for example an increased Islamophobia in society, and they lose the trust for authorities. If that would happen, we need to have our own expertise to be able to work with these issues, since the success of their work seems to lie with their knowledge of Salafism. One possible way to start working with this is from the theoretical basis of legal pluralism, which I will discuss further in the next section.

### **7.3 Legal pluralism and Salafism**

As described in the chapter of my theoretical framework, legal pluralism can be used to understand how different social settings are formed and affected by different official and unofficial laws (see chapter 4). Unofficial laws are normative rules that guide and conform behaviour, and these laws differs in different social settings. These social settings can be identified by using the concept of semi-autonomous social fields. In the context of Salafism,

they and their community can be identified as a semi-autonomous social field by looking at what the community it built upon. The biggest difference between a Salafist and a non-Salafist is the strict literal abidance to their religious texts. The texts contain several elements that affect their behaviour as there are clear descriptions of what is allowed and what is not. *Tawhid* is one of those elements, which means worshipping God through strictly performing acts or actions that are recognised in their texts (Wiktorowicz 2006, p. 208-209). *Al wala' al bara'* is another element which isolates the Salafists into a sole chosen group, in which they have to follow and live according to their strict rules to be pure, while avoiding *kuffar* and *haram* activities in the rest of society (Wagemakers 2014, p. 92-93; Wagemakers 2016, p. 12-13; Dogan 2014, p. 97-100). Their unofficial law is at least partly written as it can be attained in their texts, and they seem to be following their texts rather than adapting to the normative behaviour of Swedish society (Dogan 2014; Olsson 2012; Olsson 2014; Olsson 2017). Exactly how they are adapting their everyday life to official Swedish law is uncertain, but as purists are not considered to be part of any criminal activity, they are at least not openly breaking any official laws. Salafists and their community can therefore be identified as a semi-autonomous social field.

### **7.3.1 Can legal pluralism be identified in current practices?**

As mentioned earlier in this analysis, Salafism is not addressed specifically by the municipalities or the local police and there is a limited knowledge of Salafism, how it operates and what religious foundations it has. Since that is the case, it is very difficult to identify if they work with Salafism from the perspective of legal pluralism. The only circumstance that can be identified within this framework is that the police officer is talking about parallel societies in certain areas, where criminal gangs and family clans are in charge, enforcing the use of the veil on girls (chapter 6.2.4). Legal pluralism is in this situation only applicable to the situation that the police officer is describing and is not used by the police themselves in their work. There are with other words no direct connections between the work of the municipalities and the local police and legal pluralism.

### **7.3.2 How can legal pluralism be used in the future?**

As I have described above legal pluralism is applicable to Salafist communities. The reason why legal pluralism is beneficial is because it offers the possibility to separate Salafism from other kinds of groupings. You might argue here that every semi-autonomous social field is different and applying legal pluralism to every social field is not possible. But there is no need

to apply legal pluralism to every group of interest, since we do not lack an understanding of every social field, but in the case of Salafism there clearly is an absence of knowledge.

To see Salafism from a different perspective is of great usage in the work to prevent radicalisation. First, by accepting that they have their own social field with their own set of unofficial laws, we accept that they are living in, and by, other conditions than others. When this has been accepted, we can start to identify which unofficial laws that exist within their social field, of which some has their foundation in their religious texts (such as *tawhid*, *al wara' al bara'* and *bida*). This provides an understanding to *why* people of interest, such as those in the process of radicalisation, have the opinions and morals that they do, rather than simply understand that they *do* have these opinions and morals. The next steps can differ depending on the situation, but an example is if the municipality is having discussions and meetings with this individual. In that case there can be a discussion of why this person has these opinions and try to figure out if they are founded upon the Salafist (jihadist) community. When this has been done you can show that there is an agreement on why these opinions exist (because they have a religious foundation), but you can question how and from where the individual got these opinions. If the opinions are considered extreme, such as those from the Salafist jihadist doctrine, there can be a discussion of how ISIS is twisting the religious foundations for their cause. This can be useful as many radicalised youths hold a minor religious knowledge and might perceive that their opinions are normative within their belief (since they are affected by propaganda that refers to commonly agreed parts of Islam). All of this build upon knowledge of what Salafism is, and would in some cases need deeper knowledge, but at least knowing about Salafism is an advantageous starting point.

From the police perspective you can use legal pluralism a bit differently. Since the local police redirect cases of possible radicalisation and violent extremism to SÄPO, there is no point arguing how they should change their methods (since I do not know how they operate). But legal pluralism can still be used by the local police, to be able to identify and potentially change the unofficial laws of social fields, if they are considered to be harmful of the inhabitants in that field. To exemplify, we can use the example from the police officer, which was a case from a socially deprived area where it occurred that older men tried to enforce veils on girls. The police officer said that they need to take over the control in the area by providing their presence, but that it might still be hidden social structures. I do agree with that they need to overtake the area physically, but if the problems still exist and instead just hidden underneath, this particular problem is not solved. To work with this issue on a structural level

you need to know *who* enforces the law, *how* they enforce it and *why* they enforce it. The *who* can be identified here as the elder men. The *how* can be identified as social sanctioning to girls and their families which are approached by these men, but we do not know *why* they enforce it. If its foundation is from a Salafist community, the next steps require a debate of how freedom of religion can be expressed in society and when it can, or should, be restricted. But enforcing your religious views on children and their family is crossing the line according to me. How to solve this problem is beyond the scope of this thesis as it requires a discussion of what you can and cannot do in society based on morals and law, but using legal pluralism to identify the foundations of the social norms is a useful start.

#### **7.4 Comprehensive laws and strategies?**

The legal possibilities for the municipalities to intervene to people under 18 years old (some occasions 20) seems to be working effectively. Both the municipality workers expressed detailed and thorough processes that are used in cases of possible radicalisation, and they have a good cooperation with other authorities and civil society. Legal restrictions were not mentioned in the interviews. The police officer on the other hand stated that there is a lack of legal possibilities to intervene in the case of radicalisation. The officer even stated that they had no legal tools at all. The most likely reason for this is that both laws (SFS 1962:700 and SFS 2010:299) are only applicable when crime has been committed (or alleged), and the process of radicalisation is mainly a change of morals and opinions of which extremist views is lawful (unless openly expressed in an insulting way to others). Affecting democratic values is also outside of the scope of the police strategy, as their focus is on crime.

The national strategy to reduce violent extremism includes the sharing of knowledge to municipalities and relevant cooperating actors (chapter 3.2). To what extent knowledge of Salafism has been shared is hard to know for sure, but as I have interviewed three coordinators about this topic the knowledge sharing is most likely limited. Another possibility is that the shared information is not taken into consideration by the coordinators. What I can find is a university-based course that is not explicitly targeting Salafism but one of the themes in the course is Islamic extremism, so there has at least been some activity in this area (Lunds Universitet 2017). Another aspect in the strategy is that the work of the centre will be founded upon the current criminal policy of Sweden (chapter 3.2.3). If and how this affects what is prioritised and what is not, is uncertain. Political interference in what knowledge to be prioritised could at least potentially be problematic, but at the same time it might be very

reasonable that it is founded on the current criminal policy as Brå is a governmental organisation.

The police prevent strategy includes identifying possible risk factors, people at risk and the driving forces for radicalisation. Since a lot of this work is made on a level of intelligence through SÄPO, it is hard to know how they work with these issues. What I can analyse is how they work with this on a local level. The possible risk factors are something they are able to recognise, as they have received training in how to spot these, and this goes in line with identifying people at risk. The driving forces for Salafist radicalisation is something that they have been unable to identify, at least in the municipality where I conducted my interview. Possible reasons are the lack of knowledge of Salafism which has been discussed before, but also that the police officer expressed the lack of time and resources to focus on issues related to radicalisation. They can only work with this when they have some extra time to spare and understanding the driving factors for radicalisation on your spare time is difficult. It is possible that this is made on another level or hidden in classified information but based on the non-classified information that is available, this is the current situation.

## 8. Conclusion

This thesis has in detail and in depth presented how Salafism is problematic in regards of radicalisation. This has been done by providing a literature review and by reviewing the societal debate of Salafism. This has further been compared with how preventive practices of municipalities and local police are adapted to the challenges that are presented by academic research and the media, and finally these practices have been discussed from a theoretical perspective of legal pluralism. This has been done to be able to answer the following research question:

*With regards to radicalisation within the Salafist community: to what extent and how does academic socio-legal knowledge and/or societal debate contribute to preventive practices in Sweden within (a) the judicial system and (b) the welfare system?*

As it has been presented in the analysis, the academic socio legal knowledge and the societal debate is not affecting the preventative practices of neither the judicial system (the local police) nor the welfare system (the municipalities). The academic socio legal knowledge is represented in this thesis by previous research from the literature review and by using the socio-legal theoretical framework of legal pluralism. The societal debate analysis is representing the opinions of the societal debate. The previous research raises several dimensions of problematic occurrences related to Salafism and its community, such as the Salafist ideology's connections to radicalisation and extremism (Bencheikh 2016; Cottee 2011; Wiktorowicz 2006), connections to ISIS and other terrorist organisations (Kaati 2017; Ranstorp et al. 2018), separation from Swedish society (Olsson 2017; Dogan 2014) and rejection of fundamental rights of others (Ranstorp et al. 2018; Cottee 2011). These problematic occurrences are coherently reported as issues in Sweden in the societal debate analysis (chapter 6.3 and 7.1). This was followed by an analysis of the working methods and practices that were described by the municipality workers and the police officer in the interviews, where the problematic occurrences were taken into consideration (chapter 6.1, 6.2 and 7.1). The analysis demonstrated that both the municipalities and the local police are working with the same methods for all kinds of extremism, and not targeting Salafism specifically. They have minor knowledge of what Salafism is, but does not have a deeper understanding of the belief and the concerns that is expressed in the literature review and societal debate analysis. The local police do have knowledge to identify signs of potential Salafist radicalisation, and if that is the case, they hand over the case to SÄPO for further directions. The municipalities have an individualistic approach to people of concern where

potential Islamic extremism can be identified, but they do not want to focus on the ideology (such as Salafist jihadism). In these cases, they cooperate with faith communities and their efforts are considered effective. Because of this, the knowledge of Salafism is located at the faith communities and not the municipalities. In summary, the local police are using their knowledge of Salafism to identify signs of Salafist radicalisation, but not as a preventive practice or to further understand Salafist radicalisation. The municipalities do not focus on Salafism in their practises but includes faith communities in cases of Islamic extremism. By not having a proper knowledge of Salafism it decreases the understanding of Salafism's role in the radicalisation process, which in turn might negatively affect deradicalisation and preventative practices.

Further to this, I applied my theoretical framework to the current measures. Through the concept of semi-autonomous social fields, I identified Salafists and their community as an existing social field (chapter 7.3). Unfortunately, I was unable to apply legal pluralism to the preventive practices (chapter 7.3.1). This was due to the work of local coordinators are not aiming to understand social fields, but rather to understand the needs of the individual of concern, and the local police does not focus on understanding radicalisation in social fields potentially due to limited resources (chapter 6.1 and 6.2). The socio-legal knowledge is therefore not contributing to the preventive practices. This led to further analysis of how socio-legal knowledge, through legal pluralism, can contribute to their work by providing a better understanding of the social fields where Salafist radicalisation potentially takes place (chapter 7.3.2). This thesis does therefore offer new scientific knowledge of how a socio-legal theoretical framework can be used in preventive work against Salafist radicalisation.

## **8.1 Current situation and future concerns**

A lot have happened during the production of this thesis. The caliphate of ISIS has fallen and what will happen with the former members of ISIS is uncertain, as well as the future of ISIS since their leader presented himself for the first time in years (Hénin 2019). The legal possibilities to sentence returnees in Sweden is expected to be difficult, since it has already been about 150 returnees during the past years which walks free (Magnusson 2019; Aftonbladet 2018). Since they have not fulfilled any crime, at least not something they can be sentence for at this time, it is the responsibility of the municipalities to take care of these individuals (Thomsen & Lärka 2019). The municipalities on the other hand only have legal tools to intervene with people below the age of 18 and can only keep a connection with adult returnees if they agree to it (CVE 2019). How the returnees will continue their lives in

Sweden is uncertain, as well as if they left their Salafist jihadist ideology behind. As presented by SÄPO, Islamic extremism is bigger than ever before (SÄPO 2019a, p. 20-21), and if they get ignited by former combatants of ISIS it is unlikely that it will decrease by itself.

Continuing radicalisation and fragmentation of morals and values will most likely follow the development of the extremist environment. But recently there has been a start of change, and in May 2019 SÄPO issued interventions to the extremist environment, targeting people that are considered a threat to national security (SÄPO 2019b). SÄPO has in a just a few weeks issued five cases of apprehension of well-known Salafist preachers (Ronge & Sandelin 2019; Lönnaeus 2019; Olsson & Sandelin 2019). What effects this will have is still uncertain, but an increased focus on Salafism is a welcoming development since everything points at Salafism as an important factor in the process of radicalisation in the Islamic extremist environment in Sweden.

Another concern that was put forward in both the national and the police strategy, by the police officer and in the literature review, is the role of Internet in the radicalisation process. This has been put forward as a hard issue to deal with. But the future will probably have interesting changes, as there is currently a process in the EU to create a legal framework that obliges Internet providers and online platforms to remove terrorist content from their platforms within a short timeframe (Narrillos 2019; Porter 2019). Hopefully this can contribute to reduce lone actor radicalisation, since they are the hardest actors to find and stop before they act. The bill has been criticised, together with other bills, that it will restrict the free Internet (Patel 2019), but that is a discussion that requires a thesis on its own.

## **8.2 Future research**

Future research to better grasp the Salafist community and the process of radicalisation would be to investigate their normative system and how it interacts with Swedish society. Doing this from the perspective of e.g. sociology of law is something that is asked for by the Islam academia in Sweden, to better understand how different legal cultures corresponds and react to each other (Hjärpe 2016, p. 25-26). This should probably be made ethnographically. Analysis of the normative system could be made from Hydén's normative model (*normmodell*) to further see where the norms comes from, how they are upheld and how they react to clashing norms (Hydén 2002b, 267-316).



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## **9.1 News articles in the societal debate analysis**

Below is the name of the newspapers, the articles and the date of publish.

### **9.1.1 Aftonbladet**

I Århus ses IS-krigare som riktiga människor - 2016-05-30.

En Fascism För Vår Tid - 2011-07-26.

### **9.1.2 Dagens Nyheter**

Gävle moskés ledning borde skämmas - 2019-02-04.

Ledare: I militant islam blir utanförskapet självpåtaget - 2018-07-01.

IS för krig mot själva historien - 2016-11-21.

Terroristernas nederlag - 2016-11-12.

Stoppa radikaliseringsen - 2016-05-30.

Öppna fönstret till moskén - 2016-03-03.

Krutdurk med framtiden för sig - 2014-09-18.

Generalernas tid måste bli kort - 2013-07-04.

Inget kolonialkrig - 2013-01-19.

Även freden måste vinnas - 2012-10-29.

Terror i skuggan av våren - 2012-09-13.

Symtomet Boko Haram - 2012-08-28.

Aftonbladets debattiveri - 2012-04-29.

Skilda religioner, samma hat - 2011-12-19.

Från källaren till makten - 2011-12-09.

Absolut rätt - 2010-12-18.

Absolut rätt - 2010-12-18.

### **9.1.3 Expressen**

Kalifatet är dött - ideologin lever - 2019-03-02.

Stoppa förortens salafistförtryck - 2019-02-16.

En ny generation svenska jihadister - 2018-12-18.

S-topparna borde sluta tiga - 2018-11-19.

Staten ska inte syssla med aktivism - 2018-10-13.

Punga inte ut för vuxnas spel - 2018-07-31.

Skydda svenska vallokaler - 2018-07-28.

Salafister försöker hjärntvätta barn - 2018-06-29.

Inte bara nazister hotar moskéer - 2018-06-23.

IS-anhängarna kan värva ostört - 2018-05-21.

Inget förbud mot hjärntvätt i skolan - 2018-03-24.

Fler än Putin vill påverka Sverige - 2017-11-15.

Extremister ska inte få bidrag - 2017-09-04.

Nu är terror det nya normala - 2017-08-19.

Ge Säpo mer muskler i kampen mot terrorism - 2017-07-09.

Oljepengarna har skapat ett monster - 2017-07-03.

Ingen påsk för Egyptens kristna - 2017-04-15.

Jihad är inte en statlig uppgift - 2016-06-17.

Under mina ca 15 år i - 2016-04-22.

Sätt press på närmiljön om IS - 2015-05-26.

Rysslands fiende nr 1 - 2014-01-06.

**9.1.4 Göteborgsposten**

Islamister får inte hindra väljare att rösta - 2018-07-03.

De lärdas svek - 2018-02-17.

När den svenska gränsen passerats - 2018-02-12.

Islam behöver också en Luther - 2017-11-02.

Unga i förorten måste känna sig som svenskar - 2016-06-06.

Sluta ursäkta terroristerna - 2016-03-16.

Iransk lag ska inte gälla i Sverige - 2016-03-08.

Göteborg, lär av Århus! - 2016-01-15.



Sverige ligger efter i arbetet mot extremism - 2015-12-06.

Val väntas stärka al-Sisis ställning - 2015-10-16.

Förvecklingar för Turkiet - 2013-02-18.

Egyptisk vår blir till vinter? - 2012-11-27.

En seger för demokratin - 2011-10-27.

### **9.1.5 Svenska Dagbladet**

Allah är svaret på allt - 2018-07-03.

Moskén i Malmö kan bli megafon för Qatar - 2017-06-06.

Salafisterna i Karlstad är knappast fina demokrater - 2017-05-11.

Den yttersta dagen nalkas i Mosul - 2016-11-06.

Desinformationshot från flera håll - 2016-10-27.

Gud är kopternas enda tröst - 2016-08-26.

Generation Allah i folkbokföringen - 2016-08-08.

Ett hot mot pressfriheten - 2016-04-01.

Se ideologin bakom radikaliserings - 2015-11-12.

Svenskar är mer religiösa än de tror - 2015-07-18.

Svensk naivitet gör IS-rekrytering enklare - 2015-05-10.

Våldtäktsoffer kan få fängelse - 2012-11-11.

Islam är inte den monolit många vill se - 2010-10-01.

Fotbollsfans med risk för livet - 2010-06-18.

### **9.1.6 Sydsvenskan**

Att snacka om terror räcker inte - 2017-09-19.

”Min hypotes är att hotet är formulerat av en ickemuslimsk person som vill utnyttja människors rädsla.”- 2018-01-11.

Pengar från Qatar, själar till salafismen - 2017-05-22.

Två norska systrar valde IS. Men varför? - 2016-12-28.

"Snarare förefaller värvningsprocesser till våldsbejakande islamistiska - 2016-04-14.

I Mellanöstern förflyktigas allt som en gång var fast - 2016-01-05.

"Målet är att upprätta ett emirat fritt från Ryssland." - 2014-02-06.

En väg från våld och förtryck - 2014-01-02.

Egyptens islamistiske farao - 2012-11-26.

Istället för att inskränka yttrandefriheten bör västvärlden bemöda sig om att förklara varför den är viktigare än hänsynen till religiösa känslor - 2012-09-24.

## 10. Appendix

Below follows the interview guide that was used for all the interviews. The original versions and translated versions for readers.

### 10.1. Interview guide (original)

1.

Hur arbetar ni preventivt mot radikaliserings?

Hur arbetar ni när ni har identifierat en radikaliserad person eller grupp?

Arbetar ni olika med olika varianter av extremism (t.ex. höger, vänster och jihadism)? Arbetar ni något gällande deras ideologier?

2.

Hur ser arbetet mot Islamistisk extremism/jihadism ut?

Har ni något specifikt arbete mot eller med salafism/salafister? Hur tror du kunskapsnivån inom ert arbete är gällande salafism eller jihadistisk salafism?

Har ni identifierat särskilda problemområden, platser eller personer som är centrala för jihadistisk radikaliserings? I så fall, hur arbetar ni med detta?

Har ni några insatser för att identifiera riskbeteende online? Har ni identifierat någon radikaliserings inom jihadism som är kopplat till Internet?

Vad tror du är de mest avgörande delarna/faktorerna inom jihadismen som gör att människor går den vägen?

Har ert arbete förändrats något sedan det uppmärksammades att människor åkte ner och stred för IS?

Har ni fokuserat något på ideologin som dom identifierar sig med? Varför/varför inte?

Vad är den största utmaningen i arbetet mot jihadism?

3.

Har ni något samarbete med imamer eller trossamfund i arbetet mot radikaliserings? Salafistiska moskéer eller imamer?

Vad spelar deras arbete mot extremism för roll? Vad händer om dom slutar arbeta mot extremism?

## **10.2. Interview guide (translated to English)**

1.

How do you work preventively against radicalisation?

How do you work when you have identified a radicalised person or group?

Do you work differently with different kinds of extremism (for example right-wing, left-wing and Islamic)? Are you working anything with their ideologies?

2.

How does the work against Islamic extremism/jihadism look like?

Do you have any specific work against or with Salafism/Salafists? What do you think about the knowledge level among your workers in in regards of Salafism or Salafist Jihadism?

Have you identified any areas, persons or places of that is of particular interest of jihadist radicalisation? If so, how do you work with this?

Do you have any efforts to identify behaviour online that is considered a potential risk? Have you identified any radicalisation within Jihadism that has connections to the Internet?

What do you think is the crucial factors/parts of Jihadism that makes people go that path?

Has your work changed since the awareness was raised that people went south to fight for ISIS?

Have you focused any on the ideology they identify with? Why/why not?

What is the biggest challenge in the work against Jihadism?

3.

Do you have any cooperation with imams or faith communities in your work against radicalisation? Salafist mosques or imams?

How does their work against extremism matter? What happens if they stop to work against extremism?

4.

How do you separate between individuals that has extreme opinions, and opinions that is considered as a risk to result in violent extremism?

Have you identified that it exists parallel societies in your municipality? If you have, how do you uphold the rule of law and order?