In Sweden, as in other European countries, there seems to be an increasingly dichotomous and contradictory view of the role and function of minority religious communities. On the one hand, they seem to be viewed as a resource and a positive and integrative factor in society, whilst on the other hand, they seem to be perceived as a risk and a problem that needs to be controlled and managed. In this thesis, this contradictory and contested perspective of religion in the public realm in Sweden is analysed from a historical perspective by studying government documents between 1952 and 2019. The results show that although religion has become a new policy concern from the late 1990s, many of the recent controversies concerning minority religious communities are not new. Rather, these controversies are indicative of an ongoing story of the Swedish state’s perception and handling of increasing religious diversity and a balancing-act between different rights and values.

Ersta Sköndal Bräcke University College has third-cycle courses and a PhD programme within the field The Individual in the Welfare Society, with currently two third-cycle subject areas, Palliative care and Social welfare and the civil society. The area frames a field of knowledge in which both the individual in palliative care and social welfare as well as societal interests and conditions are accommodated.
A Risk or a Resource?

A Study of the Swedish State’s Shifting Perception and Handling of Minority Religious Communities between 1952-2019

Linnea Lundgren
A Risk or a Resource?

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Linnea Lundgren

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Opponent:
Grace Davie, Professor Emeritus, University of Exeter
Abstract

A Risk or a Resource? - A Study of the Swedish State’s Shifting Perception and Handling of Minority Religious Communities between 1952-2019

Linnea Lundgren

In Sweden, as in many other European countries, governments and other public authorities increasingly seem to view religious communities as an important resource that should be included in welfare provision and help combat problems that societies are facing, thereby intentionally or unintentionally bringing religion back into the public arena. However, religious communities also seem to be perceived as a risk and a problem that needs to be further regulated and controlled. Given these conflicting signals, the aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of the contradictory and contested perspective of religion in the public realm today by describing, analysing and discussing changes in the Swedish state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities between 1952 and 2019. The point of departure is an assumption that the state has a central role in setting the terms and conditions that both enable and limit what religious communities can do, thus shaping the function and role of religion in the public realm. The studied governments documents have been analysed through a mix-method approach meaning that both an automated content analysis and an idea-analysis have been performed. A theoretical framework including theories regarding the governance of religious diversity and civil society-state relations is used to analyse the material. The results show that the priorities of the state have been central in governing minority religious communities throughout the studied time period. Also, although the issue has become a new policy concern in the late 1990s, many of the recent controversies concerning minority religious communities are not new. Rather, such controversies are indicative of an ongoing story of Sweden’s handling of religious diversity. The conflicting view of minority religious communities today seems therefore to be deeply embedded in the inherent tensions of the Swedish social contract.

Keywords:
religion, religious diversity, faith community, state, government documents, mixed method, policy, civil society, religion-state, pluralism, religious schools
To my family
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<td>ACA</td>
<td>Automated Content Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Ministry Publications Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>EHCR</td>
<td>European Convention for Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBO</td>
<td>Faith-Based Organisation</td>
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<td>FIFS</td>
<td>United Islamic Congregations in Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICUS</td>
<td>Islamic Cultural Centre Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFS</td>
<td>Islamic Congregations in Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPOK</td>
<td>Committee on Immigration and Immigrant Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>IU</td>
<td>Commission on Immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KU</td>
<td>Committee on the Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>OÖKER</td>
<td>Orthodox and Eastern Churches Ecumenical Council</td>
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<td>SEH</td>
<td>Commission on Independent Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFR</td>
<td>The Swedish Free Church Council</td>
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<td>SFRS</td>
<td>SFR Joint Council</td>
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<td>SST</td>
<td>The Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities</td>
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<td>SOU</td>
<td>Swedish Government Official Reports</td>
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<td>UbU</td>
<td>Committee on Education</td>
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Note on Translation

Translation is a complex and challenging endeavour. There are constantly trade-offs and at times there are cultural or contextual elements that mean that translations may not be entirely perfect. This is especially true when the material is written in a different period to the period in which it is translated. It is therefore important to note that although all translations from Swedish to English have been performed in collaboration with bilingual individuals with considerable knowledge of both languages, the responsibility for the accurateness and correctness of all translation of quotes and concepts is entirely mine. In order to be transparent, some particularly crucial concepts or words that have been difficult to translate will be explained in a footnote. With other words and quotes, where for example more standardised translations exist, references will guide the reader to such literature. For further transparency, the original results in Swedish from the Automated Content Analysis are included in appendix 4.
1. Introductory Chapter

Religion and religious affairs have become heated topics in Swedish politics in recent years. Yet, the current Swedish public and political debate is at times confusing, with contradictory and conflicting perspectives being put forth concurrently regarding the role religious actors are expected to take in the public realm. This seems to be particularly true in terms of minority religious communities.\(^1\) On the one hand, the Swedish government and other public authorities seem to increasingly view minority religious communities as an important resource that can help tackle different social problems (prop. 2017/18:1). However, on the other hand, minority religious communities also seem to be perceived as a risk, i.e., a current or potential social problem and conflict-related factor that needs to be controlled and managed. This contradictory view is clearly illustrated by the heated public debate in recent years regarding the issue of religious schools\(^2\) and public funding of religion (Socialdemokraterna, 2018).\(^3\)

Given these conflicting signals, a central question of this thesis is how we can understand the current situation in which minority religious communities seem to be both celebrated and feared simultaneously? While the tension has become apparent in the last decade or so, it seems unlikely that these tensions have come

---

\(^1\) There are a number of different concepts that can be used to describe different types of religious organisations, as will be discussed later in this chapter. For now, however, I will use the concept of “religious actor” to describe religious organisations more in general and the concept of “religious communities” (in Swedish trossamfund) to distinguish the specific type of organisation I focus on this thesis. Religious communities refer, in contrast to religious actors, to organisations, culture associations or groups of collaborating congregations whose main focus is to offer worship, prayer and meditation.

\(^2\) In Swedish, the direct translation of a school with a religious orientation would be “Confessional Schools”. However, in order to use a concept more recognisable in an international context I will use the word “religious” rather than “confessional”.

\(^3\) The contradictions seen in the official discourse can also be seen in practice. The conflict of being regarded both as a risk and a resource, simultaneously, was abundantly clear in the experiences of minority religious communities’ response to the 2015 refugee crisis (Lundgren, 2019). In a study on how minority religious communities reacted to the arrival of Syrian refugees to Sweden in 2015, I could show that local congregations responded to the situation very differently. While some opened up their congregation, fed and housed newly arrived refugees, others did very little. Not only did these differences shed light on the heterogeneity of religious communities, and the difficulties of speaking of a unified group, but also the difficulties in relating to what many refer to as new and increasing expectations from public authorities. More specifically, many experienced a difficulty in navigating between what was regarded as acceptable and unacceptable in terms of different activities and values, as well as how these expectations related to their own desires and goals. Also, many described a sense of both being included whilst simultaneously excluded from the public realm.
from nowhere. Rather, the conflicting situation visible today is likely to be the consequential effects of previous decisions, choices and events. As such, in this thesis I am interested in understanding how the current situation was reached.

It is important to note that the tension between resource and risk, from the perspective of the state, is by no means an isolated national issue. Rather, in a number of different contexts scholars have highlighted that religious actors have increasingly been recognised as a resource that needs to be further included in public life, whilst simultaneously being highlighted as a problem that needs to be prevented, managed and excluded from the public realm (Beckford, 2010; Dinham, 2009; Mar Griera, 2012; Hurd, 2015a). This newly awoken interest in religious actors across the Western world in the past decades can be explained in several ways. For example, through global neo-liberalism and the deregulation of welfare services, a renewed policy interest has arisen for the sphere of civil society and the actors within it, including minority religious communities, that are understood as tools to solve many of the problems facing societies (Beaumont & Cloke, 2012; Hackworth, 2012). However, in light of increasing religious diversity, there have also been fears that some religious communities may be potential catalysts for segregation and that tensions between Western and Islamic norms and values may rise (Ivanescu, 2010). Specifically, following 9/11 the issue of how to manage religious diversity has become a policy concern, as religious actors have increasingly been pinpointed as a problem that needs to be handled (Hjelm, 2015; Humphrey, 2009; Hurd, 2015a; Turner, 2007). In order to tackle problems related to issues regarding religious diversity, national governments in a number of Western contexts have responded by appointing government commissions, both in order to find solutions of how to deal with the potential crises of national identity as well as propose policy recommendations regarding how to manage religious diversity (Lefebvre & Brodeur, 2017a).

Given the conflicting signals in the present political debate, this thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of the contradictory and contested perspectives of minority religious communities in a Swedish context from the perspective of the state – a perspective that has often been overlooked (Beckford, 2010; Hjelm, 2014), especially in the Nordic countries. Sweden is in many ways a particularly interesting country to study, not least since Sweden is often regarded as one of the most secular countries in the world (Pew Research Center, 2018), while
simultaneously being recognised as one of the most multi-religious countries in Europe due to increased immigration (Hackett, Connor, Stonawski, & Potančoková, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2014). From having been a country distinguished by its religious homogeneity and an established Lutheran national majority church, the increasing religious diversity, as well as an ongoing secularisation, makes Sweden an interesting case for exploring the state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities, not least since the Church of Sweden and the state separated in 2000. Also, despite the heated debate concerning the role of religious actors in the public realm there is a definite knowledge-gap concerning the governance of religious diversity from a Swedish perspective.

The point of departure for this thesis is grounded in an assumption that the state has a central role in setting the terms and conditions that both enable and limit what minority religious communities can do (Beckford, 2010). In order to fully understand the seemingly contradictory view of minority religious communities today, I believe it is crucial to look beyond the many changes that have occurred in the last few decades, such as increasing immigration and secularisation. Although the need to manage religious diversity may have intensified in many Western countries (Lefebvre & Brodeur, 2017a), the way minority religious communities are perceived as a risk and a resource in different contexts and societies today is most likely embedded in the local, national and political context of a country. By looking further back in history (in the case of this thesis, almost 70 years to when the Freedom of Religion Act was implemented in Sweden) it is possible to study the shifts (and continuity) of values, as well as political and moral logics. This approach is further strengthened by the fact that although many studies have been concerned with religious change, studies on the actual changing processes are limited.
1.1. Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the forthcoming thesis is to contribute to the understanding of the contradictory and contested perspective of religion in the public realm today by describing, analysing and discussing changes in the Swedish state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities between 1952 and 2019. This will be achieved by answering the following questions:

- How are minority religious communities portrayed in Swedish government documents between 1952 and 2019, in particular from the perspective of being perceived as a risk and/or a resource?

- Which ideals, values and principles underpin the state’s perception of minority religious communities and how do these affect the polices aimed towards them?

- How can continuity and discontinuity in the state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities be understood in relation to the moral and political logics informing the position of the state?

To answer these questions, I will study the voice of the state through an analysis of government documents (in particular, government commissions and the policy processes surrounding these commissions) since the implementation of the Freedom of Religion Act in 1952. The documents will be analysed through distant and close reading, meaning that the texts will be used both for quantitative and qualitative analysis. I will apply both a synchronic and diachronic perspective, meaning that the discourse, ideas and policies will be studied both during certain specific time periods and analysed over time to identify changes. The results of the research questions will be understood in relation to theoretical debates regarding the governance of religious diversity and civil society-state relations in different contexts. Specifically, I will focus on how political and moral logics can be understood to have informed the position of the state in its perception and handling of minority religious communities.

1.2. Background

In the following section I will place this study in a wider scholarly context and highlight how this thesis can contribute. Overall, my aim is to contribute to the
field of sociology of religion and more particularly the research field of the new visibility of religion in the public realm. Yet, in order to fully understand the contested and complex perception and handling of minority religious communities in Sweden today and from a historical perspective, I believe there is a need to apply ideas from different, and sometimes unconnected, research discourses. As such, I aim to use the research field of civil society as a lens to deepen my understanding regarding the new visibility of religion in the public realm.

1.2.1. Public Religion Through the Prism of the State

Given the aim of this thesis, in the following section I will present the research discourse that I aim to contribute to; the issue of public religion through the prism of the state. I will also highlight research regarding religious change in an international and Swedish context that is related to this topic.

1.2.1.1. A New Visibility of Religion

The question of how to understand the role and apparent decline of religion in modern societies has long been one of the core elements within sociology of religion. Based on a European and Christian viewpoint, many key figures in sociology have assumed that modernisation and the process of enlightenment and industrialisation would lead to a privatisation and weakening of religion for individuals as well as in societies at large (Berger, 1968; Bruce, 1995; Wilson, 1969). Based on a number of varied and sporadic explanations of how and in what way this would happen, this master narrative has come to be known as the “Traditional Secularisation Theory” (Davie, Heelas, & Woodhead, 2017).

During the last decades, however, there has been a refutation of the theory and many scholars have argued that there is a resurgence or even a return of religion in modern societies, as well as an ongoing de-secularisation, with some scholars

---

4 All of the “founding fathers” (for example, Durkheim, Weber and Marx) developed different perspectives on the secularisation theory and many scholars thereafter furthcred their thoughts. Following the Second World War, others, such as Bryan Wilson (1969), Peter Berger (1968) and Steven Bruce (1995) all strengthened the idea that modernisation of the society would lead to a decline of religion.
suggesting that we are now living in a post-secular society\(^5\) (Berger, 2017; Habermas, 2006; Stark, 1999; Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011). The underlying theme of many of these ideas is that the traditional secularisation theory has been proven wrong and that the world is still religious, with religion having returned from never having been away.

One of the scholars who questioned the idea that a modern society is destined to become more secular, was José Casanova (1994). However, rather than talking about the return of religion, he had a considerably more complex approach to the renewed role of religion in modern society. In his book, Public Religions in the Modern World, Casanova (1994) acknowledges the confusion of the concept of secularisation and in turn tries to develop a more refined definition in order to enable more accurate studies on the analysis of religion in different contexts. As a result, Casanova made a distinction between three processes of secularisation which he refers to as; “differentiation”, “religious privatisation” and “religious decline”, all of which need to be re-evaluated separately. A new visibility of religion in public life, he argued, did not necessarily have to mean that there was not an ongoing secularisation in the rest of society. By providing empirical evidence from four case studies in different countries (Poland, Spain, Brazil and the United States), he drew the conclusion that the secularity that many countries experienced, with religious decline and differentiation, had not occurred hand-in-hand with the privatisation of religion. Rather, he argued that the world witnessed a “deprivatization” of religion where religious traditions no longer accept the privatised role that the secularisation theories had prescribed to them. According to Casanova, religion would therefore continue to have an important public role in civil society, a sphere where religious actors can act independently without interference by the state, even in the modern world, where it was thought to have disappeared.

Religion in the 1980s went public in a dual sense. It entered the public sphere and gained, thereby, publicity. Various publics – the mass media,

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\(^5\) The highly debated concept of post-secularity is often associated with Jurgen Habermas (2006). Importantly, his understanding of the concept is both normative and descriptive. His normative account, that has also received the most criticism (see for example Beckford 2012 & Furseth, 2018), refers to how secular European societies and states must relate to the resurgence of religion in the public sphere and include and be perceptive to religious arguments that should have the same right to be heard as secular arguments (Habermas, 2006). His descriptive account of the concept, meanwhile, refers to a new changing “public consciousness” of religion (Habermas 2019).
social scientists, professional politicians, and the public at large – suddenly began to pay attention to religion. The unexpected public interest derived from the fact that religion, leaving its assigned place in the private sphere, had thrust itself into the public arena of moral and political contestation

(Casanova, 1994, p. 3)

More than 20 years after Casanova published his book, scholars are increasingly emphasising the importance of studying secularisation from different perspectives and levels (Furseth, 2017, Bäckström, 2014). One of them, Grace Davie (2013; 2015; 2017) has argued that there are two processes taking place simultaneously in the religious life of Europe. On the one hand, an ongoing secularisation and, on the other hand, a growing significance of religion in the public debate. According to Davie (2015) the new public presence of religion did not occur overnight but happened gradually throughout the latter part of the 20th century, with incidents such as the fall of the Berlin Wall meaning that the secular ideology of communism collapsed and Rushdie’s controversies in the late 1980s bringing new public attention to religion. This public consciousness was further evoked following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and its aftermath. Alongside such specific events, a driving factor in the new public debate regarding religion has been, according to Davie (2017), the growth in religious diversity in Europe and the difficulties experienced by countries in accommodating the needs of different religious minorities (groups that were previously labelled in terms of their ethnicity).

In the Nordic context, scholars have also highlighted that these two processes of an ongoing secularisation alongside a new public visibility of religion, characterises religious life of today (Furseth, 2018b). These processes have occurred in parallel, and most likely in conjunction with, an increasing religious diversity. The increased immigration in Sweden in recent decades has led to a new presence of religious groups and a new public visibility of religion, for example through practices amongst religious minority groups (Andersson & Sander, 2009). As Magdalena Nordin argues; “in the Swedish case, it is not so much about a return of religion but rather about an entrance of other religions” (Nordin, 2017, p. 392).
As a result of the developments seen in recent decades, few scholars would now speak of a return of religion. Rather, it is emphasised that subjective and privatised forms of religion can grow parallel to a deprivatization of religion in politics (Bäckström, 2014; Davie, 2015; Ferrari & Pastorelli, 2016; Woodhead & Catto, 2013). This development corresponds well to what Nordic researchers have described as “religious complexity”, i.e., the multiple and coexisting (and inconsistent) developments on different levels in the religious field (Furseth, Ahlin, Ketola, Leis-Peters, & Sigurvinsson, 2018).

Looking closer at the studies concerning the new visibility of religion in the public sphere in recent decades, it is clear that many connect the two parallel, but somehow contradictory, perspectives of risk and resource, in which religion is increasingly perceived as both a solution to social problems but also as a source of social problems (Hjelm, 2014). Regarding the risk perspective, a growing number of scholars have highlighted how religion is being related to conflict, global instability, insecurity and terrorism (Herbert, 2016; Hurd, 2015a). Also, in European societies as a result of increasing immigration, concerns of a loss of national identity and fear of “parallel societies” has arisen (Hjelm, 2014; Hurd, 2015a). Much of this risk perspective is also initiated by Huntington’s (2000) Clash of Civilizations Theory which argues that cultural and religious identities, not least between Western civilisations and the Muslim world, will be the major source of conflict following the end of the Cold War. Overall, there has been a widespread idea of a kind of problematic and conflicting return of religion, a perspective that can be clearly seen in the public media debate regarding religion (Hjelm, 2015).

Turning to the resource perspective, a large number of studies have been published in the field of religion and welfare, as well as religion and development, highlighting a development in which religious actors are increasingly recognised as important actors in combating different problems that societies face (see for example Beaumont & Cloke, 2012; Bäckström & Pettersson, 2016; Tomalin, 2015; Wuthnow, 2009). From a global perspective, religion is increasingly regarded as an important source of morality, freedom, and community, and religious actors are highlighted for having advantages over secular organisations in contributing to social justice and peacebuilding (Hurd, 2015b).

Although a large number of studies, from a number of perspectives, have been produced in Sweden in recent decades regarding the new visibility of religion in
the public sphere, one perspective that often seems to be overlooked is the understanding of the new visibility of religion through the prism of the state (Hjelm, 2014).

1.2.1.2. Public Religions and the State

Studying the new visibility of religion from the perspective of the state is important for a number of reasons, not least due to the fact that public life is shaped by how we talk about it and the rhetoric used by the state (Williams, 2007). Also, by shedding light on how the state involves itself with religion, important insights into the connections between religion and secularity in modern societies can be discovered (Kühle, Schmidt et al., 2018). James Beckford (2010), argues that Casanova’s (1994) claims surrounding the notion of “public religions” as free agents in civil society is problematic, not least in countries with a less strict separation between state and civil society (such as Sweden and Britain) compared to the countries studied by Casanova. From Beckford’s perspective, the new visibility of religion needs to be understood through the perspective of the state and in relation to government policies that may both include and exclude religion from the public realm. However, despite the obvious impact of the state on the new visibility of religion, this is a perspective that has been sparsely researched, as Titus Hjelm (2014) has drawn attention to:

One aspect of the new visibility of religion which has mostly escaped the attention of European sociologists of religion is the critical assessment of the ways in which governments and other public authorities use religion as a device or resource in the policies for combating social problems

(Hjelm, 2014, p. 203)

Despite this, there are a growing number of studies from different countries that highlight how states are “using or managing religions for their own purposes” (Beckford, 2010 p.123). In Britain, for example, scholars have shown how public policies have had considerable impact on religious actors, particularly as a result

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6 As will be highlighted on page 26, several studies in Scandinavia have been published regarding the relationship between religion and state (see for example Khule, 2011; Petterson, 2011; Paulsen Galal, Liebmann & Nordin, 2018; Kärrinäinen, 2011). However, there seems to be a lack of more in-depth studies particularly concerning firstly the issues raised in this thesis, and secondly, with a focus on minority religious communities.
of the New Labour Party’s emphasis between 1997 and 2007 on the usefulness of such actors and what they could “produce and provide” (Beckford, 2012; Dinham, 2009). During these years, the Labour government invested considerably in partnership programmes with the so-called faith sector, inviting religious actors to help combat many of the problems facing society (Beckford, 2010; Dinham, 2009). Religious actors were encouraged to contribute to the provision of welfare services as part of mixed welfare reforms, participate in governance and be potential sources for social capital and community cohesion, not least when interacting in local inter-faith and multi-faith encounters (Dinham, 2009). However, despite highlighting the usefulness of religious actors, there has also been evidence that the British government increasingly tried to govern religion. Beckford (2015), for example, argues that the emphasis on partnerships, as seen in Britain, is indicative of different methods of managing and governing religious diversity that governments find problematic, thereby shaping the actions of religious actors. For example, by inviting groups to discuss their inherent values in relation to government policies, policies can be shaped in order to exclude groups that in different ways prioritise other ideas and values or that can be regarded as a risk or social problem (Beckford, 2015a).

Similar developments can be seen in other countries. In the United States, the invitation of religious actors to state-religion dialogues co-occurred with other welfare reforms, such as the Charitable Choice Reform in the mid-1990s where the aim was to further involve religious actors in welfare provision (Melville & McDonald, 2006; Wuthnow, 2009). The reforms led to an establishment of a White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in 2001 as well as establishing the term Faith Based Organisations (FBO) as a normatively embedded concept for organisations that are expected to provide social services (Sider & Unruh, 2004; Wuthnow, 2009). In these faith-based welfare reforms there has been an overriding assumption that emphasising the volunteering, social services and civic engagement of religious actors is of considerable importance for society at large (Wagner, 2008). However, these claims have been increasingly criticised, not least due to the lack of empirical research of their actual contribution (Skocpol, 2013; Wagner, 2008).

In Spain, increased focus has also been placed on religious actors, especially minority religious communities (Griera, 2008; 2012; 2014). New partnerships,
inter-faith platforms and new public bodies has been established to manage religious diversity and new legislation has been passed. The Spanish state has created new governance tools to handle and manage diversity, which in turn has generated new ways of framing and representing religion in the public sphere that could be seen to represent a new policy paradigm. Mar Griera (2012) argues that to some extent this development during the past decades has meant that the governance of religious diversity has become an institutionalised policy sector and there is a construction of a “politically correct religion” (Griera, 2012).

In the past two decades, similar developments have been observed in European and North American international public policy where states have increasingly intervened in the religious field and tried to shape religious actors, commonly through the promotion of religious freedom and inter-faith programmes (Hurd, 2015a). Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (2015a) argues that there is a current and very powerful discourse of what she calls “two faces of faith” that structures most public policy concerning religion today, in which religion on the one hand is celebrated and on the other hand seen as the source of insecurity and instability. The development seen in many different countries, where governments and other public authorities recognise how religious actors can contribute either positively or negatively to society, can, according to Hjelm (2015), be understood as a “secular return of religion”. Not least, given that very little of the current public policy discourse is concerned with the issue of faith, per se.

While scholars in other European countries and globally have argued that there in recent decades has been emergence of a new policy sector concerned with religion and the handling of religious communities (Griera 2014, Beckford 2015), the question is whether this is also the case in Sweden? Specifically, is the Swedish state increasingly trying to involve and regulate minority religious communities by creating a specific sector in civil society concerned with issues of religion?

1.2.1.3. Multiple Modernities

In Beckford’s (2010) critique of Casanova’s (1994) claim concerning a strict separation between state and civil society, he draws on similarities between Britain and the Nordic countries in regard to civil society-state relations. Beckford claims that there has been no strict separation between the church and state, nor civil society and state, in the Nordic countries, nor in Britain. However, while it is
plausible that there are similarities between the Nordic countries and Britain, as argued by Beckford, there are also considerable and crucial differences. For example, the Swedish state and civil society nexus differs substantially from that of Anglo-American (such as Britain and the United States) and continental European countries (such as Spain) where previous research has been carried out regarding state interventions towards religious actors in civil society. In Sweden, the state has been the main producer of welfare whereas voluntary organisations have played a very limited role in service provision (Svedberg & Olsson 2010). The social contract7 in Sweden also differs from the social contract in many other European countries, as is characterised by a strong alliance between the state and individual (so-called statist individualism) through which the autonomy of the individual is secured and unequal power relations and dependence in the family, religious communities and charities are avoided. According to the same logic, social investments, social welfare, health service and social insurance are primarily seen as the responsibility of the state, to secure equal opportunity and fairness, as well as individual autonomy. This means that both family and religious (and other civil society) actors play second fiddle to the state in the Swedish social contract (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2015). As such, even if welfare reforms, with a focus on freedom of choice, have occurred in Sweden, the reforms have turned out to predominantly favour for-profit actors while voluntary organisations and religious organisations still have a fairly limited role (Leis-Peters, 2019; Sivesind, 2017).

Therefore, although there may be similarities between the Nordic countries and Britain, where the arrival of neoliberal politics has meant that religious actors have been increasingly invited to solve problems, through, for example, being promoted to have interreligious forums and to be part of producing “a common good” (Paulsen Galal, Lund Liebmann, & Nordin, 2018), the differences between the state and civil society nexus in different countries will, to some extent, help to explain what is at stake in the civil society debate and also, consequently, in the relationship between the state and minority religious communities. This

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7 By social contract I here refer to an implicit, hypothetical or actual agreement among the members of a society to cooperate for social benefits, for example by sacrificing some individual freedom for state protection, and to establish the principles that define and limit the rights and duties of the citizens and the state (Oxford Dictionary)
perspective is rarely, at least to my knowledge, discussed in relation to understanding the new visibility of religion in public life.

Coupled with this perspective is that whereas research from other countries can give an indication of the situation in Sweden, one cannot merely rely on research regarding how and in what way religious communities are promoted and opposed in other Western countries and apply this to Sweden. Rather, given the proposed theory of multiple modernities, i.e., that different countries and contexts can produce diverse routes towards modernity (Eisenstadt, 2017), contextualisation is vital. Therefore, the particular Swedish context, which in many ways is unique in relation to the state-civil society relationship and the underlying moral logics, needs to be understood.

Currently, there is a common discourse that the welfare-era marginalised the role of religious actors in service provision as the state took over roles previously held by religious actors in the process of creating an overarching public welfare system (Bäckström, Davie, Edgardh, & Pettersson, 2010; Dinham & Jackson, 2012) and it has also been argued that the welfare state ideal during these years was largely secular (Woodhead & Catto, 2013). Yet, relatively little is known, at least in Sweden, of how discussions concerning minority religious communities as risks and/or resources were handled during this era, and whether, why and when there was a shift in the discourse that led to religious actors becoming contributors to society, thus making religion more visible in the public realm. Whilst there is perhaps a new visibility of state intervention in the religious field, the willingness to shape and define religion is not new (Hurd, 2015a). According to scholars such as Casanova, who have shed light on the discourse concerning Catholic immigrants in 19th century America and the discourse towards Muslim immigrants in Europe today, the similarities are considerably greater than we might believe (Jose Casanova, 2012). Therefore, if this issue is not new in other countries, the issue may not be new in Sweden.

1.2.1.4. Religion in the Nordic Countries

While there is relatively little written regarding the understanding of the new visibility of religion through the prism of the state in the Swedish context, there have been several studies published in recent years that are highly relevant for this thesis. Importantly, although I am aware that a large number of studies have been
published regarding religion in the public sphere from a number of perspectives (e.g. media (Axner, 2015; Hjarvard & Lövheim, 2012; Jensdotter, 2021) and law (Borevi, Leis-Peters, & Lind, 2016; Enkvist, 2013; Nilsson & Enkvist, 2016)) and that there are a growing number of studies concerning religious minorities in Sweden (Nordin, 2004; Plank, 2015; Sorgenfrei, 2018), I will mainly focus on the research fields that I believe are most relevant to this research project: religion and state, religion, civil society and welfare, and religion and politics in the Nordic countries.

In recent years, a number of studies have been undertaken in the field of religion and state, many of which are connected to the Nordic research project NOREL that has studied the role of religion in the public sphere in the Nordic countries since the late 1980s (Furseth, 2017). NOREL is, in turn, based on a comparative study on religious change in the Nordic countries between 1930-1980 by a group of Nordic researchers led by Göran Gustafsson (Gustafsson & Dahlgren, 1985). In both Gustafsson’s project and the NOREL project, one part was particularly concerned with the issue of a changing relationship between state and religion. In his original study, Gustafsson pointed to a number of shifts regarding how the Nordic church-state relations changed between 1930 and 1980, However, despite the fact that the study was concerned with religion-state relations, the issue of religious minorities and increasing religious diversity was only sparsely highlighted. Regardless, the overall conclusion was that despite the established churches retaining a public role, there was a weakening of the official presence of religion in the public realm (Gustafsson & Dahlgren, 1985). In similarly to Gustafsson, the NOREL project has not given great attention to the relationship between the state and minority religious communities, despite raising the question of whether the connection between religion and state has become more differentiated (Furseth, Kühle, Lundby, & Lövheim, 2019). Most likely, the issue has been overlooked due to the broad definition of state-religion relations in the project. Thereby, while many different (and central) perspectives have been included, for example religion in public institutions, religious education, the

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8 Many of the current studies published regarding religious change in Sweden are related to multidisciplinary research centre Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre (CRS) at Uppsala University.

9 In which three selected years were studied - 1938, 1958 and 1978. The NOREL project then followed a similar structure and studied the years 1988, 1998, and 2008
opening of parliament, end of school year celebration in schools, etc, (Furseth & Aa Kühle, 2011; Kühle, Schmidt, Jacobsen, & Pettersson, 2018; Pettersson, 2011; Schmidt, 2011) as well as the shifting church-state relations, the project did not raise the issue of the state’s handling and perception of minority religious communities. However, the studies within the NOREL project point to some important findings that are highly relevant for this thesis, not least that religious diversity had changed and challenged many of the former arrangements between state and church (Kühle et al., 2018). It is also argued that the institutional and legal changes in the Nordic countries are often referred to as a response to human rights and religious diversity (Furseth et al., 2019) and in the example of the state inviting minority religious communities to hold chaplaincies at public institutions, the authors argue that there are distinct traces of growing partnerships, in similarity to what has been seen in Britain (Kühle et al., 2018). An overall conclusion of the project is that the relations between religion and state in the Nordic countries are complex, ambiguous and filled with conflicts and that new patterns of religion-state relations may emerge given that governments increasingly seem to be regulating new, more diverse forms of religion (Kühle et al., 2018), a conclusion relevant in relation to the contribution of this thesis.

Continuing with the research field concerning issues related to religion, civil society and welfare, a large increase in research production has been seen in Sweden during the last few decades10 (see for example Borell & Gerdner, 2011; Bäckström, Davie, & Molokotos-Liederman, 2017; Bäckström & Pettersson, 2016; Elander & Fridolfsson, 2011; Leis-Peters, 2019; Winsvold, Mjelde, & Loga, 2017). Many of these studies shed light on the changing role of religious actors and how they have acted in different areas, including welfare provision, combating extremism and in integration. By exploring how religious actors respond to the new possibilities that are provided for them, it has been demonstrated that they still largely function as a complement to the work performed by the state and municipalities (Pessi, Angell, & Pettersson, 2009). The studies also suggest that religious actors seem to have become increasingly involved both socially and politically, not least in issues concerning poverty and exclusion (Bäckström, 2014). However, in similarity to international studies, focus

10 In particular, there are two larger research projects that can be highlighted here: Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective (WREP) and Welfare and Values in Europe: Transitions Related to Religion, Minorities and Gender (WaVET)
has predominantly been on the self-perceived role of these organisations and not the state’s perspective. Regardless, these studies illustrate that the interest in religious actors participating in public life, that can be seen internationally, also seems to be apparent in the Nordic countries.

Finally, regarding studies of public policy and religion in the Nordic countries, there have been several relevant studies published in recent years, some of which have focused on government commissions, in similarity to this thesis. In Norway, recent studies have been published on the Norwegian Commission on Faith and Worldviews, and scholars such as Brestein and Furseth (2017) have studied the guiding principles, the key controversies, and how the emphasis of equal treatment of religious and worldview communities can affect how the Norwegian state deals with religious diversity. Kristin Skaring Eriksson (2020) also studied the same commission, albeit focusing on the consultation process that followed the commission, investigating how this can assist the understanding of how different actors articulate their positions on the governance and legislation of religion. Although focusing on the discourse surrounding one government commission closely can be advantageous, as the Norwegian studies exemplify, I believe it can also be fruitful to study what discourses are possible to see over a longer period of time, not least as this will enable a tracing of shifts and continuity.

Such an approach has previously been applied by Johan Cato (2012) in his study of how Muslims were portrayed in Swedish policy debates between 1975 and 2010. His study points to a similar development to that seen in other countries (Birt, 2006; Humphrey, 2009), were Muslims have increasingly been regarded as a threat. Cato shows how the Swedish discourse has changed from mainly being concerned with practical issues, for example issues regarding education and slaughter, to in the beginning of the 1990s, shifting to focus on Muslim immigration and Muslims being described as a danger connected to terrorism, extremism and the oppression of women. Cato also sheds light on how the state, through different strategies, has increasingly tried to create a more moderate Islam that incorporates more liberal and secular values. As such, he shows how Islam has become increasingly problematised in the political discourse, a result similar to that seen in the public debate in Denmark by Brian Arly Jacobsen (2009) where Muslims are increasingly perceived as a problem.
In another study, Jonas Lindberg (2015), also part of the NOREL research project, has analysed the way religion more generally is referred to in Nordic parliamentary debates during a 30-year period. His results show that religion has become increasingly politicised, i.e., religion is used to pursue political aims and to achieve political influence in the political debate, not least by right-wing parties. This is in line with other studies in Sweden with data showing that there is a growing opposition to the religious freedom of immigrants (Demker, 2017) and a widespread view that Islam is a threat to the national culture (Lövheim, Jernsletten, Herbert, Lundby, & Hjarvard, 2018). Such changing perspectives on immigrants has also been shown by Karin Borevi (2002) when studying shifts in the official discourse over time. Although her focus was not on religious minorities or religion, she studied the Swedish discourse concerning policies targeted towards immigrants more generally, in four different policy areas between the 1970s and the 2000s. Borevi particularly highlights a shift in the official discourse from multicultural policy towards a focus on civic assimilation. A shift that may also have had a considerable impact on religious minorities.

Although there are clearly several studies that indicate that the state’s approach towards religion, and especially Muslims groups, may have shifted in the same direction as described in the international literature mentioned above, there are knowledge gaps. Specifically, there is a need to analyse how the discourse, underlying ideas and policies concerning minority religious communities, as a group, from the perspective of the state, has changed over a long time period. For example, could it be that the current negative perception of Muslims in the Swedish discourse has affected the way minority religious communities are portrayed in general? Or, is the current perception of Muslims merely an example of the state’s general perception of minority religious communities? In order to contribute to an answer, longer time periods need to be studied.

1.2.2. The State and Civil Society

Although the state’s shifting perception of minority religious communities highlights many central questions regarding the role and visibility of religion, it
also highlights a number of central questions regarding civil society. Around the same time as the scholarly debate concerning the new visibility of religion occurred in the 1990s, there was also an increase in both the use of the concept of civil society but also a generally growing interest in this third sphere, separated from market and state, in both academia and politics. As both Casanova (1994) and Beckford (2010) shed light on in their discussion of the public religions, there is a need to understand the relationship between state and civil society in order to fully grasp the changes in the religious field.

1.2.2.1. Public Policy and Support to Civil Society

During the last decades, the relationship between state and civil society has been of scholarly interest from a wide range of perspectives (Cohen & Arato, 1994; Keane, 1988; Putnam, 2000), including those who have had a particular interest in the topic of religion and civil society (Berger, 2005; Casanova, 1994; Herbert, 2016; Wuthnow, 2003). Many of the early writings highlighted the polemical relationship between the two (an issue that will be returned to further in the theoretical chapter), however this “paradigm of conflict” should not be the only way to understand the relationship as this in itself is connected to a more Anglo-American narrative of civil society-state relations (Somers, 1995a). Rather, just as there may be conflicts between civil society and the state, there may also be potential for partnerships and interdependences.

This dialectical relationship, that scholars have increasingly emphasised the importance of studying (Cohen & Arato, 1994; Salamon & Anheier, 1998), can partly be understood as governed by public policies, given that such policies determine whether different organisations should be eligible for government grants, as well as other types of government support. As public policies can entail both funding and regulation and set the conditions for an organisation and its recognition in society, it will in one way or another set the character and structure of civil society (Smith & Grønbjerg, 2006). As such, “understanding the nature of

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11 Civil society is a deeply contested concept. Although the concept of civil society and its relationship to the state will be further explored in the theoretical chapter, the use of it in this thesis will mainly be analytical, meaning that civil society represents a non-state and non-market sphere, in which a number of organisations, including minority religious communities, are a part.
government-non-profit relations is therefore a fundamental quest for non-profit researchers” (Smith & Grønbjerg, 2006, p. 2).

By understanding the nature of state and civil society relations, therefore, we may further understand the possible limits and opportunities of minority religious communities in Sweden during different periods. In Sweden, the negotiations regarding whether organisations should receive support or not and, if so, what the regulations should be, are often discussed in government commissions, that are the primary material of this thesis. Although scholars have highlighted the principal arguments for introducing government grants to minority religious communities in the 1970s (Nordin, Leis-Peters, & Middlemiss Lé Mon, 2015), little is known regarding the background to this decision; a specific knowledge gap that will be filled by this thesis. This lack of knowledge is somewhat surprising given that the issue of government support, in particular to minority religious communities, has created considerable public debates both internationally and in Sweden (Ekström, 2006a; Messner, 2016).

1.2.2.2. Changing Relations Between the State and Civil Society

In similarity to the changing relationship between religion and state, during the past decades there have been shifts in the relationship between the state and civil society in the Nordic countries (see, for example, Loga, 2018; Lundberg, 2017; Reuter, Wijkström, & von Essen, 2012; Selle, Strømsnes, & Loga, 2018; Sjöstrand, 2018). Not least as a consequence of the development of the state, there has been an increased emphasis on pluralism and freedom of choice meaning that governments in the Nordic countries are expecting organisations in civil society to contribute with services, thereby reframing their role in society, a transition that some scholars have chosen to call a move “from voice to service” (Lundström & Wijkström, 2012). Erik Sjöstrand (2018), along with other scholars (Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018) also argues that the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) has formed a renewed model and a system shift in the state’s relationship with civil society. Specifically, what can be observed is that the relationship has changed from a trust-based relationship to one more characterised by a system of control where goals should be implemented and met.

Studies have shown that the support has also been questioned (at least historically) by minority religious communities themselves who raised concerns regarding their autonomy when being financed by the state (Bergsten, 1995)
(Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018). Also, in line with this, organisation in civil society are increasingly encouraged to implement different public policies (Selle et al., 2018; Sjöstrand, 2018). This development is similar to that observed in other countries, with new public-private partnerships and non-profit actors becoming instruments of public sector action (Anheier, 2009). Simultaneously, unconditioned grants have been reduced while more directed grants have become more common (Gavelin, 2018).

However, although, change has occurred, scholars have also warned against overly exaggerating the changes that have taken place in Nordic countries. As mentioned previously, many of the changes, particularly in the welfare arena in the Nordic countries, turned out to predominantly open up for market actors rather than religious actors and other voluntary organisations (Leis-Peters, 2019; Sivesind, 2017). Yet, despite this, it is evident that the dynamics in the relationship between state and civil society have changed.

Given that religious actors often stand in the centre of public debates concerning civil society, it is somewhat surprising that the issue of minority religious communities has received relatively limited attention in studies regarding the changing role of organisation in civil society and the changing relationship between civil society and the state (Leis-Peters, 2017). Also, there seems to be a lack of empirical studies focusing on how the state’s perception and handling of one particular part of civil society in policymaking has changed over a longer time period. This is also a knowledge-gap highlighted by Erik Lundberg (2017) who notes that “knowledge about what characterizes actors in control of the transformation of the welfare state, who generate policy initiatives, ideas, and legitimacy in policymaking, is in short supply” (Lundberg, 2017, p.1372).

### 1.3. Minority Religious Communities and the State

This thesis focuses on the relations between state and religion and in particular the state’s perception of minority religious communities. However, both the state and minority religious communities are contested concepts. Therefore, some clarification of these concepts is needed.
In the academic, political or general discourse, many different concepts exist to define and describe religious groups in society: religious communities, congregations, mosques, churches, faith communities, religious organisations, idea-based organisations, religious NGOs, value-based organisations, faith-based organisations, etc. Although these concepts are often used interchangeably, there are subtle, though crucial, differences. Often, they have different ideological standpoints and thereby reflect the indirect role or purpose these organisations are expected to have in the wider society. Different concepts can therefore often vary in meaning in different socio-political contexts.

The concept of FBO is a prime example and is increasingly being used in a European context when discussing religious organisations and communities (Beaumont & Cloke, 2012; Elander & Fridolfsson, 2011; Gärde, 2014; Göçmen, 2013). The concept of FBO originates from US research where religious actors have historically always had a crucial role in society and in providing social service (Cnaan & Boddie, 2002; Wuthnow, 2009). Globally, the increased use of the concept “coincided with a rise in awareness of the resurgence of religious activity” (Tomalin 2012, p.692) and was heavily influenced by the American charitable choice reform in the mid-1990s where the aim was to further involve religious actors in welfare provision (Melville & McDonald, 2006). As such, the concept FBO is connected to, and influenced by, an Anglo-Saxon socio-political context and is often embedded in a policy discourse that is concerned with how religious actors and communities could be involved in welfare provision and combat different problems facing society. Therefore, the terminology has been criticised for representing an adoption of uncritical use of language related to an American welfare reform (Melville & McDonald, 2006) and consequentially the concept is not easily transferred to a country such as Sweden.

However, concepts such as “faith communities” or “religious communities” are also highly contested concepts that need to be critically analysed. In Swedish, national umbrella organisations or federations with underlying parishes, congregation or local culture associations are named trossamfund by the Swedish government, a concept that could be translated into “faith community”. Yet, Beckford (2015a), alongside Adam Dinham (2011), have raised an awareness of how the use of “faith community” can be understood in light of the re-emergence of faith as a public category (Dinham, 2011). Such understandings indicate that
the concept of faith community is deeply embedded in “governments’ communitarian and neo-liberal policies for managing religious and ethnic diversity” in which religions constitute “faith communities for instrumental reasons” (Beckford, 2015a, p.226). By focusing on concepts such as faith communities and faith-based activities, Beckford argues that the British government focuses on shared values and tolerance that can emphasise a perception of working for the common good, rather than focusing on differences between religions. The concept of “faith communities” thereby places the normative hopes of these communities in the limelight, which could make it a problematic concept to use from an academic perspective. Similarly, by using the concept of faith community, rather than using different notions for different groups, the state can imply a homogeneity amongst religious minority groups, despite the inherent diversity. Beckford argues that “the UK government’s practice of addressing faith communities as if they were undifferentiated entities within a single ‘faith sector’ runs the risk of appearing naïve, disingenuous or misleading” (Beckford 2015a, p.233).

Looking closer at the two concepts “faith” and “community” further adds to this complexity. The concept of community is one of the most contested concepts in the field of sociology (Heskin, 2019) and has been criticised for the multiple understandings of what it relates to (a location, a shared history, faith or values, a high degree of solidarity, etc., as well as how these different aspects should be defined) and also because it entails a large number of varied meanings in different contexts (Beckford, 2015a; Dinham, 2011). Similarly, the concept “faith” could be problematic as it can be associated with a Christian, mainly Protestant, tradition, making the term less useful in a pluralistic society (Jeavons, 2004). As such, although the concept “religious” can also be complicated as it always runs the risk of either being too exclusive or inclusive, it is in contrast to the term of faith not as strongly connected to the so-called “discourse of faith”. As a result, I argue that the concept of “religious” is more suitable to use in this thesis.

Despite the critique of concepts such as faith community, there is rarely any suggestion on what concept that could be used instead. Also, while Beckford (2015a) argues that it would be good if scholars found better and less ambiguous

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13 For an overview of different commonly uses of the term ‘community’ see Beckford (2010)
alternatives than faith communities, he himself provides no alternative. Rather, he suggests a critical analysis of potential concepts, as is attempted in this section. As a result of such analyses, I have decided to use the concept of minority religious communities in order to pinpoint the type of organisation I intend to study in this thesis. The concept refers to organisations, culture associations or groups of collaborating congregations whose overriding aim is to organise religious service\textsuperscript{14} and that have been particularly identified as a group who the state directs its policies towards. Although there are problems of translating the Swedish concept of \textit{trossamfund} to religious community, in order to refrain from inventing my own concept that could potentially confuse the reader in terms of what group I am actually studying, “religious” has been seen as the most appropriate term. Regarding the concept of “faith community”, this will be used when referring to the state’s specific use of the concept.

In terms of the concept minority, this is simply defined as all religious communities outside of the majority church. In a Swedish context, the majority church refers to the Church of Sweden of which a majority of the Swedish population (60\%) still belongs to. Although the Church of Sweden has a declining membership trend and the term majority church could seem problematic, its hegemonic status is still visible through large parts of the studied period and its distinctive status still characterises it today. Also, the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities are still, not least through the acts that were passed in 2000, treated distinctly differently in Swedish politics (Pettersson, 2011).

Grouping all minority religious communities into one group could obviously be problematic, not least considering the differences in the roles historically occupied by the established minority group of the Free Churches and the “new” minority communities (for example Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Buddhists, etc.). However, although it is possible to study the state’s handling of Muslim, Catholics or Free Churches independently, as many other scholars have done (Cato, 2012; Werner, 1996), there are reasons for studying them as one unified group. As mentioned previously, in Swedish policy documents they are commonly referred to as a single entity and as a collective group, despite their considerable heterogeneity. Consequentially, this means that policies directed to one religious

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\textsuperscript{14} Although many religious communities are also involved in social service, capacity building and political activity, these aspects are clearly secondary.
group also affects all other groups, thereby creating tension and challenging situations, not least seen in the handling of religious schools, where a small number of problematic schools have led to a debate of prohibiting a majority of them.

Finally, regarding the definition of the state, the literature is considerable and definitions vary considerably depending upon the perspective and context (see for example Rothstein, 1994; Skocpol, Evans, & Rueschemeyer, 1985). Included amongst the multitude of definitions are that the state can be seen as a phenomenon linked to collective problem solving, a way of organising society and distributing (civil) freedoms and rights, an abstract concept that captures the dimensions between civil society and the market, a sovereign (over its own territory) actor in international politics, the public sector (a public legal organisation and legal entity), the technical or bureaucratic apparatus, or an economic entity. In relation to this thesis, many of the definitions are applicable and encompass my understanding of the state. Regardless of definition, however, this thesis will be based on the study of government documents, that can be said to represent the voice of the state. In my theoretical chapter I will further highlight how the state operates as a dichotomous ideal type contrasted from the civil society sphere, in order to distinguish minority religious communities from the state (of which also the Church of Sweden was tied to until 2000) and understand how this particular distinction between state and civil society can be understood in the Swedish social contract.

1.4. Disposition

This thesis will be divided into three parts. In the first part (chapters 1-4), a background will be provided, in the second part (chapters 5-9) the empirical results will be presented, and in the third part (chapters 10-11) the empirical results will be discussed in relation to the theoretical framework and previous research.

In this first chapter I have introduced the research problem, the aim and given a shorter introduction of previous research and presented two of the central concepts of this thesis. In chapter two, I will set the scene for this thesis by describing the Swedish context, both from a historical and present-day perspective. I will also give a deeper insight into the role of religion, and in
particular the situation for minority religions in Swedish society, as well as the changing political landscape. In chapter three, I will present the theoretical framework that I will use to analyse and discuss the empirical material. In chapter four, which is the last chapter before I present my results, I will present the selection of government documents and the mixed method approach I have applied. The subsequent chapters will then present the empirical results. The empirical chapters have been divided into four different time periods: 1952-1968, 1969-1990, 1991-2010 and lastly 2011-2019. Each chapter presents the trends, discourses and tensions in a synchronic perspective that are visible in each period from analysing the government documents. In chapter nine, I will highlight the diachronic perspective and look at changes over time. In the tenth chapter, the empirical results will be analysed in relation to the theoretical framework and the theoretical implications of my results will be highlighted. Finally, the thesis ends with chapter eleven where I will discuss the results in relation to previous research and highlight my overall contribution and give suggestions for future research.
2. The Swedish Context

In this chapter I will present the context and setting for this thesis; the Swedish context. I will start by reflecting on the role of religious minorities in Swedish society from a historical perspective followed by a brief overview of some of the changes that have affected the state’s perception of minority religious communities. I will conclude the chapter by presenting an overview of the current religious landscape in Sweden.

2.1. Foreign Faith-Practitioners

From the early Christian period in Sweden, the church and state has had close ties. During the reformation in the 16th century, these ties were further strengthened. The Swedish citizenship became united with the Lutheran evangelical confession and all citizens were required to participate in the rites of passage.\(^15\) During the 17\(^{th}\) and 18\(^{th}\) century, Sweden was, in comparison to other European countries, deeply marked by its unity in the Lutheran faith and lack of religious pluralism (Ljungberg, 2017). In the first paragraph of the 1634 Instrument of Government, it was stated that unity in religion and worship performed in the right way was the most important foundation for a lawful, cohesive and lasting regiment. In a society shaped by both social and ecclesiological uniformity,\(^16\) religious minorities, or so-called “foreign faith-practitioners”,\(^17\) i.e., groups that did not belong to the national Lutheran state church, had limited freedoms For example, a Swedish citizen who did not follow the Lutheran evangelical doctrine, i.e., the same religion as the monarch, would, according to 1686 Church law, be expatriated (Dahlman, 2009; Ljungberg, 2017)

Despite a political debate regarding further religious tolerance in Sweden, the situation for religious communities worsened as a result of a new law in 1726; the Conventicle Act\(^18\), that prohibited people from having private religious gatherings, prayer meetings and so-called conventions, without the presence of a

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15 Baptism (that had to take place within eight days of birth) was connected to both the Church and Swedish citizenship. Being Swedish therefore essentially meant being Lutheran and belonging to the national church.
16 A so-called "Enhetssamhälle" in Swedish
17 Främmande trossutövare
18 The so called konventikelplakaten was a constitution that forbade meeting for prayer and religious service in any other place than the national church.
priest from the national church (Ljungberg, 2017). These restrictions were rooted in a desire to maintain unity in religion and thereby reduce the risk of a disunion of the nation, a risk that was clearly evident given the pietism that grew stronger from the 18th century (Ljungberg, 2017). The pietists emphasised, as a reaction to the national church, the personal Christian faith and the individual’s own piety. In 1781, mainly as a consequence of a need for labour immigrants, Catholics and Calvinists (and later also Jews in 1782) gained the rights to establish their own religious congregations and have their own religious leaders, as long as they did not disrupt the Lutheran evangelical doctrine and the national faith. In practice, this meant that no-one could speak negatively about the church and Swedish citizens were not allowed to participate in alternative religious services, thereby maintaining the strong connection between church and citizenship (Ljungberg, 2017; Waller, 1964).

The strong ties between the state and church, where the church and state, parish and municipality were intertwined, lasted until the middle of the 19th century when they were gradually dissolved and in 1858, the Conventicle Act was abolished. The change occurred in a time of urbanisation and industrialisation of Swedish society. While the agrarian society was heavily based on traditional values of the church, the industrial society was more pluralistic and characterised by social movements that promoted individual freedom, including religious freedom. The following so-called Dissenter Acts, passed in 1860 and 1873, opened for the possibility to leave the Church of Sweden without expatriated. An illustrative example of the shift taking place in the religious landscape at this time can be seen in 1860, when the Church of Sweden was mentioned for the first time in official documents, marking a small but important shift in the religious landscape of Sweden as the specific mentioning can be understood as a sign that there was a new awareness that the Church of Sweden was not the only church existing in Swedish society (Bexell, 2003; Dahlman, 2009).

Despite the gradual changes in Swedish society, the debate concerning religious freedom was continuous and at times heated. While the Dissenter Acts opened up for some religious freedom the acts only allowed individuals to leave the Church of Sweden if this simultaneously occurred with the immediate affiliation to another, by the king approved, religious community (Enkvist, 2013). As such, although the Dissenter Acts were a significant improvement for religious
minorities, it was still evident that the Church of Sweden with its Lutheran confession was the state religion, with the whole of Swedish society resting on its foundations. For example, individuals who left the Church of Sweden and entered another religious community lost some civil rights, such as the right to become a primary school teacher. Consequentially, many who belonged to the Free Churches kept their membership in the Church of Sweden. The Catholic group in Sweden, however, was more affected by the legal framework concerning religious minorities, as they often decided to leave the church (Werner, 2002).

As can be seen in the table below, the number of minority religious communities in 1870 was limited (Gunner, 1999). Although it is likely that there were also unregistered individuals, amongst the Swedish population (at the time 4.5 million (SCB, 2020)) the number of individuals belonging to a minority religious community was minimal.

Table 1. Minority Religious Communities in 1870\textsuperscript{19}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Minority Communities</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organised groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman-Catholic (in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö)</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian-Greek (in Stockholm)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Reform (in Stockholm)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Reform (in Stockholm and Gothenburg)</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish (in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Norrköping and Karlskrona)</td>
<td>1,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals unattached to organised groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman-Catholic</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptists</td>
<td>1,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separatists</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Christian followers</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mormons</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Towards the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the pursuit for religious freedom and the right to be able to leave the Church of Sweden increased, as illustrated by the fact

\textsuperscript{19} Retrieved from Gunner, 1999 p. 46
that the reviver movement became, at the time, one of the large popular movements in Sweden (Engberg 1986).

2.2. The Church of Sweden and the Free Churches

Although the Church of Sweden had a significant and privileged position during the first decade of the 20th century, it experienced considerable difficulties in handling the societal transition from a rural agrarian society, not least since in the rural agrarian society the church had a central and evident role that was not easily transferred to the larger cities. Simultaneously, whilst the Free Churches and the Catholic communities continued to grow, thereby promoting religious freedom (Waller, 1964), a decreasing number of people participated in religious services held by the Church of Sweden. Simultaneously, there was also growing criticism of the Church of Sweden and its position in society from a new middleclass with liberal and agnostic ideals (Ekström, 2003).

Similarly, the growth of the Labour Movement is an important aspect to include in order to understand the debates concerning the role of religion and the relationship between state and church. Already in the 1880s, the Social Democratic pioneer August Palm (1849-1922) wrote in the party programme that religion should be regarded as a private matter and that the state-church system should be abolished (Ekström, 2003). Although the criticism became less strident during the early 20th century, leading individuals in the Labour Movement were not only critical towards religion but also towards the Church of Sweden’s position in Swedish society (Ekström, 2003). One of the major criticisms of the Church of Sweden was that it was backward-looking and that the priests were too conservative. In turn, this meant that the church and its priests were understood to be in opposition to the development of the Labour Movements as well as many of the suggested social reforms (Ekström 2003).

As a result of the debates, different movements within the church developed alternative ideas of how to solve these issues. For example, in the Young Church

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20 Around 5% of the population participated in Sunday services at the beginning of the 20th century (Willander 2019)
Movement the idea of the folkkyrkan developed, an idea that would have considerable impact on the future discussions concerning state and church (Eckerdal, 2012). The ecclesiology of the notion of folkkyrkan was grounded in the idea that the church’s task was to reach out to everyone in the country with the mercy of God. Everyone should therefore be included and the church should be open to all, regardless of lifestyle and piety, and wherever they may live in the country. Importantly, these ideals of openness and inclusiveness of religiosity was often contrasted to the ideals of the Free Churches (or, as they were often called, association-churches or sects) that emphasised personal confession, devotion of the individual and social community. As such, they were often understood as being exclusive and excluding (Claesson, 2004; Eckerdal, 2012).

The understanding of folkkyrkan should not only be seen in light of the relationship of the growing Free Church movements but also in relation to the criticism that was raised against the state-church system (Bexell, 2003; Ekström, 2003). In 1929, as a response to the uncertainties of the church’s future in relation to the state, the bishops of the Church of Sweden argued in a motion in to the General Synod, that the state should treat the church with respect and respect its integrity. It was also stated that folkkyrkan could develop parallel to the emergence of a democratic society with the hope that the church could be active across the entire country and open to everyone – almost like any other public administrative body – and, as such, the church could participate in the ongoing

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21 Ungkyrkorörelsen
22 The concept of folkkyrka is a complex concept to translate as the concept is decidedly Swedish and does not exist in other contexts. While it is often translated to “peoples’ church” or “folk church”, such definitions can give incorrect connotations. Therefore, the Swedish term will be used.
23 Concurrent to the development of the Young Church Movement, there were other movements with different perspectives. For example, Lunds högkyrkligt wanted to preserve the unity of the church; here the foundation was to administer the sacrament and the Christian faith. Coupled with this they had a more exclusive interpretation of the church and who belonged to it (Bexell 2003).
24 Föreningskyrkor
25 The critique was largely driven by the atheist, Social Democratic politician and later Ecclesia minister Arthur Engberg (1888-1944). Originally, Engberg argued that the church and state should separate. However, during the 1920s, Engberg changed his stance and formulated a programme in which the Church of Sweden would become the tool to liberate Sweden from Christianity (Beltzén 1961). He argued that the state should see the church in a more instrumental light and as a state entity, thereby gaining greater influence in various church affairs. One of his main suggestions was that the state should be responsible for the education and recruitment of priests. Engberg argued that in a democracy, the free choice of the individual through religious freedom was central. However, Engberg’s proposals were, unsurprisingly, met with opposition from representatives of the Church of Sweden (Ekström, 2003).
development of the People’s Home (Thidevall, 2003). The idea of **folkkyrkan**, therefore, became the bishops’ answer on how to meet the challenges of a modern society (Claesson, 2004). In the same motion, the bishops also opened up for allowing people to leave the church, with the main argumentation that the church should be understood as a religious community and a popular movement. Simultaneously, the Free Church Council argued for freedom of religion and a separation between state and church. However, this was argued with some caution given the fear of Christianity losing its central role in society, not least through the abolishment of the education of Christianity in schools (Ekström, 2003).

From a political perspective, the idea of the **folkkyrkan** was put forth by a small number of politicians in the Social Democratic party, in particular the priest and Social Democratic politician Harald Hallén (1884-1967). Originally, Hallén argued that **folkkyrkan** could be a part of the development of the Social Democratic idea of the People’s Home. Hallén’s idea was that Christianity should be the central foundation of the People’s Home and that the church was to be connected with the Swedish people (Claesson, 2004). For Hallén, the concept of **folk** (people) was based on a democratic ideal and not on national community. As such, he debated both against the Free Churches and those who argued for a separation between state and church. In parliamentary debates he raised the negative effects of a possible separation between state and church, such as the risk of the growth of the Free Churches and stimulating more backward forces within the Church of Sweden. In essence, therefore, Hallén argued that the good forces in society should be supported by the state, in accordance with democratic principles (Claesson, 2004; Ekström, 2003).

Hallén’s ideas of **folkkyrkan** became well established and would have a considerable impact as the notion of the People’s Home became established during the 1930s and 1940s, parallel with the development of a Swedish welfare state. As a result, the Social Democratic party removed the demands for a separation from their party programme. Part of the intention for making the **folkkyrka** model an

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26 The “people’s home”, refers to the Swedish concept of **folkhemmet** that was a central notion and slogan for the Social Democrats from the 1930s and a central part of their “national project of unity” (*nationella enhetsprojektet*).

27 The view on democracy differs between the rivals Engberg and Hallén where one saw democracy as requiring freedom of religion and the other that democracy must be protected from sectarian groups and allow greater freedom for the individual within communities (Ekström 2003).
integrated part of the development of the Swedish welfare state can be understood as a way for the Swedish Parliament to both maintain the historically strong ties between state and church, whilst also separating and regulating the areas in which the church functioned, not least in the field of provision of welfare (Thidevall, 2003; Wrede, 1992). Thereby, the Church of Sweden continued to have strong ties with the state as it became an integrated part of the development of the welfare state project. Ties that would last until 2000, when the church and state separated.

2.3. The Freedom of Religion Act

Although religious freedom had increased following the Dissenter Acts, there was still considerable hostility towards religious minorities, particularly Jewish and Catholic communities, during the first half of the 20th century (Berggren, 2014; Werner, 2015). The anti-Catholic tendencies continued into the 1960s and (particularly during the 1920-30s) were based on Catholicism being regarded as a threat to the norms and values of Swedish society, not least the interest of the state and the freedom of the individual (Werner, 2015). The debate regarding freedom of religion continued throughout the first half of the 20th century, with Free Church and Catholic groups demanding improved legislation for religious minorities in Sweden. However, the demands for a revision of the Dissenter Acts did not merely come from minority groups but also from within the Swedish Parliament and the Church of Sweden (Waller, 1964). Many of the demands were concerned with the “negative” aspects of religious freedom, i.e., the right not to be obliged to belong to the Church of Sweden (Enkvist, 2013), and a number of government commissions (see for example SOU 1927:13) were appointed to discuss the issue, albeit with limited success.

After years of heated debates, the new legislation, The Freedom of Religion Act, came into force on the 1st of January 1952, relatively late compared to other European countries, thereby guaranteeing the freedom of religion for all Swedish citizens. Primarily, the purpose of the new law was to open up for people not to belong to a religious community, with the first paragraph defining religious

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28 See for example: *skrivelse till Kungl Maj:t den 17 juni 1935 frikyrkliga samarbetskommiten*
freedom in a Swedish context with a special focus on the issue of membership of the Church of Sweden.

Everyone has the right to freely practise their religion, as long as they do not disturb the peace or create general upset. Everyone who belongs to the Church of Sweden has the right to withdraw from it through personal registration with the pastor of the parish. The law accepts the principle that children follow their parents in terms of belonging to the church. Just as no one against their will needs to remain in the Church of Sweden, no one is subject to coercion, not even by their own commitment, to remain in another religious community.

(SFS 1951:680)

Despite the heated debates and the new freedom to leave the Church of Sweden, the law had a considerably more limited effect on membership numbers than many had forecasted. Less than one percent left the Church of Sweden during the first year, a percentage lower than the year before despite the previous requirement of having to simultaneously enter another religious community (Ekström, 2003). Regardless, the new act became the starting point for many of the debates concerning the future state-church relations in Sweden, the dominating role of the Church of Sweden and its status as a state church, and, despite not being the original attention, the relationship between the state and religion and religious minorities in Swedish society. For these reasons, 1952 is the point of departure for this thesis.

2.4. The Development of the Swedish Welfare State

In the beginning of the 20th century, the sphere of civil society was characterised by large mass-membership popular movement organisations (Engberg, 1986; Johansson, 1980; Lundkvist, 1977) often with close ties to the state who were engaged in advocacy and mobilisation, taking part in the creation of the Swedish welfare state. While the ideology behind the Swedish welfare state had its breakthrough during the 1930s, it was after World War II that major societal reforms were implemented and the Swedish welfare state fully developed (Lundström, 2002), with the development of social insurance measures (such as general state pensions, parental allowance and universal child support) and a tax-
financed welfare system. While there was a trust-based relationship between the popular movements and the state (Klausen & Selle, 1996), religious charities, as well as other philanthropical organisations with social conservative motivations that had played a large role during the 19th and early 20th century providing different social services, were increasingly challenged. Not least, as the Swedish welfare state was to be religiously neutral and “social liberal” and the welfare of the individual was to be a collective responsibility carried by the state and not be dependent on religious initiatives (Christiansson 2006).

In the post-war era the Swedish state also involved itself in the living arrangements of Swedish citizens in order to create better living standards for families (Hirdman, Björkman, & Lundberg, 2012). In the new neighbourhoods, all aspects of life should be catered for, with a requirement for local schools, shops, post offices, etc. Given the emphasis on a strong state and centralisation, where all citizens should be given equal opportunities, the issue of a “value community” regarding the goals of Swedish society was raised. Amongst the churches, concerns were raised whether Christianity was to continue to be both a foundation for these common values and have a central role in the Swedish society (Brohed, Tegborg, Nilsson, & Pernler, 2005). A broader public debate also emerged regarding the established role of the church and Christianity more in general, seen not least through the so-called “Hedenius debate” in which both the strong position of the Church of Sweden, as well as the teaching of Christianity, was questioned (Thurfjell, 2015). The criticism of the role of Christianity, where faith and science were placed in conflict, gained considerable sympathy in Swedish society and was in line with the Social Democratic strive to secularise welfare, and where the state would only sanction activities that could be tested with scientific methods (Christiansson, 2006). Parallel, the Swedish government increasingly involved itself in several of the church’s affairs, thereby leading to major debates (Ekström, 2003). In 1958, for example, legislation was passed allowing women to become ordained, despite considerable opposition from within the Church of Sweden. Such involvements in internal church affairs were important factors in the discussions surrounding a separation of church and state, from within the

29 Värdegemenskap – here I used a direct translation from the Swedish concept. The overall meaning of the idea of a value community was that there were to be certain values and norms that kept Swedish society unified.
Church of Sweden, although strong bonds between the church and the public administration remained (Brohed et al., 2005).

Overall, in the post-war era and particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, policies towards religion in Swedish society were characterised by secularisation in areas of education, health and social care. Through legislation, all responsibilities that were not connected to religious services were transferred to state or local authorities (Brohed et al., 2005). The contractual relationship between the state and church became based on the agreement that the church’s role was to engage in rites and individuals’ religiosity, leaving social and political issues to the state (Bäckström, Edgardh Beckman, & Pettersson, 2004). Religious actors and other voluntary organisations were commonly viewed by the general public as pre-welfare state, relating to social inequality and paternalism (Meeuwisse, 1999). Diaconal institutions, for example, received increased criticism and many of the institutions closed or underwent large transformations (Christiansson, 2006). Similarly, the Free Churches’ social institutions either closed or altered their target-group (Brohed et al., 2005). However, although churches were emphasised to focus on so-called “religious welfare” and the welfare state assumed a number of responsibilities from churches in many areas, Annette Leis-Peters (2014) has shown that the development of the Swedish welfare system did not eliminate service-producing faith-based welfare actors. Rather, they continued their work although were largely invisible in both the public and research debate.31

2.5. From Welfare State to Welfare Society

From the 1980s onwards, the Swedish welfare state underwent major changes. Whilst Swedish society, at least from an outsider’s perspective, had previously been almost fully based on a state monopoly of welfare services, this system was became increasingly questioned due to social, economic, demographic and political changes (Bergmark & Palme, 2003). The Swedish economy suffered considerable setbacks with unemployment increasing from 1.8% in the early 1990s to 10.1% in 1997 and major reforms were introduced, resulting in

30 Andlig välfärd
31 Specifically, according to Leis-Peters (2014) religious actors worked as a complement to the state and public authorities by helping those most marginalised in society (such as care for the homeless, self-help groups for drug and alcohol victims, and providing shelter for victims of domestic violence). (Bjorklund, Clark, Edin, Fredricksson, & Krueger, 2006).
decentralisation and deregulation (Björklund et al., 2006) where previously public-owned services were sold or contracted out. As such, the official separation between church and state in 2000 was somewhat synonymous of the time.\textsuperscript{32}

Policy changes occurred in almost all social policy areas of the time and opportunities arose for both organisations in civil society and for-profit actors, due to a growing emphasis on pluralism and freedom of choice (Bergmark & Palme, 2003). Their involvement was encouraged in a number of fields, for example education as well as social and health services (Lundström, 2002) and although many of these changes occurred during the period of a Conservative government\textsuperscript{33} (1991-1994), few were altered when the Social Democrats returned to power in 1994 (Gavelin, 2018). Rather, the rights of individuals to choose his or her own service, in parallel to cutting public funding, had become a central part of the new narrative in health care and education.

Parallel to these changes, the concept of civilsambälet (civil society) was introduced to Swedish society. It was adopted at a time of political changes and was from the political-right used as a critique of the strong welfare state, while from the political-left used as an important shift towards a democratic grassroots movement and the empowerment of the citizen (Trägårdh, 2007a). According to Trägårdh (2007a), the early debate in Sweden can be said to be characterised by three groups: those who defended the welfare state and two groups of critics from both left and right who adopted civil society as a polemical concept with strong communitarian undertones.

The overall shift that took place, both in the discourse and policy changes, has been described as a move from a “welfare state to a welfare society”. Specifically, whilst universal welfare is still the prime objective in the welfare society, there has been a shift towards a further emphasis on freedom of choice that in turn has opened up for other actors (Gavelin, 2018). Although these changes have occurred gradually, since the mid-2000s changes have been particularly apparent in the practical applications. For example, in the 2006 Alliance government.

\textsuperscript{32} However, despite the separation, the Church of Sweden would still continue to have a semi-official role, as it was entrusted with certain public services (such as a responsibility for burial grounds) (Pettersson 2011).

\textsuperscript{33} See appendix 1 for full list of Swedish Governments between 1952-2019
statement it was declared that a strong civil society, including churches and religious communities, played a central role for a strong democracy.

The foundation for security and community is laid in a strong civil society such as associations, sports movements, churches, religious communities and non-profit organisations. Solidarity in the public welfare system is a complement to a society that is greatly characterised by compassion, responsibility and idealism. A strong civil society is also the basis for a strong democracy. Increased co-operation between the public, private and non-profit sectors is necessary to develop our society.

(Regeringsförklaring 2006)

Therefore, shifts in the welfare reforms have clearly led to new opportunities for organisations in civil society and religious actors. Interestingly, however, the actual role of religious actors is still very limited in many sectors (for example, there were merely 66 religious primary schools, ten of which were not Christian, registered in Sweden in 2017 with a combined number of students of less than 10,000). Despite this, there is still a considerable public debate concerning the role of religion in the public realm (Qvarsebo & Wenell, 2018).

2.6. Immigration and Religious Diversity

Although the increased visibility of religious communities can be understood in light of welfare reforms, the changes that have affected religious communities cannot be separated from the increasing religious and ethnic diversity that has occurred as a result of immigration in the last 80 years. The number of people born outside of Sweden, though living in Sweden, has increased considerably, starting with the labour migration and large population movements following World War II that dominated immigration until the 1970s. Such European immigration led to considerable increases in the number of religious minorities in Sweden. For example, before World War II approximately 500 Catholics lived in Sweden whilst in 1953, when the Stockholm Catholic diocese was established, the number of Catholics had increased to 32,000 (SOU 1963:39). Similarly, in 1963, the Jewish population was estimated at 13,000 and the number of people with an Orthodox belonging had increased from 1000 before World War II, to an estimated 10-11,000 (SOU 1963:39). The Muslim population, however, was still a small group in Sweden with an estimated 500 Muslims in total in 1953. As such,
they were rarely mentioned in any of the government reports during this time (SOU 1963:39). Despite immigration and the steady increase in the number of non-Protestant religious groups during the middle of the 20th century, religious belonging in Sweden was still largely limited to the Church of Sweden and the Free Churches. In terms of membership, the Free Churches had around 350,000 members at the beginning of the 1950s (approximately 4.6% of the Swedish population). However, also within the Free Churches there were movements and many of the large and established Free Churches, such as the Baptist church, lost members whilst newer Free Churches, such as the Pentecostal moment, grew (SOU 1963:39).

Although the number of labour immigrants increased throughout the 1950s and 1960s (Borevi, 2010), the large changes in immigration patterns occurred from the 1970s onwards. Specifically, a new type of immigration started with individuals fleeing war or persecution from outside Europe and coming to Sweden. Consequently, different religious minority groups, such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam became more established in Sweden. For example, Muslim organisations established a national network in 1974 and started receiving governments grants in 1975 (Sorgenfrei, 2018). Also, during the 1970s, the first Buddhist and Hindu temples were established (Willander, 2019). Parallel to these changes, Sweden established a multicultural policy (Borevi, 2010). The main idea was that rather than supporting the assimilation of immigrants, as had been the case previously, the state would support immigrants’ ethnic affiliations. Ideologically, the multicultural approach was closely related to the generous universal welfare programmes of the time. However, just as these welfare programmes were reformed in the mid-1980s, so too were the immigration policies, ultimately leading to a retraction from multiculturalism (Borevi, 2010). This retraction was further reinforced towards the end of the 1990s when a government bill proposed a new “integration policy” with a focus on civic integration rather than on the multicultural policy that had been visible before (prop. 1997/98:16).

Importantly, many of these changes in policy occurred gradually and parallel with an increase of immigrants, in particular refugees (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999). As is

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34 Pingstkyrkan
35 Förenade Islamiska församlingar (FIFS)
seen in the figure below, from the 1990s onwards, immigration increased considerably (predominantly from Syria, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan). Today, roughly one out of every five people in Sweden were born abroad (SCB, 2020).

Figure 1. Immigrants in Sweden: 1970-2016 (SCB, 2020)

The trend in immigration has, in turn, led to a very different religious landscape in Sweden today compared to 50 years ago. Although data is not regularly collected in Sweden regarding an individual’s religious belonging, as is seen in table 2, merely in terms of membership of religious organisations, a number of dramatic changes have occurred. Firstly, membership (measured as percentage of the Swedish population) in the Church of Sweden has decreased by 23.0%. Meanwhile, membership in all other minority religious groups, apart from Lutheran Churches, has increased. The largest increase is seen in the Muslim religious communities where membership increased by 1184.5% between 1976 and 2016.36

36 For a more comprehensive table of membership in religious minorities in Sweden, see appendix 3
Table 2. Membership in religious communities in 1976 and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>Percentage of the Swedish population</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Percentage of the Swedish population</th>
<th>Percentage change 1976-2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Churches</td>
<td>277,522</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>321,829</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Religious Communities</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>154,140</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1184.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Churches</td>
<td>56,170</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>50,228</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>-10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox and Eastern Churches</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>145,279</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>190.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Religious Communities</td>
<td>83,116</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>148,237</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Sweden</td>
<td>7,779,940</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>5,993,368</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>-23.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This development is predicted to continue along the same trajectory. In a recent PEW study, following the large increase of asylum seekers in Europe between 2014-2016, different scenarios of how the size of Europe’s Muslim population may change in the future have been presented. In their three scenarios, Sweden is predicted to have the largest Muslim population in Europe by 2050.

Sweden, which also has accepted a relatively high number of refugees, would experience even greater effects if the migration levels from 2014 to mid-2016 were to continue indefinitely: Sweden’s population (8% Muslim in 2016) could grow to 31% Muslim in the high scenario by 2050, compared with 21% in the medium scenario and 11% with no further Muslim migration.

(Hackett et al., 2017)

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Data has been retrieved from Willander (2019). In her report Willander (2019) importantly highlights that the statistics gathered in 1976 differ from later periods. For example, minority religious communities in 1976 could not show membership and participant numbers, only membership numbers. Also, Muslim and Orthodox communities did not have a national organisation or co-operation organisation at this time which may partly explain the large increases in these groups (for further explanation of the statistics, see Willander 2019, p. 95)
The religious landscape of the previously homogenous Sweden has therefore changed considerably and will, most likely, continue to do so with the entrance and increase of other religions and actively religious individuals. This change has in turn led to a reconfiguration of religion in the public sphere (Lind, Lövheim, & Zackariasson, 2016). However, amid increased diversity and a visibility of religion in the public debate, there is also an ongoing trend of secularisation, especially on an individual level. As shown above, membership in the Church of Sweden has decreased and fewer individuals participate in religious services, though an increased spirituality is seen outside of the traditional realms (Bäckström, Davie, & Molokotos-Liederman, 2017). In this changing religious landscape, it is interesting to note that although Swedes are generally relatively open-minded regarding diversity, recent research has shown that there is scepticism towards religious diversity (Ahmadi, Palm, & Ahmadi, 2016). However, what this means for policies directed towards minority religious communities, is still largely unknown.
3. Theoretical Chapter

In this chapter I will present the theoretical framework for this thesis and discuss the theoretical perspectives that will support the analysis of the research questions of this thesis. The chapter will be divided into four main parts. In the first part, I will present key concepts that are central for my analysis. Thereafter, I will present a theoretical framework to help gain a deeper understanding of the “moral logics” underlying the perception of minority religious communities, as a risk and as a resource in the Swedish context, through a civil society-state perspective. The purpose is to assist the understanding of what values and assumptions underpin the contested role of minority religious communities in Sweden today. In the third part, I will present different “political logics” that could underpin the state’s handling of minority religious communities. In the final part, I will present how shifts and changes of the above-mentioned perspectives may be understood through so-called policy paradigm shifts.

3.1. Key Concepts

Before presenting the theoretical frameworks that will guide the analysis of this thesis several key concepts are ought to be presented and defined. The key concept that I will highlight and discuss are “civil society”, “risk and resource” and lastly “religion”.

3.1.1. Civil Society

At first glance one may wonder how a normatively-charged concept such as civil society (or as it is sometimes interchangeably called, the voluntary, independent or third sector), that in recent years has become somewhat of a buzzword, will help the analysis of the transformations in the Swedish state’s perception of minority religious communities during the past 70 years. Also, given that the concept of civil society suffers from what Edwards & Foley (2001) calls “acute definitional fuzziness” and no theoretical consensus exists of how it should be understood, there may be sound arguments for dismissing the concept completely. However, the definitional fuzziness can also make for an interesting starting point, in which one can embrace the fact that civil society means different things in different contexts and during different times, as well as being understood both a problem and a solution (Edwards, 2009).
Today, civil society is often described as an arena populated by various organisations, including NGOs, community groups, social movements, advocacy groups, faith-based organisations, religious communities, self-help groups etc. The common ground between such disparate groups is that they share features of being private (separated from the state), non-profit (separated from the market) and are voluntary and self-governed (Salamon, 1999). Importantly, connected to these common features, the concept of civil society is also often used as a normatively charged concept that carries hopes of what voluntary organisations and other non-profit actors can and ought to do for society at large (Edwards & Foley, 2001). In political and academic discussions today, there are tendencies of using the analytical, empirical and normative perspectives simultaneously. As a result, there is an inability to, for example, distinguish between the potential ambitions of organisations in civil society and their actual role in society (Herbert, 2009). This can be problematic and, therefore, I will differentiate between the understanding of civil society and its relationship to the state from an analytical and from a normative perspective (Keane 1988, Herbert 2009).

Starting with the analytical approach, this means that a distinction is made between civil society and the state, where these two spheres can function as dichotomous ideal types (Keane, 1988) that help to develop an explanatory understanding of socio-political realities of the past (and the present). In the case of this thesis, this means that the sphere of the state is differentiated from the sphere of civil society of which minority religious communities, as non-state actors, are a part of. In turn, this means that minority religious communities have belonged to the same sphere as other voluntary and non-profit actors, but a different sphere to the Church of Sweden until the separation between state and church in 2000.

The normative approach, meanwhile, focuses on the normative ideals and potential roles of civil society and what hopes, and visions exist, and how these are expressed in government documents, regarding what actors in civil society can contribute with. In practice this means that I am interested in studying how visions and normative assumptions are expressed in the official discourse.

38 There is also a third distinction - empirical civil society (Herbert, 2009) - where the actual roles and actions of CSOs are studied. However, as I am studying the state’s perception of civil society, this approach is not further highlighted.
regarding what role minority religious communities ought to take rather than what their role actually is (i.e., the empirical approach) (Herbert, 2013).\textsuperscript{39} Similarly, what values underpin such perceptions, has this shifted or remained in the different time periods, and what are the resulting political consequences? By focusing on how these normative hopes are expressed in government documents, I believe it is possible to not merely study the hopes and expectations, but also the opposite – what roles are not prescribed to civil society, what embedded fears exist and what aspects and principles, that are in conflict with the normative hopes of civil society, are present? This perspective is particularly relevant in terms of minority religious communities given that it has been argued that it is feared that religious diversity will challenge the normative ideals of what civil society is (Williams, 2007). Also, importantly in regard to thesis, as civil society is always in a dichotomous relationship with the state, the hopes of civil society always entail a perception of what the role of the state ought to be or ought not to be.

Although both an analytical and normative account of civil society is beneficial in order to study the Swedish state’s perception, and in turn shaping and regulation, of minority religious communities during the past 70 years, I believe that studying the new visibility of religion in public life through the lens of the state-civil society relationship, not least in regard to the normative visions of civil society, is a perspective rarely taken. From this perspective, a state’s ambition and expectations of what the state wants a civil society actor to be is synonymous with how they can be a resource to the state and society. Likewise, the state’s fears of what the civil society actor could become, if this is not in accordance with what the state wants them to be, can be seen to be the risk perspective.

\subsection*{3.1.2. Risk and Resource}

The concept of risk has been discussed and debated considerably in the scientific literature (see, for example, Fischhoff, Watson, & Hope, 1984; Kaplan & Garrick, 1981), especially due to the concept being used regularly across a large range of scientific disciplines as well as in the political and media debate. Compared to similar terms such as hazard, danger, fear, etc., the use and definition of the

\textsuperscript{39} Importantly, both in politics and academia, discussions often concern simultaneous empirical and normative civil society concepts. As a result, there is an inability to distinguish between the potential hopes of organisations and their actual role in society (Herbert 2016).
concept risk has increased dramatically during the last 200 years (Li, Hills, & Hertwig, 2020). Despite the increased use of the concept when discussing societal issues, in terms of the study of religion as a risk, the topic seems to be scarcely researched. Rather, the issues of risk have predominantly been framed in the discourse of the “social problem theory” although this research field also seems to be relatively limited and scholars such as Titus Hjelm (2009) highlight the importance of further studies:

What I found most interesting and important is that addition to being a solid field of inquiry in itself, the study of religion and social problem also works as a prism through which many of other central problem of in sociology of religion – and sociology in general – can be examined. For example, first the role of religious communities, by alleviating social problem raises crucial questions about the function and performance of religion in the contemporary world.

(Hjelm, 2009, p. 937)

A social problem is often referred to as a condition that is recognised by a number of people and that in some way or another unconventionally stands out from a social norm that a group values (Fuller & Myers, 1941; Hjelm, 2009). A central part of the definition is that it has both an objective condition and a subjective dimension and researchers have highlighted the need to study it from a social constructionist standpoint. In a social constructionist view, the claims-making is central in order to study how the problem is constructed, in my case in government documents, in different contexts. The importance of understanding the cultural and social context as a factor that influences the claims-making is thereby pivotal. This coincides well with the aim of this thesis given that the interest does not lie in verifying a situation, but rather in how the state views a condition as a threat to a cherished value (Hjelm 2011). This can, as will be discussed further, be largely dependent on the social contract and perceived visions of what the role of the state, and the role of civil society, should be.

In terms of differentiating between “social problem” and “risk”, this is not entirely straight forward. Some authors suggest that potential or real risks can become social problems when the issues are raised by public authorities and placed in the limelight (Gilbert & Henry, 2012). According to this view, risks are purely objective, quantitative factors while social problems are the social
constructivist view and understanding of the risk. However, sociologists and anthropologists have often emphasized that risks are not merely a natural object but are socially constructed, based on norms, moral considerations, and structures of social organisation (Douglas, 2013). Risks are also adaptable to how individuals or societies identify what elements are worth protecting (Bradbury, 1989), for example the specific morals and values that are embedded in the Swedish social contract. Therefore, although the more positivistic view of risk is dominant in both research and practice, risk can also be understood from the more modest social constructivist perspective (see 3.1.3), as well as a combination of the two (Renn, 1992). Specifically, the broad understanding of risk means that risks can objectively exist without society paying any attention to them (for example unknown effects of new minority groups in society) but continue to exist or come into existence when this risk is constructed in society. As such, it could be argued that the two concepts “social problem” and “risk” are relatively interchangeable given that social problems can also be understood from an objective perspective.

However, one aspect seems to differ between the two and leads to the use of the concept risk rather than the concept of social problem. Specifically, while a social problem is a condition in the present (or past), risk also includes a future perspective. This is due to the fact that a key element of risk is uncertainty (O’malley, 2012). This uncertainty is in turn fear-generating (Beck, 1992) and, although the uncertainty per se affects individuals and society in a variety of different ways, the risks need to be managed in order to minimise fear.

Resource can somewhat be understood as an opposite concept to risk. In this thesis, resource is defined as how religious communities are described as a solution to social problems, and how they are expected to contribute to society at large. Returning to the definition of risk, religious communities can be identified as actors that can also reduce risks in society and thereby act in accordance with the state’s wishes. As such, regardless of how they are expected to be a resource to society, all potential roles are deeply embedded in the state’s perception and normative visions of what role civil society ought to take and what, in my case, minority religious communities can do for society at large. As will be developed further on, this will be dependent on different normative traditions concerning civil society and state, and thereby affect not only which specific risks and resources are highlighted, but also how the perspectives are balanced.
While the new visibility of religion could be studied in a number of ways, I would argue that this distinction between risk and resource, that is highly visible in the policy debate today (Hjelm, 2014; Hurd, 2015a), may offer an important theoretical lens to understand specific choices that have been made as well as the underlying expectations, hopes and visions of religion. Both today and in the past.

3.1.3. Religion

Although the focus in this thesis is on the state’s perception of minority religious communities, the question of religion is also highly relevant, not least since many of the discussions held concerning minority religious communities also often are related to discussions of religion.

From the outset it is important to note that I am fully aware that religion is a complex concept, used in various and changing ways (see, for example, Droogers, 2011; Woodhead, 2011), meaning that it is important to be transparent in my understanding. I have approached the concept of religion (as well as risk and resource) through the analytical strategy of modest social constructionism. According to Beckford (2015b), social constructionism refers to the fact that “human beings construct, communicate, and negotiate shared meanings in the course of their social interactions with each other” (Beckford, 2015b, p.11). Meanwhile, the modest approach, according to Beckford, means that the understanding of a social construct is not grounded in a particular ontology or epistemology, but is rather an analytical strategy for analysing how, in this case, the category of religion and non-religion is constructed (Beckford 2015b).

Based on this analytical strategy, I have decided to focus on three categories of religion put forth by Hurd (2015a). These categories will function as my interpretive lens for analysing the material and are taken from Hurd's book; Beyond Religious Freedom, where she draws attention to the relation between religion and policy in global affairs today, and the sometimes-problematic intersection between the two. Although Hurd predominantly focuses on global politics, the categories are relevant in a Swedish context, particularly when studying policy documents and the voice of the state. In her book, Hurd disaggregates the category of religion into three distinct parts; “expert religion”, “governed religion”, and “lived religion” (cf. Woodhead, 2013).
Starting with “expert religion”, this refers to “religion construed by those who generate “policy-relevant” knowledge about religion” (Hurd, 2015, p.8) and can include scholars, policymakers and government officials including committees of government commissions. Closely related to expert religion is the concept of governed religion, i.e., “religion as construed for the purposes of law and governance by those in positions of political and religious authority” (Hurd, 2015b, p.2). In the case of this thesis, governed religion would be policies and laws set by the Swedish state. Within governed religion focus is on what type of religion is privileged and supported at a specific time and context. Importantly, although I will focus on expert and governed religion in this thesis and on how religion is constructed, these two categories actively shape the third category; “lived religion”, i.e., “religion as practiced by ordinary individuals and groups as they interact with a variety of religious authorities, rituals, texts, and institutions and seek to navigate and make sense of their lives, connections with others, and place in the world” (Hurd 2015b, p.2).

According to Hurd (2015b), a central process in both expert and governed religion is for authorities to draw lines and define what counts as religion and what does not count as religion. A natural part of this process is distinguishing between what a moderate or radical, tolerable or intolerable, religious community should be and, as a result, who should be included or excluded from recognition and support. In terms of “lived religion”, while this is not the focus of this thesis, the concept still sheds light on the importance of distinguishing between how religion is constructed by those in power and religion as practiced and lived by people in everyday life.

I also believe it is useful to distinguish between different types of religiosity, not least in light of the Swedish historical context, where a distinction has been made between _folkkyrkan_ and the Free Churches in terms of religiosity. Anders Bäckström’s (2017) distinction between “hot” and “cool” religiosity is particularly useful in assisting the understanding. According to Bäckström, “cool” religiosity refers to an “in-between group” that can neither be defined as hard-line secularist nor as highly religious but as a group that belong to the Church of

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40 Bäckström (2017) presents a more complex model where, for example, cool religiosity can be combined with a hard faith (such as in New Age). However, in this thesis, the distinction will be understood as two dichotomous ideal types.
Sweden, take part in the rites of passage, are dependent on a specific belief, or attend church very often. This type of religiosity is also closely related to what Nancy Ammerman (1997) has called “golden rule religiosity”, referring to a group that is thought to exist in the American mainstream who often score low on orthodox beliefs and do not attend church regularly. On the opposite end, there are those with “hot religiosity”, i.e., those with strong religious commitments, frequent practice and who often favour scriptural belief and right believing (Bäckström, 2017). As a crude dichotomy, this distinction is useful. However, it would also be beneficial to add the perspective of their relationship both internally and towards the surrounding society. For example, having more exclusive claims as hot religiosity entail may also imply a more communitarian form of religion, where the connections within a group is based on strong ties between members, more inward-looking, more exclusive claims, and where there is a strong emphasis on shared values (that are often more traditional) and convictions with others in one’s community. These features could in turn stand in contrast to groups having more bridging element and thereby refers to more outward-looking groups that emphasise the connection, inclusiveness and openness with the surrounding society.

Importantly, the distinction between hot and cool religiosity does not have to be a distinction made between a majority church and minority religious communities. In a Swedish context there may be congregations in the Church of Sweden that represent a “hot religiosity” and minority religious communities that represent a “cool religiosity”. Rather, the important factor, not least given the historical context, is to understand how the Swedish state, through its policies, may both promote, privilege and marginalise certain types of religiosity over time and to understand the underlying arguments for such perspectives.

3.2. Risk and Resource from a Civil Society and State Perspective

In Sweden, as well as in many other countries, there are conflicting views of minority religious communities that seem to exist parallelly, thereby bringing a number of complex questions regarding inclusion and exclusion into the limelight as well as where the line is drawn between a good and bad religious community. Or, as Dinham states;
There are two kinds of faiths: moderate faith who are friends with the state – repositories of resources which can help it to functions; and immoderate faith who are its enemies. This may seem fair enough at first glance. And yet we must ask who are the moderates and the immoderate? Who decide which is which? And where are we to draw the line?

(Dinham, 2009, p. 110)

I would suggest that where the line is drawn depends considerably on the specific normative visions of civil society in a specific context, as well as on what aspects and principles that are in conflict with the normative hopes that exist. These normative visions could remain the same, based on the underlying moral logics, or be more fluctuating, influenced by other contextual elements. Factors that in turn will govern where the line is drawn. As stated in first chapter of this thesis, much of the literature concerning the new visibility of religion, not least through the prism of the state, is written in an Anglo-American context and may differ in a Swedish context. Therefore, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how minority religious communities are perceived as a risk or a resource, I believe we must understand what roles and activities are cherished and thereby regarded as acceptable for participating in public life, in the particular context we study. Given the interest in studying the voice of the state through government documents, i.e., highly normative material where the visions and fears of minority religious communities are discussed, I will present a theoretical framework of two ideal types that illustrate two different traditions in relation to the normative hopes (and fears) regarding civil society and more specifically minority religious communities.

3.2.1. Neo-Hegelian and Neo-Tocquevillian Perspectives on Civil Society and the State

While there are a number of different understandings of what the role of civil society ought to be, two traditions will be placed in the limelight for this thesis; the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition (Edwards & Foley, 2001) that is more embedded in an Anglo-American narrative (Somers, 1995b), and the Neo-Hegelian tradition (Trägårdh, 2010) that is more embedded in the Swedish social contract. In the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition, civil society is celebrated for community building, provision of welfare and altruism, and the individual is thought to be deeply
connected to the communities of civil society, while the state is viewed with suspicion (Anheier, 2009; Edwards & Foley, 2001). In the Neo-Hegelian tradition, meanwhile, the state is understood as the protector of common interests and individual autonomy while civil society is seen as a place for particular interests and political actions (Trägårdh, 2010). Importantly, there is not necessarily a clear divide between these two traditions and where they appear. Rather, there seems to be tendencies that Sweden is moving closer to an Anglo-American tradition in which new partnerships and a new division of labour between state and civil society is evolving.

Although I will focus on the particularities of a Neo-Tocquevillian and Neo-Hegelian perspective, the aim is not to try to provide an overall picture of either Tocqueville’s or Hegel’s thinking concerning civil society and the state. Rather, the aim is to shed light on two distinct visions of civil society and its relationship to the state. As such, these Neo-traditions should be seen as ideal-types, i.e., deliberate simplifications and exaggerations of two different traditions and narratives (Britannica, 2018). As they are constructed as ideals, they also focus on certain elements. Yet in order to fully understand how these ideal types are constructed, it is necessary to start by looking at the origins of the two traditions.

3.2.1.1. The Origins: Many Civil Societies

The modern tradition of civil society was first shaped and introduced by different enlightenment thinkers (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003). They reflected on the conditions of modernity at a time when society and civil society were starting to be understood as different entities and separate spheres (Keane, 1988). An important feature of early thinkers, such as Adam Fergusson (1767/1980) and Thomas Paine (1792), were that they were political and that their main concern in making a distinction between state and civil society was the danger of state despotism and how to respond to it (Keane, 1988). Although Fergusson and Paine were optimistic about civil society and feared despotism (Keane, 1988), central thinkers, such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1991/1820) and Karl Marx,41 were in many ways sceptical. For Hegel, civil society (that for him included the

41 Karl Marx understood civil society as closely linked to capitalist domination. In similarity to Hegel, he saw civil society as a realm of inequality where private interests were set at the forefront. However, in contrast to Hegel, he viewed the state with suspicion as he saw the state as a protector of the interests of the bourgeoisie (Foley and Hodgkinson, 2003).
market and the economy as well as social classes, groups, individuals, civil laws, courts and institutions) was first and foremost a “system of needs”. This meant that civil society was predominantly a place where the diverse needs and interests of the individual were placed at the forefront and as a satisfaction of the subjective particularity (Hegel, 1991/1820). Therefore, according to Hegel, civil society, in contrast to the state, was characterised by inequalities and class divisions. In contrast to other thinkers of the time, such as Thomas Paine, civil society was not, as such, understood as a natural condition of freedom (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003). Rather, for Hegel, the state represented the universal and the actuality of the ethical idea as well as the regulator of civil society (including the market), that could reconcile the conflict within civil society as well as protect the freedom of the individual that could not be guaranteed in civil society (Trägårdh, 2010). Hegel, therefore, did not see an immediate conflict between the state and civil society, rather a connection between the two. In this respect Hegel stands out compared to many of the other thinkers at the time whose ideas were based on an anti-statist attitude and a general suspicion of the state (Keane, 1988).

Around the same time, another early contributor to the modern notion of civil society and the relationship between democracy and civil society, was Alexis de Tocqueville. In his work De la Démocratie en Amerique (1840/2003) he highlighted the rich and diverse associational life in the United States next to the weak state, leading to his conclusion that democracy could work even with a weak or non-working state (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003). In contrast to Hegel, Tocqueville did not see the risk of particular interests being represented in civil society. Rather, he saw associations as important actors that could tackle and solve common problems that the weak state or the individual seemed unable to solve (Foley & Edwards, 1998; Keane, 1988). For him, the diverse associations, both political and civil (including churches), were places where civic skills, that were a necessity in a democratic republic and the political society, could be learnt and mastered. According to Tocqueville’s thinking, a large diversity in associations was therefore constitutive for citizenship (Williams, 2007). For Tocqueville, religion had a central place in civil society and churches were vital social institutions for learning elements and skills such as civic virtue (Herbert, 2013).

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42 Tocqueville identified three different realms of society: the state, civil society (which could be understood as the realm of private interest and all economic activity) and political society (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003)
Churches were viewed as key components of civil society, not least as they were not part of the government. As such, he argued that “religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions” (Tocqueville, 1990, p. 305). The (protestant) churches were in many ways understood as necessary for societal success and the idea of them as free from direct political influence was central. As the church and state did not have any constitutional ties in North America, religion was seen and understood to be a vital part of civil society, not least in integrating new immigrants (Herbert, 2009). However, in contrast to the context of European Enlightenment thinkers and the struggles for change against old orders, religion (and the church) was often understood to stand in opposition to civil society and a defender of the “ancient regime” (Herbert, 2009).

Despite the obvious importance of the topic of civil society and the state, given the number of great thinkers raising the issue of the realm of civil society from the end of the 18th century, it is in in many ways surprising that during the mid-19th century, the concept, discussions and debates largely disappeared. Not until the mid- to late-20th century did a revival of interest occur when the issue of the role played by autonomous groups in democratic processes was highlighted and re-evaluated (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003; Keane, 1988). The revival, although taking a different shape, was seen in the internal struggle against communist states in Eastern Europe and in uprisings against states in Latin America as well as in Western Europe, where the idea of an autonomous sphere with democratisation from grassroots was seen as appealing and in North America where the revival was permeated by the idea of civil society as an alternative to state action and where civil society was considered to be a sphere for human relationships that could generate civic activism (Edwards & Foley, 2001; Keane, 1988).

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43 Influenced by Gramci, different thinkers attempted to find strategies for action in the autonomous and authentic sphere of civil society in which natural human relationships were built against the totalitarian state (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003).

43 For one of the thinkers Adam Michnik, the Catholic Church formed one such autonomous force and he saw the Catholic Church as a “key source of encouragement for those to seek to broaden civil liberties” (Michnik, 1985/1976). From this perspective, for Michnik and other thinkers like him, the state was understood as a threat to liberty and authentic human relationships. Similarly, thinkers in Latin America deployed civil society in their efforts against repressive states, thereby bringing an end to dictatorship (Edwards & Foley, 2001; Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003).
In these revivals, it is clear that although different political narratives affected the interpretation and, one may argue, the ideological purpose of the revival, they were all embedded in a so-called anti-statist Anglo-American narrative (Somers, 1995a). In such a narrative, there is an essence of a communitarian tradition closely related to the dominating Neo-Tocquevillian understanding of civil society, where there is always an existing polemical situation between state and civil society. The overbearing state is seen as a risk while civil society is seen as a resource, celebrated for its communities, voluntarism, altruism, democracy community-building and liberty. As such, the North American revival most clearly followed a Tocquevillian thinking in what Edwards and Foyle (2001) call a Neo-Tocquevillian tradition.

3.2.1.2. The Community and the Individual: The Neo-Tocquevillian Tradition

In terms of the revival of the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition, this first occurred in 1963, when Gabriel Almonds and Sidney Verbas (2015) performed their study on the civic cultures of five nations (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003). In their study, they presented evidence for Tocqueville’s claim, namely that societies with a strong and vibrant associational life have a stronger democracy and greater trust between citizens and towards the government (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003). Interestingly, given the historical and cultural context, the understanding of the importance and value of smaller associations and communities for democracy appeared side-by-side with an increased critique of the federal government in the United States and the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet Union (Wuthnow, 2003). A large number of texts during the following years continued to write in a Neo-Tocquevillian tradition, highlighting the importance of civil society as a sphere for human relationships that could generate civic activism and active citizenship as well as a realm of civility (Barber, 2003; Berger & Neuhaus, 1977; Walzer, 1991).

44 Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus (1977), for example, wrote about the role of mediating structures defined the type institutions standing between the individual in his private life and the large institutions in public life. These in-between institutions were constructed of smaller communities such as neighborhoods, local churches, voluntary organisations, etc. and although Berger and Neuhaus argued that they had no intention of dismantling the welfare state, they highlighted the vitality of mediating structures for a democratic society. These were understood as important agencies for generating and maintaining values in society to avoid totalitarianism, and churches were identified as particularly important in transmitting the operative values of society to
Yet, the thinker that perhaps is most clearly associated to the tradition, as well as being responsible for a great deal of the advocacy for the importance of a rich associational life, including religious institutions, is Robert Putnam. In his classic books Making Democracy Works (Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1994) and later Bowling Alone (Putnam, 2000), he makes a number of claims about how a civil society with a high degree of civic engagement correlates with a healthy democracy and economy. According to Putnam, the importance of social capital is vital, something that he refers to as a “connection among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000, p.19). In his later book, Putnam calls attention to the decline of social capital in the United States where people are less active in different voluntary, face-to-face associations. Consequentially, he argues, this affects the social interactions that occur in these organisations and in turn affects democracy negatively. A vital point in Putnam’s argument is that “social capital, as embodied in horizontal networks of civic engagement, bolsters the performance of the polity and the economy, rather than the reverse” (Putnam et al., 1994, p.176). Putnam’s argument can therefore be said to be embedded in the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition that emphasises the importance of being an individual in a community partaking in communal life, rather than being an autonomous individual (Williams, 2007).

Many of the works addressing the new visibility of religion in the welfare arena can also be largely understood to be embedded in the Neo-Tocquevillian and communitarian tradition. Similarly, the more normative tradition of attributing a number of capacities to religious organisations, such as creating communal values, social capital, fostering civic engagement, promoting democracy, and as an actor providing social services and offering volunteers (Becker & Dhingra, 2001; inform the public discourse. Overall, Berger and Neuhaus (1977) emphasised the crucial role of institutions that could democratising the delivery of welfare services. By delivering new innovations, they could be an alternative provider of human services, compared to agencies of state bureaucracy (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003).

45 Putnam’s rationale states that the individual always has the right to choose which particular voluntary associations they want to belong to and is therefore regarded as free and autonomous. Yet, once entered the association, networks are created in the process of community building (Williams, 2007). For Rhys H. Williams (2007), it is in this way of “reconciling individual autonomy and communal obligation, private wants and public contributions that the idea of civil society was designed to call to attention, and the practices of civil society were thought to accomplish, in American life” (Williams 2007, p.47).
Such capacities have also been highlighted in the context of failing states in the global south (Herbert, 2009; Tomalin, 2015). Putnam & Campbell (2012) highlighted similar capacities when they, in a study of religious life in America, noted that religious American are generally better neighbours and more active citizens. With the development of a faith sector in many countries, this sentiment continues. Governments increasingly seem to search for what resources religious actors contain within them and the community aspect has often been raised as a factor that strengthens civil society (Dinham, 2009; Giddens, 2013). Religious communities are highlighted as actors that are to be “good at community” and therefore central for community cohesion, as they bind individuals into communal relationships (Dinham, 2009; Smidt & Smidt, 2003). The underlying communitarian and anti-statist attitude can also be seen with regard to welfare reforms in different countries, such as the Charitable Choice Reform in the United States (Hackworth, 2012).

Clearly, the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition is strongly resource-focused regarding civil society and the emphasis in much of the literature is “the good” religion can bring to society as well as religious actors’ instrumental role. However, the risk perspective is also visible. For example, Putnam (2000) argues that one should be careful when presuming that all communities in civil society are good, as even terror groups can involve a sense of community. He therefore makes a distinction between “bonding” and “bridging” social capital, where binding social capital refers to more inward-looking and homogenous groups such as ethnic organisations, religious groups, and associations that require certain prerequisites for membership. Bonding social capital, meanwhile, refers to outward-looking and inclusive groups such as ecumenical organisations and civil rights movements (Putnam, 2000). As such, Putnam sets out the idea that an optimal civil society always orients itself in relation to the larger world and wider society. However, although making a distinction between bridging and bonding aspect, he does not argue that bonding social capital is inherently bad. Rather, he argues that such social capital can be of great value for people and the individual within the organisation. Furthermore, he also notes that “the external effects of social capital are by no means always positive” on society (Putnam, 2000, p.21). Empirically,
scholars such as Robert Wuthnow (2009), have also shown the tension between risk and resource. He highlights that although religious actors contribute considerably to American society, the expectations are often too high in relation to what services and social capital religious civil society actors actually provide and generate. In fact, faith-based organisations, according to Wuthnow, are not generally perceived, by those who receive the support, as more trustworthy or more loving than secular organisations (Wuthnow 2009). Also, although studies have shown that congregations are important in strengthening social ties and promoting communal relationships, bonds are often built between people similar to themselves rather than with those who are different (Wuthnow, 2003).

Despite limited empirical evidence, it could nevertheless be argued that the focus on the instrumental role in much of the Neo-Tocquevillian literature is perhaps more connected to the normative hope of what civil society can do rather than what it actually is or does. Although such hopes can take time to adjust, perspectives and expectations are changing. In fact, Berger, who highlighted the importance of the intermediate and mediating role of religion in 1977, has later declared that he was overly optimistic and that religion in global civil society may create more conflict than solutions (Berger, 2005).

3.2.1.3. The State and the Individual: The Neo-Hegelian Tradition

Leaving the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition to one side, I will now turn to what historian Lars Trägårdh (2010) calls the particular Swedish inflection of a Neo-Hegelian social contract. In this tradition, a different picture appears of the state and civil society; as more equal partners, though playing different roles. Specifically, while civil society promotes distinct private and political interests, the state safeguards the general and common interest. As such, the state is not perceived as a threat but rather as the protector of equality and individual freedom, while civil society is questioned for creating trust and social cohesion (Trägårdh, 2010). In contrast to scholars writing from a more Anglo-American tradition, highlighting the important role of civil society to achieve high levels of social capital, Swedish scholars such as Bo Rothstein have argued that the high levels of social capital in Sweden and other Scandinavian countries can be explained by universal welfare programmes, high degrees of economic equality, as well as low levels of corruption, rather than due to a strong civil society.
Importantly, whilst the particular understanding of Neo-Hegelian will be illustrated in the Swedish context and contrasted to the Anglo-American below, critique of the Anglo-American tradition exists elsewhere, not least in the United States. For example, critics have highlighted the danger of placing too much emphasis, as Putnam does, on civil society, while avoiding looking closer at political structures, or not highlighting the need for a functioning government and a supportive state (Edwards & Foley, 2001; Skocpol, 1996). Therefore, the differences on a detailed level may not always be as clear as sometimes portrayed.

Yet, in order to understand how the normative hopes of civil society (i.e., the resource perspective), as well as the risk perspective can be understood in a Swedish context, it is important to take a macro-level perspective. Specifically, the Swedish Social Democratic welfare regime and the role of civil society within it differs greatly from liberal regimes (Esping-Andersen, 2013). As described in chapters 1 and 2, voluntary organisations providing welfare and social services have only had a minor role in Sweden compared to similar organisations in the Anglo-American context. In fact, in the early development of the welfare state, religious actors and other voluntary organisations working with social services were associated with social inequality, due to a supposed unequal balance of power between giver and receiver, rather than being framed in a positive light (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2015; Vamstad & von Essen, 2013). This negatively framed view of voluntary organisations providing welfare and social services is based on the emphasis on a good and strong state, guaranteeing its citizens social rights, rather than people having to rely on civil society and family for services (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2015).

Overall, the so-called Swedish model differs considerably from an Anglo-American theoretical narrative. In the Neo-Tocquevillian context, there is always an existing dualism between the autonomous individual and the dangerous state. Non-state alternatives are often put forth as the best alternative for the public good, as illustrated by the fact that civil society is supported though gifts and tax exemptions in order to safeguard the autonomy of civil society (Trägårdh, 2010). The Swedish model, meanwhile, is based on an idea of strong bonds between a strong, but also good, state and autonomous individuals in what Trägårdh has termed “statist individualism” (Trägårdh, 2010). The strong state guarantees social
rights based on citizenship, while civil society is predominantly based on social movements, interest groups, sports, giving individuals a voice and for emphasising a particular interest, not the common good. In regard to support, no tax exemptions to the individual are given though direct government grants to civil society has not been regarded as problematic. Rather, such state grants have been viewed as a way to make sure organisations work in line with the values of a democratic society (Trägårdh, 2010).

The statist-individualist perspective thereby differs greatly from the idea-world of the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition in which bonds are based on the strong relationships between the individual and civil society, and between individual autonomy and communal obligation (Williams, 2007). In the Swedish social contract it has been argued that the individual needs to be liberated from unequal and old-fashioned institutions of civil society and of what could be called “narrow communities” – such as the family, the churches and charity organisations that contribute with bonding social capital and that may represent values that are in conflict with society at large – “the wider community”. The Swedish Theologian Joel Halldorf (2018) argues that due to the, in his opinion, extreme individualism in Sweden, there is a general fear of the community aspect and that associations that are too tight or narrow (or tighter than a stamp collecting club as Halldorf expresses it) have been regarded as a potential sect in the Swedish context.

Interestingly, compared to Putnam’s understanding of bonding social capital, that is primarily concerned with the potential negative consequences of bonding social capital for the larger society, in Sweden focus more often seems to be on the potential negative consequences for the individual within the community.

In order to understand these differences, it can be fruitful to look at what values are promoted in Sweden through, for example, the World Value Survey. Sweden’s somewhat extreme position is based on the general and considerable support for individualistic and secular values that promote the autonomy of the individual (Pettersson & Esmer, 2005; World Value Survey, 2021). In turn, there is low support (and perhaps even low tolerance) for more traditional values that highlight communitarian practices, such as those found in “narrow religious communities” with a “hot religiosity”. Combined, this results in considerable

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46 Tät gemenskap
47 Bredd gemenskap
support for individual rights, in particular for women, children, sexual minorities and other vulnerable individuals, ahead of group rights (Trägårdh, 2017). The Swedish modulation of the Neo-Hegelian social contract can therefore be seen to be first and foremost grounded in the statist individualist relationship and key values, underlying moral logics and practices that focus on individual autonomy and social equality are secured through an alliance between the state and the individual. As such, Trägårdh has urged scholars to interpret civil society-state relations in Sweden through a Neo-Hegelian lens, where civil society is;

…seen as legitimate and important, but it is less tightly linked to unselfish, altruistic and communitarian virtues. Instead, civil society is first and foremost conceived of as the arena in which individuals and groups seek to advance particular political and private interests, to satisfy needs and desires and to realize hopes and ambitions. It pictures state—civil society as a dynamic, interactive and productive process, rather than as a counterproductive zero-sum game.

(Trägårdh, 2010, p. 227)

Despite the strong statist individualist relationship in Sweden, when the concept of civil society was introduced in Sweden in the early 1990s, as described previously, it was more in the shape of the communitarian Neo-Tocquevillian civil society tradition. Many of the early texts on civil society in Sweden at the time followed this narrative, inspired by a more Anglo-American communitarian view of civil society and a suspicion towards the strong welfare state (see, for example, Arvidsson, Berntson, & Dencik, 1994; Zetterberg, 1995). In recent years, scholars and politicians alike seem to lean towards thinking of, and highlighting, civil society in a Neo-Tocquevillian light; promoting actors in civil society as vital for democracy and highlighting the more communitarian aspects of civil society (see chapter 2). Consequently, it would seem that Sweden has two disparate views of civil society existing in parallel.

3.2.2. A Theoretical Lens

A crucial part of this thesis is to try to understand the continuity and discontinuity regarding the Swedish state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities, in order to understand the contested view that seems to exist towards them today. In order to do so, I believe it is vital to look at the underlying
moral logics that may inform the position of the state in this studied context. In the four chapters where the empirical results are presented (chapter 5-8) I will therefore analyse how the discourse, ideas and policies in the government documents have been framed and underpinned by certain moral logics found in both the Neo-Hegelian and Neo-Tocquevillian traditions in light of stability and change. NB, this is not driven by an assumption that the state’s perception must be underpinned or understood in the light of these two traditions. Rather, it merely aims to provide a theoretical lens with which to deepen my understanding of the state’s perception of minority religious communities, of why certain activities, groups and values are celebrated, and others feared, in the Swedish context, and how this may not be applicable to what has been seen in other contexts. To do so, I will study both the long-term perspective (a diachronic perspective) and deepen my understanding of each individual time period (a synchronic perspective).

3.3. Governance of Religious Diversity

Although the moral logics may help to deepen my understanding of the Swedish state’s perception of minority religious communities in Sweden, other societal processes and factors are also important to include in the analytical framework. In similarity to the discussions above, contextual, structural and historical elements will most likely affect the state’s handling of, and thereby policy outcome regarding, minority religious communities. In recent decades, a considerable amount of literature concerning European states’ governance of religious diversity has been produced showing that Muslim immigrants in particular are increasingly being regarded as a risk that needs to be addressed (Fetzer & Soper, 2005; Koenig, 2007; Laurence, 2012). It has been argued that since the 1990s, increased immigration, coupled with struggles of integration as well as fears of terrorism and polarisation, have led to new political strategies in dealing with religious diversity. In particular, an increased visibility of partnerships and interaction between the state and Muslim groups is one of the major resulting trends (Dinham, 2009; Humphrey, 2009; Laurence, 2012).

A number of different theoretical explanations have thereby been developed to understand cross-national variations regarding the state’s accommodation and handling of religious diversity in Western European countries (Tatari, 2009). Four
contributions\textsuperscript{48} that stand out are the Theory of Church and State, the Theory of Control, Political Ideology Theory and the European Convergence Theory, all of which represent different mechanisms of how to explain institutional stability and change (Griera, Martínez Ariño, & García-Romeral Moreno, 2014; Tatari, 2009). In turn, all of these theories can be understood in light of “expert” and “governed” religion in order to look further at different explanations for the expert religious discourse at different times, and how this has structured public policies concerning minority religious communities.

\textbf{3.3.1. Theory of Church and State}

Starting with the Theory of Church and State, this is based on the idea that the specific church-state relationship and patterns will affect how religious diversity is managed and handled in different countries (Fetzer & Soper, 2005; Griera et al., 2014). Also, the church-state arrangement deeply affects the political debate in a country regarding how to accommodate religious minorities (Fetzer & Soper, 2005). Consequentially, state policies concerning minority religious communities will largely be based on the inherent relationship between the majority church and state of a specific country. Two scholars that have highlighted this theory is Joel Fetzer and Christopher Soper (2005). They refer to how three different countries in Europe (Germany, France and Britain) have significantly different political debates concerning the accommodation of Muslims and the governance of religious diversity. It is argued that different church and state patterns (where Britain has an established church, Germany has a diverse religious establishment and France has a total separation between church and state and Laïcité as the guiding principle) deeply have affected the state’s accommodation of Muslims. When comparing the three countries, the British government seemed the most willing to accommodate Muslims while France was the least willing. According to the theory, and the idea of path dependency, it is therefore argued that the long-lasting stability of certain policies, together with institutional patterns resulting

\footnote{\textsuperscript{48}According to Griera et.al (2014), in recent years, there have been several theories developed concerning different mechanisms of how to explain institutional stability and change regarding how European countries have handled and accommodated religious minorities. In their paper, they put forth three main contributions (the Theory of Church and State, the Theory of Control, and the European Convergence Theory). Yet, after a review of other theories, not least Tataris’ (2009) presentation of the most central theories, I decided to include a fourth theory, the “political Ideology Theory”.
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from historic events, can help explain why different countries follow different paths in their handling of diversity (Griera et al., 2014).

A number of scholars agree with Fetzer and Soper’s (2005) conclusion and have highlighted how the state-church structures in different countries could account for cross-national variance (Nielsen, 2009; Tatari, 2009). Following this line of thought, this would mean that Sweden’s strong ties between church and state would have affected and impacted the public policies directed at minority religious communities. Yet, this raises the question regarding what impact the state-church separation in 2000 had on minority religious communities and policies towards them.

3.3.2. Theory of Control

The second theoretical explanation, named Theory of Control, has also been put forth as an explanation for the current strategies for the governance of religious diversity (Griera et al., 2014; Turner, 2007). As touched upon in chapter 1, scholars have highlighted how religion has become a growing policy concern (Dinham, 2009; Griera, 2012; Hurd, 2015a) and that many of these new policies, in particular in relation to religious minorities, can be described as direct reactions to the risk element of religion and a wish to control it (Humphrey 2009). However, in many Western countries, this risk perspective is connected to the public role of Islam. Scholars have shed light on how governments are increasingly trying to manage the risks, though also reap the benefits, from Muslim religious communities, as a result of religion increasingly being portrayed as a problem by media with reports of religiously motivated terrorism, violence and the creation of parallel societies (Soper & Fetzer 2003, Birt 2006, Turner 2007, Griera 2008). According to Bryan Turner (2007), there has in recent years, particularly following 9/11, been a development in which political authorities put forth religious groups as a risk that can contribute to religiously motivated terrorism, violence and the creation of parallel societies. As a result, there has been as increasing desire to wield substantial control over them, albeit with a governmentality rhetoric that uses neutral language of pluralism, liberalism or multiculturalism.

In order to manage religions Turner (2007) distinguishes between two forms of governmentality of religions. First, a strategy of “upgrading” religions. For
example, creating moderate Muslims by making them more compatible with the inherent values of liberal democratic regimes. An illustration of this could be the offering of educational programmes for faith leaders and promoting interfaith dialogue (see also Birt (2006)), a strategy similar to what researchers have identified as a way of creating “politically correct religion” or a form of “civic religion” (Birt, 2006; Griera, 2012). However, according to Turner, although this strategy may be appealing, for a large group this will most likely be regarded as a desire to change the personal piety of a group (Turner, 2007). The second strategy is the “strategy of enclavement”, which often appears when other policies have failed. Put simply, the strategy involves more direct surveillance and control of religious groups (Turner, 2007). The control strategy is also highlighted by Michael Humphrey (2009) who, in accordance with Turner (2007), argues that many Western states are looking for ways to further shape Muslim groups and leaders to work more in line with Western values. In his study on Muslim integration in Germany, Turkey and Australia, he argues that Muslims in Western societies have been made objects of “securitisation”, i.e., “a political technique of framing policy questions in logics of survival with a capacity to mobilize politics of fear in which social relations are structured on the basis of distrust” (Humphrey, 2009, p.137) and “domestication”, i.e., a way for states to put up boundaries of what values that will be tolerated (Humphrey, 2009).

In summary, these different contributions can be summed up in that the strategy of control has predominantly become visible following 9/11 with states and other authorities trying to increasingly control problematic elements that exist in religious communities and amongst their leaders. The primary aim and strategy is to try and create more moderate versions of the existing groups.

3.3.3. The European/International Convergence Theory

In the European Convergence Theory (Griera et al., 2014; Koenig, 2007), Mattias Koenig (2007) proposes that researchers should look beyond national models for handling religious diversity. Rather, focus should also include the increasingly influential European model for religious governance and “processes of Europeanisation” that take place through, for example, the European Court of Human Rights, with implications on individual countries’ national handling of diversity. Although regional or national organisational, political and historical
contexts differ between European countries, it is also argued that all countries are also affected by such supranational processes. Therefore, according to this theory, although there have been historical path dependencies in relation to state-church relations, increasingly, a more common European model is developing that may adjust the current arrangements (Koenig, 2007).

From this perspective, however, I would suggest a need to move beyond merely the European scene and highlight the work of scholars in the field of international relations who argue that global forms of modern secular governance of religion are developing (Hurd, 2015a; Mahmood, 2016). According to Hurd, the “advocacy for religious freedom has become a modern technique of governance of religion in global politics” (Hurd, 2015a). In this specific type of governance, it is argued that individuals and groups are pushed by states and other authorities to define their religious identity in line with clearly defined orthodoxies (based on a liberal understanding of faith) of what religion is, in order to gain legal recognition and privileges. In these efforts there are also elements of a discursive construction of a new normal where everyone is religious (Beaman, 2013) and where religious difference becomes more politicised (Hurd, 2015a).

As already mentioned in the first chapter, Hurd (2015a) argues that in recent years, particularly following 9/11, the “two faces of faith”, which frames religion as either good or bad, have dominated the global expert religious discourse and structured the public policies. There has been a tendency to civilise religion through a religious freedom agenda, a perspective that she contrasts to the previous secularisation narrative that dominated the global governance of religion. In this new global discourse Hurd highlights how states increasingly gather experts to gain more knowledge about religion and how to manage it. In accordance with Hurd’s suggestions, in which there is a growing global demand to further shape and study religion as driven by a religious freedom agenda, it may be more appropriate to talk about a development of a common “international/global model” rather than merely a European model.

### 3.3.4. Political Ideology Theory

The final theory, Political Ideology Theory, focuses on ideas and the connection between ideas and policy outcome (Fetzer & Soper, 2005; Tatari, 2009). This can include national ideas concerning pluralism, citizenship and nationhood, for
example distinct ideas on assimilation or multiculturalism of immigrants that can affect policy outcomes towards minority religious communities. Therefore, diverse ideologies in different countries produce different political opportunity structures which in turn determine the rules of policy (Fetzer & Soper, 2005; Tatari, 2009). Given that I will analyse government documents through a so-called descriptive idea analysis (see chapter 4), I am from the outset inclined to agree with the opinion that ideas are at the core of political action (Béland & Cox, 2011). Although there may be difficulties in tracing the casual mechanism of how different ideas influence policy outcomes, I believe, in line with other scholars (Tatari, 2009), that this fourth approach could be seen to interact with, and even shape, the other theoretical approaches in the governance of minority religious communities.

As is clear, all the different theories highlight, in one way or another, the importance of the underlying ideas that shape countries’ handling of religious diversity. However, to my knowledge, few that have looked closer at the impact of central ideas do this. In light of this, I will be open to different central ideas seen in my material that seem to be of particular importance in the Swedish state’s perspective of minority religious communities in different periods.

3.3.5. A Synchronic and Diachronic Perspective

Clearly, all four of the highlighted theoretical approaches can help to understand different governments’ responses to religious diversity. The question, however, is how they should be understood in relation to each other? Often, one single theoretical explanation is favoured as the critical factor in determining the political responses of different countries. Yet, some scholars have tried to look at how different theoretical approaches may interact – an approach I favour and therefore focus on in this thesis.

In Griera et al’s (2014) study of the governance of religious diversity in Spain over time, the authors point out that there is a “diachronic succession” where different time periods may be explained by its own causation mechanism. Hence, during one period there is, according to Griera et al (2014), one particular underlying factor that more strongly determines the response. This can be compared to Eren Tatari (2009) who argues that although the theoretical approaches provide important insights into understanding different policy outcomes “they each fail
to take into account all the explanatory factors and to adequately explain the entire causal mechanism” (Tatari, 2009, p.280). Given this, Tatari presents a compound model/framework where she suggests how the four different theories interact (alongside a fifth variable of the specific group that is being studied), that in turn will affect the policy outcome of the state.

Although appreciating the comprehensive model, Griera et al (2014) argue that Tatari’s model fails to establish a hierarchy of the different components and does not identify the causes behind policy change, putting forth that there have been three major stages of governance in Spain, each explained by its own causation mechanism. I would suggest that both Tatari’s (2009) and Grieras et al’s (2014) proposed frameworks have both weaknesses and strengths and, therefore, combining them is most fruitful. As such, by applying both a synchronic and diachronic perspective, we may, in accordance with Tatari (2009), see how different mechanisms interact during a certain period (a synchronic perspective) and, in accordance with Griera et al (2014), see the changes in the state’s handling of minority religious communities over time (a diachronic perspective), whilst also being aware that different causation mechanisms may interact over time.

Looking at changes over time is, as I stated previously, vital, as many recent studies have predominantly described the management of religious diversity (in most cases Islam) in a modern context, i.e., of something that has occurred since the 1990s or after 9/11. Thereby they advertently or inadvertently suggested that the issue of governance of religious diversity was previously almost non-existent. As already emphasised, there is a need to look beyond the situation seen today and try to understand how minority religious communities have been perceived and handled in other periods, and how this has transformed over a longer period of time, rather than merely studying the present. This may be important, not least, in order to investigate whether the ideas and principles underlying the treatment of Muslim minorities today, that is often the current primary focus in the field of governance of religious diversity, may in fact be similar to those ideas and logics that formed the responses to other religious minority groups in the past.
3.4. Studying Stability and Change on the Policy-Level

In much of the international research that has been published in recent decades, scholars have highlighted that a new faith sector is developing, religion is becoming a policy concern, and a new policy paradigm of issues concerning religious diversity has arisen (Beckford, 2010; Griera, 2012; Hurd, 2015a). Yet, as stated above, in order to fully study this aspect, I believe the developments that occurred towards the end of the 20th century cannot be studied in isolation. Rather, given that values and principles play a central role in structuring a policy sector, a longer time period needs to be studied. By doing this, the development of and changes in policymakers’ perceptions and values in the process of framing and categorising matters related to minority religious communities can be analysed (Griera, 2012; Hall, 1993). Understanding continuity and discontinuity is central in the field of policymaking, as is studying how different principles and goals develop to either preserve or reform policies (Vedung, 2018). In order to study changes in the ideas behind polices, “public policy paradigms” can help to frame changing perceptions. Peter Hall (1993) refers to a policy paradigm as a wider narrative that places issues in a broader frame, giving them meaning, as well as identifying what the problems are, what the solutions can be and the stability and/or dramatic changes that characterise it. Policy paradigms can be seen to be developed through three dimensions: a general description of the situation; an identifying of the problem; or suggesting suitable policy instruments (Griera, 2012).

Mar Griera (2012) argues that there are several advantages of studying how the “framework of ideas” is constructed in different time periods when studying changes in the governance of religious diversity. By characterising the policy processes in each paradigm, where not only the goals are specified and how to solve them, but also the problems that need to be addressed, it may be possible to understand how new types of regulations are legitimised towards religious minorities. From a Spanish perspective, in the context of Barcelona, Griera argues that the Secularisation Thesis was the guiding policy paradigm for a long period of time in which policies towards minority religious community groups were largely absent. Today, however, a new policy paradigm has taken over: the Religious Pluralism Model, a policy paradigm that has increased the visibility of
religious pluralism in the public sphere and opened up for more inclusive policies towards minority religious communities, for example including them in partnerships to a greater degree.

The shift Griera is shedding light on is defined as a so-called policy paradigm shift. This refers to Hall’s (1993) ideas that policymaking can, from an idea-based perspective, be stable for long periods and then suddenly change dramatically. Hall illustrates the shifts as dramatic changes in “the framework of ideas and standards that specifies not only goals of policy and the kind of instruments that can be used to attain them, but also the very problems they are meant to be addressing” (Hall, 1993, p.279). The shift can be understood as being similar to a so-called scientific paradigm shift, as raised by Thomas Kuhn, that happens rarely but leads to fundamental change. Thereby, a policy paradigm shift sheds light on how not only the policy mechanisms but also the underlying ideas and the perceived problems change. Aspects that, according to Hall (1993), are a result of a process of social learning where the goals are adjusted in the policymaking.

By studying the changes and stability through the framework of different paradigms, I aim to shed light on the discourses and ideas that, in hindsight, are visible in relation to the stability and continuity of policymaking towards minority religious communities in Sweden. Specifically, I intend to analyse how the perception of minority religious communities as a risk and/or a resource may affect this.
4. Material and Methods

In this chapter I will present my overall research design. I will describe and evaluate the material that has been used, how it has been selected and collected, as well as describe the choice of method for analysing the material. Structurally, this chapter will be divided into two parts. In order to fully explain my methodological approach, I will first present and discuss the material analysed in this thesis, i.e., the government documents, with a specific focus on government commissions. I will also address the selection of the different time periods in my empirical chapters and discuss the choice of three different categories for analysing the material. In the second part, the overall analytical strategy of this thesis, the abductive approach, will be highlighted and discussed regarding the mixed method approach that I have applied. Here, I will shed light on how I analysed the government documents, step by step, through both distant and close reading, meaning that both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyse the material. I will end the chapter by presenting the different steps of the research process.

4.1. Material

In the following part I will discuss how government documents have been understood and defined. Thereafter, I will discuss my selection of data and what delimitations have been made.

4.1.1. Government Documents

Starting with government documents, this is a collective term in which publications including government bills, written communications, government commissions (SOU series), etc., are included. Essentially, government documents are part of the official material in the policy process that may lead up to new legislation and that differ in genre, purpose and authorship.

The main material of this thesis are government commissions (also called Swedish government official reports) that are published in the so-called SOU-series. Such reports are written by a government-appointed committee or commission of inquiry and are tasked to conduct a thorough inquiry of various alternatives in conjunction with the process of the government proposing new legislation to
parliament (Riksdagen, 2021). At times, a government ministry has been appointed to conduct the inquiry and in these cases the reports are published in the so-called Ministry Publications Series (DS) rather than the SOU series. In terms of the analysis when I am interested in the shift of discourse, central ideas and policies over times, these reports have been given the same status as the reports published in the SOU series. Overall, government commissions are a unique source for studying the changing politics towards minority religious communities and how the voice of the state differs over time.

The uninterrupted, genuine and far-reaching reports from the SOU-series is a unique source for studying the general trends of the Swedish state's character, interests and attitudes over time. It is therefore possible to use the collected material as a representation of the 'voice of the state'.

(Norén, 2016, p. 11)

Although government commissions are the primary material of my study, they cannot be analysed in a vacuum. Therefore, policy documents related to the studied commissions have also been included, for example, motions, terms of reference, proposals for parliamentary resolutions, as well as statements from the parliamentary committees, new legislation, budget proposals and regulation letters. To understand how the chosen documents are interlinked in the policy process, a division into three phases can be made. First, material that is involved in the work leading up to an inquiry (motions, terms of reference); second, the inquiry itself (government commissions); and finally, the resulting legislation or policy. Also, budget proposals and regulation letters have been analysed (when available) in order to understand the ongoing policy process for state-religion relations. Generally, the SOU series is characterised as including “authoritative policy documents”, meaning that they can deeply affect the discourse, in the case of this thesis, of minority religious communities. However, unlike “steering policy documents” they have no legislative characteristics and have no direct function in affecting the particular area or topic that they are guided towards (Hallsén, 2013). Therefore, in order to gain an overall picture of the policy process it can be argued that studying the terms of reference, which is where the government sets the terms for the commission on what issues they should examine and what problems that need to be solved, enables an understanding as to why the commission is appointed. The arguments in the authoritative policy documents, meanwhile, shed
light on the current discourse that could initiate a changing process, and the steering policy documents highlight the policy outcome (Hallsén, 2013).

Choosing to analyse government documents in order to study the shifting perception and handling of minority religious communities in Sweden can be motivated by several aspects. First, given that part of the aim of the thesis is to study historical patterns, development and change, these government documents allow a comparison over time. Second, government documents are primary sources and the arguments and goals presented in them provide direct access to the discourse of the time. The government documents are also not random texts. Rather, they are often well thought through, following certain conventions in style and formulations are often reused throughout the policy process (Borevi, 2002). Third, the public character of government documents means that questions of authenticity and credibility are less problematic (Schenk, 2005). Fourth, Sweden has a long tradition of appointing government commissions and, as many results in legislation, there are central texts for studying the policy process (Marier, 2009). Lastly, as far as I am aware, the specific analysis of government documents concerning minority religious communities as a group, over time, has rarely been performed, in Sweden or internationally.

Naturally, other government documents, such as referral processes and records of parliamentary debates could have also been included, as these are part of the policy process. However, there are several reasons why these sources have not been included. Given the length of the studied period, nearly 70 years, the enormity of the material that can be found in the referral process and parliamentary debates has meant that certain limitations have been necessary. However, predominantly, limitation have been governed by the aim and research question of the thesis. As the main aim is to study the voice of the state, referral processes and parliamentary debates have not been assessed as appropriate to study. Overall, the study is “idea-centred” rather than “actor-centred”, meaning that the political message and political arguments are at the centre of the analysis rather than focusing on the actors who deliver and submit them, such as political parties, specific politicians or government agencies, parliamentary debates and referral processes (Beckman, 2005b).
4.1.2. The Government Commissions and their Role

As the primary material of the thesis is government commissions, it is fair to ask the question: what is a government commission? Even though it may be difficult to find a common definition or understanding internationally, not least as a consequence of the diversities of form and functions (Lefebvre & Brodeur, 2017b), a description from the 1910 Balfour Enquiry gives a relatively clear indication of what a government commission can be and why it is appointed:

Government commissions are established…to advice upon a particular limited issue in public policy… The commission is (an independent) corporated group created by a public act whose duty is to collect evidence, analyse the problem, report publicly and make advisory recommendations for governmental action. The group is an ad hoc body, created for specific purpose, and its life is limited to the time take to produce the report. The members of the commission are appointed directly by the head of the state, as a result of consultation within government

(Balfour Enquiry, 1910:6 49)

This definition sheds light on a number of important perspectives; it is a government-appointed body that provides advice based on an examination of issues that are of current interest or issues that authorities are not satisfied with (Lefebvre & Brodeur, 2017b; Sheriff, 1983). Importantly, in a Swedish context, although the author(s) of a commission are hand-picked and appointed by the ruling government, they are simultaneously a somewhat freestanding body, often consisting of specially selected experts, officials, politicians from several different parties, etc., as well as in a group or individual (Dahlström, Lundberg, & Pronin, 2020; Lundberg, 2017). In terms of the goals and motives for a new commission, although these are often stipulated clearly and straight forward in the terms of reference, there are often many underlying intervening factors for appointing a commission, that are important to note. Apart from obtaining knowledge, facilitating political compromise and educating the general population, commissions can also be motivated in order to avoid blame, delay or increasing support for a proposition (Marier, 2009). Regardless of the initiating factors, the possible policy outcomes of a government commission also vary extensively.

49 Quoted in Lefebvre & Brodeur, 2017b.
According to Marier (2009) there are five major outcomes of a commission; “Opposition” (when the government introduce reforms in opposition to the proposed ideas of the commission); “Status Quo” (the advice and outcome of the commission leads to no reforms and have limited effect); “Ignoration” (the government ignores most of the recommendations or may only take a few into consideration); “Long-Term Effects” (the commission might have a long-term impact by affecting the main ideas and principles of a policy); or “Act Accordingly” (the government decides to act according to the commissions’ recommendations and advice).

From a Swedish perspective, the use of government commissions with a following referral process has long been seen as a central part of any Swedish policy making and political decision-making process (Dahlström et al., 2020; Lundberg, 2014). Overall, the decision-making process is understood as a fundamental institutional part and is often associated with politics that are deliberative, consensus steered, rationalistic and, not least, open (Petersson, 2015; Trägårdh, 2007b). This openness is clearly illustrated by the referral procedures that follow the commission’s recommendations. The referral process gives organisations, government agencies (who are legally required to answer) and individuals an opportunity to participate in the democratic process by submitting written referrals to the policy proposals (Lundberg, 2014).

Although this policy process with many appointed government commissions is well-established in Sweden, it is important to note that the commission process has changed in numerous ways during the studied period. One such example is the number of appointed commissions. During the 1950-1960s, an average of around 50-60 reports were published annually. In the 1990s, the average was about 150 reports. Also, the time allocated to each commission has been reduced since the 1950s (Petersson, 2015). In the material studied in this thesis, the allocated time varied between one to ten years. Another major change is that historically, parliamentary committees, that include politicians from a number of parliamentary parties, previously played an important role in creating broad political agreements. Also, commissions were often constituted with a mix of representatives from civil society, politicians, experts and civil servants (Dahlström, Lundberg, & Pronin, 2019). However, recent studies have shown that the number of parliamentary committees have decreased (Dahlström et al.,
In the 1990s, around half of the commissions were parliamentary committees, whilst only accounting for 3% in 2016. Today, 75% of the commissions are led by inquiry chairs, together with an advisory board, meaning that there are fewer political compromises and negotiating in the commission process today compared to previously (Dahlström et al., 2019). These changes have raised several questions regarding whether the Swedish government commissions can still, to as high a degree, be regarded as open, democratic and consensus-driven as has previously been the case (Petersson, 2015).

Despite changes in character, government commissions have maintained their position as the foremost process for new polices and legislation and the strategy for broad political agreement in Sweden (Dahlström et al., 2019) and are, therefore, important texts to analyse when studying the voice of the state. Nonetheless, in light of the shifting characters of government commission that may make comparison over time more difficult, I have tried to be transparent regarding the composition and types of committees in the empirical chapters in order to discern similarities and differences between the commissions and give account for the different aspects, as discussed above. Also, in appendix 2, I have added information regarding the length of all of the analysed commission and the author(s) of each commission.

Finally, as highlighted previously, government commissions should not be understood as separate entities. Rather, they must be placed in greater political context in which they are both affected by, and affect, as well as be understood in relation to the background of the appointment and in relation to the political outcome. When such aspects and perspectives are taken into consideration, given that almost every legislation in Sweden is a result of an appointed government commission, Swedish government commissions are an important source of information when trying to understand changing patterns in the political discourse concerning minority religious communities.

### 4.1.3. Selection of Periods and Data

In order to further understand the contested view of minority religious communities today, an important aim of this thesis is to study the continuity and discontinuity in relation to the state’s perception of minority religious
communities over time. As has already been stated, the starting point of this thesis is 1952 and coincides with the Swedish state guaranteeing freedom of religion for all its citizens in the Freedom of Religion Act (SFS 1951:680). This is therefore a natural starting point as the act opened up for new discussions regarding the relationship between state and church and, consequentially, the role of religion and religious minorities in Swedish society. The thesis ends in 2019 when two government commissions concerning minority religious communities in Sweden were finalised. The first one, State Support for Religious Communities in a Multi-Religious Sweden (SOU 2018:18), was one of the first religion-state commissions entirely focused on minority religious communities. The second, New Rules for Schools with a Confessional Orientation (SOU 2019:64), also placed religious minorities firmly in the limelight as well as being the first commission that focused entirely on the issue of religious schools.

In order to find relevant material for this thesis I have primarily used the parliamentary database where most government documents are available. For the SOU series I have used Linköping University’s SOU database where the entire SOU series between 1922 and 2021 is collected. Regarding some documents, such as regulation letters and budget proposals from the early years of the studied time period, these have been difficult or impossible to find digitally. For these, the original documents have been found at the Swedish Parliamentary Library.

4.1.3.1. Selection of Documents

Given the large amount of government documents produced during the studied time period, a systematic process was required to identify relevant documents in relation to the research questions. The first step of this process was to systematically search the SOU database for relevant keywords. These were identified based on previous literature and were chosen in order to identify all

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50 https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/
51 Regulation letters have been from https://www.esv.se/statsliggaren/
52 https://www.ep.liu.se/databases/sou/
53 Relevant keywords were identified through a snowball-like process. First, commonly used synonyms related to minority religious communities, such as, trossamfund, frikyrkan, frikyrkor, katoliker, muslimer, ortodoxa, judar, konfessionella, religion were used in the search. Second, the identified commissions were read and thereby new keywords were identified such as (främmande, fria) samfund. This process was then repeated.
possible government commissions that included the topic of minority religious communities during the studied period. Once these had been identified, I searched for documents connected to these commissions.

In the second step, all documents were manually assessed\textsuperscript{54} in order to determine in what context the issue of minority religious communities was discussed. This resulted in a number of the commissions being discarded as the keyword merely referred to minority religious communities in passing or when referring to other commissions where the issue of minority religious communities was discussed (only commissions discussing the issue more at length were included). After a first selection of documents, the remaining commissions were more closely read during the third and final step. In order to enable a systematic comparison over time there was a need to find policy areas in which the issue of minority religious communities was not only highlighted in one commission but rather where the discussions were recurrent. In this process I identified three such policy fields; “Religion and State”, “Education” and “Integration”. These were organised as different categories through which I could sort my material. The category where the issue of minority religious communities was most regularly highlighted and discussed in length was in the religion and state category in which commissions discussing the issue of religion/church and state relations were included. Given the amount of material in this category in comparison to the two other categories, the sustained focus on the state’s overall perception and handling of minority religious communities, and that the commissions were evenly spread out throughout the studied period, “religion and state” was identified as the main category. The categories of “education” and “integration”, meanwhile, were considerably smaller and varied throughout the studied period. Therefore, they have been identified as supportive- or sub-categories.

\textbf{4.1.3.2. Main Category: Religion and State}

The main category includes government commissions (and the policy process surrounding these) that explicitly, from the outset, raise matters and questions specifically relating to the relationship between church/religion-state. Although

\textsuperscript{54} Given that all documents are digitalised, this process was relatively simple. Keywords were searched for in the document and thereby the number of times it was discussed and in what context was quickly apparent.
the name of the category is “religion and state”, it is relevant to note that many of the commissions in this category, in particular during the earlier periods, were predominantly concerned with church-state relations (as the names of these commissions indicate). Yet, despite this being the prime focus of the commissions, the state’s relationship with religion and religious minorities was also frequently discussed. Therefore, as this is the central matter of this thesis, the main category was named “religion and state” rather than “church and state”.

The four commissions (and the policy process surrounding these, as described previously) in the table below are, as such, the primary material for this thesis. Also, budget proposals and regulation letters were included as these were strongly related to the outcome of the commissions.

Table 3. Religion and State Commissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commission</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The 1958 Commission of Church and State</td>
<td>1958 – 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1968 Commission on State and Church: Society and Religious Communities</td>
<td>1968 – 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The State and Religious Communities</td>
<td>1995 – 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The State support to Religious Communities in a Multicultural Society</td>
<td>2016 – 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the importance of these four commissions in determining the relations between state and minority religious communities, the empirical chapters have been divided and framed in line with these, resulting in four separate periods (1952-1968, 1969-1990, 1991-2010 and 2011-2019) that also make up four different chapters (chapter 5-8). The main argument for using these four commissions as the main material in this thesis was that the underlying purpose of the commissions was distinctly similar. All discuss what relationship the state should have with religion, if minority religious communities should be supported, what the risks and benefits of this would be, etc. Also, given that one of the objectives with this thesis is to study how the perception of minority religious communities change over time, both in regard to discourse, ideas and policy but also concerning the risk and resource perception, the similarity over time in the types of documents and the underlying purpose of the documents as described above, is crucial.

55 For a full list of commissions, see Appendix 2.
Importantly, although changes generally occur gradually and this type of periodisation runs the risk of overlooking the complexity of change, the selection of the different periods has been a way of, following an analysis of the material, trying to highlight shifts in the discourse and shed light on why a new commission was appointed at that particular time, an element I also try to address in the title of each chapter. Also, the selection of periods based on the religion–state commissions enables both a diachronic and synchronic perspective. Chapter 5-8 each represent a period in which a synchronic perspective is adopted and where focus is mainly on the specific and relevant discourses, tensions and policies during that time. In chapter 9, meanwhile, a diachronic perspective is adopted in which the shifts and changes over the entire time period is in focus.

4.1.3.3. Sub-Categories: Education and Integration

In the two sub-categories “education” and “integration” I have included commissions where the purpose was not primarily to discuss the relationship between state and church/religion but where the issue was nonetheless central. In other words, despite not always being the expressed intention of the commission, the relationship between state and minority religious communities or the state’s expressed demands and desires, was highlighted and discussed in the commission due to it having a strong bearing on the investigated issue, either as a problem-creating or problem-solving characteristic. As such, these supporting categories help to reinforce or soften the gathered conclusions from the religion and state category.

There are further reasons for including these two categories. First, when performing the primary search of government commissions, apart from in church and state commissions, commissions concerned with questions relating to education and integration were those that most clearly raised and discussed the issue of religious minorities most in depth. Second, in terms of the research question related to the risk/resource role of minority religious communities, education and integration often highlight these tensions in a particularly clear way as well as helping to illuminate the moral and political logics underlying the state’s perception. It could, of course, be argued that no distinction should be made between main or sub-categories given that they can all contribute to the purpose.

The specific commissions can be found in Appendix 2
of this thesis. However, it is important to note that while minority religious communities were mentioned in the education and integration categories, the issue was at times raised very briefly. It was therefore difficult to gain an overall picture of how the state perceived and handled minority religious communities in those commissions.

4.1.4. Limitations of the Material

In terms of the material used in this thesis, there are some limitations that need to be addressed. Most importantly, the government commissions differ considerably, both qualitatively and quantitatively over time. With different authors in the different commissions, each with a different focus, length and purpose as well as being written in very different eras, comparisons and the study of changes in the language can be difficult, an aspect that has previously been highlighted by other scholars (see, for example, Gavelin (2018)). However, although this can be problematic when studying documents from an actor-centred perspective, this thesis focuses on the ideas that are discussed in the commission and, therefore, the different authorship is not the focus. Despite this, I have tried to clarify differences and similarities in terms of focus, length, purpose and outcome between the different commissions in the empirical chapters, as I believe all of these findings may assist in gaining a deeper understanding of the issue at hand. Also, by analysing government documents through the whole policy process, the reader is provided with a context of why a certain commission was appointed and what the policy outcome was.

4.2. Methods

In this part I will highlight the analytical strategy of this thesis as well as present the methods that have been used. I will also present my research process step-by-step.

4.2.1. The Abductive Approach

The overall analytic strategy in this thesis has been guided by an abductive approach (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Abduction refers to the “creative inferential process aimed at producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence” (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 167). The abductive approach, that has some characteristics of
both induction and deduction, is common when studying historical patterns and developments (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017; Florén & Ågren, 1998). Rather than merely allowing the empirical material to steer the analytical process, or alternatively basing the analytical process on an existing theory, the abductive approach does both. In abduction there is, as Pearce puts it, a “complementary and constant dialectic between inductive and deductive theoretical development rather than a reliance on one or the other” (Pearce, 2012, p.832). An abductive reasoning, therefore, means that the researcher has to be open to surprises. These may in turn change the research design (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012) and so limit the risk of becoming one-sided and/or un-realistic, as can be the case with deduction and induction (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017).

In terms of the research process, in abduction there is an alternating process between theory and the empirical findings and how they are understood relative to each other (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017). The understanding of the empirical material becomes deepened by the theoretical preconceptions and, likewise, the empirical material creates an awareness of what specific theoretical framework that could be used. Importantly, this type of flexible research design means that the theoretical framework is modified during the working process (Pearce, 2012). Another central part of the abductive analysis is that I, as a researcher, am aware of my theoretical presumptions. This makes it possible to recognise the potential relevance of unanticipated and perhaps even surprising observations (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). A central difference to an inductive approach is therefore that the scholarly literature is not turned to at the end of the research process. Rather, this theoretical base is present from the outset and permeates throughout the research process (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

Already in my original research plan I had an idea that my overall research problem would concern the contested view of minority religious communities in Sweden today, from the perspective of the state, given that I had discovered that little research had been performed on this particular subject, not least from a historical perspective. From the outset, I had several theoretical preconceptions both from the field of sociology of religion and civil society research that I believed could help me analyse my material. However, during the research process, and as a result of some unanticipated empirical findings, such as the large impact the governance of the Church of Sweden had on public policies directed
to minority religious communities, the exact theoretical framework was modified and developed as I added the theoretical perspective of governance of religious diversity further into the research process (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

Another central part of the research process has been sharing my preliminary results with other scholars at seminars and conferences, experiences that have helped me articulate and refine my theoretical framework (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Throughout the research process I have also continued to read literature in the research fields and revisited the empirical material searching for new ways to understand it, grounded on my new knowledge, and thereafter modified my findings (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Such flexible research is often considered to be a pragmatic approach, meaning that I, as a researcher, should stay reflexive during the process, moving back and forth and seeing how I can best find answers to the larger research question (Pearce, 2012). The flexible research design also means that the choice of method shifted during the research process. Once I started to read and sort my material it was clear that in order to grasp the large mass of empirical material, the qualitative idea-analysis, that had been my original choice of method, needed to be complemented by other more quantitative methods, not least in order to see more overarching trends. Specifically, it was concluded that using mixed methods to analyse the material would be helpful. As a result, I decided that I would combine so-called “distant” and “close” reading.

Used correctly, the mixed methods approach can help reduce many of the problems and difficulties that arise when using one single method (Morse, 2016). By using both quantitative and qualitative techniques, the strength of both methodologies can be incorporated to balance the weaknesses of the two (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In turn, this also means that an abductive reasoning is more appropriate rather than the inductive (common in qualitative studies) or deductive reasoning (common in quantitative studies) (Pearce 2012).

4.2.2. Distant and Close Reading

In terms of defining “close” and “distant” reading, close reading can be understood as the more traditional way of performing qualitative research in analysing text – by finding recurrent themes and words, argument patterns and ideas in the text (Jänicke, Franzini, Cheema, & Scheuermann, 2015). Although
close reading has many strengths, such as finding latent and manifest content (Bergström & Borèus, 2012), there are also weaknesses in regard to recognising larger changing processes, overarching patterns, as well as finding concealed semantic structures in the text (Jänicke et al., 2015). As such, close reading can be complemented with distant reading.

Distant reading can be seen to be more of a quantitative research approach and methodology when analysing large amounts of texts. By analysing the text from a distance, through a computer program, and by viewing words more as data points rather than inherent terms, distant reading enables the researcher to find larger underlying patterns. By applying a more abstract view of the text, main clusters of words can be found (Jänicke et al., 2015; Moretti, 2013). Overall, the digital age has meant that new types of studies are possible given the new methods available (Berry, 2012). The so-called “digital turn” of humanities, where analogue data is converted into digital form, has opened up for the study of, for example, digitalised government documents in a new way given that all the SOU-series have been digitalised from as early as 1923 (Norén, 2016). This digitalisation of documents and texts has meant that advanced quantitative methods, such as textual mining, algorithm approaches to text, and visualisation of text, has made it possible to find patterns in texts that would not be possible to find through traditional close reading (Jänicke et al., 2015; Norén, 2016).

Although digitalisation has opened up for new possibilities within this field, the new methods can be criticised for not taking the hermeneutic tradition seriously and being more connected to a positivistic tradition where less attention is placed on context and where there exists a more unquestioned trust in the result the computer provides. Therefore, by combining different methods, as well as weighing up the weaknesses and strengths of distant and close reading approaches, I will combine the strengths of both systematically analysing larger amounts of data and finding overriding patterns, while simultaneously retaining a qualitative awareness in a type of hybrid reading (Lindgren, 2016). In turn, this means I will both take the hermeneutic tradition seriously (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008) though also gain some distance to the material that comes with the more positivistic approach of distant reading.
Although both distant and close reading have been applied to the material in this thesis, it is important to note that this does not entail that I have given the two an equal amount of space or focus. Rather, the process can be viewed as the analysis being driven by the close reading and the hermeneutic approach and supported by the distant reading. Or, as other scholars have put it, the methods of distant reading should amplify and augment close and more careful reading (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013). The distant reading is therefore used as a way of showing larger patterns in the material that are difficult to visualise if only qualitative methods are used (Jensdotter, 2021). Importantly, in terms of credibility, the patterns found in the distant and close reading can “uncover a mixture of dissonant, converging and complementary findings” (Baker & Levon, 2015, p. 224) and find “outliers that do not fit with identified patterns” (Lemon & Hayes, 2020, p. 612) that help give a better understanding of the issue. Also, as highlighted by others (Lemon & Hayes, 2020), I believe that the trustworthiness of the results is strengthened by using more than one method to analyse large amounts of text.

**4.2.2.1. Distant Reading**

Given the purpose of the distant reading, i.e., to allow the empirical material to steer the analytical processes, Automated Content Analysis (ACA) was used (Nunez-Mir, Iannone III, Pijanowski, Kong, & Fei, 2016; Smith & Humphreys, 2006). ACA is a text-mining tool that enables the computerised analysis of large sets of text in order to further the understanding of how different concepts are used and correlate with each other (Nunez-Mir et al., 2016). By finding clusters of concepts that frequently occur together it is possible to discover themes (or ideas) that are latent in the text and that in turn help the researcher to understand the underlying ideas in the text.

Importantly, ACA should not be confused with quantitative content analysis, a commonly-used method in research similar to that applied in this thesis (Lindberg, 2015). At its simplest, quantitative content analysis describes how

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57 The notion of concept is used rather than the notion of word in ACA. This is slightly confusing as I would argue that it, at this stage of analysing, would represent a word (a small unit of language) rather than a concept, that would need to be understood further through the close reading. For example, the word “neutrality” may appear in an ACA in different time periods but may be interpreted very differently throughout these time periods. As such, only when set in the context of the close reading we may fully understand the concept. Yet, in order to avoid confusion with the notions used in this particular method and in Leximancer, I will use concept rather than word.
often certain words appear in a text. In the context of this thesis, such a method could give an overview of which concepts were used in different periods and how often they were used, thereby indicating different trends. However, several problems exist when using such crude quantitative methods. Primarily, as mentioned previously, the length of the studied commissions varied considerably meaning that any comparisons would be fraught with inherent bias. Yet, the main problem with this method is that the results from a quantitative content analysis can be highly superficial given that no information is given as to how different words and concepts appear in different contexts and with different connotations (Norén, 2016). ACA, meanwhile, is considerably more sophisticated. Rather than simply counting the frequency of words, ACA finds larger topics and clusters of concepts (so-called “themes”), that would not be possible to find with more traditional reading, connected in texts, thereby enabling comparisons over time. Crucially, the themes are not predominantly related to how many times a concept arises but rather the probability distribution of the concepts co-occurrence in regard to the co-occurrence frequencies. As such, it is not only the presence of the concept that is central but also the relationship between different concepts (Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Smith & Humphreys, 2006). Also, there is no need to decide to choose which concepts are central prior to the search and ahead of the analysis in ACA. Rather, there is an automated thesaurus-based process meaning that words automatically appear from the text data (Smith & Humphreys, 2006), thereby strengthening the inductive approach.

In order to conceptually analyse and measure the associations between words, the software program Leximancer (V.5 Leximancer Pty Ltd; Brisbane, Australia) was used. Leximancer is currently one of the most advanced tools available for ACA (Nunez-Mir et al., 2016) although it seems to have rarely been used in fields of sociology and religion or civil society research. With the help of Leximancer it is possible to get a bird’s eye view of the studied government texts by identifying how often concepts occur, determine the associations of concepts, as well as the rate at which these co-occur within a body of text (Smith & Humphreys, 2006). Leximancer finds connections between concepts that generally “travel together” in a text as well as showing on what level there is a connection between key concepts in the analysed text (Thomas, 2014). Through advanced modelling, the concepts that cluster together (either due to contextual similarity or appearing
physically close to each other in the text) become higher-level themes (Smith & Humphreys, 2006) and are named in line with the most prominent concept (Lemon & Hayes, 2020). For example, one theme could be church. This topic can then consist of a number of concepts such as priest, hymn, religion, bible (Smith, 2003). Importantly, the process is performed automatically and without human involvement (Smith & Humphreys, 2006).

Although the analytical process is computerised, in order to produce understandable and useful results the researcher is required to take an active role both before and after the computerised analytical process. Therefore, it is important to be transparent regarding the working process and the different stages as well as to highlight any possible limitations. Consequentially, after having presented the close reading, the research process will be described step-by-step.

4.2.2.2. Close Reading

The close reading is an important part of the research process at it helped me to search and gain deeper understanding of my research question. Idea analysis was used as the overall text-analytical approach for studying and analysing political text and messages systematically (Beckman, 2005, Vedung, 2018), and Nvivo-based content analysis was the chosen research technique for studying the material.

Idea analysis can be defined as the scientific study of political documents and texts that guide not only the analytic approach but also the research questions and the aim of the study (Beckman, 2005). The studying of ideas in political texts comes from the understanding that “ideas are at the core of political action” (Béland & Cox, 2010). In this thesis, I used a “descriptive idea analysis” meaning that I did not want to explain why certain ideas were highlighted in the studied text (as in explanatory idea analysis), nor take a stand for the ideas and debates taking place (as in so-called idea critique), nor did I want to use a normative approach (Beckman, 2005; Vedung, 2018). Also, as mentioned previously, the idea centred analysis meant that the political message and political arguments were at the centre of the analysis rather than the actors who delivered them and the context in which they were delivered in (Beckman, 2005). Therefore, with the three research questions as the point of departure, I wanted to clarify what was being said at a
particular time in history and understand how these perceptions changed over time.

Since this thesis has applied both a synchronic and diachronic perspective regarding what ideas characterised the state’s policy in relation to minority religious communities, the descriptive idea analysis was a useful approach in seeking to understand both the constant and changing nature of dominant ideas that in turn could describe the dominant ideals and policies of today (Vedung, 2018). Evert Vedung (2018) argues that in a descriptive idea analysis it is important to include an understanding of both continuity and discontinuity of policymaking and argues that major shifts can be framed through different policy paradigms. An important part of my analysis has therefore been to compare the different periods, searching for important changes in discourse (research question 1), ideas (research question 2) and policy change (research question 2) between 1952 and 2019. Looking at changes and shifts through the perspective of policy paradigms means that I try to locate the current narrative within a broader framework, study how different “framework of ideas” are constructed in different periods and how they change over time (Hall, 1993). Here, focus is on what the hopes, goals and visions are for minority religious communities during a certain time and what fears, problems and risks are raised and how they are proposed to be resolved.

4.2.3. The Research Process

In terms of the research process, this was performed in several steps. The first stage of my research process was the selection of documents, as described earlier in this chapter. In the second stage, I performed a first close reading of all the chosen documents and made a draft of the selected years of the four different time periods. I also sorted the material into main and sub-categories. This process was particularly helpful given the mixed-methods approach as I already had some idea of how the material could be analysed when I started the distant reading. For example, an analysis of all the time periods together would have given me little information of the discourses and ideas at a certain time or changes between the periods.

In the third stage, the distant reading was performed to enable an improved overview of the texts, find overriding patterns, the greater context, as well as
discovering text sections of significant interest (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Lemon & Hayes, 2020). During this stage I needed to decide how I would use ACA to analyse the material in the best possible way. Originally, I intended to perform the ACA on all of the material in each period, however this proved to be difficult. Although technically possible, when all categories were analysed simultaneously the results were largely incomprehensible. A major problem was that in regard to the sub-categories, minority religious communities were, as highlighted previously, often mentioned in relatively short sections. They were often not a central issue in many of the commissions (sometimes only mentioned in a couple of sentences) and therefore, if the education and integration categories were analysed together with the religion and state category, the topics with connected concepts became irrelevant, showing no trace of any discussions regarding minority religious communities. Also, it was difficult to understand the context of the different categories as the discussions differed considerably between, for example, the education category and the religion and state category. Therefore, in order for the distant reading to contribute to the analysis, I decided to analyse the main- and sub-categories separately for each period.

Although the decision to analyse each category individually within each period solved certain issues, I was still left with the problem of minority religious communities being at times only mentioned very briefly in certain texts. Obviously, one solution to this issue could have been to simply include and analyse the relevant pages or chapters in the sub-category material. However, such a choice would have required a purposeful subjective selection of data, thereby compromising the objectiveness of the ACA method. Also, although the inclusion of all text meant that the outcome of the ACA in the education and integration category not always provided information concerning minority religious communities, it did provide an insight into the context in which the issue of minority religious communities was discussed. In turn, this gave several interesting insights. For example, in the analysis of the integration category during the 1970s and 1980s, the topic “immigrants” gave a number of concepts that at face value did not appear particularly relevant. However, although the issue of

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58 Immigrants', opportunities, languages, organisations, activities, measures, information, authorities, society, minority organisations, languages, situation, social, consideration, increased, financial, support, needs, problems, background, groups, municipalities, initiatives, cultural
religion was not in focus and therefore not seen in the themes, it was in relation to these overarching discussions that the issue of minority religious communities was raised. Discussions were predominantly related to the process of dealing with immigrants and of whether minority organisations should be supported or not. Such contextual knowledge was central in the process of further analysis.

In term of analysing the periods separately, although there were advantages of this type of analysis, such as an improved understanding of the main discussions in the documents at a certain time, it is important to note that such choices also affected other elements; for example, the question of how different concepts were used in different times. Therefore, an extra analysis was performed after the close and distant reading in which periods were compared, and concepts of importance were studied further. This is be explained further in the eighth step.

During the **fourth stage**, the **ACA** was performed. To perform the analysis, different settings and manual interventions were required in Leximancer, for example, so-called stop words (for example, *them, a, is, such*, etc.) were identified both automatically by Leximancer and manually, and thereafter removed. After the automatic identification of concepts that are regularly used in the text, further manual work was needed, such as removing all capitalised words. Also, similar versions of different concepts (such as *organisation* and *organisations*) were identified and manually (unless automatically identified through Leximancer) merged into a single concept. After these steps, the list of automatically generated concepts was presented, enabling an opportunity to double-check that no concept was misspelt (and therefore should be added to the stop list) or not merged properly.

During the **fifth stage**, the **final trend analysis**, visual concept maps, in which concepts are clustered (or themed) based on their co-occurrence, and that

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59 In Leximancer there is an existing Swedish stop list that removes obvious stop words such as *and, such, by*, etc. However, as the work progressed and as I analysed older texts, it was clear that there were additional stop words that were not included in the original list. These had to be added manually. They included misspellings and older stop words no longer used today.

60 After I had performed the first primary analysis, that was done without any interference, specific concepts were also added to the concept list as *seed terms*, for example *neutrality* and *islam*, given that they were of significance for other time periods but were perhaps less obvious for that particular time period. Given that these concepts were not visible throughout the entire studied time period, these were added manually during the second analysis process to those time periods where they were absent. This enabled me to compare the use of these concepts between time periods. Importantly, adding these terms did not affect the basic ACA.
represent themes found in the text, were produced (Indulska, Hovorka, & Recker, 2012; Smith, 2003). Alongside the map, a list and tools to facilitate the interpretation of the visual concept map were presented. While this visualisation was helpful, I found the so-called concept list where all of the strongest clusters and themes were presented in a table, the most useful, given that is clearly showed the strongest themes and the relationship and co-occurrence with other concepts. Attached to each theme were text segments in which these connections were found. There was also the possibility to analyse certain concepts more closely to see what other concepts they most commonly occur with (Smith, 2003).

In order to present the findings in a coherent way I decided to primarily focus on the statistically significant 3-5 top-ranked themes in each category (presented in hierarchical order in the empirical chapters). These themes an indication of what is at stake in each category of each period and whilst not always necessarily providing direct information regarding minority religious communities, the themes shed light on the context in which minority religious communities were discussed. Therefore, even when not being highlighted, the results contribute to an understanding of the contextual setting of the period.

In the sixth stage, I returned to the close reading and the idea-analysis, organising the material of each period in Nvivo, whilst being guided by my research questions regarding what discourse, ideas and policies that were present during different time periods. Parallel to this, I could start searching for both shifts and stability regarding the different aspects and in relation to potential policy paradigms (Hall, 1993). Crucially, this stage and process helped me sort through a large amount of empirical material and find patterns, similarities and differences between time periods (Syssner, 2018).

In the seventh step, the findings from the close reading were compared to those from the distant reading, that in turn were compared to the close reading. Generally, this alternating process meant that the distant reading functioned as a guide, focusing on understanding the different concepts and the connected statements in order to have a distance for abstraction. This amplified the close reading of the material where I, to a further extent, could achieve a deeper understanding for my research questions and increase the familiarity with the text as a whole (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 7). Throughout the close reading I
regularly returned to the quantitative results in a continuous interactive analytical process in order to maintain an objective view of the material and to find larger patterns. Central concepts that were found in this interactive process were analysed further, both in the close and distant reading and also compared over time. As such, the material was analysed in a continuous iterative or repetitive process, where the outflow at each stage was used as the inflow at the next stage. This was also in line with the abductive approach, with a constant interactive process between distant and close reading and between the theoretical and empirical understanding of the material together with my own reflections (Vedung, 2018). As stated before, the distant reading was used to amplify and augment close and more careful reading (Grimmer & Stewart 2013).

The interactive process can be exemplified by focusing on the **eighth step**. During this stage, I returned to the distant reading to perform a more focused analysis of the text. Specifically, it was clear that some concepts reoccurred both in the close and distant reading. However, their use and meaning seemed to change over time. In order to test this indication from the close reading, I performed a so-called **targeted ACA**.

A targeted ACA is when a concept, such as minority religious communities, is purposefully sampled and the concepts that are most strongly associated with this topic over time is studied (Nunez-Mir et al., 2016). The analysis means hand-picking the concept (for example, religious community\(^{61}\)) and performing ACAs on the four different periods in order to find temporal trends and changes, thereby not merely focusing on the questions being asked and subjects being discussed in certain time periods or certain documents. Although, the analysis becomes less iterative than the ACA described above (given that purposeful sampling of concepts is performed), the results show changes that have occurred regarding a specific concept in all of the studied documents between the time periods. Specifically, the attached words are hierarchically determined, with the word statistically most connected to the concept coming first in the list. This diachronic analysis therefore produces a complementary analysis to the synchronic and pinpoints the strongest associations and trends in each time

\(^{61}\) Concept seeds: främmande samfund, fria samfund, samfund, samfunden, trossamfund, trossamfunden
period and thereby between time periods (for a more in-depth methodological explanation, see Nunez-Mir et al. (2016)).

Importantly, there are several issues one needs to be aware of with this type of analysis. For example, terminology can change and vary between periods. Therefore, all terms need to be combined in this type of analysis meaning that there are increased risks of the analysis also including irrelevant concepts and showing incorrect results. Also, given the complexity of the analysis, only some analyses will produce statistically sound results, thereby limiting the number of results. In this thesis, targeted ACA was repeated with several topics such as freedom of religion, democracy, neutrality, religion, etc. However, statistically sound results were only produced for religious community and freedom of religion. Whilst this meant that only these terms could be used in the diachronic perspective and presented in chapter 9 with the generated ranked lists, the performing of the process on other concepts meant that I could regularly validate my results from the close reading, balance the objective and subjective view of my material, and give indications of the discussions concerning the different concepts.

4.2.3.1. Conclusion

Although the research process described above is clearly continuously iterative and repetitive, transparently illustrating this process in the empirical chapters is difficult. Therefore, the empirical chapters (based on four separate time periods (1952-1968, 1969-1990, 1991-2010 and 2011-2019)) are structured in such a way that the chapters start by presenting the distant reading and the 3-5 top-ranked themes of each category. The main questions discussed in the distant reading are then presented. After this I turn to the close reading, looking closer at the general discourse, ideas and policy discussions found in the text.
5. A Time of Negotiation and Balancing of Ideals (1952-1968)

During the 1950s and 1960s, as the Swedish welfare state fully developed, Sweden was still a relatively religiously homogenous country and religious belonging was largely limited to the Church of Sweden. Yet, the strong position held by the Church of Sweden was increasingly questioned alongside a gradual increase in the number of religious minorities in Sweden, predominantly as a result of labour immigration coupled with population movements following World War II (SOU 1974:69). Given the relatively slow development, at face value, few government commissions explicitly studied the issue of minority religious communities. However, as will be seen throughout this chapter, many of the overarching questions and concerns were in fact connected to minority religious communities and in particular the state’s perception and handling of these groups. There was an underlying understanding that society was changing and thereby a need to deal with increasing secularisation and religious diversity. Consequentially, the issue was far from insignificant even though it was mainly integrated in discussions of other issues, not least in the discussions concerning the future relationship between the Swedish state and the Church of Sweden.

5.1. State and Religion

In table 4, the statistically significant results from the distant reading of the category state and religion for this first period is presented. The five themes highlight the most used concepts as well as the concepts that most often “travel together” in the text. These themes shed light on some of the primary topics and questions asked in the analysed text.

62 See appendix 2
The strongest theme in the category of religion and state during this period was *Church*. Together with the connected concepts it sheds light on the main topic during this time, namely the issue of how the state should resolve the church-state relations. More specifically, should there be a changed relationship between the state and Church of Sweden? If so, how would the membership of the church be affected? More technical issues of the church-state relations are also highlighted. For example, if the Church of Sweden became independent how should the economic situation be solved? What should be the position of the Church of Sweden in Swedish society? What role and function should it have, and should it become a faith community among others? While minority religious communities are not directly highlighted in this theme, many of the questions raised regarding the church-state relationship brought attention to minority religious communities, as will be shown in the close reading.

In the second theme, *Religion*, the wider question of the role of religion, rather than merely the role of the Church of Sweden in Swedish society, was raised. Importantly, although this theme not necessarily includes any concepts directly related to minority religious communities, there are indications of a widening of the church-state discussion, i.e., what role should religion play in society? How should freedom of religion be realised? Should the Christian faith have a certain

### Table 4. Religion and State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Church</strong> <em>(Kyrka)</em></td>
<td>church, Church of Sweden, state, ecclesiastical, question, relationship, Swedish, position, activity, parish, free, tasks, form, faith community, economic, regulations, members, opportunities, parish, area, economic, development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Religion</strong> <em>(Religion)</em></td>
<td>religion, religious, freedom, Christian, religious freedom, society, Sweden, life, teaching, society, Christianity, faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Faith Community</strong> <em>(Samfund)</em></td>
<td>faith community, specific, free, Swedish, interest, perception, requirement, influence, different, principle, connection, individual, problem, free, countries, groups, doctrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Church Meeting</strong> <em>(Kyrkomötet)</em></td>
<td>church meeting, law, church meetings, civil, law, priests, order, marriage, legislation, property, priest, legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Free Church</strong> <em>(Frikyrka)</em></td>
<td>free church, separation, people, state church, support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
privileged position? As a result of such questions, the issue of minority religious communities was also raised.

In the third theme, *Faith Community* (i.e., the concept often used to describe minority religious communities), minority religious communities were included more directly. For example, how should the state relate to the specific/free religious communities? How have other countries dealt with the free religious communities? How should the rights of the individual and groups be upheld in these religious communities? Importantly, while it is clear that minority religious communities were not of primary interest in the commissions, the fact that they to such a high degree are visible in the third theme indicates that they directly or indirectly became an important issue to discuss in the religion and state category during this period.

The fourth and the fifth themes also highlight similar tendencies as those described above, although through different perspectives. The theme *Church Meeting* illustrates the importance of practical issues though predominantly in relation to the Church of Sweden. The last theme, *Free Church*, in which the issue of support was raised, has many similarities with the faith community theme. However, the fact that a particular theme is focused on the Free Churches illustrates the importance of this group in relation to other minority religious communities, as well as to the Church of Sweden.

In terms of the close reading, in order to summarise the empirical results, a number of sub-themes will be presented that highlight the discussions and questions that were treated. First, however, a background will be presented to the appointment of the 1958 State and Church Commission in order to facilitate an understanding of the contextual setting.

5.1.1. Background

Although the starting point for this chapter is 1952, the year when the Swedish state, relatively late compared to other European countries, guaranteed the freedom of religion for all its citizens (SFS 1951:680), in order to understand why certain decisions, bills and acts were implemented, there is a need to understand the political discourse preceding this period. Specifically, the period just before 1952 is relevant as it describes the upcoming initiation of the 1958 State and
Church Commission as well as the discussions concerning the state’s relationship to minority religious communities, not only before the State and Church Commission but also before the Freedom of Religion Act.

The demands for freedom of religion largely came as a result of increased demands for negative religious freedom, i.e., the right to not be obliged to belong to the Church of Sweden (Enkvist, 2013). Unsurprisingly, the demands for an improved legislation for religious minorities had largely been put forth by minority religious communities themselves and the demands for a revision of the Dissenter Acts had created heated political debate since the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the appointment of a number of government commissions to come to a solution of the issue. In 1949, one of those commissions, the Dissenter Act Committee,\textsuperscript{63} presented its final report with a proposal for a new religious freedom act (SOU 1949:20).\textsuperscript{64} The report was predominantly concerned with the issue that there should be no limitations or barriers for individuals to leave the Church of Sweden and, if they chose to do so, this should not require the individual to enter another religious community, as was the requirement at the time. However, parallel to highlighting the need for negative religious freedom the committee also highlighted the importance of the continued strong connection between the state and those with an evangelical faith.\textsuperscript{65} Therefore, it was argued that the constitutional recognition of the principle of religious freedom would not “mean that the state has declared itself religiously neutral or indifferent to the religious education of its citizens” (SOU 1949:20, p.11).

Although the negative aspect of freedom of religion was deeply emphasised in the report, so was the importance of the Christian faith that in itself was seen as a major resource in society. It was unclear whether any of the minority religious communities could take on such a role although there seemed to be an intention to further include minority religious communities or, at a minimum, further highlight their existence. This change in perspective is seen in the committee’s

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\textsuperscript{63} The committee was appointed in 1943 with the purpose of submitting proposals for a new act on freedom of religion

\textsuperscript{64} Betänkande med förslag till religionsfrihetslag m.m.

\textsuperscript{65} The committee stated that a new law should not be formulated in such a way that it could encourage people to become religiously homeless, i.e., to not belong to any religion and leaving the church, and that the evangelical faith with its morals and values was important for the social cohesion of society.
suggestion that minority religious communities should be termed Especial Religious Communities rather than Foreign Religious Communities as had previously been the case – a decision that in many ways indicates an attempt to further include minority religious communities in Swedish society. However, although the new term was less alienating, as well as the fact that the committee proposed that minority religious communities should gain further rights in issues concerning religious education, the ability to start monasteries, as well as being allowed to legally conduct marriages, the term Especial Religious Communities maintained a focus on minority religious communities’ difference to the norm.

A further suggestion from the Dissenter Act Committee was the creation of a new legislative form for minority religious communities, thereby introducing new regulations, as well as privileges, for minority religious communities. The government bill that followed the Dissenter Act Commission largely suggested a similar direction to the committee (prop. 1951:100); that the Dissenter Act should be repealed and replaced by a new act on freedom of religion. The Dissenter Act, which mainly concerned religious minorities and their religious practices, was considered inadequate and outdated. Therefore, a new law was to contain more overarching and general principles of religious freedom. Yet, it was argued in contrast to the commission’s proposals, that there should not be an introduction of a new legislative form for minority religious communities, given that any regulations aimed towards minority religious communities “could be accused of being an assault on the freedom of religion” (prop. 1951:100, p. 57). Despite this it was still suggested in the bill (and later in the act) that a new judicial term should be introduced: trossamfund (Faith Community). The new term was defined as “in

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66 Särskilda trossamfund  
67 Since 1873, monasteries had not been allowed on the basis that they were considered incompatible with the doctrine of the Lutheran evangelical faith  
68 Yet it was rather unclear what these regulations and privileges were to include.  
69 The new juridical term was not mainly concerned with minority religious communities, but rather introduced in order to highlight that the Church of Sweden was no longer to be a state institution and carry out state affairs but rather be a religious community and focus on the religious activities. Thereby, the Church of Sweden would predominantly be a spiritual community (andlig gemenskap) (prop. 1951:100, p. 50).
addition to the Church of Sweden, an association for religious activities, which includes arranging worship” (prop. 1951:100, p. 6).70 Although there was no introduction of a legislative form, the new judicial term opened up for the state to further govern minority religious communities, both through offering privileges as well as proposing regulations. In order to ascertain religious freedom for religious communities, it was stated that minority religious communities should be free to organise religious meetings and services as they required. Also, in accordance with the Dissenter Act Committee, it was argued that a number of the unjust laws directed to religious minorities should be abolished.71 However, in the new act it was clearly stated that minority religious communities could only gain full freedom as long as they “did not disturb the peace and order in society” (prop. 1951:100, p.6). Although it is relatively unclear what this practically entailed, it indicates that there was a fear that the new Freedom of Religion Act could be abused. In line with this, it was highlighted that the religious freedom for religious communities should never “be so extensive as to infringe on the individual's religious freedom” (prop. 1951:100 p. 59), i.e., the individual should always be placed in a prioritised position ahead of the religious community and should be able to leave a religious community at any time.

This ideal, that the right of the individual should be prioritised ahead of the group, clearly sheds light on an idea that would be central in the upcoming period; namely that the freedom of the individual should be protected by the state and could be in danger in the minority religious community. Perhaps consequentially, the concern that the freedom of religion for religious communities would limit the freedom of religion for the individual, permeates this upcoming time period. In the government bill this discussion can perhaps be seen most clearly in the discussions around possibly abolishing the ban of establishing monasteries.

Although it was suggested in the government bill, in line with the Dissenter Act Committee, that new monasteries should be allowed, given that the freedom of

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70 Interestingly, although the term “faith community” was suggested to be used both for the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities, the terms were primarily used for minority religious communities.

71 It was suggested that minority religious communities should be allowed, through their priests or preachers, to conduct marriages in accordance with civil law. Similarly, an abolition of the previous legislation banning non-members of the Church of Sweden to hold certain positions in public service was also suggested, as was the forced connection to the Mosaic Assembly.
the individual was prioritised over the freedom of the group (in this case in the monastic community), a state-based control function was proposed in the government bill required. Consequentially, in order to start a monastery, it was suggested that such requests “could only be founded with approval of the government” (prop. 1951:100, p. 113).

Following the government bill and after considerable parliamentary debates, on the 1st of January 1952 the new Freedom of Religion Act came into force and this also marks the starting point for this thesis.

5.1.2. The Appointment of the 1958 Commission of Church State

With the introduction of the new act, the debate continued and, in the years following the new act, several motions were proposed concerning a separation of church and state (see for example mot. 1955:48 and mot. 1956:124). Although the proposer’s arguments varied, there were some themes that reoccurred and also opened up for further discussions of minority religious communities.

First, the proposers argued for a separation of the church and state based on the principle of freedom of religion. In turn, the principle of freedom of religion was understood from three perspectives; that the Church of Sweden should be free in terms of their internal affairs (religious freedom for religious communities); that the individual citizen should have a right to choose his or her own religion (religious freedom for the individual) and; that the state should not prioritise one religious community over another but treat all religious communities equally. Second, it was suggested that in a changing society with an increased secularisation, as well as increased diversity through the growth of the Free Church movement, “the state authorisation of a certain form of confession is a remnant of an obsolete view” (mot. 1955:48). Also, as Sweden no longer could be regarded as a religiously homogenous country it should be a “fundamental

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72 A particularly heated debate concerned whether or not Free Churches should be allowed to conduct marriages. Such a right meant that the state’s influence on the Free Churches would increase rather than decrease, thereby potentially making the minority religious communities “servants of the state” and as such less autonomous in relation to the state (Ekström, 2003). Other large political debates concerned a continued ban of, mainly Catholic, monasteries as these monasteries were understood to have a negative impact on the religious freedom of the individual (Werner, Y. M. 2002).
democratic requirement that different belief systems were placed equally before the citizens” (mot. 1956:214). Accordingly, it was argued that the state should not be involved in religious matters within which they lacked competency. Third, although many of the proposers argued for a separation between state and church and the freedom of religion for the individual and religious communities, they also emphasised, in similarity to the Dissenter Act Committee, that the state should maintain an interest in religion and in particular the values that Christianity and the Church of Sweden represented. As a result of the intensified debate regarding the future relationship between state and church, the motions were referred to several government authorities as well as organisations including the Church of Sweden and the Free Churches. The opinions were summarised in a statement from the Committee on the Constitution (KU) that would have considerable impact on the final terms of reference (KU 1956:17).

Only a few of the referral responses were unreservedly positive to the appointment of a new government commission and the criticism from the Church of Sweden was particularly intense. Representatives from the Church of Sweden argued that the proposers had misunderstood the ecclesiology of the Church of Sweden and that the so-called Free Church ideal that permeated the motions carried several assumptions that were not in line with the perception and the ideal of folkkyrkan. The ideology underlying the idea of a folkkyrka was that membership should not be based on the personal faith of the individual nor should it be mistaken to be a confessional church, as was the case of the Free Churches.

This argument sheds light on the ongoing tension where the Free Churches’ “hot” religiosity was contrasted to the “cool” religiosity represented by the Church of Sweden and, as such, put forth as arguments for retaining strong bonds between the state and church. It was also highlighted in the KU statement that the proposer’s focus was on the negative aspects of freedom of religion, whilst neglecting the positive aspects and the rights to religion, as well as not highlighting the importance of Christianity in Swedish society and its base in Christian morals. It was therefore argued that starting a government commission that could lead to a separation between state and church would be to risk the core morals and values of Swedish society.

73 Bekännelseskýrka
Despite the criticism summarised in the KU statement, KU approved the appointment of a multilateral government commission on the future construction and relationship between the state and church. Importantly, however, it was clearly specified, in line with the criticism from the Church of Sweden, that the main aim of such a commission was *not* to address a possible church-state separation. Rather, the purpose was to impartially investigate how future relations between state and church could be organised, how the economic situation should be solved and, if applicable, the degree of disestablishment, whilst maintaining state involvement in religious matters. Also, perhaps as a response and assurance to the referrals’ responses, it clearly stated that nothing should be done to in any way damage Swedish society’s connection to Christianity. KU highlighted that the role of Christianity should not merely be seen as a resource from the perspective of the individual, but rather from a larger societal perspective, given that Christian values had formed and shaped Swedish society. Thereby, as they constituted an asset for the Swedish nation and people, it was stated that the forthcoming “committee could therefore not take part in any measure which could harm any of these indispensable values” (KU 1956:17, p.13).74

The debate that followed in the second chamber was considerable (Brohed et al., 2005), but in November 1956 Parliament approved the KU request (rskr 1956:381) concerning the proposed government commission, and in 1958 the Swedish government appointed a new commission, The 1958 Commission of Church-State, to further investigate the church-state relations in Sweden. In the terms of reference, it was stated that the government agreed with the KU statement regarding the state’s responsibility concerning religious concerns and therefore the terms of reference were written fully in accordance with their suggestions.

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74 The importance of Christian ethics, morals and the central role of Christianity in Swedish society was highlighted throughout the KU statement. As such, one of the reports in the up-coming commission would concern the role of religion as a social phenomenon in Swedish society (NB: not only Christianity).
5.1.3. The 1958 Commission of Church and State.

The 1958 Church and State Commission was to be organised in different stages and the committee, consisting of several experts in different fields, many with a strong connection to the Church of Sweden, were set to work on a number of different inquiries in parallel, each related to different relevant issues. Between 1958 and 1968, ten reports (nine separate reports and one final report) were produced. In each of the ten reports a historical overview, the current laws, as well as a problematisation of the future church-state relationship was presented. From the outset, the committee presented four main hypothetical future relationship models (A, B, C and D) that each report related to, with different suggestions on how future relations between church and state could be solved as well as different degrees of disestablishment. Finally, after 10 years, in 1968, the final, concluding and comprehensive summary report of the government commission work was presented: The Church of Sweden and the State: Final Report (SOU 1968:11).

As mentioned in the distant reading, minority religious communities seemed almost absent in the debates leading up to appointment of the 1958 Church and State Commissions. Nonetheless, when the issue of the future relationship between state and church was discussed, the issue of how to handle minority religious communities also received attention. As such, an interesting trend can be seen throughout this period; namely that the political negotiations concerning the future church-state arrangement seemed to deeply affect, structure and even

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75 The first stage included an inventory of previous studies in the field, a mapping of the present problems and possibilities, as well as offering suggestions for future reforms. Many issues were considered, such as issues concerning the freedom of religion, the state’s neutrality, the economy of the church and its role in accounting, marriage and funerals ecclesiology, the state’s responsibility for religious matters and the role of Christianity in Swedish society.

76 Alternative A suggested no major changes in the relationship between state and church whilst alternative D suggested the opposite: a total separation. Alternatives B and C proposed a middle way with a semi-separation between the church and state. More specifically, both proposed a separation of church and state on an organisational level but not fully on an economic level, whereas in the B alternative the church could still keep its right to taxation.

77 Svenska kyrkan och staten: Slutbetänkande

78 In this major report, all the ten reports were discussed at length. Also, the first part of the final report presented the ongoing debate within the political parties, the Church of Sweden and the Free Churches, concerning the future relationship between state and church. Additionally, other reports that were not previously connected to the 1958 commission were included, such as the report that discussed the matter of religious schools for religious minorities (SOU 1966:55).
shaped the politics towards minority religious communities. A trend not least visible in the many discussions regarding the principle of freedom of religion.

5.1.3.1. The Principle of Freedom of Religion: Equality and the Limits of State Neutrality

Given that the principle of freedom of religion could be understood as a starting point for the discussions of how the church-state relationship should be formed, it is unsurprising the considerable attention that was placed on the principle in the different reports of the 1958 Church and State Commission. In a number of reports regarding the role of religion in Swedish society (SOU 1963:26), education (SOU 1964:30) and the issue of support (SOU 1967:47), it was discussed what consequence the principle of freedom of religion would have on minority religious communities. However, it was in the extensive report Freedom of Religion (SOU 1964:13), with the purpose of presenting the issue of freedom of religion and how the law and principle could be understood in relation to the ongoing discussions concerning the future church-state relations in Sweden, that the principle of freedom of religion regarding minority religious communities was first raised. The inclusion of minority religious communities can be understood as a result of the report highlighting how other countries had solved the church-state arrangement in regard to the principle of freedom of religion. It was concluded that most of the studied countries differed from Sweden as their religious landscape was more heterogenous and rather than having policies concerning church-state relations they had a wider focus that also included issues

79 Religionens betydelse som samhällsfaktor. Möjligheter och metoder för en sociologisk undersökning
80 Kristendomsundervisningen. Med särskild hänsyn till förhållandet kyrka-stat
81 Kyrklig egendom: Skattefrågor; Prästerskapets privilegier
82 Religionsfrihet
83 In the first part of the report, consisting of nearly 500 pages, associate professor Sture Waller first gave an all-encompassing historical overview of the public and political debate regarding religious freedom, as well as different interconnected issues, followed by a literature review of how freedom of religion had been defined and regulated in different international contexts and understood by different thinkers. The report ended by Waller first presenting his own view of freedom of religion in a separate section, followed by a statement by the commission’s committee based on Wallers presentation on the issue of freedom of religion. As such, whilst largely based on a single individual and researcher, the statement is not merely the ideas of one man but becomes intertwined and entangled with the committee’s perspective.
of religion and state. As such, the commission widened its focus, as seen in the distant reading, to the question of the state’s relationship with religion.

Although the principle of freedom of religion was to be a leading and central principle in the commission’s work, the complexity of the principle was an issue that was recurrently raised; not least the idea that it was a relativistic principle, i.e., the understanding of the principle often changed depending on the context and who was claiming it in order to gain attention to, or place importance on, the claimants’ group or identity’s freedom.

The Swedish debate on the issue of religious freedom has become very confused; not least because the participants have included special interests in universal questions meaning that they speak about religious freedom in general, when they in reality mean increased freedom for their own religious group. 

(SOU 1964:13, p. 527)

Given the relativistic nature of the principle, it was argued that it was not possible to propose a definition or objective norm of what freedom of religion could mean and, in turn, seeing if it was fulfilled. Rather, focus was on whether different religious communities, individuals and individuals within religious communities, experienced that their religious freedoms were met. Or, more importantly (and related to the negative aspect of freedom of religion) if there were any signs of religious force in Swedish society. Practically, this meant that rather than focusing entirely on the Church of Sweden and its members (even if this was the main focus of the commission), the commission also had to include a discussion of those with no particular faith, as well as those belonging to a minority religious community (or as they were notably often called in the Freedom of Religion report (SOU 1964:13) – those with “deviating religious beliefs”). By focusing on those who had a different faith, a shift is again clearly visible from the original aim and purpose of the commission in broadening the perspective and focusing increasingly on religion and religion-state relations.

84 Religiöst tvång
85 ”De med avvikande religiös tro”
86 Although this is an important shift, it should not be overstated. Rather, whilst the issue of minority religious communities was raised, it was predominantly in relation to the Church of Sweden
Based on the principle of freedom of religion, it was argued that there were no formal obstructions to continue the support of the Church of Sweden, in the case of a separation, although it was noted that criticism towards such a support could be justifiable. Yet, by claiming this, the question was if the state then also should be obliged to support minority religious communities in situations where they requested support, in order to create further equality, based on the principle of freedom of religion. The main standpoint in the report Freedom of Religion (SOU 1964:13) was that this would be possible. As such, for the first time, in the 1958 Church and State Commission, the issue of government grants to minority religious communities was raised. However, an important question was that although minority religious communities could be supported, did this entail that the state would become neutral towards different faiths and religions?

On the one hand, it was argued that the state could be influenced by a positive neutrality, i.e., when the state directly or indirectly creates favourable conditions to religious groups that they regard as resources. As such, rather than merely focusing on the negative aspect of freedom of religion as a type of immunity, it was preferable to think of freedom to something. On the other hand, it was argued that the state could not be entirely neutral in terms of values and norms. This meant that there should be no principle hindrance in having a close connection to a certain religious doctrine (such as Christianity) or creating favourable conditions for different religious practices that were regarded as valuable to the state.

It is necessary for there to be a set of principles to guide the actions of every society. The life-philosophy that is assumed to promote and consolidate these norms and values, will then, it would be argued, be favoured in various ways. It is difficult to view this as an incorrect hypothesis according to democratic principles.

(SOU 1964:13, p. 505)

This statement illustrates how the commission identified a possibility to continue to support the Church of Sweden, in the event of a separation, as it was regarded

and, not least, the issue of whether it was compatible with the freedom of religion for the state to support only one religious community, i.e. the Church of Sweden.

87 “Livsvåskådning” is a term literally meaning life/world view or life-philosophy (the English translation I will use in this thesis). While it often refers to a religious life-philosophy, it can also be separated from religion.
as a central resource in society, given that it stood for the norms and values that were viewed as central for the wider society. Thereby, even if minority religious communities could be supported in practice, the discussion was largely dependent on the desire to continue to support the Church of Sweden. In light of this, although it was argued that the state could stay neutral in terms of treating different religious communities more equal, this did not mean that the commission disregarded the risks of taking such a position. Fundamentally, a solution to this was that the state should not be entirely neutral concerning its central values; not least because democracy required that “certain general ethical values – a community of values – exist as a basis for the state’s activities” (SOU 1964:13, p. 571). Therefore, although it was argued that the principle of neutrality should be observed in relation to religion and religious communities, in practice a passive neutrality towards religion was not regarded as desirable.

Overall, there was clearly a wariness of the many demands for state neutrality that were seen in the debate. It was argued that it was predominantly groups that benefited from neutrality that would emphasise this perspective, based on their own interests (this referred particularly to the Free Churches and those with no confession). Thereby it was only in possible future scenarios where the number of people without a religious belonging increased that the state could become entirely neutral. However, it was stated that it would seem highly unlikely that the state “could or would want to be completely neutral” (SOU 1964:13, p. 525).

The main argument was that even if different groups argued for state neutrality they would not, in practice, want the state to be neutral towards unwanted activities that were religiously motivated and that were in conflict with central norms in society. It was therefore necessary to highlight the limits of the state neutrality in order to maintain laws and morals as well as protect the common good of society, rather than proclaim full religious freedom. Specifically, all could not be allowed in the light of religious freedom as this would mean considerable risks to society at large. Therefore, as seen throughout this period, there was a clear sense that the common good must override the rights of a religious group.

Freedom of religion without any regard for the order, laws and morals of society can scarcely be thought to exist, and hardly any of those who demand full religious freedom would like to be part of the extreme
consequences, e.g. human sacrifice (...). The notion that the state should be religiously neutral does not appear to be a practical solution either.

(SOU 1964:13, p. 509)

The main conclusion in The Freedom of Religion Report (SOU 1964:13) was that freedom of religion did not have to mean that the state and church separated, nor that the state became entirely neutral or, crucially, that the state could not support religious activities. However, in the commission’s final report (SOU 1968:11), discussions of how the principle of freedom of religion could become a leading principle continued. The overall argument was that due to the importance of the principle of freedom of religion, the state was obliged to ensure that the situation between different religious communities became more equal. In similarity to the Report on Freedom of Religion (SOU 1964:13), the final report placed considerable importance on the issue of neutrality from two perspectives. The first perspective of the state neutrality (church-political neutrality)\(^{88}\) was the demand for a more equal treatment of different religious communities and their members; an issue that became strongly connected to the aspect of state support to minority religious communities. The second perspective was that the state could not be neutral in terms of moral and ethics. Therefore, in certain situations, the state’s core values would be in conflict with the values of a religious community (for example regarding central values such as a democratic outlook on life) and the state would, in those situations, be required to prioritise its own core values.

An overall conclusion was therefore that the state needed to rethink its policies surrounding not only state and church, but also state and religion on the basis of the principle of freedom of religion, not least since the principle required the commission to highlight issues of state neutrality and equality, and the tension between these different principles. Importantly, in the final report a shift was visible from the perspectives previously put forth. No longer was the principle of freedom of religion the sole factor that made it necessary to rethink the state’s relationship with religion more generally. Rather, as the religious landscape was changing, with increased diversity and secularisation, the committee highlighted

\(^{88}\) Kyrkopolitisk neutralitet
that a widened focus was necessary where focus increasingly had to take the demands of other religious groups into account.

5.1.3.2. A Changing Religious Landscape: The Perspective of the Minority and Majority

Alongside the understanding of a changing religious landscape, the final report (SOU 1968:11) also signalled a sense of urgency that the state needed to balance the demands of majority and minority groups and, in a slight change to the terms of reference of the 1958 State and Church Commission, it was argued that the state could not disclaim its responsibilities concerning not only Christianity but religion more in general. The committee exemplified the changing religious landscape by shedding light on the ongoing secularisation where people increasingly questioned religion alongside the membership growth in the so-called Free Evangelical Religious Communities and other non-Christian faiths. Such groups were mentioned for the first time when the issue of migration in connection to the issue of religion was raised in the 1958 Church and State Commission’s final report.

Even non-Christian religions such as Muhammedism and Buddhism are now, mainly due to immigration, represented in our country. In addition to religious worldviews there are also those who call all religion into question or fight it. A significant part of the population appears to be indifferent to religion. This new situation that has emerged in our country makes it understandable that from the point of view of the state, the significance of religion has taken on a different meaning than before.

(SOU 1968:11, p. 74)

Although only gradually, a change clearly emerges throughout the final report regarding this changing religious landscape, not least in terms of what principles and ideals the committee thought should guide state policies concerning religion in Swedish society. Foremost it was argued that in terms of principles it was no longer only the principle of freedom of religion that should be the guiding principle. Rather, the principle of democracy should also be included in discussions concerning church and state as well as religion and state. The close proximity between these two principles was highlighted as they both “often resulted in
increased demands for equal treatment of religious communities (...) as well as for state neutrality” (SOU 1968:11, p. 223).

The new emphasis on the principle of democracy meant that increased attention was placed on the issue of minority religious communities given that it entailed that the demands “within other religious communities as well as outside all religious communities - should be considered” (SOU 1968:11, p. 238), meaning that the perspective of minorities should be taken into consideration. The committee meant that it could be problematic if only the perspective of the majority was considered concerning the future relationship between church and state as this would only satisfy the religious needs and desires of the majority and may not necessarily reconcile with the aspirations of minority groups. To avoid this situation, any support of religious communities would need to be guided by the principle of democracy, as well as the principle of freedom of religion, meaning that minorities should be given more equal opportunities and equal support in relation to the opportunities and support given to the majority church. However, although this principle standpoint was taken, there was a poignantly contradictory view in parts of the final report. Specifically, it was stated that the majority perspective should be given prominence when different demands stood in conflict with each other and when issues of common interest were discussed.

Where the demands of different groups oppose each other, compromises must be made, which, as far as possible, satisfy everyone’s interests. In the case of values and positions, the size of the group that experiences religious freedom can often play a role; society's decisions must be made with the consideration of the general public’s interest. Although the religious freedom debate is often almost aimed at the wishes of minorities, the views of the majority is of course of great importance to the state.

(SOU 1968:11, p. 76)

Nevertheless, the overall final statement was that explicit measures must be taken to ensure that the majority, through the state authority, should be unable to strengthen its own view of religious issues, at the expense of the minorities. I.e., if the majority, for example, decided to have a close relationship with one particular religious community (in this case, the Church of Sweden), minority religious communities should be able to obtain the same support and respect as
the majority-based community, on the basis of both the principle of democracy and freedom of religion. As such, the issue of a government grant to minority religious communities was highlighted.

5.1.3.3. The Question of Support of Religion

The issue of whether the state could and should support other religious communities apart from the Church of Sweden must be understood in the context of the time (the 1960s). At this time, it was clear that the state saw itself as a central actor in solving different issues and problems facing society, in a number of different areas including in the religious sphere.

The authority’s development has shifted from a passive to a more active approach and it currently appears, for many people, as relatively natural for the state to step in through interventions or support measures, e.g. create resolutions in matters where competing interests emerge.

(SOU 1964:13, p. 574)

In similarity to the previous discussions, the issue of government grants to minority religious communities was raised regarding the discussions of whether the state should support the Church of Sweden. The conclusion was that if this was pursued, it would “place the Church of Sweden in a favoured position” (SOU 1967:46 p. 31) and similar support should therefore be offered to minority religious communities based on the principle of freedom of religion. Other financial advantages that the Church of Sweden had, compared to for example

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89 As mentioned previously, it was The Freedom of Religion report (SOU 1964:13) that opened up the possibility of supporting other religious communities than the Church of Sweden through government grants. The issue was then further highlighted in the two reports Church Property, Tax Issues, Priesthood Privileges (SOU 1967:46) and Legislation and the Administration of Justice (SOU 1965:70). Although these reports were primarily concerned with the finances and legislation of the Church of Sweden (the issues relating to the first and fourth theme in the distant reading), they also highlighted the issue of minority religious communities in shorter sections. In the report concerning legislation (SOU 1967:46), the issue of a new organisational form for minority religious communities was once again highlighted. However, in accordance with the statement in the government bill concerning freedom of religion (prop. 1951:100), it was argued that there should not be a differentiated religious organisation form for minority religious communities. Not least, since regulations could limit the ability of religious communities to make claims that they themselves considered religiously motivated. This would in turn be an interference with the religious freedom of religious communities.
the Free Churches, such as tax relief, was also raised as economic arrangements in need of reform. Overall it was argued that;

If other faith communities lack the necessary finances to conduct their activities among members and others, the freedom to carry out the activities is of little value. It is obvious that financial difficulties can spoil a theoretically well-structured religious freedom program

(SOU 1968:11, p. 86)

Although the state’s relationship with the Church of Sweden clearly came to shape the political agenda of minority religious communities, a recurrent question concerned the support of minority religious communities: could the state support religious communities while remaining neutral towards different beliefs of religion as the principle of religious freedom would dictate? Also, could the state support any other religions other than the Evangelical faith? If so, would this be accepted by the Church of Sweden and the Free Churches at a time of general scepticism towards the Roman Catholic Church, and where many felt that “the state should actively prevent the Roman Catholic form of Christianity from gaining popularity in Sweden” (SOU 1968:11, p. 85).

Even though concerns were raised, the committee declared that there was general agreement, and no overall objections in Swedish society, towards the idea that at least the Free Churches and Church of Sweden could both receive financial support. Three alternatives were presented: tax exemption, state support in collecting membership fees, and state grants. It was stated that all options had specific advantages and disadvantages. For example, if a religious community obtained tax exemption status this meant that it became harder for the government to interfere in religious matters. The tax exemption may also give the individual the opportunity to freely choose which organisation to give donations to, an aspect that was presented as a common way of solving the issue in other Western countries. However, tax exemption also meant that tax money from non-members would support religion, which according to the committee would be

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90 In the final report (SOU 1968:11), despite the declared importance of equal treatment, in the chapter where the A to D alternatives concerning the state and church relationship were discussed, there was barely any mention of minority religious communities. When discussing alternative B, i.e. that the church and state would separate yet the church would keep its right to taxation, the issue of religious minorities was mentioned.
highly problematic. This risk could be eliminated if the state opted to support religious communities by collecting membership fees. State grants, meanwhile, would always mean that the state could exercise influence over religious communities, as was highlighted previously. Related to this, the committee raised the question of whether minority religious communities even wanted to be financially supported by the state.

Fundamentally, even if it was stated that support could be given, the question was whether the support could be given unconditionally. Although it was understood as important that no religious groups should be discriminated, it was also argued that support could not be given indiscriminately to activities or groups. Rather, support should be limited and the so-called common good should have a higher priority than the rights of religious minority communities.

It is inevitable that the state must draw limits on who it can support and that it must also counteract the numerous activities that occur among the citizens. It is, of course, a delicate task to decide to what extent a certain religious community should be given support or not. It follows from the principle of religious freedom, however, that religious beliefs cannot have a bearing on whether or not social support is given. On the other hand, different public authorities can not relinquish the right and obligation, as they are also acting on behalf of others (other than those who seek the support), to make assessments and compromises that satisfy the public interest. The result at the end can in turn go against a religious or non-religious group.

\[(SOU 1968:11, p. 235)\]

This statement raises one of the central issues of this thesis which will be discussed in the following section, the question of to what extent minority religious communities were perceived as a risk during this time.

5.1.3.4. The Risk of Narrow Communities

In all of the reports discussing the issue of minority religious communities and the principle of freedom of religion, it was clear that there would be limits to what the state would allow. It was argued that some essential elements would not be negotiable, such as limiting the freedom of the individual on behalf of the religious community. Generally, the committee argued that in terms of balancing the rights of the individual and the religious community, the individual’s rights should be
prioritised, for example in relation to the individual having the right to leave a religious community. Likewise, given the importance of the individual’s freedom, it was also argued that the state could interfere in certain issues where the individual’s freedom was threatened, such as the issue of starting monasteries, children’s religious education (that will be discussed further in the education category), membership issues, ecstatic prayer meetings and children’s health.

Occasionally the question arises as to the extent to which state or municipal authorities should be able to intervene at certain religious meetings which contain intense religious experiences, e.g. speaking in tongues. In such situations it has been claimed that mentally weak people - especially children – had their mental health endangered by attending these gatherings

(SOU 1964:13, p. 57)

The matter regarding children’s rights versus the religious parents’ rights, that is highlighted in the quote above, is one example of the tensions between the individual and the group that can be seen during this period. Although the committee argued for the right of parents to make choices for their children’s religious belonging and upbringing, on the basis of freedom of religion, there were also limits, not least when parents, on religious grounds, made choices concerning the upbringing of children that could come into conflict with child legislation. In extreme cases, such as the example mentioned in the quote below, there could be a need for social services91 to intervene.

In cases where children may be psychologically damaged or be in danger of developing such damage, it is mentioned in the preparatory work for the law that parents – with obvious symptoms of mental health issues or as part of a pathological reaction – who raise their children in a way that involves a kind of spiritual terror which can eventually result in the development of an undesirable kind of personality for the child and result in being a danger to the child’s mental health, Social Services could intervene.

(SOU 1964:13, p. 563)

Overall, the committee introduced a number of examples in which the individual’s and society’s interests could collide with the freedom of religion for the religious

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91 Barnavårdsnämnden
communities (for example, holidays, building permission for churches, etc.). The general approach and view was that most issues could be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. However, in the majority of cases, the interest of society and the individual should come first.

Despite the perception of risk in religious communities, this perspective differed between the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities. Specifically, the risk elements were more connected to so-called confessional churches that were seen to represent a form of “hot religiosity”. Interestingly, however, and as noted previously, the risks were associated with a hypothetical situation where the Church of Sweden became a free church; a confessional church, in similarity to the Free Churches, rather than a confessor’s church that was open to all. If this were to happen, the freedom of the individual within the Church of Sweden was feared to become limited. Overall, it was argued that in comparison to the Free Churches, *fölkkyrkan* did not impose a personal Christian confession (i.e., a personal faith in Jesus) as a condition for membership and thereby represented a cooler form of religiosity; being open to everyone for religious services, which was of importance for the Swedish population, though without any requirements of personal commitment. In this sense, the Church of Sweden was understood as a freer church, connected to the wider community of society, rather than the narrow community of minority religious communities.

Another risk that was highlighted was that some minority religious communities may, in the name of freedom of religion, try to impose their faith on others as part of their missionary work. It was argued that from the perspective of freedom of religion, no one should be forced to belong to a religious community or adhere to any faith. From this perspective it could be difficult for the state to support minority religious groups financially, based on the principle of freedom of religion for religious communities, as it would consequentially be in conflict with the principle of freedom of religion for the individual, a perspective that was to be prioritised. It was argued that a separation between state and church, as well as more equal terms for minority religious communities, could have a negative impact on the free choice of the individual and his or her right to not take part in or adopt religious communities’ practices or faiths. Therefore, the report argued

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92 *Bekännarskyrka*
that based on the religious freedom for the individual it could be reasonable to keep the model of a folkkyrka in Sweden.

Finally, the committee highlighted a potential conflicting scenario that could occur in a situation in which an individual member of a religious community faced conflicting demands from their religious community (that would expect strong commitment from its members) and the state. In these situations, the state could not remain neutral and passive but should uphold its own interests.

Conflicts can arise between the state and the (minority) religious communities. The members of the religious communities are also citizens of the state and different conflicting demands on the individual may be made on the one hand by the religious community and on the other hand by the state. In such conflicts concerning the conditions of individual citizens, the state should not accept the opinion of the religious community merely on the basis of its religious neutrality. Should the controversy that has arisen not be resolved in any other way, the state should certainly seek to assert its interests through its legislative powers. Examples of areas in which conflicts of this kind may arise are schooling, compulsory military service and in health care.

(SOU 1964:13, p. 572)

In similarity to perspectives previously highlighted, this shows that the general argument was that there should be clear limits to the state neutrality towards religious communities. As a result, two contradictory perspectives can be found; both an openness towards minority religious communities, particularly those representing a cool form of religiosity and towards their contribution to society at large, but also an awareness of the risk of those representing a hot religiosity and their role and claims in society.

5.1.3.5. Christian Faiths and Morals: A Resource for Society

The openness towards minority religious communities can be traced back to the rather optimistic view of the role of (Christian) religion in Swedish society expressed in the terms of references. It was clear that the state should continue to keep an interest in religion and investigate the role of religion in Swedish society and the activities performed by religious communities.
In total, a two-part report was published to further explore these issues (see SOU 1963:26 and SOU 1963:39). The purpose of the first report, The Importance of Religion as a Societal Factor – Opportunities and Methods for a Sociological Investigation (SOU 1963:26) was to investigate the possibilities of studying the importance of Christianity regarding opinions and behaviours in different aspects of life and society. This was a direct result of the KU statement from 1956 where Christian religion and faith was understood as an important resource for the Swedish people. Despite that fact that the inquiry was later excluded from the final report, it still had an impact on the final report as it highlighted the importance of not only the Christian faith but also religion, in a broader sense, in Swedish society.

The second report, Churches and Congregations in Sweden: Scope and Activities (SOU 1963:39), was an extensive investigation of the entire religious landscape in Sweden and the activities performed by religious actors. In an overview of the activities, both the Free Religious Communities as well as non-Protestant Religious Communities were included. One of the most important conclusions was the astonishment over the many activities related to both pastoral welfare and social welfare that were performed by minority religious communities and in particular the Free Churches. Given that these activities were largely financed through voluntary gifts and offerings, the unequal circumstances that faced many minority religious communities in comparison to the Church of Sweden was highlighted once again.

In relation to religious welfare, there was a specific emphasis in further equating minority religious communities with the Church of Sweden. This included enabling the Free Churches to take a greater role in pastoral care in hospitals, jails, the military, etc. This process had already started through various reforms in which increased demands for more equal opportunities between the church and

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93 Kyrkor och samfund i Sverige: Omfattning och verksamhet
94 Apart from presenting a statistical report of the religious geography of Sweden, the purpose of the report was to examine whether there was a connection between religion and people’s social behaviour. The committee argued that they needed more time, money and an adjusted purpose to enable a reliable study. This led to a decision that the study would no longer be included in the 1958 Church and State Commission (prop. 1965:32)
95 The committee did not comment why only Christian and Jewish groups were included or why new religious groups such as New Age were excluded even though these groups were increasing in popularity at the time.
Free Churches had been raised, not least following the Freedom of Religion Act. In 1952, for example, Free Churches received more equal opportunities to work in prisons. In 1962, similar opportunities were created in hospitals. However, no such opportunities were given to non-Protestant or non-Christian groups. Regarding other roles that minority religious communities could play in society in, for example, social welfare, it was neither overly emphasised nor discouraged. In this sense, there was an openness to the argument that religious communities could play an important role both publicly and privately; as illustrated by the focus on both religious and social welfare in the report concerning the Swedish religious landscape (SOU 1963:39).

Throughout the different commission reports, one of the most highlighted and underlying resource-related aspects was that religion, with its values and morals, was a central foundation for Swedish society, not just for Swedish culture, but also for individuals. As religion was regarded as useful, this also opened for the possibility of the state further supporting religion. However, as seen throughout this time period, it was clear that the religious field was not be left without control.

An argument for state responsibility for religious matters in our country may be that religion is considered to be important for social morality in the broadest sense. Religion can be valuable from a cultural point of view and in many cases, it has an intrinsic value for the individual, illustrated by the way in which faith communities gather many citizens. Furthermore, it has been emphasised that the religious activity in our country is so considerable that this sector of society should be supported and that, on the whole, it should not be outside of all state control and influence

(SOU 1964:13, p. 573)

The quote above highlights an interesting development that is important to note in terms of the resource perspective. In the original terms of reference to the 1958 commission, as well as during the start of the commission, focus was heavily on the Christian faith. However, in the quote above, religion is put forth as a general phenomenon that does not necessarily have to be limited to the Church of Sweden. Similarly, rather than merely focusing on the relationship between the church and state, the committee increasingly described the state’s relationship with religion, indicating that they seemed to see a broader understanding of the
state’s relationship with a pluralistic religious sphere. In line with this, towards the end of the final report (SOU 1968:11), the committee declared that during their enquiries they had observed an increased acceptance from many minority religious communities to start cooperating with both central and local authorities, particularly regarding social aspects. As such, there seemed to be opportunities for further co-operation between the state and minority religious communities.

Overall, therefore, there seemed to be an emerging idea that not only could the Church of Sweden contribute to the educating of Swedish citizens and the common good in society, but other religious communities could also be understood as being resources to society. From a historical perspective, given the lack of rights and ongoing discrimination of minority religious communities, this was a considerable change in rhetoric.

5.1.4. The Outcome of the 1958 Church and State Commission

In 1968, the 1958 Church and State Commission published its final report in which all ten reports were summarised. The main part of the final report was concerned with how the state should deal with different scenarios in the case of a changed relationship between church and state. The hypothetical A to D scenarios were presented throughout the individual reports and continued to be central to the discussions in the final report. The overall conclusion was that further inquiries were needed and that the reports of the 1958 commission should serve as a foundation for further investigations regarding the future relationship between the state and church. As such, in terms of the policy outcome discussed in chapter three, it was mainly a status quo as no recommended reforms were presented by the commission. However, despite the lack of specific legislation or recommendations, the principles that were raised and discussed by the commission would clearly have a long-term effect and influence future policies regarding minority religious communities.

The final report was sent out to a large number of churches, state and voluntary organisations in the spring of 1968 (SOU 1970:2). During the referral process a new commission was appointed to find final political solutions for the relationship between the state and church based on the previous committee’s
work. The 1968 Commission on State and Church: Society and Religious Communities will be discussed in length in the following chapter.

### 5.1.5. Summary: State and Religion

There is no doubt that the two main themes *Church* and *Religion* found in the distant reading are illustrative of the main issues discussed in the 1958 Church and State Commission. The main parts of the reports were concerned with issues relating to the future relationship between state and church (found in the first and fourth theme) and the reports thoroughly discussed both practical as well as ideological aspects of a potential change in the relationship. Yet, in discussing many of the issues relating to the church-state relations, many larger questions were inadvertently raised concerning the state’s relationship with religion more generally and other religious communities. The second, third and fifth theme (*Religion*, *Faith Community* and *Free Church*) clearly shed light on these underlying debates and concerns. However, although the issue of religion-state relations was raised, the discussions were clearly dependent upon the discussion regarding the church-state arrangement.

### 5.2. Education

The following table shows the distant reading of the education category. Here, only three themes are presented these were the only themes in which the connections between the concepts were statistically significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme: <strong>Students (Elever)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Concepts: students, schools, the investigation, expats, opportunity, schooling, needs, home, accommodation, form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme: <strong>Teaching (Undervisning)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Concepts: teaching, teachers, tasks, time, religious, perception, subjects, work, class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme: <strong>Children (Barn)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Concepts: children, Swedish, Sweden, parents, language, measures, country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The themes seen in table 5 give a relatively limited picture of the discussions that took place regarding minority religious communities during this period. However, they clearly show the context of the discussion. As is evident from the first theme,
Students, the main discussion in the commissions was the issue of educating Swedish children living abroad. Yet, in these discussions the issue of how Sweden was to deal with the needs of children living in Sweden, though with roots in a different country, were also raised. The main focus in these discussions concerned the issue of whether ethnic minorities should be required to learn Swedish (theme three) and the issue of the teaching of religion for children from religious minorities.

Although the three themes indicate what the central discussions in these commissions were, it is obvious that minority religious communities were of subordinate interest. In order to gain more information about an issue discussed more rarely in a document a so-called targeted ACA can be applied, as mentioned in chapter 4. This method involves a purposeful sample of the subject of interest, therefore requiring knowledge of what the central concept should be. In this case, as a result of the close reading, the concept of “confessional” was chosen as it clearly relates to the discussions concerning education and minority religious communities at this time.

Table 6. Confessional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Confessional (konfessionella)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: religious education, liberation, Catholic, education, parents, state grants, state, schools, population, countries, confession, children, Christian, consideration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in table 6, a number of underlying questions are identified through the targeted ACA. Specifically, should parents be allowed to decide if their children should be liberated from compulsory religious education in schools? How has the issue been solved in other countries? What consideration should be taken of people from other confessions? Should Catholic schools be approved? If so, should they receive government grants?

Clearly, many of the aspects and tensions that were seen in the state and religion category are also visible in the commissions and debates regarding education. Notably, as will be shown below, the discussions in this category were often more direct, not least when discussing the issue of religious teaching for religious minority groups. Overall, the discussions regarding the future Swedish society were intertwined with the tensions between church and religion that have been
shown previously, not least in the discussions concerning the teaching of Christianity and the teaching of religion in Swedish schools.

5.2.1. Background

Between the 1940s and 1960s, several school-related commissions96 were appointed in Sweden leading to a number of reforms in the field of education. In 1962, after many parliamentary debates, the school subject of Christianity was changed to the Study of Christianity,97 parallel to the introduction of the nine-year compulsory school (Kittelmann Flensner, 2015).98 The changes coincided with Christian values and morals becoming increasingly questioned by the general public (Brohed et al., 2005) and, therefore, in the debates it was emphasised that all education in Swedish schools must be conducted in such a way that it would not come into conflict with the requirement for freedom of thought and belief. Also, it was declared that all teaching must stay objective in the sense that it should give objective knowledge regarding the meaning and content of different beliefs, without authoritatively seeking to influence the students to accept a certain view (SOU 1964:30). However, despite a continued and clear intention that Swedish education was to be based on a foundation of Christian values (Brohed et al., 2005), the changes also led to an increasingly united opposition of the reforms from different Christian groups.99

5.2.2. The Study of Christianity with Special Regard to the Church–State Relationship

As highlighted previously, the 1958 Church and State Commission included a separate report concerning the teaching of Christianity in Swedish schools (SOU 1964:30100). The report was largely governed by the question of whether it was possible to continue the teaching of Christianity in schools if there was a

97 Kristendomskunskap (While this is often referred to as Knowledge of Christianity. I would argue that the school subject is “to study” whilst the result of studying produces knowledge. As such, I have chosen the term Study of Christianity).
98 In 1965, the subject in upper secondary school was changed to the Study of Religion.
99 Over two million signatures were collected in 1963 as a protest the ongoing changes. As such, it became one of the first practical examples of an ecumenical movement in Sweden (Brohed et al., 2005).
100 Kristendomsundervisningen: med särskild hänsyn till förhållandet kyrka-stat.
separation between state and church? In other words, should the state retain its responsibility and interest in the religious realm, even in the case of a separation?

5.2.2.1. Christianity vs Religion

The committee of the 1958 Church and State Commission struggled to present a clear solution concerning how the issue of teaching Christianity in Swedish schools should be solved. On the one hand, it was viewed as important that public schools were objective in teaching religion in schools. Also, it was emphasised that based on the principle of freedom of religion, no one (especially those belonging to a minority religious community) should be forced to take part in the teaching of Christianity or morning prayer, if he or she did not wish to do so. According to The Education Act (Section 27), students from certain religious communities could be exempt from participating in the compulsory teaching of Christianity in schools and instead provide their own alternative religious education.\(^\text{101}\) However, having a divided school system was clearly not an ideal solution, not least as it was considered important that all children and youths in Sweden should be taught the correct Christian morals and ethics to guide them in life.

The question of whether the state educational system’s educating activities should be built on Christian ideals and moral values is a central issue when the teaching of Christianity is considered. This is also related to the question of whether a neutrality on questions concerning life-philosophy can be better met by placing the educational activity in a teaching area other than within the Study of Christianity.

\[(\text{SOU 1964:30, p. 158})\]

Interestingly, a number of similarities can be seen in the issues raised in this report, as those raised in the report concerning Freedom of Religion (SOU 1964:13). The issue of neutrality was highlighted a number of times and primarily understood from two perspectives; first, in terms of equality between different religious communities and, second, in terms of neutrality with regard to different life-philosophies. The first standpoint regarding equality, i.e., that no church should be prioritised above any other religious group, was not regarded as a major

\(^{101}\) At the time, the Catholic Church in Sweden as well as the Mosaic congregation in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö
problem in the report and more equal terms for different groups was seen as a necessity. However, the second aspect of neutrality in which the state should be entirely neutral was considerably more complex and it was once again stated that the state could not be neutral regarding central values.

It is obvious that the state cannot - either in schools or otherwise - observe any neutrality in [regard to central] values, which are important for human coexistence. However, divided opinions may prevail on how the necessary education of the citizens should be carried out.

_(SOU 1964:30, p. 163)_

It was in these discussions that the teaching of Christianity and Christian values became central. In line with the 1962 compulsory school reform, the committee argued that although the state could not be neutral in regard to different values and norms, the teaching of Christianity must be conducted in such a way that it did not come into conflict with the requirements of freedom of thought and belief. It was also stated that the teaching should be objective in the sense that it should provide knowledge of different beliefs without trying to impose any certain religious doctrine on the student. Therefore, although the school’s educational activities should still largely be based on Christian values, according to the current regulations, this did not mean that the school took any particular stance in matters of faith, as had previously been the case. In turn, this would mean that religious minorities could still partake in the teaching of religion in Swedish public schools. However, whilst a theoretically sound solution, from a practical perspective this was not easily achieved.

When discussing if the teaching of Christianity in Swedish schools would cease in public schools, in the event of a separation between church and state, it was claimed by the committee that both the Church of Sweden and other religious communities would most likely intensify their own teaching through church services, Sunday school, Bible schools and other youth activities. The central question, therefore, was whether the state should assume responsibility for the teaching conducted by different religious communities, for example through government support.
5.2.2.2. Incorporation or Adjustment: The Issue of Religious Schools

One of the reasons why the committee originally discussed religious minorities and minority religious communities was that they had studied how other European countries had solved the issue of teaching Christianity and the topic of religious minorities was clearly an important aspect to consider when discussing the question of teaching Christianity in schools. Yet, the committee also raised concerns for highlighting such an issue, as the experience from other countries was that opening up the education sector to different actors could easily lead to a fragmented school system.

As such, the committee presented two options for solving religious education for religious minorities, in the case of a separation between church and state. First, as mentioned previously, minority religious communities would be allowed to organise their own teaching of Christianity. Another option, that was inspired by the experiences from other countries, was to allow religious communities to open their own schools with the understanding that it would most likely lead to the same development as in other countries; namely that “mainly Catholics have started their own schools, while Protestant schools are rarer” (SOU 1964:30, p. 174). Regarding the second option, the committee was concerned that it could threaten social cohesion and argued that the state would have “a very strong interest in not dividing the school system as conflicts could arise between different groups within the population” (SOU 1964:30, p. 175). In practice, however, it was noted that it was impossible to stop minority religious communities from starting their own schools, not least since the European Convention stated that parents should be able to choose a school for their children in line with their religious belief, thereby affecting the Swedish way of handling diversity, but also due to the Education Act (1962:6) that stated that there should be no major obstructions to start independent schools. Therefore, although it was clearly stated that this was not the wish of the committee, given the legal framework that declared that such schools could be permitted, they should not necessarily be funded or receive financial support from the state. Rather, each case was to be determined on an individual basis (it was, for example, seen as possible to financially support certain schools that had specific circumstances, such as schools for children of refugees).
Despite being included as a part of the 1958 Church and State Commission, the report received limited attention, most likely due to the parallel school reforms that occurred during the 1960s.

**5.2.3. Schooling Away and at Home**

Whether religious communities could start schools and obtain funding was strongly debated during the 1960s, together with discussions of immigration and school reforms.\(^{102}\) As a result, although the parliamentarian commission, the 1964 Foreign and Boarding School Inquiry,\(^{103}\) was appointed with an aim of investigating the situation for Swedish children abroad, the committee also reviewed the educational situation for immigrant minority groups staying in Sweden for longer periods of time. Therefore, in their concluding report (SOU 1966:55),\(^{104}\) the issue of religious schools for religious minorities was included.

**5.2.3.1. Religious Schools for Children who have Immigrated to Sweden**

From the perspective of this thesis, the 1964 Foreign and Boarding School Inquiry is important given that it was the first time that the issue of minority religious communities was discussed in regard to the wider context of more general policies towards refugees and migrants (as can be traced in the distant reading - theme three). Specifically, the issue of education for minorities, as well as the discussion of whether they could start their own schools, was closely connected to the larger issue of immigration and “the adjustment of immigrants in Sweden” (SOU 1966:55, p. 225). In the terms of reference, the question was how increased immigration should be handled but also how immigrants’ rights and special interests should be managed. In light of these discussions, the issue of whether minority religious communities should be allowed to start their own schools was raised. Or, to be more precise, the recurring theme was whether the current Jewish and Catholic schools in Sweden, where the education of religion was adapted to the children’s religious background, should be entitled to government grants.

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\(^{102}\) Mot. 1963:479, Mot. 1962:599-600

\(^{103}\) 1964 års utlands- och internatskoleutredning

\(^{104}\) Borta och Hemma, Utlandssvenska barns skolgång — skolinackordering — skolgång för vissa minoriteters barn
Given the small number of religious schools at this time and that focus was on the issue of education for Swedish children abroad, it is surprising that the topic received such attention. However, although the issue was relatively small at the time, the committee expected an increase in immigration in Sweden, that would lead to a greater number of people with different backgrounds, as was the case in other countries. As a result, Muslim and Orthodox groups, as well as Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons were mentioned alongside the existing Catholic and Jewish groups.

In order to minimise the risk of a fragmented school system in the future, as seen in other countries, the committee declared that the “problem within education” concerning children of immigrants, needed to be handled. Two possible solutions based on two rather opposite ideas were presented. The first focused on what could be described as the assimilation of children and the second on the recognition of religious differences. In other words, either facilitating an adaption to the Swedish school system or supporting children in maintaining contact with the parent’s cultural and religious environments by, for example, allowing minority religious communities to run their own schools.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, considering the discussions presented previously, the committee’s general view was that children who belonged to minority religious communities should be assimilated and attend public schools. The central argument was that the education provided in public schools should be neutral and, perhaps even more importantly, that a common school system was valuable and that children in Sweden should not be placed in different schools. However, minority children could still be entitled to be liberated from the Study of Christianity.

The teaching that is offered in primary and secondary schools in religious matters and life-philosophy, should, according to the current curriculum, be neutral. The children of religious minorities should therefore be able to complete their schooling within the framework of the public-school system without the teaching being considered contrary to the parents' religious and/or philosophical convictions. In addition, exemption from the Study of Christianity and religious studies may be granted to certain religious minorities.

(SOU 1966:55, p. 280)
The conclusion (in similarity to the SOU 1964:30 report), was therefore that religious schools should not be entitled to government grants. However, an important and crucial exception, that still has a bearing on the debate today, was made regarding the Hillel School that provided education for the Jewish community. This group had a special position given that many of the students at the time were children of parents who had arrived in Sweden after World War II. Given their unique circumstances, it was considered reasonable to let them rebuild cultural institutions in Sweden. It was also argued that Jewish schools could be understood more as schools for ethnic minorities, rather than religious minorities. Specifically, it was put forth that ethnical minorities had social, rather than religious, reasons for needing separate schools (such as the French and Estonian schools) and social reasons were a sound basis for needing independent schools. Consequentially, Jewish schools could be supported whilst the Catholic school would lose its funding. However, the Catholic school would be given a three-year transition period to facilitate the children’s adjustment into Swedish society.

The commission finds that one cannot ignore the great value in all the initiatives to achieve a sense of security for immigrant children. Nor can one ignore the importance that a sense of community within the peer environment, built on cultural or religious grounds, can have for the wellbeing of these children during an adjustment period.

(SOU 1966:55, p. 280)

From a risk and resource perspective, therefore, it was seen as a risk to let groups start their own schools based on their religious faith as this could lead to fragmentation. Schools based on social factors, however, could be regarded as resources in society, as children could gain a sense of community – a vital element for social integration.

5.2.3.2. The Risk of a Parallel School System

At the end of the final report (SOU 1966:55), in the form of reservations, leading politicians deemed the exception made for the Catholic school as unacceptable and that the financial support of Catholic schools should be completely withdrawn. Their reservation argued that allowing religious schools

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105 By politicians Åke Fältheim and Alva Myrdal.
(apart from the Hillel School) to receive government grants would risk opening up for a parallel school system. Instead, it was preferable (if parents found the education of religion offensive) to allow children to be exempt from religious education in public schools in order to remove any potential conflict with the principle of freedom of religion.

If state subsidies were granted with special regard to these children, and the religious schools thus had the opportunity to accommodate significantly more children to fulfil their schooling there, this would, in the opinion of the dissidents, be an absurd consequence. As a result, a significant risk would arise for the development in our country of a parallel school system. Should the parents of the pupils of these schools not invoke the above-mentioned social reasons but instead religious reasons, the dissidents further state, that it seems that the commissions initial standpoint could be shifted even less.

(SOU 1966:55, p.185)

In accordance with this reservation, the government decided that support should only be given to the Jewish Hillel School as this school was based on cultural and national foundations with a long and unique historical background (prop. 1968:67). The issue of whether an exception had been made based on social issues was no longer highlighted as an argument for the exception. Rather, it was now highlighted that the Swedish public-school system should be recognised as a uniform school with children and youths from different social, religious and economic backgrounds (prop. 1968:67).

The main purpose of the Swedish compulsory school is that it should be a school for all young people, regardless of their social, economic or religious background. I find it extremely important to safeguard this. In view of what I have stated, state grants should not be given to particular schools for religious minorities

(prop. 1968:67)

Apart from this exception, the government did not suggest any changes in the current regulations concerning the issue of the teaching of religion for religious minorities. Rather, it was stated that the current reforms, that were guided by the principle of objective teaching, had solved these issues and that religious minorities could be exempt from participating in Christian education and
morning assembly. The state parliamentary committee followed these underlying ideas put forth in the government bill, based on the view that the Swedish school should be a school for everyone. As such, the approved government bill entailed that no government grants should be given to schools run by minority religious communities (rskr 1968:303).

In line with the government bill, the committee argued that whilst independent schools could not be prohibited, due to the integration of international conventions such as the declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention, meaning that the interests and choices of parents were placed before the state, conditions for approval could be put in place for these schools as well as a general principle of not supporting these schools financially. This was seen as necessary step in order to avoid a fragmentated school system, not least in the future. Interestingly, the particular concern was once again regarding Catholic groups:

> Experience from a number of other countries shows that religious issues still play a significant role in cohesion and contradictions within a country. (...) Not least the school system can be easily exposed to divisive tendencies when different religions are represented within the same state. In particular, Roman Catholic confessors have, in different countries, started their own schools in accordance with their view that not only the Study of Christianity but the whole school experience, should contribute to the individual’s religious development.

(SOU 1968:11, p. 108)

As is seen in the quote above, there is an obvious tension between resource and risk that permeates this period. Although religion was understood as potentially creating cohesion in a society, it was also feared that when society became more religiously diverse, there was an evident risk of tensions being created between groups and a growing divergence in society.

### 5.2.4. Summary: Education

Overall, the studied commissions in the education category during this period clearly show that regardless of how the future relationship between church and

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106 With the exception of supporting the St Eriks Catholic school with 16,000 SEK during one budget year, 1968/69.
state was solved, the desire was that not only the teaching of religion, but also the general education, should be given in public schools. Central to this standpoint was that it was in the interest of the state to provide young people with common values and education in order to become responsible citizens. Although similar concerns were raised in the education category as in the main category of religion and state, the concerns were often discussed more explicitly, most likely as a result of the discussions concerning children and not adults. There was a constant balancing act between different ideals and principles (as seen in the targeted ACA) such as equality, objectivity and pluralism, as well as on common values, cohesion and unity.

5.3. Integration

The issue of religious minorities was only very vaguely mentioned in the government documents concerning integration during this time. As seen in table 7, there are no traces of minority religious communities in the distant reading and, therefore, a relatively limited picture of issues concerning immigrated religious minorities is given. Nevertheless, the distant reading provides an important and interesting contextual setting for the discussions concerning these issues at the time.

Table 7. Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Theme: <strong>Swedish</strong> (Svenska)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Concepts: Swedish, labour force, Sweden, foreigners, opportunities, immigration, countries, needs, scope, conditions, citizens, immigrants, social, society, consideration, position, economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Theme: <strong>Country</strong> (Landet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concepts: country, staying, permit, work permit, guilty, purpose, employment, law, foreigner, work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Theme: <strong>Control</strong> (Kontrollen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concepts: control, residence permit, state, regulations, general, visa, means</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The different themes highlight the central discussions that were had regarding how to deal with the increasing number of labour immigrants in Sweden, mainly from a practical and legal perspective. Specifically, central questions that were asked were; how should Sweden deal with increasing immigration and what status should foreigners have that come to Sweden? Focus was placed on how this new
situation should be handled and what regulations there should be, as illustrated by the last theme, Control. In terms of minority religious communities, they were predominantly discussed, albeit in a limited capacity, within the first theme, Swedish, when discussions concerned immigrants who were staying for longer periods of time in Sweden and whether they should have their cultural and religious needs met by the state.

5.3.1. Background

Importantly, during this period, the perspective on immigration differed to later periods. In 1954, Sweden was largely seen as a host country for labour immigrants as a result of a new Foreigners Act (prop. 1954: 41), in which it was stated that following World War II, Sweden had become “an immigration country”. A bearing idea at the time was that most foreigners (as was the phrase used at the time) would only stay in Sweden temporarily and then return to their home country, sooner rather than later. Refugees and labour immigrants who stayed long-term were understood as an exception. Therefore, discussions concerning more long-term effects of immigration in Sweden had not yet commenced, nor had issues such as adjustment and the religious needs of immigrants in Swedish society.

Given that it was believed that only a minority of those coming to Sweden would stay for a longer period of time, the perception was that those staying in Sweden more permanently could receive more equal rights to the Swedish population by obtaining a residence permit and thereby gaining access to social security programmes (SOU 1974:69). Overall, the public debate concerning immigration and immigrants in Sweden during the 1950s received relatively little attention, at least in part due to a large majority of immigrants coming from neighbouring Nordic countries (SOU 1974:69).107 In the 1960s, however, parallel to the rise of labour immigration from southern Europe, the public debate intensified concerning the long-term effects of immigration in Sweden and the issue of integration (SOU 1974:69; Borevi, 2013). For example, trade unions argued for a more restrictive stance on labour immigration, not least due to the prevailing recession in the mid-1960s (SOU 1974:69).

107 For an overview of immigration to Sweden see SOU 1974:69 p 50-57, where general statistics are presented of, for example, the country of origin of those immigrating to Sweden.
5.3.2. Immigration: Problems and Handling: The Foreigner Commission’s report

In 1961, the Foreigner Commission\textsuperscript{108} was appointed to investigate what consequences a Swedish association to the EEC would have for resident permits and the control of foreigners. However, when Sweden decided against joining the EEC in 1963,\textsuperscript{109} the terms of reference changed, stating that a review was going to be made of the current legislation regarding different, predominantly judicial, issues concerning immigrants and immigration, for example the legal status of foreigners in Sweden, border controls, etc., issues also seen in the distant reading. Although legal aspects were the main focus for the commission, rather than the social aspects of immigration in Sweden or the long-term consequences, one chapter in the final report, The Problems of Policy Towards Foreigners (SOU 1967:18),\textsuperscript{110} highlighted the importance of also looking more deeply at the social aspects of immigration. Alongside the social aspects, the religious aspects of religious minorities and the problems that could arise regarding their adjustment and assimilation was raised.

5.3.2.1. Assimilation and Equality

Two relatively competing views framed the discussion of immigrants and their religious needs. On the one hand, it was argued that they should be treated \textit{equally} to the general population, though on the other hand it was argued that they should \textit{adjust} to society at large. In the above-mentioned chapter, the committee identified a number of problems related to immigration that they believed could be of importance in the forming of future immigration policies. One of the prime aspects was the issue of immigrants’ adjustment to Swedish society, not least as an increasing number of people came from very different cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds which, according to the committee, had “clarified the adjustment problems that migration could bring” (SOU 1967:18, p. 165).

The committee highlighted a number of difficulties regarding the assimilation process into Swedish society, connected primarily to the possible difficulties for immigrants of getting to know the new country and its people. For example, a
lack of knowledge in the Swedish language, different cultural and social backgrounds, and, importantly, a different religious life to the general population.

For those immigrants who have come from countries with a cultural and religious environment that is very different from ours, living here can create special adjustment problems. This is especially true for those immigrants who in their homeland have been more deeply involved in its cultural and religious life; for them, moving from their home country means that their opportunities to meet their cultural and religious needs are greatly curtailed.

(SOU 1967:18, p. 165)

It was feared that such problems could lead to isolation and that people and groups who failed to adapt could be discriminated and experience hostilities from the Swedish population. The committee therefore highlighted that issues concerning the adjustment of immigrants into Swedish society was a fundamental issue that state authorities needed to solve. According to the committee, there were two main options – either try to fully assimilate immigrants into Swedish society, or, whilst assimilating them, try to also further recognise them and allow them to hold on to their specific cultural and religious heritage. The main issue, towards the end of the period, was therefore the question of whether immigrants staying longer in Sweden should be assimilated or gain acknowledgment and recognition for their particular needs (which could be religious). If religious minorities were to maintain their religious traditions and have their religious needs covered, the question was: how could immigrant religious communities be supported to take on this role?

Crucially, these discussions must be understood in relation to some of the other major discussions at the time. There was a general concern regarding how to deal with the fact that Sweden was becoming increasingly diverse and, in similarity to the discussions regarding education, there were clear hopes and concerns raised over how to create cohesion in society despite differences between the majority population and minority groups.111

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111 The general importance of these issues is also clearly seen in the referral responses following the Foreigners Commission’s report. The issue of adjustment was particularly highlighted and several bodies were critical over the lack of attention given to the issue of immigrants’ adjustment and that this issue should itself be subject to a special inquiry.
5.3.2.2. The Outcome of the Foreigners Commission Report

The government bill (prop. 1968:142) that followed and that was adopted by Parliament, concluded that the principle of equality should guide all future policies related to immigrants, not only regarding the labour market but in all areas related to immigration. Given the underlying principle of equality, social inclusion was necessary. However, this was only deemed possible if a regulation of immigration and labour immigration to Sweden occurred parallelly. Therefore, certain regulations were needed to ensure that equality was met.

The following government bill generally supported the committee’s ideas concerning the importance of adjustment. The religious needs were not particularly highlighted in the bill, which is interesting as it was clearly highlighted in the commission’s report. Nevertheless, it was emphasised that it was of great importance that immigrants staying for longer periods of time in Sweden should not be isolated. Rather, they should “blend in with the rest of the population” (prop. 1968:142, p. 108).\(^\text{112}\) If those staying wished to preserve their traditions and their cultural heritage, this was to be accomplished through their own initiatives and not by the state, not least due to economic reasons. However, although such initiatives were accepted it was clearly stated that immigrants should adjust to the Swedish welfare system. Consequentially, alongside the appointment of a new commission concerning state and church (The 1968 Commission on State and Church), the Commission on Immigration (IU)\(^\text{113}\) was appointed. The purpose was to further study the development and position of ethnic minorities and immigrants in order to propose new social policies, in various sectors, on behalf of these groups (SOU 1974:69).

5.3.3. Summary: Integration

As shown, the issue of immigrated religious minorities was discussed very briefly in the commission and ignored in the subsequent government bill. This highlights the fact that the issue was not of primary importance and clearly illustrates the relationship between religious minorities and the state at the time. However, as is also clear (and in similarity to the state and religion and education category), an increased interest in immigrant religious communities emerged towards the end

\(^{112}\) Kungl. Maj:ts proposition till riksdagen angående riktlinjer för utlänningspolitiken m.m.

\(^{113}\) Invandrarutredningen
of the period. In particular, regarding how to respond to increasing religious diversity and how new religious groups should be governed. As was seen in the distant reading (particularly in theme three), there was a desire to actively control immigration and to start developing immigration policies directed towards people living in Sweden with different cultural and religious backgrounds.

5.4. Conclusion Chapter Five

In the following section of this chapter I will summarise the themes and tensions that have become visible in the studied material during this time period. In accordance with the methodology of this thesis, these themes have become visible through a combination of distant and close reading.

5.4.1. A Move from Unity to Diversity

In the beginning of the period, Sweden was a society characterised by a homogenous population and strong state church of which a large majority of the Swedish population belonged to. The Swedish state was understood as the protector of the Lutheran Christian faith and Christian values, as seen in The Dissenter Act Commission (SOU 1949:22). However, as highlighted in this chapter, societal changes such as secularisation, an increased desire for freedom of religion, together with increased immigration and religious diversity, meant that new questions and concerns were raised. This period can therefore be viewed as a time of deliberation in which long and careful consideration was given regarding how the Swedish welfare state should deal with and handle the processes of increasing diversity and secularisation. Although none of the commissions led to any major policy changes for minority religious communities, the period highlighted the need for possible future policies concerning further equalisation of minority religious communities though also the assimilation of religious minorities into Swedish society.

The emergence of a discussion regarding the handling of diversity during the time period is clearly seen in regard to the 1958 Church and State Commission. Although the primary task of the commission was to discuss the future of the relationship between the Church of Sweden and the Swedish state, as well as matters indirectly related to it, it was extended to included religion as a more general phenomenon. As such, the issue of other religious communities was
inadvertently raised. This is most clearly illustrated by the two main themes in the distant reading: Church and Religion. Changes in society, together with principles such as freedom of religion, neutrality and democracy, meant that the discussed issue broadened from church to religion. This is an important result of the 1958 Church and State Commission and sheds light on how the state’s handling of minority religious communities was strongly dependent on how the church-state arrangement would be solved in the future. The same, however, cannot be said in relation to the supplementary categories of education and integration. The ideological positions are less clear, although from the distant reading there is clearly an underlying context of the state wanting to adopt a more hands-on approach and a need to handle immigrants who stayed and settled down in Sweden. In these discussions there seemed to be a more urgent need to start evaluating the long-term consequences of diversity and to tackle these practical issues head-on, for example regarding economic support to minority religious communities.

Overall, a central aim of many of the studied documents was to determine what position the state should take in terms of the changing processes and what the outcome of such a position would be. In the discussions concerning which ideals should guide future policies regarding church and religion, and in the context of the Swedish society moving from a homogenous society to an increasingly pluralistic society, there was a constant balancing act between different ideals.

### 5.4.2. Tension Between Different Ideals

Clearly the discourse during this time was characterised by contradictory arguments being put forth concurrently. These contradictions could be said to be predominantly due to the contrasting and often opposing ideals and principles. Specifically, the view was that the state should be neutral in issues concerning religion and religious communities, largely based on the principle of freedom of religion but also on ideals such as pluralism, democracy, neutrality, freedom, and the state’s objectivity in matters concerning religion. Regarding these ideals, further social inclusion and equal participation of minority religious communities was fundamental. In contrast, however, there were limits to the neutrality in relation to the central core values that were said to characterise Sweden and Swedish society. Ideals such as unity, ethics and morals were seen as core values,
grounded in the Christian Evangelical Lutheran heritage. As such, although they were often defined as Swedish values, a more appropriate term would be Christian Lutheran values.

Given the core value’s connection to the Christian Evangelical Lutheran heritage, there was an awareness of the risks that could arise as a consequence of opening up policies further, for example for religious minorities. However, towards the end of the period and most likely as a result of increased secularisation, questions were raised regarding whether Christianity was necessarily a central element in keeping society together. Despite this, the latent tension between the central national values and equality was clear throughout, as seen in a number of examples.

First, based on the Freedom of Religion Act and the principle of democracy, the state appeared to have an obligation to equalise minority communities with the Church of Sweden. As such, if the Church of Sweden was to be supported, so should minority religious communities. However, although religious groups could be supported, this could not be unconditional, given that the common good of society was of utmost importance. Therefore, given the perceived risks, in order to be eligible for support the inherent values of the minority religious communities needed to be consistent with the common values. Consequently, regulations were needed alongside the support.

Second, the tension was also visible in the reports concerning education for children belonging to minority religious communities. Throughout the reports there was an underlying fear of allowing or inadvertently creating a parallel school system. Christian values were seen as the cornerstone of Swedish education and a central part of the students’ schooling. A parallel school system, therefore, would be a serious threat to the cohesion of Swedish society. Simultaneously, it was believed that, on the basis of the Freedom of Religion Act, freedom and objectivity should be the leading ideals within Swedish schools, thus changing the direction of teaching Christianity towards a more objective subject. Consequently, parents of students from religious minorities should be allowed to refrain from letting their children take part in morning prayer and religious education.
Third, in terms of immigrants’ religious communities there seemed to be a welcoming of diversity and different faiths, although simultaneously a desire for assimilation and cohesion of society. Although this perspective is similar to the tension seen in the discussion concerning freedom of religion and Christian values, in relation to immigrants’ religious communities, ideals were discussed in terms of either adjustment or recognition.

Clearly, a general concern permeated the discussions: how should society be kept united and how should social cohesion be protected? Specifically, given the presumed strength of the Church of Sweden’s cohesive role, what would happen when Swedish society became more diverse and a separation between church and state occurred? Concerns were raised whether other religious communities could benefit from the creation of cohesion or if increased diversity would predominantly lead to tensions and reduced social cohesion. In fact, in many ways the unfolding process from unity to increased diversity raised the issue of whether Christianity and the Church of Sweden was still a crucial part of ensuring unity and social cohesion in Swedish society and whether religion, in general terms, should be perceived as a risk or a resource.

In terms of the relationship between risk and resource and the state’s view and ideals, this period has a distinct emphasis on the many risks of religious minority communities, although not all minority groups were feared. For example, a positive attitude was generally seen towards the Free Churches, not least concerning their involvement in social and religious welfare, as well as taking on both a public and private role. In terms of religious welfare, Free Churches seem to have been increasingly included and made more equal with the Church of Sweden, for example by allowing Free Churches to take an active role in hospitals and prisons. This positive attitude is likely to be connected to the main resource role, i.e., the importance of religion in providing a foundation for common morals and values in Swedish society. As such, religious communities (particularly Protestants) were possible protectors of morals and ethics, and could help people develop and maintain a moral foundation.

5.4.3. A Fear of the Narrow Community

As mentioned, the risk aspect is decidedly more visible throughout the different reports compared to the resource perspective. In particular, the fear of individuals
losing their freedom within minority religious communities was identified as a considerable risk. What is particularly noteworthy is that the communitarian aspects of minority religious communities and the sense of belonging and community in those groups, which could be considered as a vital and positive aspect of civil society, was, during this period, regarded as a risk rather than a resource. Importantly, given that the number of minority religious communities at the time were few, both the risk and resource perspective was largely based on the view of, and relationship to, the Free Churches and the Catholic communities. As highlighted above, although risks were undoubtedly seen with the Free Churches, they were also understood to contribute to society with important (Lutheran) Christian values. Catholics, however, were largely perceived as “the other” and as a risk to society.

The most obvious example of the risk perspective in relation to the Catholic Church was the debate surrounding the possibility of starting monasteries. The risk of narrowing the freedom of the individual and the perceived need to protect the individual from the religious community can be clearly seen in the number of barriers and obstacles that were put in place. Similar discussions can also be seen regarding Catholic schools. In terms of the Free Churches, the risk of a narrow community was often highlighted in discussions concerning the increased risk for the individual’s freedom if the Church of Sweden separated from the state and became a confessional church, in similarity to the Free Churches. Being an individual within a confessional church was perceived as a risk given that the individual was seen to not have the same freedom as he or she would have in a confessor’s church that represented the wider community. Similarly, concerns were raised regarding the Free Churches’ missionary activities, as well as certain practises such as speaking in tongues, that could affect individuals negatively. Once again, children were pointed out as a particular group in need of protecting. The Free Churches’ ideals of a focus on their own devoted members with their personal beliefs was placed in stark contrast to the ideals of falkkyrkan, not merely in terms of being exclusive and excluding, but also because it gave the individual limited freedom. The hot and communitarian form of religion that was found in many minority religious communities was therefore seen as a challenge to the core values of Swedish society.
This perspective, i.e., the importance of protecting the individual’s rights in relation to the tension between the rights of the individual and the religious community, was crucial throughout the different reports. A coherent perspective was taken in the importance of the state protecting and liberating the individual from subordination in the minority religious communities, for example with regard to the individual’s right to leave a religious community. Overall, it was stated that individuals should primarily be members, not of their religious community, but of society at large. If the rights collided between society and a religious community, the state should emphasise cohesion over diversity, as seen in the debate regarding whether religious communities should be allowed to start their own schools. In contrast to minority religious communities, the Church of Sweden and its members were not referred to as frequently in the discussion regarding the risks with religion or religious communities (apart from in the discussion of the risk of the Church of Sweden becoming a Free Church). This clearly illustrates the tone of the overall debate and the visible tensions - namely that the political discourse towards minority religious communities was heavily based on the state’s positively charged relationship with the Church of Sweden. In the negotiating between the perceived unstoppable development of Swedish society becoming more diverse and the importance of social cohesion, minority religious communities were seen as both a risk and resource.

As touched upon previously, in the studied documents there seems to be a fear of narrow communities. In terms of minority religious communities, a narrow community is characterised by a communitarian sense of belonging, a hot religiosity and bonding faith, and often understood in having the potential of deepening divisions in society rather than promoting a broader community. The Church of Sweden, as a folkkyrkan, was seen as an integral part of the wider community and although the term “faith community” was occasionally used for the Church of Sweden, it was predominantly a concept that was connected to the narrower communities of minority religious communities.

Given the identified risks, the question was if minority religious communities should be supported without also imposing stricter regulations to protect individual members, who were foremost members in the wider community? A possible solution can be found in the discussions concerning neutrality. If the Swedish state was to have a continued relationship with the Church of Sweden
(that often appeared to be the desired result), minority religious communities could not be overlooked and removed from the equation. As such, it was suggested that the state could be politically-neutral towards them, giving economic support and recognising them in similarity to other organisations in Swedish society. However, in terms of values and particularly in areas especially worthy of protection (such as the education of children), the state would not be value-neutral. Rather, it would protect the central values that kept the wider society together.

5.4.4. Concluding Remarks

One may wonder, as highlighted previously, whether the issue of support and equality of minority religious communities would have been highlighted at all without the state having such strong intentions of retaining the bonds with the Church of Sweden? Also, despite large, extensive and encompassing commissions, many of the primary issues that were discussed during this time were left as open questions to be further analysed and discussed. In particular, the question of how the relationship between state and church, and in turn state and religious minorities, should be politically solved after years of debate? And, how should the state handle the issue of an adjustment of religious minorities to Swedish society given the increase in communities, members, popularity and impact?

In order to attempt to answer these questions, two new commissions were appointed towards the end of this time period: The 1968 Commission on State and Church and The Commission on Immigration (IU). The aim of these commissions was to study the issues further and propose political solutions to these questions.

As is clear from the previous chapter, a gradual change occurred in the discourse concerning minority religious communities and the state, in particular towards the end of the previous time period. In the period that followed (1969-1990), many of the previously introduced discussions continued and, in many ways, intensified. This was particularly true in the discussions regarding the issue of government grants to minority religious and the issue of religion related to immigration. This must in turn be understood in the context that between 1969 and 1990 new immigration patterns started to occur in Sweden. Labour immigration decreased in line with a decreased demand for labour due to economic difficulties, while refugee and family immigration increased (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999). This meant that the state had to handle a scenario of increased religious diversity in which new religious groups became established in Swedish society.

6.1. State and Religion

The themes generated in the distant reading highlight four major themes in the religion and state category. At first glance they seem to be somewhat similar to the previous period. However, there are some important differences.

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<th>Table 8. State and religion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts: Church of Sweden, state, ecclesiastical, issues, investigation, relationship, present, future, connection, nature, time, future, area, principles, free, new, organisational, interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts: Faith community, activity, society, economic, form, support, religious, organisations, members, principle, grants, free, relationship, needs, individual</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts: law, rules, regulations, proposals, legislation, order, treated, character, church-state, priest, churches, intra-church, valuable, culturally-historic</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts: religion, religious freedom, freedom, society, spiritual, care</td>
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In similarity to the previous period, the strongest theme in the material is *Church*. Together with the third strongest theme, *Law*, this theme reiterates the fact that
the future relationship between state and church was in the limelight of the discussions. In turn, this highlights an important element regarding how minority religious communities were discussed. Specifically, the church-state relations seem to have continued to shape the political agenda concerning minority religious communities and the main questions being asked concerning the Church of Sweden (theme 1 and 3) were similar to those being asked in the previous period: what form should the Church of Sweden’s relationship with the state be in the future? Should the current relationship structure be upheld, or should the church become free? If so, what would this mean in practice? How should the Church of Sweden be regulated, and how should the organisational issues be solved?

As questions were being raised of the Church of Sweden’s position in the event of a possible separation, the issue of what this would mean for minority religious communities was also highlighted and more attention was turned towards them, as the second theme, *Faith Communities*, shows. Fundamentally, a semantic shift had occurred between this and the previous time period. The concept of faith communities was increasingly being used rather than specific and Free Religious Communities or the Free Churches.114 Alongside the semantic shift, the concepts that were related to the theme of faith community also changed. Although questions were still being raised concerning the principles that should guide polices towards religion, focus turned to more practical issues of accommodating religious communities. For example, should they receive support in similarity to other organisations in the society? If so, what should the economic support to religious communities look like and what shape should it take? And, how can the religious needs of the population and each individual be met if minority religious communities were not supported? The fourth theme, *Religion*, sheds light on the wider topic of this time. In similarity to the first period this theme relates to the fact that the state not only needed to deal with the relationship to the Church of Sweden, but also its relationship to religion. Again, the principle of freedom of religion was set as the guiding principle for the relationship. However, the question was how freedom of religion should be achieved?

114 As previously highlighted the concepts of faith community was largely used to describe minority religious communities rather than the Church of Sweden.
To sum up, therefore, although there were overlapping themes between this and the previous time period, there were also central differences, as will be further highlighted in the close reading.

6.1.1. The Appointment of the 1968 State and Church Commission

Although the focus of the 1968 State and Church Commission was the church-state relationship, as will be seen, the issue of minority religious communities was included to a much greater extent than was initially planned. In comparison to the previous period, therefore, a shift is visible in which the issue of minority religious communities is approached more directly, rather than predominantly being a side-effect of the main discussion, not least seen in the period leading up to the commission presenting its final report.

In 1968, as the final report of the 1958 State and Church Commission was sent out on referral to a large number of church agencies and voluntary organisations, a new government commission was appointed: The 1968 Commission on State and Church Relations (also called The Myrdal Commission). The aim of the parliamentary committee was to reach broad political agreement and find an acceptable solution concerning the future relationship between the state and Church of Sweden based on the results from the 1958 Church and State Commission. In the terms of reference it was advocated that the new commission should not be too detailed nor time-consuming.

The main focus in the terms of reference was once again the future relationship between church-state and the issue of minority religious communities was not mentioned to any great extent. It was suggested that the committee should predominantly focus on the A and C alternatives presented by the 1958

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116 “Den Myrdalska utredningen”. This was due that the committee was to be led by the Social Democratic cabinet minister, Alva Myrdal, a prominent political figure in Swedish politics.
117 The differences, in regard to the aim and function of the commissions that were set up in 1958 and 1968, were prominent. In 1958, the main task of the committee (consisting of experts) was to clarify and impartially investigate how the future relations between state and church could be organised. The 1968 committee, on the other hand, had as its main goal to find acceptable solutions for a final resolution for the relationship between state and church. Therefore, it had a more argumentative approach, based on political rhetoric, compared to the 1958 commission.
commission in terms of the future relationship between church and state. Alternative A meant that no major changes should be made regarding the relationship between state and church. According to the terms of references this alternative could be an alternative given that the Church of Sweden was a *folkkyrka* and, as such, church services should be available to everyone in the country (something that a free non-state church could not necessarily accomplish). Alternative C, on the other hand, meant a semi-separation between state and church, i.e., a separation between state and church on an organisational level. It was stated that this would be the most favourable alternative as it had the obvious advantage of being aligned with freedom of religion and opened up for further equality between different religious communities and faiths. Furthermore, it was contended that alternative C would eliminate the increasingly questioned issue of the Church of Sweden handling issues of importance for the whole population, that were not of a religious nature, such as the civil register.\(^{118}\)

Interestingly, in terms of the central ideas and principles that were to guide the commission, it was stated that the strong commitment to the Christian faith, which had been so strongly emphasised in the guidance of the 1958 Church and State Commission, was no longer the starting-point for discussions regarding the state-church relations.

The continued investigative work should take place in a spirit of tolerance and generosity. This work must, therefore, in as minimal a way as has been done up to now, take any stance in questions regarding different life-philosophy, and only focus on the organisational issues. There may be different opinions on how this issue should be resolved, but everyone should be able to agree that great broadmindedness should be shown in the balancing between conflicting interests and views.

\(^{118}\) The C alternative would also, compared to, for example the D alternative, mean that the Church of Sweden would become more of a pure “faith community” and thereby gain a greater freedom of its own affairs.

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*SOU 1972:37, p. 220*

Already from the outset, the 1968 Church and State Commission received criticism, not least given the fact that the terms of reference were sent out and the new committee had been appointed before the referral process of the 1958 commission was finalised (Ekström, 2003). In 1970, as a result of the criticism,
the committee published an extensive summary report of all 106 referral responses (SOU 1970:2)\textsuperscript{119} showing clearly that not least the Free Churches were critical of the continued privilege position of the Church of Sweden.

Meanwhile, the committee finalised a report concerning the finances of the Church of Sweden (SOU 1971:29).\textsuperscript{120} Although no mention was made of minority religious communities in the report, the commission’s committee arranged a number of symposiums in 1971 to discuss the commission with representatives from a large number of religious and non-religious organisations.\textsuperscript{121} The name of two symposiums - Freedom of Religion in the Society of the Future\textsuperscript{122} and Faith Communities in the Society of the Future,\textsuperscript{123} clearly indicate an increased focus on the principle of freedom of religion and on faith communities rather than merely the Church of Sweden.

This shift of focus from *church* to *religion* can also be seen in the statement that the committee made in 1971 in which the committee proclaimed that the relations between the church and state could not be fully addressed without considering the relations between the state and minority religious communities, based on the principle of freedom of religion (SOU 1972:36). As a result, the commission’s focus was adapted to the state’s relation with religion (rather than the church) and minority religious communities were further included. Minority religious communities thereby came to gain considerably greater attention in the commission’s work than was originally intended in the terms of reference. Incidentally, this change of focus most likely led to the addition of a report concerning the finances and organisations of 15 other major (also non-Protestant and non-Christian) religious communities (SOU 1972:38\textsuperscript{124}).\textsuperscript{125} Finally, the shift

\textsuperscript{119} Om stat och kyrka: en sammanställning av remissyttrandena över Svenska kyrkan och staten
\textsuperscript{120} Kyrkan kostar: en ekonomisk studie av Svenska kyrkans församlingar 1969 (SOU 1971:29)
\textsuperscript{121} Apart from this, the committee had a continuous dialogue with representatives for different religious groups as well as conducting field work and interviews (DsU 1972: 5-8).
\textsuperscript{122} Religionsfrihet i framtidens samhälle
\textsuperscript{123} Trossamfund i framtidens samhälle
\textsuperscript{124} Samhälle och trossamfund - bilaga 20. Andra trossamfunds ekonomi
\textsuperscript{125} A further factor that may help explain why minority religious communities were included in the final report of the 1968 Commission to a larger degree than was originally planned can be found in the political debate that took place following the initiation of the commission in 1968. Specifically, the debates concerning whether minority religious communities should be eligible to receive funding in similarity to the Church of Sweden. As a result of the debate, that will be returned to further on in this chapter, it was decided that the issue of government grants to minority religious communities should be dealt with by the commission committee (KrU 1971:15, rskr 1971:207).
from church to religion was further illustrated by the choice of title for the final report of the 1968 Church and State Commission – Society and Religious Communities (SOU 1972:36).

6.1.2. The 1968 Church and State Commission

Before turning to the leading principles and ideas of the 1968 Church and State Commission, it is important to understand how the committee viewed Swedish society and their predictions of its future development. These viewpoints largely set the tone for the entire final report and its conclusions – not least in relation to the policy outcomes for minority religious communities. Major societal processes were predicted including increased urbanisation, increased religious diversity through immigration, a growth of smaller temporal religious groups, a deepened ecumenical dialogue between churches, increased secularisation and a growth of both religious and non-religious social movements. Compared to the perspectives put forth in the previous 1958 commission, in which such societal changes were viewed with concern, the 1968 commission regarded these with enthusiasm. A secularisation of society and an increased religious diversity was understood as a forthgoing and irreversible process that in turn resulted in the state needing to rethink its policies in the religious field.

Furthermore, it is clear that the 1951 reform did not take freedom of religion into account in the sense of equal employment opportunities for the various Christian faith communities to which individuals are free to join. The same also applies to non-Christian religious communities and associations of individuals who want to be outside all religious communities. In this context, we would like to point out in particular that the problems have been exacerbated by the sharp increase in immigration of both Christian and non-Christian foreigners. We believe this marks a historic change in our society’s position towards faith communities. The pluralistic reality takes us further and further away from the social environment of ecclesiological uniformity and the church-unity.126

(SOU 1972:36, p. 47)

Overall, the committee claimed that the current church-state system was problematic, not least because of the strong connection that still existed of being

126 Enhetskyrkan
a Swedish citizen and being a member of the Church of Sweden. Also, the fact that Sweden was still largely recognised, due to the state church system, as a country of a certain confession, was also regarded as deeply problematic and not suitable in an increasingly religiously diverse society.

6.1.2.1. The Principle of Freedom of Religion and Democracy

When the final report of the 1968 Church and State Commission was published (SOU 1972:36) in 1972, the principle of freedom of religion was once again regarded as a necessary foundation for all negotiations between state-church/religion relations. However, in contrast to the previous time period, much of the criticism concerning the difficulties of allowing this principle to guide the relations between state and religion was dismissed.

Although the concept of "religious freedom" is both vague and ambiguous, there is widespread agreement that the area of ideas and the different values it stands for are of the utmost importance for society's relationship with religion. We therefore believe that the principle of freedom of religion must guide the formation of the state's relations with faith communities.

(SOU 1972:36, p. 41)

In similarity to the final report of the 1958 Church and State Commission, the committee also highlighted that the principle of democracy needed to guide the future relationship between state and religion. Specifically, the principle of democracy was understood from the perspective that the state’s approach to the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities needed to be guided both by the demands from the majority as well as the demands from the minority. In an increasingly diverse society, it was declared that a central aim was “to find a solution that was acceptable by the vast majority” (SOU 1972:36, p. 46). However, although the principle of democracy received some attention, the principle of freedom of religion was firmly placed in the spotlight and the question of how it should be interpreted and understood was discussed at length in the report. The

127 Samhälle och trossamfund. Slutbetänkande
128 However, even if the complexity of the principle of freedom of religion was largely reduced and was set as an obligatory foundation for the commission, the committee still distinguished that there could be different interpretations and understandings of the principle itself that needed to be looked into further.
committee focused on three different aspects of the principle: the freedom of religion for the individual, the state’s impartiality,129 and the freedom of religion for religious communities.

Although similar to the aspects raised in the previous commission,130 there were some crucial differences. First, all of the different aspects raised by the new committee were predominantly concerned with the positive aspects of freedom of religion, i.e., the right to religion, rather than the negative aspects of religion that had previously been in focus. Second, the religious freedom for individuals within religious communities, that had dominated in the previous period and was deeply connected to a number of risk-related aspects, was now largely absent. Finally, the state’s impartiality was included as a central element of the principle of freedom of religion.

These changes in the understanding of the principle of freedom of religion illustrate a considerable shift in perspective compared and affected the discourse and perception of minority religious communities given the emphasis on the right to religion for the Swedish population and on further equality between different religious communities. Also, the shift clearly reduced the focus on different risk-related aspects connected to religious practices and religious communities. In turn, this may help to explain the policy approach to religious diversity during this period, that was largely concerned with further recognition.

6.1.2.2. The Right to Religion for the Individual

One of the most central discourses in the 1968 Church and State Commission was the importance of satisfying the religious need of the individual. The discourse was deeply embedded in the committee’s understanding of the freedom of religion for the individual and it was argued that “full religious freedom has not been implemented through the 1951 Religious Freedom Act” (SOU 1972:36, p. 47). The reason for this, according to the committee, was that the Freedom of

129 Samhällets opartiskhet
130 In the 1958 Church and State Commission three aspects were raised: the religious freedom of religious communities, the religious freedom of individuals within and outside religious communities,
130 In the 1958 Church and State Commission three aspects were raised: the religious freedom of religious communities, the religious freedom of individuals within religious communities, and the religious freedom of individuals.
Religion Act had been interpreted from the perspective that the individual should be freed from religion and a forced membership of the majority church, i.e., focus had been on the negative principle of freedom of religion. Given the increasing number of immigrants living long-term in Sweden, the committee put forth that the positive principle of freedom of religion must be further emphasised, i.e., the freedom to religion for the individual. Consequentially, Sweden should be understood as a pluralistic country, also in terms of religion, and a country where full religious freedom was met. As a result, one of the main discussion points for the committee was how the principle of freedom of religion for the individual could be fulfilled further. The underlying idea and basis for the committee was that the state should ensure that individuals’ religious needs were satisfied and that all (not merely those belonging to the Church of Sweden) individuals living in Sweden had access to religious service.

It must be state main task to ensure that the individual needs of the citizens can be met in various respects. These needs can exist in all sectors of society; the social, cultural, political and economic, as well as the religious.

(SOU 1972:36, p. 12)

Given that the committee predicted an increasing religiously diverse population, it was argued that the state now had a responsibility in ensuring that those who belonged to other religious faiths also had their specific religious needs taken care of, wherever they might live, based on the principle of religion for the individual. The equality argument was therefore closely related to the committee’s understanding of the principle of freedom of religion for the individual, i.e., that the rights of minorities could not be overlooked and that providing equal opportunities for minority religious communities was an important feature of the changing relations between state and church. This was important since the prioritised position of one church could lead to individuals experiencing psychological pressure to belong to the majority church as minority religious communities could be regarded as having a lower status. As a result, it was declared that it was not “consistent with the principles of religious freedom, that one faith community has a significantly different relationship to the state than other faith communities” (SOU 1972:36, p. 48). Crucially, this standpoint led to
the committee declaring that government grants should also be given to minority religious communities.

What is interesting to note is that the committee seemed to regard religion as a central resource for the individual. Supporting religious activities was understood as a natural consequence of the idea that the individual should have access to religion. Given that the committee predicted that Sweden would experience increased religious diversity in the future, including the growth of non-Christian groups, it was argued that this aspect of freedom of religion for the individual would become even more important. In fact, access to religious services for immigrants was seen by the committee as a requirement for freedom of religion.

We have repeatedly highlighted that immigrants' access to religious services must be seen as a requirement of religious freedom. The difficulties for churches and faith communities with a large proportion of immigrants who come to work here, are considerable, seen both from the churches’ and religious communities’ point of view and from the point of view of the immigrants themselves. Regarding the religious freedom perspective, the problem has a more serious undertone. These faith communities have, in our country, been regarded as merely "permitted". They have been discriminated against, not to say persecuted, during the time of ecclesiological uniformity and we have traditionally been taught to disregard or even to try to save them. Now they have hundreds of thousands of "new Swedes" as members. At the same time, tolerance in our country has broadened considerably. The current difficulties are most closely related to the requirements for all to have access to church / religious services. It must be considered an essential goal of Swedish immigration policy to ensure that freedom of religion also applies to immigrants.

(SOU 1972:36, p. 56)

As the quote above illustrates, a shift of focus occurred, from freedom from religion to freedom to religion. In addition, there was a transition from an emphasis on the importance of religious belonging for the individual, rather than an emphasis on the risk for individuals within religious communities, as well as a need for creating improved working conditions for all religious communities. Underlying these changes was also an overall assessment that society was not merely becoming more diverse, but also more tolerant to minority religious communities than had previously been the case.
6.1.2.3. An Active and Positive Attitude to Religious Communities

In accordance with the idea of placing a greater focus on the principle of the freedom to religion for the individual, the committee argued that the future relationship between state and religion should be guided by another aspect of freedom of religion: the state’s impartiality regarding religious issues. Compared to the approach in the 1958 commission, with a focus on the state’s neutrality, there are both differences and similarities. In terms of the change from neutrality to impartiality, this was predominantly a semantic change with both terms indicating that the state could not be entirely neutral in terms of values. However, the underlying values differed compared to previously. In particular, according to the committee, Swedish society had certain common ethical values that were shaped by humanistic ideals, rather than the historical view that these values were Christian values that needed safeguarding. Although it was noted that many of the values were predominantly Christian, it was also stated that both non-Christian and non-religious values were important in central areas such as the judicial system, education and social care.

A conclusion was, therefore, that although the state could not remain entirely neutral in terms of values, this did not entail that the state should stay impartial towards different religious communities. Put simply, all citizens should have equal civil rights and therefore, due to the commission’s focus, different religious communities should be treated on equal terms. However, it is important to note, that although it was declared that the state could not be entirely neutral, in comparison to the previous period the limits of the neutrality were only vaguely touched upon. Specifically, it was argued that the state, through legislation, could take a stand against the values of extreme groups and thereby not remain entirely neutral to the activities and values while remaining neutral to the group as such.

There are groups in Swedish society who distance themselves from some of the fundamental values on which the current democratic state is based. The state is neutral towards these groups insofar as some direct preventative measures e.g. in the form of bans, do not usually exist for them in order to propagate their views. But practically, in the form of, for example, legislation on various issues, the state takes a principled stand against the views represented by extreme groups. Certain types of propaganda are also punished, e.g. incitement against ethnic groups. In
practice, the government can thus not observe any total neutrality to different worldviews that attack the basis of democracy.

(SOU 1972:36, p. 48)

Overall, although some potential risk-related aspects were raised, as seen in the example above concerning extreme groups, the risk perspective was largely absent in the commission’s work. Rather, the main concern was how to ensure that the equality argument based on the state’s impartiality was realised and how religious communities, based on the principle of freedom of religious communities, could become increasingly autonomous in relation to the state. The idea that religious communities should be autonomous and free in internal affairs was put forth as a considerably more central aspect of freedom of religion than the freedom of religion for individuals within religious communities. As such, ensuring freedom of religion for religious communities was a more central concern for the committee, rather than regulating different religious communities and their practices.131 Interestingly, therefore, in discussions concerning specific matters where the state and religious community may come into conflict, the approach was considerably more relaxed than previously. All conflicts were to be dealt with individually through the principle of the state’s impartiality and be regulated by legislation. It was also argued that many of the strict regulations, such as those concerning the establishment of monasteries, should be abolished. Not least, since it “reflected past values of “dangerous” influence from foreign faiths” (SOU 1972:36, p.61). Once again, it was clear that the committee highlighted how society was becoming more open and tolerant than previously. This view was also manifested in the committee’s principal foundation concerning how a secular state should treat different religious groups. The main idea was that the state should have an active and positive attitude to different worldviews, both religious and non-religious.

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131 Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that the committee claimed that the current church-state system was problematic from the perspective of freedom of religion for religious communities, not least because the church (and other religious communities) should have the right to fully decide internal church affairs.
6.1.2.4. The Importance of Community

As mentioned previously, there was a clear sense of an ongoing, irreversible process of increasing diversity and secularisation in Swedish society in which the prioritised position of the Church of Sweden was increasingly put into question. During this transforming time the question was not only what role the Church of Sweden would play in the future but also what role other religious communities would play. It was clear that even if Sweden was becoming more secularised, religious communities were important and viewed as a potential resource in society.

The most obvious role for religious communities was to provide religious services to the Swedish population and thereby fill the religious needs of the individual. However, the committee also highlighted other potential roles for the future; for example, in providing a sense of community. According to the committee, the increasing urbanisation of society could potentially lead to a growing societal anonymity. This actualised the need for new common meeting points, as well as small communities where people could actively engage in political, cultural or religious activities. In this predicted scenario, religious communities were identified as having a central role, in particular in larger cities. Other previously mentioned risk aspects, such as the freedom of the individual within a religious community, i.e., that individual rights were at risk in narrow communities, that had been an important issue in the 1958 commission, were only briefly touched upon by the 1968 committee. In fact, the previously feared community aspect of religious communities was now no longer merely regarded as a risk.

Although the relationships between the members of faith communities may enforce a social pressure and a lack of religious freedom, they can also be experienced as a community with considerable positive values for both individual and society.

(SOU 1972:36, p. 54)

Similarly, it was highlighted that the risk of religious pressure and lack of religious freedom, that had been raised regarding the community aspects, were now understood not just as potentially occurring within the Free Churches, but also within groups in the Church of Sweden. In turn, this highlights another aspect that changed between the commissions, namely that the 1968 commission was
less interested in distinguishing between minority religious communities and the Church of Sweden. Rather, it was stated that the differences “between the Church of Sweden and the so-called free faith communities should not be overemphasised” (SOU 1972:36, p.54).

Again, the committee had a more optimistic outlook, anticipating that the future religious landscape would be characterised by openness, tolerance and ecumenical dialogue between religious communities. In such a future, shared common values, no longer solely connected to the Christian faith, such as peace, freedom, justice and equality could be at the forefront, and minority religious communities could function as a resource by providing community and religious services to its members.

6.1.2.5. The Strictly Religious Role

However, although religious communities were viewed in a positive light in the commission, their role in society was predominantly seen to belong to the private sphere, an element that may explain the lack of a risk perspective in the documents. For example, in the area of social welfare, it was emphasised that welfare services should be provided by the state and local government. Religious communities’ social role, therefore, was largely seen as a compliment to the public welfare services, with an emphasis on being recognised as a religious alternative. In other words, religious communities should be religious actors in society and providers of religious services such as pastoral care, rather than providing other social services. The availability and visibility of a religious alternative was particularly important in hospitals, prisons and in the armed forces.

In order to accomplish full religious freedom, the committee also stated that there would be a need to create a further division of responsibility between the state and the Church of Sweden. It was, however, important that although responsibilities of social welfare should shift to the state, religious communities (based on the principle of freedom of religion for religious communities) should not necessarily be hindered in taking a social role. However, this role should be clearly characterised by its religious practice:

With regard to social activities (diakonia), from the point of view of individuals' freedom of religion, there is reason to emphasise that it must in principle be the task of the state to meet the population's need for
social security, health care, care for the elderly, etc. However, in line with the freedom of religion, faith communities should have opportunities to provide "religious" alternatives for those who request suchlike for caring and empathetic human contact.

(SOU 1972:36, p. 55)

The overall view of the commission, therefore, was that religious communities should not be included in any social services. This included “running schools, leisure activities, social care, medical care, alcohol and drug treatment, curative interventions for families and pensioners and social measures of a specific nature for e.g. immigrants, single parents, the mentally handicapped and the disabled” (SOU 1972:36, p.95). The overall standpoint was that the role of religious communities should be limited in the process of creating an overarching public welfare system. Their role was to act only in the private sphere and be incorporated in the complementary service in the provision of pastoral care or any other activities “determined by their spiritual tasks and, ultimately, their religious message” (SOU 1972:36, p.95).

By being encouraged to take a strictly religious rather than social role, the narrowed perspective of the role of religious communities in Swedish society can be understood to be connected to the relationship between church and state. The Church of Sweden still performed important societal functions such as population registration and funeral services, and from the principle of freedom of religion, the committee argued that responsibility for local population records and the administration of burial grounds should be transferred from the Church of Sweden to the civil authorities. The Church of Sweden should no longer be regarded as a state institution, but a “faith community” amongst others where all religious communities were treated equally. Practically, for the Church of Sweden, this meant an elimination of the compulsory duties of a profane administrative nature, as well as a greater freedom in internal decision-making, such as matters concerning faith and liturgy. Regarding minority religious communities, it was argued that due to the principle of religious freedom for religious communities, any regulations that gave the Church of Sweden an advantageous position in pastoral care in public contexts should be prohibited. Also, a new commission should be established to inquire about the possibilities of supporting minority religious communities in taking a more active role in this field. However, although
this meant a further inclusion of minority religious communities, the role they were invited to take was solely focused on pastoral care and religious practices.

6.1.2.6. Introducing Government Grants with a Hands-off Approach

Up until now, focus has been on the central ideals, principles, fears and hopes regarding minority religious communities as well as the committee’s suggestions on how to further equate minority religious communities with the Church of Sweden. The question, however, was: how was this going to be realised?

Historically, the Free Churches in Sweden had adopted a sceptical approach in relation to receiving financial support from the state (Ekström, 2006b). However, during this time a changed perspective emerged, as illustrated by a statement from the Swedish Free Church Council to the government in 1970. Specifically, they stated that it was not satisfactory, based on the principle of the freedom of religion, that minority religious communities had such a financial disadvantage compared to the Church of Sweden.132 The Free Church council argued that the pressure on members to support their congregations financially was considerable; a pressure that had been worsened further as a result of changes in the tax system.133 The Free Church Council, therefore, argued that the state should increasingly strive for equal treatment of all religious communities and thereby also offer the Free Churches financial support.134

Following the statement from the Free Church Council in 1970, a number of motions were submitted by politicians from a number of political parties,135 all arguing that the government should support minority religious communities (see for example mot. 1971:364; mot. 1971:35: mot. 1971:34). It was argued that the new tax regulations meant that many minority religious communities would find it difficult to obtain the necessary finances and given these economic difficulties, it was proposed that minority religious communities should be given fairer

132 The statement was written as a referral response to a motion concerning the financial support for the free Christian communities and the immigrant churches (Mot. 1970:1146). Referred to in Mot. 1971:35.
133 According to their calculations, the expenses for the Free Churches and their 80,000 members amounted to approximately 215 million SEK per year. According to the Free Church Council, changes in taxation rules would cost them an additional 14 million SEK per year (Mot. 1971:35).
135 Social Democrats, Folk Party and the Centre Party.
working conditions. Some argued that minority religious communities should receive government grants, whilst other argued for tax deductions on gifts and removing social fees for all religious communities.\textsuperscript{136} It was also put forth that the economic conditions of minority religious communities and the conditions for support must be dealt with by the 1968 State and Church Commission. Regardless of the proposed solution, all submitted motions agreed that the unequal economic situation for minority religious communities was unsustainable. Importantly, the motions did not focus on certain principles\textsuperscript{137} but rather on the practical reality that many minority religious communities were dealing with, not least as a consequence of the newly introduced taxes.

As a result of the large number of motions suggesting further support to minority religious communities, it was decided in 1971 that Free Christian Communities (NB not non-Protestant or non-Christian groups) should receive government grants\textsuperscript{138} for the first time in Swedish history whilst awaiting the results of the 1968 State and Church Commission (KrU 1971:15, rskr 1971:207). The main purpose of the grant (which was very modest to start with – 2 million SEK per year) was to assist economically weak congregations in obtaining and keeping premises as well as offering religious services in the form of worship, pastoral care and a place of prayer. The grants were to be distributed by The Council of Free Churches Works Council (SFRS) within The Council of Free Churches (SFR).

In the 1968 commission, the inquiries concerning the finances of the Church of Sweden (SOU 1971:29) and minority religious communities (SOU 1972:38) had shown that the economic situation differed greatly, as well as between established Free Churches and new immigrant religious communities. With the ambition to create a more equal situation, a number of reforms were discussed regarding how to provide support to religious groups in Swedish society. The committee argued that a balance between the financial commitments of the individual and the state

\textsuperscript{136} It was also suggested that the support should be distributed by a central committee consisting of representatives with insight in the religious landscape and religious organisations. Formal requirements should be set up and the support should be primarily guided by the financial situation of religious communities.

\textsuperscript{137} With the exception of the submitted motion from the Social Democrats that argued that minority religious communities should be supported because of their beneficial actives for the society at large. Such principle discussions were also visible in motions that were more clearly directed at the support to immigrant religious communities (see for example Mot. 1970:700; Mot. 1971:285; Mot. 1971:37)

\textsuperscript{138} 3,500,000 SEK the first budget year (1971/72).
was required and that the main responsibility for the economic resources of religious communities must remain with the members themselves. In similarity to the conclusions from the 1958 committee, there was scepticism towards the idea that the state should partake in the collection of church fees. This could be understood as a form of taxation and thereby be against the principle of freedom of religion for the individual, particularly if such a tax was seen as compulsory under public law. In line with this, they suggested an abolishment of tax obligation for citizens not belonging to the Church of Sweden.

From a long-term perspective, meanwhile, it was proposed that a gradual expansion of different forms of public support should begin with the aim of levelling out the financial situation of different religious communities.

As previously stated in the report, we interpret the principle of the state's impartiality in views of life as meaning that society should take a positively neutral attitude to the existence of different views of life. This should be expressed in such a way that the state directly and/or indirectly creates favourable conditions for the activities of all faith communities, e.g. through various forms of social financial support. In doing so, one must strive for an equal treatment of different faith communities.

(SOU 1972:36, p. 112)

In accordance with this argument it was suggested that government grants could be given to financially weak parishes and congregations which needed support. Other types of support could also be given to religious communities, including support for children and youths, grants for upholding meeting places, for restoring historically valuable church buildings, etc., as well as specific forms of support for pastoral care in hospitals and in the armed forces, for Swedes abroad, as well as for ecumenical international co-operation.

As is evident, the committee had a generally optimistic view of supporting religious communities and the positive attitude towards diversity became an important part of the committee’s main argument in also proposing support to minority religious communities. The committee claimed that it was “also of the

139 Specifically, a certain sum should be made available (which should be calculated on the basis of the state budget for 1971/72) and allocated as state tax equalization grants to parishes of the Swedish Church, Free denominations and “immigrant churches”.
greatest importance for the vitality of Swedish democracy that different ideologies and faiths have plentiful opportunities to make themselves relevant” (SOU 1972:36, p.49). Therefore, just as other organisations were seen as central to the Swedish democracy, so were religious communities. Consequentially, it was stated that minority religious communities, in similarity to popular movements, political parties and study associations, should be entitled to economic support from the state. According to the committee, the introduction of state support to the Free Churches was a start though in order to ensure that different religious groups could participate in the continuous process of the common good of the society, active support was required. Also, in line with the general view of the importance of autonomy for religious communities, based on the principle of freedom of religion for religious communities, it was stated that a central aspect with the grant, in similarity to the grants to the Swedish press and political parties that had recently been introduced, was that it should be completely unconditional.

The support for political parties and support for Free Christian religious communities has been designed in such a way that there is no control over the activities. Other forms of support also contain a minimum amount of control. For example, the previous ban on giving state support to youth organisations for political and religious propaganda has now been lifted.

(SOU 1972:36, p. 50)

The underlying idea was that the support had been designed in such a way that the “interference from the state is practically non-existent” (SOU 1972:36, p. 122). Rather, minority religious communities should distribute the funds between themselves according to principles that could be agreed upon in an ecumenical committee. Distributing funds with a minimum of control and a “hands-off” approach was also promoted from the standpoint of the state’s impartiality and a generally positive attitude to the idea of a diverse society where a diversity of views has a value in itself and therefore an inherent value for a democratic diverse society. Importantly, however, the committee also argued that if, in the future,

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140 *Presstöd and Partistöd*

141 It was suggested that the distribution of funds and the decided principle for the distribution should be made by a special body appointed by the government: The Joint Council of Religious Communities (*Trossamfundens samarbetsråd*). Religious communities that served at least 3000 people should have at least one representative on the council.
Swedish society changed drastically, for example with growing support for a certain religious group that in turn claimed priority in relation to other religious communities, then the principle of the state treating all religious groups in an equal and impartial way could be questioned and policies concerning religion could be reformed and reconsidered.

6.1.3. The Outcome and Aftermath of the 1968 Church and State Commission

In May 1972 the Parliamentary Committee of the 1968 State and Church Commission delivered their final report (SOU 1972:36) and presented its main proposals. The conclusions were generally unanimous concerning the major proposals in the field of freedom of religion142 determining that the Church of Sweden, over a gradual transitional period and with generous offers from the state, should cease to be a state institution. Thereby, further equality and improved conditions for minority religious communities would be achieved. Although the Social Democratic Party Congress supported the committee’s proposal in October 1972, the congress, in line with the terms of reference of the commission, highlighted the importance of reaching a unified solution; the proposals should be implemented with as much political agreement as possible and in agreement with the Church of Sweden (KU 1973: 36). Perhaps unsurprisingly, considering the potential impact of the proposed changes, the referral process led to a lively debate. A summary report (SOU 1974:9) was presented in 1974 with an overview of all the responses.143 Of the 870 referrals, approximately 400 were generally positive (including the large majority of the minority religious communities’ replies) to the committee’s suggestions, while the large majority of instances connected to the Church of Sweden were sceptical (Ekström, 2003). In 1973, just before the summary report of the referral process had been published, the government declared in a press release that the possibilities for reaching a collective solution was limited due to a lack of

142 Two reservations were submitted. One from the Centre Party where it was argued that the law on parish governance (lagen om församlingstyre) should be abolished, and one from the Conservative Party that requested a referendum concerning the committee’s conclusion.
143 In total, the commission received over 870 replies from the remiss procedure, historically a very high figure. Of these 870 replies, 287 were from different institutions connected to minority religious organisations and parishes. Apart from minority religious groups, different government agencies, councils, Church of Sweden parishes, CSO etc., were among those who sent in remiss replies. The largest number of replies (459) were from institutions related to the Church of Sweden.
consensus. Therefore, “the government will not formulate or present proposals on this issue”. As such, despite the large support for the committee’s suggestions, no decisive governmental actions were taken. In spite of a reluctance for pursuing major reforms, it was claimed that as the referral process was ongoing, minor reforms were possible if they received sufficient support from the referral process. One such reform was the issue of financial support to minority religious communities.

In terms of policy outcome from the commission, therefore, an interesting result can be seen. Specifically, the government ignored most of the committee’s recommendations, though took some smaller aspects into consideration that, in turn, would have long-term effects for minority religious communities. Consequentially, in 1974 it was decided (prop. 1974/75:100) that minority religious communities with at least 3000 members, regardless of faith, should receive regular financial support (SFS 1974:404). Importantly, this was the same year as freedom of religion became a constitutionally protected and absolute right of the individual in the Constitution of Sweden. As a result, the Instrument of Government protected the religious freedom of each citizen further than had previously been the case and marks an important shift when it came into force on the 1st of January 1975 (Instrument of Government, Ch. 2 § 1.6.). In terms of the size of the grant, this increased successively from the original 10 million SEK in 1974, largely due to the fact that one of the main arguments for making the grant permanent was that different faiths should have ample opportunities to act in society (KrU 1974:9). Therefore, alongside a permanent grant, a special grant was also given to support religious communities in obtaining and keeping premises (SFS 1974:404).

Interestingly, following the 1974 Governmental decree and the introduction of the government grant, the topic of minority religious communities became almost absent from the political agenda (at least regarding the policy field of the religion-state relationship) and there was a general silence in the discussions. Although many new commissions were appointed, they all discussed the future

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144 A summary of the press release can be found in KU statement (KU 1973:36).
145 Förordning om statsbidrag till vissa trossamfund.
relationship between state and church and the preparation of proposals for reforms regarding the church’s organisation and structure. No mention was made of minority religious communities and they were not a prioritised issue in policymaking. Rather, there was a silence and absence of any major discussions. It was not until 1988, in the so-called ERK Commission, that was appointed as a result of the Church meeting requesting an inquiry into the future economic and legal relations between state and church, that the issue of state and religion was back in the limelight.

In terms of the government grant, no major changes occurred, and the overriding purpose of the grant remained the same throughout the period. Nevertheless, grants increased in almost every budget proposal during the 1970s, not least in order for minority religious communities to gain further equality with the Church of Sweden. Also, there were small changes in the type of available grants. For example, in 1976 the possibility arose for religious communities to receive building grants (SFS 1976:255) and minority religious community’s role in covering individual’s religious needs became evident in 1980 when, for the first time, they received grants specifically designated for pastoral care (prop. 1979/80:152) in order to cover the population’s need for religious services in different societal institutions. From 1981, grants could be used for improving accessibility to buildings (prop. 1981/82:100) and in 1985, extra grants were introduced for new immigrant religious communities that needed support for building or renovating premises for religious services. Finally, due to rising unemployment rates, politically motivated labour market interventions meant that an extra grant was given for religious communities to acquire premises (prop. 1983/84:100).

Overall, therefore, although the specifics changed, the common underlying purpose of grants to minority religious communities was to facilitate minority

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147 Many of which led to a number of significant reforms for the church’s external and internal organisation whilst preserving the existing relational framework with the state.

148 This report will be discussed in chapter seven.

149 In terms of the development during this entire time-period, annual grants to religious minority communities amounted to 70 million SEK in 1990.

150 Between the budget year of 1972/73 - 1977/78, the grant increased from 2 million SEK to 25 million SEK. However, SFRS and different motions argued that the grant was too small in comparison to the funding of the Church of Sweden (See, for example, prop. 1974/75:100; prop. 1976/77:100).
religious communities’ ability to provide religious service and pastoral care in Swedish society. This would indicate that their role in society, from the perspective of the state, was that they should be kept in the private religious sphere, in which the government could fund but not further interfere with them. Interestingly, nowhere during this time period were minority religious communities mentioned in terms of having a wider social role or a role as social welfare actors, offering social service and care for the population (with the exception of so-called immigrant religious communities, an area I will return to in the category of integration).

6.1.4. Summary: Religion and State
The two main themes found in the distant reading (Church and Faith Community) give an important insight into the focus seen in the religion and state category during this period. The growing focus on minority religious communities is not least illustrated by the choice of name that the 1968 Church and State Commission decided for the final report - Society and Religious Communities (SOU 1972:36). Rather than highlighting the relationship between the state and church, focus shifted to the state’s relationship with religious communities more generally. As is illustrated in the themes in the distant reading, the primary concern in the discussions concerning minority religious communities was how the state could solve different practical issues for religious minorities so that they could more easily perform their religious duties and cover the religious needs of the individual. Importantly, the accommodating of minority religious communities and the provision of further support was highly dependent on the state’s continued relationship with the Church of Sweden.

6.2. Education
Following the government bill in 1968 (prop. 1968:67), in which it was declared that the government had no intention of supporting religious schools, the issue of education for religious minorities and discussions surrounding religious schools largely disappeared from the political agenda. When the subject was highlighted again in the 1980s, it was predominantly in the context of discussions concerning independent schools in general.

Table 9. Education
The results from the distant reading provide an important contextual setting of the context in which discussion of religious schools were discussed. For example, while the first theme, *Schools*, includes the concept of confessional (referring to confessional schools), the other concepts that are connected to the theme are more concerned with the issue of education more in general and particularly questions related to independent schools. The questions that were raised were, for example, should independent schools be permitted and, if so, should they be supported by the state? Also, what conditions should be required to receive support? It was in the light of these discussions that the question was raised whether schools with a confessional orientation should be entitled to support?

The second theme, *Teaching*, highlights some of the other central discussions that took place during this period and that were also related to the issue of diversity in the Swedish educational system. Specifically, should children be able to be taught at home and, if so, should this be supported? Also, should children with different native languages be allowed to have their own schools and, if so, should they receive support? Although religious schools were not included in these discussions, as will be discussed below, the theme clearly shows what issues were in focus. Finally, the third topic, *Grants*, highlights one of the overall main issues during this time, as discussed in the previous section. In similarity to the state and religion category, the question was how the state should or should not give support, and, if so, in what format?

### 6.2.1. Background

In the beginning of the 1980s there were a limited number of independent schools in Sweden – only 35 in total. Of these, nine had a religious profile. Even though
the total number was limited, and one should be careful to draw conclusions, it is interesting to note that the number of religious schools had more than doubled the since beginning of the 1970s. One of the main reasons for this increase was thought to be connected to school reforms and the weakening of the subject of Christianity in Swedish school, as discussed in the previous chapter. As a consequence of these changes, parents who were concerned with the secularisation of the Swedish school and who worried that Christian values would be lost, opened their own schools; therefore, these schools were predominantly Christian (SOU 1981:34).151

The limited number of religious schools in Sweden must be understood in relation to the restrictive policies that existed towards independent schools in general. Only seven obtained government grants, of which the Jewish Hillel school was the only school with confessional orientation that obtained the grant.152 These restrictive policies and school reforms were to a large extent formed by the dominant Social Democrats who saw schools as an important instrument for achieving cohesion and creating a meeting place for students from different backgrounds (Qvarsebo, 2006). As such, there were limited opportunities for Swedish parents to send their children to independent schools prior to the 1990s and the issue, not least regarding independent schools with a religious profile, was almost totally absent from the political agenda during this period (although some indications of the discussion can be sensed during the mid-1980s). Rather, focus was placed on the issue of education for children with other linguistic and cultural backgrounds (see, SOU 1983:57). However, in 1979, a new commission, the SEH commission,153 was appointed to further inquire the current regulations of independent schools. Included in the commission was the theme of minority religious communities and education.

151 Fristående skolor för skolpliktiga elever (Delbetänkande av kommittén angående skolor med enskild huvudman).
152 However, those not receiving government support were still supported by local councils for books, school transport, food, healthcare, etc.
153 Kommittén angående skolor med enskild huvudman.
6.2.2. Independent Schools for Compulsory School Students

Already in the terms of reference to the SEH commission there were signs that the government was critical of the general idea of the establishment of independent schools in Swedish society (Dir 1979:123). It was clearly stated that any suggested reforms that would lead to an increase in independent schools was unwanted, not least considering the risk of a parallel school system.

6.2.2.1. A Unified and Cohesive School

In one of the commission’s interim reports, the same principle was applied (SOU 1981:34) – that in an increasingly diverse society the need for a unified school system was essential and that possible tensions between different groups, that could exist in an increasingly diverse society, could be bridged by having a comprehensive school for all. The particular interests that were represented by groups in civil society in the field of education were, although not explicitly stated, therefore seen as a risk to the cohesion of Swedish society.

The uniformity that characterises the public school system in Sweden has several advantages, and it is therefore important to safeguard it. It provides an opportunity for equal education for children, regardless of where they live, and it is one of the means to achieve greater equality and to bridge gaps between different groups in society. In the increasingly emerging diverse society, it is essential and valuable that children are offered a common platform through the unified public-school system.

(SOU 1981:34, p. 77)

However, although this was the general standpoint of the committee, this did not completely eliminate religious minorities from the discussions concerning education. Although the education of religion was to be objective in public schools, parents and religious communities were welcome to provide their own religious education outside of school hours. Also, despite the committee’s emphasis on a public educational system and the scepticism towards independent schools, it was clearly stated that it would be impossible to prohibit independent schools, regardless of whether they were religious or not. Due to different international regulations, such as the European Convention of Human Rights and

154 *Enhetsskolan*
the UNESCO convention, the state was forced to respect the rights of parents to provide their children with education that was in harmony with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions. Interestingly, therefore, although the committee was explicit in their argumentation concerning their dislike for independent schools, international regulations deeply affected the actual management of the perceived problem.

In order to balance the rights of parents with the goal of keeping the education system unified, it was argued that independent schools should be permitted as long as the basic requirements of standard teaching were fulfilled. Government funding to independent schools was, however, to be restricted and only given in cases were the school contributed to pedagogical diversity or developed certain upbringing or pastoral ideas\textsuperscript{155} that could be of use for the educational system at large. This principle could, according to the committee, also apply to schools with a confessional profile. In other words, if the school contributed with a confessional profile that consisted of new upbringing or pastoral ideas, government funding could be considered. Therefore, although the confessional aspect in itself was not regarded as problematic it was still stated that the “fact that a school has a work environment with a confessional character should not in itself be a reason for state subsidies” (SOU 1981:34, p.75). Rather, the central point was the overriding idea of a comprehensive school for all principle\textsuperscript{156} in which children from different backgrounds should meet. The conclusion from the SEH committee was thereby that state support to independent schools should only amount to 0.6-0.7\% of the total number of eligible students in Sweden and that each request for support should be independently assessed.

When the SEH committee’s recommendations were addressed by the government, they largely agreed with the SEH committee, and stated that schools with a confessional profile should not be entitled to government grants as the overriding purpose of the school should be that all students should receive a common frame of reference and schools should be a place where students of different backgrounds could meet (prop. 1982/83:1). Interestingly, in similarity to the general discourse during this period, no risk dimensions regarding religious

\textsuperscript{155} Uppfostrings- eller omvårdnadsidéer

\textsuperscript{156} Enhetsskoleprincipen
schools were put forth in the government bill. Instead, it was highlighted that religious schools could be a resource for students.

I am aware of, and appreciate, the positive efforts that the confessional schools make by seeking to provide students with a safe and positive outlook on life rooted in a work environment with a confessional character. The confessional schools have also, for many worried and insecure students, often offered a calmer social environment than the state primary schools.

(Prop. 1982/83:1, p. 39)

Despite these positive aspects, given that the overriding purpose in an increasingly diverse society was seen to be the safeguarding of the cohesive and unified school system, it was seen as critical for the state to “through schools, contribute to an education of children and young people that is based on the norms that have been of fundamental importance for the building of our society” (Prop. 1982/83:1, p. 39). Simultaneously, however, the state needed to ensure that different opinions could be discussed freely on the basis of the fundamental human and democratic values that were expressed in the school curriculum. The government bill was later approved by the committee of education (Ubu 1982/83:10) where it was once again highlighted that religious schools should not be treated differently to other independent schools.

6.2.2.2. Opening up for Further Pluralism

Despite the general wariness towards independent schools during much of the time period, the political debate started to change towards the end. For example, the Social Democratic Minister of Education declared in the budget proposal for the budget year 1987/88 (Prop. 1987/88:100) that independent schools should be given more generous conditions for receiving government grants. Crucially, however, whilst this had previously been motivated by the fact that they provided added value to the educational sector, the reasoning had changed and involved the fact that they had a diverging character from traditional schools (Borevi, 2002). In turn, although the issue of religious schools was not specifically mentioned, this development opened up for religious schools to also be entitled to government grants. This argumentation coincided with the fact that a number of political parties, including the ruling Social Democrats, started to question the
united school system, instead further emphasising the freedom of choice for parents and students (prop. 1988/89:4). This change, which will be discussed further in the next chapter, can be seen as the starting point for a greater shift that occurred in the politics surrounding Swedish schools in the 1990s, in which the school choice reform opened up for a school-voucher system where parents had a free choice of choosing a public or independent, religious or non-religious, school for their child (Borevi, 2002).

6.2.3. Summary: Education

The general scepticism towards independent schools during this period is an important element to understand when approaching the subject of religious schools. Although there were concerns regarding religious schools, these concerns were not greater than the scepticism to other independent schools. As seen in the distant reading, the discussion of religious schools was embedded in discussions concerning independent schools more generally. Therefore, religious schools were not understood as a risk per se. It is also clear that there were no major discussions regarding the issue of religious schools or education for religious minorities during this period and the issue was almost absent from the political agenda.

6.3. Integration

In similarity to the education category, no concepts directly related to minority religious communities were found in the distant reading. However, despite this, the distant reading clearly illustrates the important contextual setting for the discussions concerning integration and minority religious communities at the time. Although true for all three themes seen below, theme two is particularly relevant as it illustrates the discussions regarding how to handle and accommodate immigrants staying longer in Sweden. It was also in this context that the issue of minority religious communities was raised.

Table 10. Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme: <strong>Sweden</strong> <em>(Sverige)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Concepts: Sweden, Swedish, citizens, immigration, foreign, persons, country, children, countries, social, resident, Nordic, foreigners, conditions, citizenship, Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Theme: <strong>Immigrants</strong> <em>(invandrarnas)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first theme, *Sweden*, sheds light on the main discussion on the political agenda at this time regarding immigration. The questions that were being asked were, for example, how should Sweden deal with increased immigration and with increasing numbers of people settling down and becoming Swedish citizens? What measures of social policy should be implemented to handle increasing immigration? How should Sweden deal with the issue of adjustment, particularly in regard to children, when many immigrants would mostly likely move back to their country of origin? Although indirectly relevant for the issue of minority religious communities, no questions were directly associated with them. In the second theme, *Immigrants*, the context of minority religious communities was highlighted as focus was on what the state should do for immigrants and what role the state should have. Here, the main questions were related to different social measures that were believed to be required regarding immigrants who had settled in Sweden. For example, what needs do immigrants in Sweden have and what measures should be taken to solve their acute social problems? Should the state support cultural and language activities for immigrant and minority associations? What possibilities and problems could such support lead to? Lastly, the third theme, *Political*, illustrates how there was a shifting discourse concerning immigration during this time, particularly in the latter part. Sweden experienced an increase of political refugees rather than the previous labour-related immigration. This meant that many new questions were being asked in relation to what regulations and principles should guide the immigration policies in Sweden long-term.

### 6.3.1. Background

As has been clear throughout this chapter, this period is permeated by a realisation that Sweden was becoming increasingly diverse through immigration. Although emigration exceeded immigration in 1972 and 1973 due to a shifting labour market in Sweden, immigration increased during much of this period. Therefore,
it is unsurprising that the issue of minority religious communities was largely highlighted in relation to immigration policies.

Large transformations also occurred in the mid-1970s regarding the type of immigrants coming to Sweden, with an increase of non-European immigrants fleeing war and persecution. This change in immigration patterns is clearly seen when comparing the proportions of foreign nationals when the Commission on Immigration\textsuperscript{157} (IU) published its final report in 1974 and when the Committee on Immigration and Immigrant Policy\textsuperscript{158} (IPOK) published its final report in 1984. As is seen in table 11, in 1974 a large proportion of foreign nationals were from the other Nordic countries (Finland alone accounted for 47.3\% of all foreign nationals) followed by other European countries. In terms of non-European countries, US nationals accounted for half (SOU 1974:69\textsuperscript{159}).

Table 11. The number of foreign nationals in Sweden in 1974 and 1983/84\textsuperscript{160}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1974</th>
<th>Percentage of all foreign nationals\textsuperscript{161}</th>
<th>1983/84</th>
<th>Percentage of all foreign nationals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>244,488</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>326,827</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>120,005</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>195,345</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-European</td>
<td>14,848</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>112,801</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1983/84, the distribution had changed considerably. Although Finnish nationals were still the largest group (37.8\%), the largest increase was clearly amongst non-Europeans. Among non-Europeans, US nationals now only accounted for 10\%. Instead, immigrants were increasingly from South America (in particular Chile) and Asia (in particular Turkey) (SOU 1984:58\textsuperscript{162}). This change in immigration patterns also affected the religious landscape with an increase in memberships in the Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim religious communities while memberships in the Free Churches remained relatively stable or declined (Willander, 2019). Despite this, as will be show in the following pages, although the issue of minority religious communities was highlighted in the commission

\textsuperscript{157} Invandrarutredningen
\textsuperscript{158} Invandrarpolitiska kommitteen
\textsuperscript{159} Invandrarutredningen. Invandrarna och minoriteterna.
\textsuperscript{160} Original data and division collected from SOU 1984:58 and SOU 1974:69
\textsuperscript{161} The commission did not declare all countries. Therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100%.
\textsuperscript{162} Invandrar och minoritetspolitik – slutbetänkande
during this period, it was overshadowed by the attention placed on ethnic, cultural and linguistic affiliation of immigrants.

6.3.2. Commission on Immigration

In 1968, when the Commission on Immigration (IU) was appointed by the Swedish government, its purpose was mainly to investigate the fact that Sweden was becoming more diverse due to labour immigration. The parliamentary committee’s purpose was to look further into the adjustment problems of immigrants staying longer in Sweden, as a result of the conclusion made in the Foreigners Commission (SOU 1967:18). Rather than merely solving problems, the aim of the commission was to gain knowledge of the specific difficulties that immigrants, including religious minorities, faced in their adjustment into Swedish society as well as to gain an overview of the nature and extent of the problems, both short- and long-term, and propose new social policies regarding immigrants in Swedish society in a number of different areas. As Sweden was thought to become increasingly diverse, the purpose of adjustment was two-fold. First, that immigrants should blend in with the rest of the Swedish population, thus preventing them from becoming isolated from the rest of the population. Second, that immigrants could maintain their language and culture and that the state could provide support based on the immigrants’ own desires. Overall, the primary principle was that future policies relating to immigrants should be grounded in providing equal possibilities and opportunities for them as to the rest of the population.

The commission should be free to consider social measures that are suitable for eliminating conditions that put immigrants or those belonging to established ethnic or religious minorities in a worse position than the general population

(SOU 1974:69, p. 451)

The IU’s final report; Commission on Immigration: Immigrant and minority affairs (SOU 1974:69) was finalised in 1974. The commission had a clear multicultural approach, and it was proposed that the future immigration policy in

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163 The commission published two interim reports. The first was published in 1971 (SOU 1971:51) and dealt with the educational situation and the issue of Swedish lessons. The second report, published in 1972 (SOU 1972:83), dealt with interpreter services. The final report was presented in 1974 (SOU 1974:69) and this is when the role of immigrant religious communities was highlighted.
Sweden should be formulated from the perspective and goals of equality, freedom of choice and partnership. As such, the overall proposal was based on the foundation that immigrant groups should be supported in becoming further assimilated into Swedish society while simultaneously being supported in maintaining their cultural identity. The goal of equality was predominantly understood from the perspective that immigrants should be provided with equal standards of living to the general population. Freedom of choice, meanwhile, was mainly concerned with linguistic minorities. It was argued that such minorities should be supported in order for them to be given a genuine choice in deciding whether they wanted to keep or develop their original culture. The goal of partnership meant that minority and majority groups should benefit from each other and be regarded as equal partners in society. Therefore, any initiatives that could result in this should be supported. It was in terms of these goals that the issue of minority religious communities was raised by the commission.

6.3.2.1. Further Equality for Immigrant Religious Communities

Given that immigration was thought to increase and that the number of foreign nationals staying in Sweden permanently would also increase, the commission was to propose different policy recommendations on how to support immigrants’ ethnic, cultural, linguistic and, not least, religious affiliations. Although the religious aspect was not raised to the same degree as the other aspects, when it was raised it was clear that religious belonging was thought to be of great value to immigrants coming to Sweden and religious belonging was regarded as a resource for newly arrived individuals’ identity construction.

In that case it should by right be argued that the individual's experience of their religious, national or linguistic affiliation is often of an equivalent and much more in-depth and basic nature than other possible grounds for identification, e.g. belonging to an occupational group.

(SOU 1974:69, p. 277)

Interestingly, although the committee emphasised the importance of immigrants having the possibility of preserving their cultural and religious identity, one exception was made – in children’s education. In similarity to the government (prop. 1968:67), the committee had a negative view of religious schools and shared the idea that the Swedish educational system should be characterised by a
comprehensive school for all that included children from different social, religious and economic backgrounds. Therefore, affirmative action concerning the children’s right (or parents’ right to choose) to attend a religious school was not emphasised.

Despite the limited attention placed on the issue of religious minorities by the committee, they did raise that the state should ensure that the religious needs of immigrants were to be fulfilled. It was claimed that immigrants should have the same opportunities and rights to religious services and rites of passage in accordance with their religious traditions as the population at large, an argument very similar to the equality argument that had been put forth in the 1968 Church and State Commission.

One goal should be to give immigrants the same opportunities for religious services - including opportunities for marriage, infant baptism, funerals, etc., according to their religious rituals - as other citizen groups.

(SOU 1974:69, p. 304)

The committee, therefore, argued that so-called immigrant religious communities should not be differentiated from other minority religious communities and should receive government grants through the SFRS, in similarity to other minority religious communities. As such, immigrant religious communities were seen to belong to the policy field of religion, rather than the policy field of immigration.

6.3.2.2. The Policy Outcome of IU

The proposal from IU gained wide acceptance both in the Swedish parliament and the government who largely followed the policy recommendations made by the committee (prop. 1975:26; InU 1975:6; rskr, 1975:160). In the government bill (prop. 1975:26) it was also proposed that equality, freedom of choice and partnership were to be central in Swedish immigration policy. Immigrants were to have the same rights as Swedish citizens through access to the public welfare

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164 It was also proposed that it should be possible for religious communities with less than 3000 members to receive government support in order to minimise the risk of excluding new religious groups in Sweden. It was suggested that the Immigrant Agency (Immigrationsverket) could support religious communities for shorter projects in order to support immigrants’ cultural and social situation.

165 Regeringen proposition om riktlinjer för invandrar- och minoritetspolitiken m.m.
system, and also the freedom of choice to decide whether to hold on to their original identity or adjust to a Swedish cultural identity. In turn, this may explain the positive view of minority religious minorities seen throughout the commission and the following government bill, as these objectives became the guiding ideals for minority religious communities that mainly served people of other origins.

Immigrant and minority policy should be characterised by an effort to create equality between immigrants and Swedes. Immigrants and religious minorities should be given the opportunity to choose the extent to which they want to become part of a Swedish cultural identity or maintain and develop their original identity. The policy should also focus on creating co-operation between Swedes and immigrants in order to increase solidarity between them as well as the opportunities for immigrants and religious minorities to influence decisions concerning their own situation.

(prop. 1975:26, p. 1)

Following the government bill and the approval by parliament, a number of major reforms took place with the purpose of improving the situation for immigrants in Sweden.166 Perhaps most importantly, the Instrument of Government was adapted in 1974, in which it was determined that ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities should be allowed to keep and develop their own culture and denominations, thereby further strengthening the situation for immigrants (1 chapter. 2 §).

In terms of non-Protestant religious communities, who were somewhat side-stepped in the beginning of the 1970s, so-called immigrant religious communities became increasingly highlighted in the late 1970s by the SFSR as they gained further representation through different national councils, such as the Orthodox and Eastern Churches Ecumenical Council (OÖKER) and the Islamic Congregations in Sweden (IFS).167 In 1980, SFRS changed their name to The

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166 These reforms include the introduction of foreign citizens receiving the municipal electoral vote (prop. 1975/76:23) as well as home language teaching for immigrant children, entitling children to receive teaching in their mother tongue in Swedish schools (prop. 1975/76:118), and a number of other measures in various areas of society.

167 The United Islamic Congregations in Sweden (FIIFS) is the oldest Islamic council and was formed in 1974. The Swedish Muslim Federation (SMF) was formed in 1982 and two years later the Islamic Cultural Center Union (ICUS) was formed.
Commission for Government Support for Faith Communities (SST),\(^{168}\) thereby shedding light on the fact that the religious landscape had become more diverse and that it was no longer mainly the Free Churches that were included in the state support to minority religious communities.\(^{169}\)

### 6.3.3. Committee on Immigration and Immigrant Policy

The immigration patterns changed considerably between the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In many ways this meant that when the 1975 immigration policy came into effect much had already changed. Other concerns than those raised in 1968 could be seen in the political debate; for example, concerns regarding the unemployment rates of those born abroad, as well as social segregation (SOU 1984:58). Consequentially, in 1980 a new government commission was appointed, the Committee on Immigration and Immigrant Policy (IPOK), to review the 1968 guidelines for regulated immigration and to recommend principles and guidelines related to future immigration policies (Dir 1980:48\(^{170}\)). In 1983, an additional term of reference (Dir 1983:39) was included, in which it was stated that the committee should also investigate and re-evaluate the measures in the immigration and minority policy, in particular regarding the goal of freedom of choice that had been set in 1975 given that it was seen as a risk that freedom of choice could out-trump central norms and values in Swedish society. A central question for the new commission was therefore if there should be clearer limits to the freedom of choice.

> The goal of freedom of choice has come to be interpreted as an acceptance of values which strongly deviates from the basic view on various issues that are expressed in Swedish legislation. It is therefore necessary to express the basic view of Swedish society in various valuation issues with greater clarity.  

*(Dir 1983:39)*

When the final report, Immigrant and Minority Politics (SOU 1984:58), was presented in 1984, a slight shift can be seen. Although it was stated that activities

\(^{168}\) Samarbetsnämnden för statligt stöd till trossamfund (SST)  
\(^{169}\) SFR thereby became more of a voluntary collaborative council. However, in order to receive state support, a requirement was a connection to SFR or a connection to a separate delegation with groups and congregations that were not part of SFR but still entitled to support.  
\(^{170}\) Both terms of references are included in appendix 1 in SOU 1984:58.
and norms that clashed with the Swedish legal system or with democratic values could not be tolerated, it was determined that this principle should be applied to immigrants in the same manner as to native Swedes and the state should still protect and support those wanting to keep their own cultural identity and give them equal rights to the Swedish population at large. However, a transition in approach can be seen. It was now no longer a specific aim to support minorities in maintaining their cultural identity long-term. Rather, maintaining a cultural identity was seen as a response to current needs, while the long-term goal was an integration into Swedish society. Interestingly, this approach and perspective was not particularly evident regarding the issue of minority religious communities.

6.3.3.1. The Extended Role of Immigrant Religious Communities

In terms of religion and religious communities, although these issues were not explicitly mentioned in the terms of reference, the committee decided to include them in the final report as it was declared that this area of religion had often been overlooked in the policy field of immigration. Also, it was argued that immigrant religious communities felt unequally treated, both compared to the Church of Sweden and compared to secular immigrant organisations.171

Religious issues and faith communities and groups have ended up on the fringes of Swedish immigration policy. This area, which in other countries has been central to migration and minority research (and in Sweden in terms of emigration to North America), has been almost completely overlooked. The survey we conducted seems to suggest that immigrant faith communities experience being negatively treated both in relation to the Church of Sweden and to the secular immigrant organisations. There does not seem to be any co-operation with the municipalities at all.

(SOU 1984:58, p. 316)

Consequentially, the committee suggested that immigrant religious communities should receive increased support similar to that of non-religious ethnic organisations, with the purpose of providing services for their members. Thereby, we can see that the equality argument is once again used as the main rationale to

171 Objectively, the economic situation was clearly unequal. In 1984, profane organisations (with 150,000 members) received 35 million SEK in public support whilst immigrant religious communities (representing 250,000 members) received 6 million SEK (DS C 1986:12).
The committee argued that the membership regulations, i.e., the requirement of having 3000 members, was too complex for immigrant communities. Not least as many of the non-Protestant congregations had an entirely different way of organising membership.
cohesive community was understood as an important resource for individual immigrants. The clear absence of the risk element in the committee’s proposals, even though the clash of norms and values had been raised as a potential risk in the terms of reference, is in many ways puzzling. In part, the reason for this may be found in the government bill following the IPOK final report (prop. 1985/86:98). When the risk aspects or prevention of risks was raised, it was in relation to ethnicity and conflicts between people with different ethnic background, and not among those with different religious backgrounds.

In a society where different groups live side by side, ethnic conflict is a latent risk. No immigration policy can be successful if it is not based on an overall effort to maintain and develop good ethnic relations and prevent tendencies towards ethnic intolerance and open conflict on ethnic grounds

\[\text{(prop. 1985/86:98, p. 21)}\]

In the government bill it was moreover proposed that the aims of the immigration policy from 1975, with the objectives of equality, freedom of choice and cooperation, should remain unchanged. However, importantly, it was added that although immigrants should be able to develop their own cultural heritage (NB there was no mention of religious heritage) this should be accomplished in accordance with the basic values of Swedish society, such as human coexistence, mutual tolerance and solidarity between people of different origins. Therefore, although the multicultural approach was still central, it was, to a degree, being questioned and implementing limits to the approach was seen as a necessity in terms of central values. Yet this perspective could not be seen regarding religious minorities, and the government agreed with IPOK’s proposal of appointing an unconditional commission with the purpose of studying the possibilities for improved support to immigrant religious communities; not least in order to solve the unequal situation that immigrant religious communities faced and to further accommodate and recognise their needs in Swedish society.

6.3.4. Support to Immigrant Religious Communities

In 1986, the resulting report, Support to Immigrant Religious Communities (DS 1986:12), was presented. Already from the outset the committee highlighted a

\[^{173}\text{Stöd till Invandramas trossamfund}\]
number of different perspectives and arguments that shed light on the important role religion could play for immigrants and the committee followed the recommendations of mainly focusing on the central role that could be played by immigrant religious communities in Swedish society.

6.3.4.1. Immigrant Religious Communities – A Resource for Identity and Community

Primarily, and in line with the previous commission, the committee highlighted the importance of what an identity-based factor such as religion could have for immigrants in their new home country. Religion was understood as being considerably more important for many immigrants compared to many in the Swedish population. Also, it was argued that Swedish immigration policy had become more generous and that the integration and assimilation of immigrants into Swedish society was a challenge that society needed to deal with. According to the committee, one possible way of dealing with this was to ensure that immigrants could easily stay connected to their religious traditions, therefore minimising the risk of not settling in Sweden.

Alienation and loss of important identity-preserving factors mean that many immigrants can neither find their place based on their own culture of origin nor be assimilated into the Swedish. Religion is a crucial element in the lives of many immigrants, also in the new culture.

*DS 1986:12, p. 5*

Consequently, it was argued that minority religious communities had a central role to play, not merely in providing identity to the individual, but also in the creation of social community. As such, the community aspect was viewed as a resource that could lead both to further cohesion within the group and facilitate further co-operation with the wider community, thus supporting integration. It was therefore perhaps not unsurprising that the commission stressed that the state and other local authorities should acknowledge them as a resource in society.

It should be in the interest of society and authorities to make better use of the positive resource that immigrants' faith communities constitute when it comes to talking to immigrants on their own terms. Faith communities constitute a hitherto unused resource and it is therefore important that immigrants' religious communities receive increased
opportunities for support in order to develop their respective members' involvement in Swedish society. This can be done, for example, by strengthening the role of minority faith communities in the interaction with the surrounding majority society.

(DS 1986:12, p.9)

Given this optimistic outlook, the committee did not highlight any particular risk aspects regarding minority religious communities. However, they did emphasise that minority religious communities themselves were faced with several risks in Swedish society and that this should be regarded as a greater problem. The committee argued that religious minorities often faced discrimination, not least due to a lack of understanding in Swedish society of the importance of religion in many immigrants’ lives. According to the committee, this had led to institutional discrimination and a passive attitude in the politics towards immigrants in questions concerning religion.

Even if Swedish society does not “persecute” immigrants in religious terms, it is still a matter of discrimination when Swedish society does not seriously address immigrants' need for religious support or remain passive in the face of immigrants' wishes for government support when seeking to establish their faith community in Sweden. Officially, Swedish society is positively inclined, but in practice, many of its representatives oppose the religious activities of immigrants through their passivity.

(DS 1996:12, p. 8)

Examples of this passive attitude was that there was a lack of recognition for religious holidays, regulations concerning religious slaughter and questions of morals such as unisex bathing hours and physical education lessons. It was also stressed that religious minorities were at times discriminated due to their more traditional values of gender and family, and the committee highlighted such tensions as illustrative examples for the need for further recognition of minority religious communities and religious minority rights in Swedish society. In order to handle immigrant religious communities, in accordance with current multicultural policies and in order to reach the immigration policy aim of equality, different proposals were put forth based on the idea of so-called affirmative action. In essence, this meant that further financial support should be given under more beneficial terms, than had previously been the case, to immigrant religious
communities. For example, support could be given to aspects other than merely religious activities (as was the case with the grant to minority religious communities more in general), establishment support, etc. It was also proposed that the support should be expanded and that both the Swedish Migration Board and municipalities should support immigrant religious communities to a greater degree with different projects and premises. Furthermore, it was argued that SST should be freed from the Free Church Council and become its own body, with all minority religious communities entitled to support being represented.

Despite this specific proposal from the committee, little action was taken following the report as the current government wanted to await the results from the Popular Movement Commission before any more concrete conclusions were drawn concerning support to immigrant religious communities. Yet, in the budget proposal for 1988/89 (prop. 1988/89:100), it was declared that extra support would be given to immigrant religious communities and that establishment grants could be given to immigrant religious communities with fewer than 3000 members. Overall, the support was proposed to be given with a hands-off approach.

6.3.5. Summary: Integration

As Sweden was becoming increasingly diverse, the main question being asked concerning integration during this period, as can be seen in both the distant and close reading, was how the state should handle this situation and accommodate the needs of immigrants staying longer in Sweden? Overall, focus was on how to solve different issues and further recognise the rights of different groups. Although so-called immigrant religious communities were considerably less highlighted in comparison to other ethnic and immigrant organisations, they became embedded in the multicultural policy developing at the time. This meant that emphasis was placed on how immigrant religious communities should be further recognised and supported in order to keep and develop their religious culture. In contrast to other minority religious communities, their role was expanded, as they were seen to play a central role in providing different social services to immigrants in Sweden. There was a total absence of any risk aspects; rather, when state support to ethnic and linguistic affiliations began to be

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174 Folkrörelsetredning
questioned towards the end of the period, there was greater emphasis to increase the support and further recognise immigrant religious communities in Swedish society.

6.4. Conclusion Chapter Six

In the following section of this chapter, the themes and tensions that have become visible through the close and distant reading will be summarised.

6.4.1. Pluralism, Tolerance and Recognition

A central starting point in many of the government documents during this period was that the Swedish population was becoming more diverse. The main question was: how should the state deal with this situation? How was the state to combat the inequality that different minority groups faced in Swedish society in comparison to the majority and how should the past discrimination now be rectified? It was in regard to these questions that the issue of minority religious communities was raised.

As shown in this chapter, the processes of secularisation and increased religious diversity were understood as irreversible processes that, in turn, made it imperative for the state to rethink how it managed the religious field. This shift is clearly illustrated by the shift of focusing mainly on the Free Churches to focusing on minority religious communities more in general, and, in particular, so-called immigrant religious communities. Interestingly, no major concerns were raised regarding the transformation of society; rather, the changes were looked upon with a sense of optimism. A diverse religious landscape was understood as a resource for Swedish society where minority religious communities, in similarity to other organisations, were understood to play a vital role by meeting religious needs, partaking in public debate and shaping a democratic society. Thereby, the foundation that was created in the previous time period, with a transition from a church-state to a religion-state relationship, became more established, an aspect that could be seen in the Church and State Commission’s final report. Compared to the previous period, however, there were no longer any visible tensions or dichotomies between the established church and minority religious communities. Instead there was a new type of rhetoric emphasising religious pluralism, tolerance, multiculturalism, equality, positive rights and the positive aspect of
religious freedom of every individual and group. In line with this, it was clear that there was to be no prioritisation of the Christian faith in Swedish society. Instead, a central aim was to protect both the individual and the collective rights of religious minorities. In this respect, we can see that the foundations that were laid for these ideals in the previous period became fully developed, albeit with one exception – in the field of education.

In the field of education, ideas such as cohesion and unity, concerning the wider community, continued to permeate the discussions. The underlying fear remained largely unchanged in relation to allowing too much diversity in the educational system, given that this could inadvertently lead to the creation of a parallel school system which, in turn, could be a threat to the cohesion of Swedish society. However, this risk was not limited nor specifically directed towards religious schools. Rather, this was in relation to all independent schools.

Despite the exception of the field of education, the main aim of many of the commissions was to combat the inequalities experienced by different minorities in Swedish society. In the religion and state category, the guiding principles were freedom of religion and democracy. The principle of democracy meant that the state’s approach to religious communities was to be guided by both the demands from the majority, as well as the demands from the minority. The freedom of religion, meanwhile, was mainly concerned with the right to religion for individuals and religious communities and that the state should treat different religious communities impartially. Also, in addition, the state should have an actively positive attitude towards religion. This affirmative attitude meant that the Church of Sweden should continue to be supported and, in order to combat and correct the inequalities facing minority religious communities, such groups should also be supported. To further delimit the disadvantaged position of minority religious communities in relation to the Church of Sweden, the government grant increased almost annually during the whole time period. Again, this clearly sheds light on how the church-state relations once again came to profoundly affect the state’s policies towards minority religious communities. It is therefore worth considering whether the policies towards minority religious communities, also during this period, were mainly dependent on how the discussions regarding the Church of Sweden developed.
Compared to the previous period, however, the discussions regarding the Church of Sweden were not the only driving factor in the relationship. In connection to the specific discussion of immigrant religious communities, one can see how the ideas of multiculturalist polices for immigrants affected both the discourse and policy outcome for minority religious communities. The principles of equality, freedom of choice and partnership meant that different affirmative actions were proposed to deal with the inequalities that immigrant religious communities faced in comparison to other organisations and religious communities. Creating more equal and non-discriminating conditions for minority religious communities was seen in both the distant and close reading, in relation to the issue of government support to minority religious communities. Financial support increased from 2 to 70 million SEK thereby clearly illustrating how the ideals and principles guiding the policies also led to practical implementations at the policy level.

Although not always clearly stated in the documents, it is evident that all of the before-mentioned principles and goals that were to guide the state’s policies towards minority religious communities were embedded in a central idea. This central idea dictated that the state should not interfere with the internal affairs of minority religious communities and have a hands-off approach. I.e., minority religious communities were to be supported, but should also be autonomous in relation to the state. This autonomy must be understood as a central underlying idea guiding the state’s policy towards minority religious communities during this period. In turn, a perspective that was most likely related to the fact that the perception of risk was largely absent.

6.4.2. The Invisible Risk Perspective

In the previous time period, several risks were raised regarding minority religious communities, not least in relation to the risk of the individual’s freedom being limited within minority religious communities, particularly so-called narrow religious communities. Interestingly, during this period such perspectives were almost non-existent, with discussions being permeated by a much more optimistic view on minority religious communities. They were no longer perceived or portrayed as a major concern but rather as important actors in Swedish society, covering the religious needs of the individual as well as providing support and
community. As important actors in Swedish society they should consequentially be both recognised and supported.

This rather dramatic shift can be related to and dependent upon different interpretations of freedom of religion. During the first period a negative interpretation of religious freedom could be seen where the individual should be freed from religious oppression. In this period, meanwhile, a more positive interpretation of religious freedom was portrayed in which it was argued that the individual and the group should have their rights to religion recognised. This positive outlook on minority religious communities is also reflected in the fact that a lack of religious freedom for the individual was not merely highlighted as a risk only within minority religious communities, but also within groups in the Church of Sweden. Such perspectives represent the overall scepticism towards distinguishing between minority religious communities and other organisations and groups. For example, independent schools in general, not religious schools, were understood as the predominant risk in negatively impacting the cohesion of society. This clearly indicates that minority religious communities were not regarded as a particular threat or risk per se. Rather, the risk of groups and individuals promoting values in conflict with the legal system was seen to be able to exist anywhere in society.

This is further exemplified in the 1968 Church and State Commission in which it was declared that the state should stay neutral to different extreme groups, in their existence as groups. However, through its laws the state did not need to remain neutral to the competing values that the extreme groups represented. Once again, this shows that the state would not accept values that were in conflict with Swedish values, regardless of group. Similar approaches can also be seen in the government bill following the IPOK proposals (prop. 1985/86:98), in which the possible risks of polarisation and conflict between different groups was raised. Such issues had started to be understood as an emerging problem and a risk connected to immigration and failed integration in society. However, it was mainly highlighted from the perspective of ethnic and cultural division, with little or no focus on religious divisions and conflicts. Overall, therefore, there was a general lack of a risk perspective during this period, rather an optimistic view of pluralism and the multicultural approach, together with a clear vision of what the division of roles between civil society and state should be.
6.4.3. The Provision of Religious Services in a Private Sphere

Although indicated in the previous period, it became even more apparent that in the process of creating an overarching public welfare system there was a clear vision that the state did not want religious communities or organisations to be involved in the provision of welfare directed towards the Swedish population. This, however, did not mean that they wanted to diminish or marginalise the importance of the role played by religious communities in society. Rather, it was thought that these communities had an important and specific role to fulfil – namely in providing religious services and covering the religious needs of the Swedish population in a private sphere. The fact that this role was seen as vital and important in Swedish society and that religious communities to such a large extent were seen as a resource, is surprising given that the secularisation paradigm, i.e., the idea that the secularisation process of society is irreversible, also permeates the discussions. The positive aspect of freedom of religion meant that the religious tasks performed by religious communities were deemed important to uphold, protect and emphasise, not least because the religious needs of every individual was understood as a natural human need. As such, in order to ensure that the whole population could be offered this, minority religious communities had an important role to fulfil. Fundamentally this assumed that religion was kept private and that religious communities did not take on any roles in the public sphere, such as offering social services to people in need. Although religious communities were not necessarily hindered in taking a social role, such roles should be clearly characterised by its religious practice and was therefore to be seen as a religious alternative, supplementary to services provided by central and local government. So-called immigrant religious communities, however, were seen to have an important role to fill in society by also providing social services to immigrants in Swedish society.

The positive and active attitude towards minority religious communities and the almost non-existent consideration of any risk aspect during this period must thereby be understood in this context. Similarly, in combination with a private view of religion, these contextual elements could also explain why the issue of minority religious communities received such limited attention during this period. However, although such elements undoubtedly contributed, it is once again
important to note that the discussions concerning the role of minority religious communities in Swedish society was strongly embedded in the discussions concerning the declining role of the Church of Sweden as a state institution. It was no longer seen as appropriate, based on the principle of freedom of religion, that the Church of Sweden still performed important societal functions and it was argued that there should be a transferral of power and an adjustment of a number of different roles between the Church of Sweden and civil authorities. As such, policies directed towards the Church of Sweden also affected the rhetoric and handling of minority religious communities.

In this perspective it is worth highlighting that immigrant religious communities were not first and foremost discussed in relation to the Church of Sweden, but primarily in relation to other immigrant organisations and this may help explain why the expectations on them became extended beyond the private religious sphere. Although the primary aim in offering financial support was to cover religious needs and provide religious service for immigrants in Sweden, during the 1980s they were also encouraged to take on an expanded role in providing social and cultural activities for their members and, not least, providing a sense of community for the individual immigrant.

6.4.4. The Good Community

In the previous time period, it was clear that an idea existed where the state should liberate the individual (especially children) from minority religious communities. This was particularly true of minority religious communities that represented a narrow type of community and a hot religiosity. Instead, openness to the wider community was emphasised. During this period the perspective changed as a more communal ideal of religious communities was emphasised and minority religious communities were perceived as having a central role in providing and offering community as well as a communal relationship for the individual. Rather than focusing on the risk of the community, it was emphasised that in a changing society, with increased diversity and urbanisation, people would have an increased need for community. Minority religious communities, together with other organisations, could offer this to society by bringing individuals together into communal relationships. Rather than viewing the group as a factor that the individual must be protected from; the group and community were now
prioritised ahead of the individual. The general rhetoric, therefore, was that the rights of groups should not be overlooked. Coupled with this was the overall idea that minority religious communities should be autonomous and free in internal affairs, thereby ensuring freedom of religion for religious communities.

This communitarian ideal is particularly visible in terms of the role of immigrant religious communities. These religious communities were seen as having a central role in providing support and community for immigrants in Sweden and providing their members with a sense of identity whereby the communal aspect was viewed as a central part of integrating immigrants into Swedish society. As such, the social cohesion within the group was not regarded as a threat to the social cohesion in the society at large, as was the case in the first time period, but rather as a tool that could create improved relations between the minority and majority. Only in education was there a clearer emphasis on the wider community ahead of the community aspect offered by minority religious communities.

### 6.4.5. Concluding Remarks

In summary, although differing to the first period in many ways, the church-state arrangement continued to deeply affect the state's handling of minority religious communities, although in a less visible and outspoken manner. Rather, the path dependency existed as an underlying, often implicit foundation for decisions and principles that consequentially affected minority religious communities, even though this was not always intentional. Importantly, the handling of minority religious communities also became increasingly embedded in a multicultural immigration policy. The overall governing approach, in particular towards the end of the period, was characterised by the sustained and extensively positive approach where religious diversity was understood as something that was to be culturally valued and protected in Swedish society. Not least, this was illustrated by the continuous annual increases of unconditional government grants to minority religious communities in general, and in particular to immigrant religious communities.

In the final decade of the 20th century, the topic of minority religious communities, that had been relatively absent from the political agenda, started to receive new attention. Due to economic setbacks in Swedish society, this was a time of considerable policy changes in a number of areas, as well as a deregulation and decentralisation that would also come to affect minority religious communities. During the same period, the separation between the Church of Sweden and the state started to become a reality and in 2000, after years of political negotiation, the two separated. Simultaneously, particularly after the turn of the century, religion started to receive new attention as a result of an increase of terrorism on religious grounds, not least after the 9/11 attacks, but also as a consequence of controversies concerning the perceived conflict between religion and freedom of speech. Also, as immigration continued from non-European countries, the multicultural approach that had already begun to be questioned during the late 1980s was now being intensely challenged. With such a multifaceted contextual background, the question is: how did this influence the perception of minority religious communities and how did the state’s approach towards these groups change? Specifically, did these changes in society lead to an increased engagement or further regulation of minority religious communities?

7.1. State and Religion

In the studied government documents within the category of state and religion a crucial difference can be seen compared to previous periods. Rather than the issue of minority religious communities being included in documents primarily concerning church and state relations, a transition can be seen. Specifically, documents and commissions were more directly related to either the issue of minority religious communities or the Church of Sweden. As such, the documents included in this category are less related to the Church of Sweden compared to previous time periods.
The strongest theme in the state and religion category during this period is **Faith Communities** (rather than **Church** as in the two previous periods), while the second strongest theme is **Church**. An interesting difference between these two main themes is that they shed light on two different perspectives. The theme of **Faith Communities** (that here primarily refers to minority religious communities) first and foremost concerns the relationship between the state and minority religious communities and what the state should do. Questions that were asked were, for example, how should the future support to minority religious communities be shaped? Should the state’s support be through the collection of fees or traditional government grants? What conditions and objectives should be connected to the support? Should there be a requirement of maintaining the central values of Swedish society? Contrasted to the previous time periods, focus was not on leading principles, but rather on objectives for support and whether limitations could be included regarding who should be supported.

In the theme of **Church**, the perspective is rather different. Focus is more on the relationship between state and church that was about to end and, therefore, it is a more internalised perspective. For example, how should the Church of Sweden be organised in the future? What will the position and identity of the church be when the relationship changes? Therefore, although the Church and minority religious community issues were discussed in the same documents (in similarity

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<th>Theme: <strong>Faith Communities</strong> (<em>trossamfund</em>)</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Concepts: religious communities, state, support, business, government, form communities, basic, values, religious, government grants, contributions, SST, people, society, future, fee assistance, counseling, long-term basis, requirements, maintain, uppbördshjälp, vitality, interest, goal</td>
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<th>Theme: <strong>Church</strong> (<em>kyrkan</em>)</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Concepts: church, Church of Sweden, law, parishes, ecclesiastical, provisions, tasks, dioceses, organisation, belong, church meeting, principle, property, relationship change, position, communities, order, connection, identity, consideration, cease, mission</td>
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<td>Concepts: government agency, issues, government, fees, conditions, opportunity, regulations, help, parliament, legal, perception, rights</td>
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<td>Concepts: associations, economic, Sweden, Swedish, members, non-profit, purpose, pay, needs, local</td>
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to previous time periods) and thereby interrelated, the discussions concerning the two differ. Not least, this is true regarding the relationship to the state, given that the church-state relationship was about to end while the relationship between state and religious communities was developing in the opposite direction.

The third theme, \emph{Government Agency}, is strongly related to the first theme given that the specific issue was which government agency (SS\T, as seen in the first theme) were to be responsible for handling the support towards minority religious communities. For example, who should distribute the government grant to minority religious communities and deal with any questions related to the support? Should it be an administrative authority or the government? Who should the state help in collecting fees? The fourth theme, \emph{Association}, is not primarily concerned with the issue of support. Rather, it concerns the discussion of the new legal form for minority religious communities and whether they should be able to be registered as faith communities. As such, the discussions regarding a special legal form that had been dismissed by the government in 1951, as it was understood to be an assault on the freedom of religion, was once again discussed.

As is clear, the four main themes in the distant reading all relate to distinct practical issues in the changing relations between church and state as well as religion and state. Also, at least in regard to minority religious communities, the state was increasingly becoming an actor in this field. Finally, in the previous periods the discussions of principles were of primary interest and debate. Now, however, there was a sense of practical urgency in how different issues in the field of religion were to be solved.

\section{7.1.1. The Appointment of the State and Religious Communities Commission}

The primary focus in the state and religion category in this chapter are the commissions that were included in the overarching State and Religious Communities Commission\footnote{Staten och Trossamfunden} that was appointed in 1995. Before looking closer at these commissions there is a need to describe and discuss the political debates that led to the appointment of the State and Religious Communities Commission. In particular, such a discussion is needed in order to understand why the issue of
minority religious communities was once again included in church-state discussions after being largely absent in any of the commissions appointed from the mid-1970s onwards.

It was not until the ERK Commission published their final report (SOU 1992:9)\textsuperscript{176} in 1992 that the topic of minority religious communities was once again highlighted in a church-state commission. The ERK Commission had been appointed in 1989 after the Church meeting necessitated that the government should appoint a new commission to inquire about the economic and legal conditions for the Church of Sweden and thereafter present different possible alternatives regarding how the future relationship between church and state should develop. It was in relation to the discussions regarding how the future relationship between church and state should be solved and how the principle of freedom of religion should be understood, that the state’s relationship with other minority religious communities was once again included in the discussion, albeit to a very limited extent.

Despite the brevity, the discussions that took place give an important insight into the fact that the principles and ideals guiding the policies towards minority religious were changing. This was not least evident in the discussions concerning the principle of freedom of religion. Overall, the ERK commission can be seen to have applied a more cautious approach to the principle of freedom of religion. For example, it was argued that the principle of religion should only be understood as one possible starting point for guiding the discussions regarding church-state relations. Other societal changes such as the process of secularisation, increased religious pluralism and the state’s neutrality in issues regarding different life-philosophies, were also suggested for consideration and given weight to in the discussions. The main criticism for letting the principle of freedom of religion be a leading starting point was based in the complexity regarding an agreement on how the principle should be understood and implemented in issues relating to both the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities.

The obvious difficulties which are undoubtedly associated with a broader definition of the concept of religious freedom, show, with all

\textsuperscript{176} Ekonomi och Rätt i kyrkan: slutbetänkande
too great a clarity, that too much room can be left for subjective and somewhat irrelevant values, which do not really have to do with religious freedom as such.

(SOU 1992:9, p. 263)

As a solution, the committee advocated that the principle of freedom of religion was to be understood from a much more basic perspective compared to the 1968 State and Church Commission. Specifically, every citizen should be given the freedom to practice his or her religion alone or together with others, as well as be protected from being obligated to express religious views or belong to a religious community. In turn, this meant that the broader and more positively charged understanding of the principle of freedom of religion that had pervaded the previous period was changing. It was, for example, argued that although the equal and impartial treatment of different religious communities was desirable, it could be associated with certain difficulties in deciding how such a principle should be formulated and applied in practice. The strive for equal treatment of religious communities was therefore suggested to not be pushed too far as it would be impossible to accomplish an entirely equal treatment of different religious communities, not least as the Church of Sweden was characterised as being a folkkyrka both from a practical and a principle point of view.

Although the committee argued that it was impossible for the state to be totally impartial towards different religious communities, which in turn should be understood in relation to the commission’s primary aim which was to investigate the future relationship between state and church, it was still maintained that it was important to enable similar working conditions for different religious communities. It was, therefore, argued that the state could take an active role in supporting minority religious communities who were already entitled to governments grants, for example through the process of collecting fees. Importantly, it is evident that minority religious communities were not centre stage of any discussion. Rather, any policy recommendations concerning minority religious communities were predominantly based on the state’s desire to maintain the continued support of the Church of Sweden.
Shortly after ERK presented their final report, a new parliamentary commission, the Church Council, was appointed to continue the work that had been started by ERK. In the terms of reference for the new commission it was stated that the main task would be to review the state regulation of the Church of Sweden’s position, organisation and finances. No mention was made of minority religious communities (Dir. 1992:45). However, as a result of the referral process of ERK’s final report, several representatives from minority religious communities highlighted the importance of including the issue of minority religious communities and emphasised the importance of setting some fundamental rules and regulations in the legal framework concerning the relationship between the state and religious communities. As a result, the newly appointed Church Council’s committee stated that the legal and economic situation of minority religious communities should be included in the final report. Also, the name, The State and Religious Communities (SOU 1994:42), should reflect this widened focus. However, in the final report, minimal attention was given to organisations other than the Church of Sweden.

In line with previous time periods, it was declared in the commission that Sweden needed to deal with a situation of an increasingly diverse country with a changing religious landscape, not only due to increased immigration but also due to globalisation more generally. Therefore, it was declared that the state’s future relationship with religious communities should be characterised by remaining as neutral as possible towards different religious communities and keeping a positive attitude to religious activities whilst simultaneously also protecting the right not to partake in religious activities. This change, from speaking of religion and religious communities as entities to focusing on religious activities, is particularly interesting and noteworthy. By highlighting activities and the social function of these, such as the instrumental role of minority religious communities and what they could contribute with to society, rather than the strictly religious role, it is possible to ascertain a shift in the expectations of the role of minority religious communities in Swedish society.

We believe that from the state's point of view, even today there are reasons to be positive about religious activities, e.g. with regard to its

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177 Kyrkoberedningen
178 For a summary of the referrals see SOU 1994:42.
significant social function. However, this should be done with respect for the citizens who, for their part, distance themselves from religious activities.

(SOU 1994:42, p. 11)

Despite placing importance on the equality between different religious communities, the committee was not led by any certain principles, such as the principle of freedom of religion, or neutrality. One reason for this could be the special position of the Church of Sweden and Christianity that, according to the committee, was to be protected, given the role it had played, and continued to play. It was also stated that the Church of Sweden should have somewhat of a prioritised position, compared to minority religious communities, not least to ensure that the Church of Sweden continued to be an open, democratic and nationwide folkkyrka. It should be treated differently and be regulated under public law in the event of a separation.

Therefore, despite the initial intention of an equal treatment of all religious communities, two different legal frameworks were suggested in the event of separation – one for the Church of Sweden and one for minority religious communities. For minority religious communities, the legal entity status became “registered faith communities” and would be regulated through the so-called Faith Community Act, thereby guaranteeing constitutional safeguards. However, despite proposing different legal frameworks, it was suggested that minority religious communities should be offered the same opportunities as the Church of Sweden, for example in the support of collecting membership fees.

In the referral process following the commission’s final report, many organisations and councils were active (Ds 1995:34). Although a majority of the referral comments in part or fully agreed, criticism was also raised. From minority religious communities, criticism was related to the fact that different legal regulations were to be applied to the Church of Sweden and other religious communities. From the perspective of freedom of religion, it was viewed as

179 It was suggested that the Church of Sweden should be given its own legal entity, separated from the state and municipality, and that parishes and other parochial associations would be ecclesiastical local municipalities. The position of the Church of Sweden was suggested to be redefined by public law through the Constitution Act and in a particular the Church of Sweden Act. This act was proposed to include all the requirements and responsibilities for both the Church of Sweden and the state.
unacceptable that one particular religious community, the Church of Sweden, would receive special treatment regarding their relationship with the state. In a statement from SST and SFR it was argued that the proposal meant that neither freedom of religion nor neutrality of the state could be fulfilled (Ds 1995:34). Despite the considerable criticism, the political debate that followed mainly focused on the proposed separation between church-state, while the issue of minority religious communities received less attention. However, this was perhaps unsurprising as the separation of state and church was, from a historical perspective, a major societal change.

On the 8th of December 1995, a historical agreement was reached with support of both the parliament and the Church of Sweden180 after almost 40 years of debate. In the so-called 1995 Principle Decision it was stated that the state and Church should be separated on the 1st of January 2000 and that a new special legal entity for minority religious communities should be created (rskr. 1995/96:84). Regarding minority religious communities, it was stated by KU that the decision that the state would have different relationships with the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities was not in conflict with neither the positive nor the negative principle of freedom of religion, not least given that minority religious communities would also be constitutionally protected (1995/96: KU12). Thereby, the different treatment of the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities was to continue. As a result of the Principle Decision, it was clear that there would be a number of issues in need of further investigation before the final reforms were implemented. As such, the government appointed four different government commissions181 under the umbrella name The State and Religious Communities Commission (Dir 1995:162).182 Amongst the issues they

180 Following the referral process there were heated discussions between the government and the Centre Party, who had originally opposed the proposal. Yet, in 1994, consensus between all parties was found (Ekström, 2003). In 1995, the government submitted their proposal to the Church Meeting that was later approved (RegSkr 1995:1, prop. 1995/96:80). The proposal predominantly followed the Church Council Commission recommendations concerning the Church of Sweden and Minority religious communities.

181 Utredningen om trossamfundens rättsliga reglering, Begravningsverksamhetskommittén, Kommittén angående det kyrkliga kulturarvet och Utredningen om kyrkans personal och om samfundsstöd

182 A number of different committees and inquiry chairs were to be appointed to lead the work. The whole process was also connected to a specific organisation with representatives from different groups, including religious communities that were also to be included in the dialogue concerning the proposals. Overall, it was stressed that the results should be anchored in a “broad democratic process”.

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would inquire into was the new legislative form for minority religious communities and the new regulations concerning government support.

7.1.2. The State and Religious Communities Commission

In the terms of reference, it was stated that the need to change the relationship between church and state, as well as gain further equality between different religious communities, originated in the fact that Swedish society had become more multicultural and religious diverse with a growing value-pluralism183 (Dir. 1995:162). Consequentially, not only the state but also religious communities were required to adapt to the changing societal conditions.

The changes are particularly clear in certain parts of the metropolitan areas where immigrants make up a significant proportion of the population. There is reason to assume that this relationship remains and that the affiliation with the Church of Sweden in some places will be relatively low, while in other places a high proportion of the inhabitants will continue to belong to the Church of Sweden. For the Church of Sweden, the immigrant religious communities and the Free Churches, this places a demand for an increased adaptation to the changed conditions.

(Dir 1995:162)

The optimism that could been seen in the previous time period, therefore, had to some extent been replaced by an awareness that society was changing and there was clearly a more restrained approach towards minority religious communities. Despite an ambition to create equal working conditions for the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities, it was nevertheless proposed that the new commission should look further into the motives and conditions that would be set for minority religious communities to attain government support.

183 Värdepluralism
The commission shall consider what motives exist for the state support to religious communities other than the Church of Sweden. Based on these motives, the commission shall propose the conditions that should be set for state support to religious minority communities and in what form the state support should take.

( Dir. 1995:162)

While conditions had been set before, such as in relation to the size of the religious community, this statement would fundamentally change the political discourse concerning minority religious communities from this point onwards. The work of the new commission was not to be grounded in any principles, such as the principle of freedom of religion, as had previously been the case, but in motives, objectives and conditions.

7.1.2.1. A New Legal Form for Minority Religious Communities

One of the commissions under the umbrella of the State and Religious Communities was the Commission on Legal Regulation of Faith Communities. This commission was appointed to further examine the legal and constitutional regulations for the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities following the separation in 2000. In practice this meant that the commission was to propose how the new acts were to be designed and formulated as well as recommend regulations in order to create stable and long-term conditions for all religious communities. The overall emphasis was that considerable attention should be placed on the needs of the religious communities and the commission, led by an inquiry chair, published its final report, The State and Religious Communities: Legal Regulations, in 1997 (SOU 1997:41). The principle of freedom of religion was set as a starting point as it was argued that the principle, through the Instrument of Government, had a strong position in Swedish society. Also, this premise was motivated by the fact that the principle was in line with international regulations concerning human rights, the importance of which had been strengthened in Sweden as a consequence of the incorporation of the

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184 Utredningen om trossamfundens rättsliga reglering
185 For the full terms of reference see SOU 1997:47
186 Staten och Trossamfunden: Rättslig Reglering

It was proposed that the two new acts (one concerning the Church of Sweden and one concerning Faith Communities) should be constitutionally protected from legislative changes. The new act concerning minority religious communities was to contain 16 paragraphs where the first four had the character of religious freedom legislation and therefore replaced the 1951 Freedom of Religion Act. In the proposed constitutional change, both the positive and negative aspects of freedom of religion were raised and the religious freedom for children was further strengthened (it was proposed that children over 12, who belonged to a religious community, should have his or her own views and wishes respected and increasingly considered). The definition of faith community was also reformulated and defined as a “community” (rather than association) for religious activities which included the practice of organising worship. Whilst not stated, the concept of worship was suggested to be understood as inclusive and adapted to the new religious landscape in Sweden, meaning that both meditation and other forms of prayer could be included.

Crucially, in order to provide acceptable working conditions and as equal conditions as possible for different religious communities, in line with the 1995 Principle Decision, a new legal form was proposed for “faith communities”. The new organisational form was to be inclusive and open for all old and new religious groups in Sweden that had a number of different ways of organising themselves through a number of varied organisational forms. A central aim was to open up for all religious communities who organised some type of religious service to have a common legal form that could distinguish them from non-religious groups and unify them. Given the diversity, it was suggested that in order to become registered as a faith community, only a few minimum requirements regarding organisational structure should be met. It was argued that it should “not be possible to exclude certain religious communities from the opening provided by the new legal status” (SOU 1997:41, p. 125), as this would conflict with ECHR.

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187 The elements concerning the individual’s right to and from religion from the 1951 Freedom of Religion Act was suggested to be repealed as the freedom of religion was now also found in the second chapter of Instrument of Government (SFS 1974:152) as well as in other laws such as in the Code of Conduct (SFS1993:1617).

188 *Gemenskap*
Although it was highlighted that this would also open up for sectarian movements, this was not regarded as a risk, because “a crime that is generally punishable is not protected simply because it occurs in a religious context” (SOU 1997:41, p.142).

Whilst the new legal form was designed to improve the working conditions for minority religious communities, most rights, such as performing marriages, did not require the organisation to become registered as a faith community. However, in accordance with the Principle Decision in 1995 (prop. 1995/96:80), it was suggested that only registered faith communities were entitled to apply for further support by the state, such as the collection of fees from members – in similarity to the Church of Sweden.\(^{189}\) Importantly, although all minority religious communities were able to be registered, this did not mean that they would automatically be entitled to state support. Rather, while a minority religious community that became registered as a faith community would have minimal restrictions, a registered faith community that wanted to be entitled to government grants would be exposed to further regulations and government engagement.

### 7.1.2.2. A Tool for the Common Good

In January 1996, an inquiry chair, together with an advisory board, was appointed to lead the commission that would look further into the support of minority religious communities. One of the purposes was to propose new conditions and motives for government grants to faith communities as well as suggest possible taxation statuses for them. In April 1997, the final report, The State and Religious Communities - Support, Taxes and Funding\(^{190}\) (SOU 1997:45), was presented.\(^{191}\)

Interestingly, compared to previous commissions, there was no longer a focus on what principles should guide the support. Instead, focus was result- and objective-oriented. The principle of freedom of religion was only vaguely mentioned and

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\(^{189}\) It was proposed that a government agency, such as the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency, should be responsible for the formalities in terms of registration as well as being in charge of the state’s assignments to religious communities regarding the right to officiate marriage ceremonies. SST, meanwhile, were to be responsible for distributing grants.

\(^{190}\) Staten och trossamfunden - Stöd, skatter och finansiering

\(^{191}\) Interestingly, although the commission was created in co-operation and in dialogue with other actors, the report had a distinctly personal approach and was entirely written in first person. This also explains the difference in tone from the previous reports presented in previous chapters.
when highlighted it was primarily from the perspective of the importance of freedom of choice and freedom of religion for the individual. The freedom of religion for religious communities was largely ignored. This meant that the original motive for supporting minority religious communities, i.e., gaining further equality between different religious communities, was now largely dismissed.

A first condition, of course, is that religious freedom is respected. But that does not mean more than that the state must remain neutral to the individual's choices regarding worldview and community. Today, active state support is given to many faith communities, but not to all. This can be perceived as unfair but is compatible with religious freedom because the individual has full freedom of choice.

(SOU 1997:45, p. 29)

Overall, the idea that the support should be embedded in the needs of the minority religious communities themselves was understood as problematic by the inquiry chair. Although it was argued that “there is no doubt that religious communities have use for the state subsidies they receive today” (SOU 1997:45, p.46) and that many minority religious communities could be regarded as central resources in Swedish society by, for example, offering people who had immigrated to Sweden an important link between the individual’s heritage and the new life in Sweden, it was stated that “when deciding whether state subsidies should be provided, the needs of religious communities cannot be taken as a starting point” (SOU 1997:45, p. 46). Instead, it was proposed that the starting point should be what minority religious communities could do for the common good and the wider society. The support, therefore, should be rooted in what the state wanted minority religious communities to contribute to. Although the needs and priorities of the state and the needs of minority religious communities did not necessarily have to stand in conflict with each other, support would be given to those aligned with the state priorities.

In terms of what contributing to the common good of the society would imply, it was clear that minority religious communities were no longer seen as merely actors involved in religious activities. Rather, they were to be understood as social actors solving different social problems present in Swedish society. This proposed widened social role could, for example, include facilitating the integration of people into Swedish society, raising people’s ethical awareness, providing their
members with education in democracy, organising social initiatives for homeless people, supporting individuals in crisis, etc. Crucially, the underlying view was that minority religious communities had specific capabilities that could be of use to society at large.

Other examples of concrete social problems where many faith communities can make particularly important contributions are acute crises, poverty and disease. Faith communities can usually act quickly and unbureaucratically, and there is knowledge and experience that is valuable when dealing with people facing adversity. Furthermore, there is access to solidarity and helpfulness.

(SOU 1997:45, p. 51)

As illustrated in the quote above, there was a clear shift from the previous period. Minority religious communities were now understood as resources that could combat different social problems and be of use to the state. By rewarding and further including some minority religious communities, on the basis that they were beneficial to society, whilst also excluding others, this perspective meant that the state, to a certain degree, could further shape the role of minority religious communities in society by using funding as a tool. With a focus on the instrumental role and public capacities of minority religious communities, rather than on their basic task of offering religious service, these functions could be set as a prerequisite for support.

A faith community can sometimes be particularly well placed to solve a tangible social problem of some kind. Should the state find it important to remedy the problem in question, it can be cost-effective to provide financial support to that religious community for that particular purpose. Importantly, the problems that are current vary over time.

(SOU 1997:45, p. 50)

Although the instrumental role of solving different social problems meant that considerable focus was placed on the resource perspective of minority religious communities, as is clear from the discussions above, the risk perspective permeated the report. Specifically, many of the social problems that minority religious communities were asked to solve were, in fact, problems that often could exist within the religious communities themselves. In line with this, it was also stated that it would be an obvious risk to not apply a clear result-oriented
approach as this could lead to the support of minority religious communities that were “inhumane or contrary to our legal system” (SOU 1997:45, p. 54).

While several objectives were presented as possible ways of deciding whether a minority religious community should be supported, a few basic conditions for support were set. First, minority religious community were to provide spiritual support to people. Second, and in stark contrast to what had previously been argued regarding immigrant religious communities, newly started religious communities should initially not be entitled to support. Lastly, in order to make it possible to exclude religious communities that were understood as problematic, it was a necessity that those who were granted support should demonstrate an awareness of ethical issues. It was argued that minority religious communities that, for example, did not live up to the conditions and objectives of giving comfort and support to individuals within a minority religious community, could risk causing more harm than good and thereby be a potential threat to the social cohesion of the wider community. Therefore, they should be excluded from support. In order to only support minority religious communities contributing to the common good of society, it was argued that the government should decide which religious communities should be entitled to government grants. SST would remain as a “grant-distributing authority” and it was suggested that all grant-eligible minority religious communities should be give basic support in the form of either collecting fees or receiving an organisational grant in order to perform their core role in offering religious service. This basic support would be considerably smaller than the then-existing organisational support and it was argued that more objective-oriented grants should be given to all religious communities, including the Church of Sweden. As such, the type and level of support could vary over time, depending on what social problems the state identified and what support minority religious communities needed in order to help resolve these issues and problem.

At face value these suggestions are obviously a considerable shift from the previous period. However, the shift must be understood in the context of greater changes between state and civil society. The move towards a more objective- and result-oriented focus was already apparent in state-funded activities (prop. 1993/94:150) and applied to organisations in civil society, not least in order to have further insight into how the support was used, as well as giving organisations
an opportunity to show the value of their work (DS 1997:36). In the report Result Management of Association Grants (DS 1997:36), different types of grants had been proposed; organisational grants, activity grants and project grants, all of which would have different levels of steering from the state. It was also suggested that different criteria should be formulated depending on whether there were particular regulations for the support (as was the case for minority religious communities). Given the development of an increased result-oriented approach towards other organisations in civil society, the shift presented in the commission concerning government grant to minority religious communities (SOU 1997:45) is therefore more understandable, and the change can be understood as less dramatic.

7.1.2.3. Criticism and the Appointment of a New Commission

Despite this, the commission’s (SOU 1997:45) proposals received massive criticism in the referral process, not least from the Free Churches and SST (KU 1999/934/Ky). The criticism was predominantly concerned with the result-oriented approach and the requirement of having to be beneficial to society in order to obtain government support. The lack of any importance being placed on the autonomy of religious communities was also criticised, as well as the lowered organisational grant that was meant to support their core functions of offering religious service to their members.

As a result of the criticism, a new committee was appointed in 1998, only two years before the separation between the church and state with the goal of proposing a design for the future support of minority religious communities. From the outset, in the terms of reference, it was clear that support was not to be given unconditionally. Apart from being organisationally stable, minority religious communities should, in their work, show respect for human dignity and participate in forming the norms of society, in accordance with the democratic principles. What this would entail in regard to the required objectives, was up to the committee to decide. Focus was therefore once again not on how the government grant to minority religious communities was to be given in a similar manner to the funding of the Church of Sweden. Instead, focus for the newly

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192 Resultatstyning av Föreningsbidrag  
193 Prememoria 1998-03-12 Kulturdepartementet  
194 The terms of reference can be found in Ds 1999:2, p. 93
appointed committee was on how minority religious communities could be simultaneously regulated and supported in relation to the common values of Swedish society. As such, although the policy recommendations presented in the Commission on the Church’s Staff and Community Support (SOU 1997:45) were opposed and ignored, they had a considerable impact on the forthcoming discourse and, in turn, the governance of minority religious communities.

7.1.2.4. Strengthening the Fundamental Values as a Condition for Support

Although the underlying perception of minority religious communities was not dissimilar from the previous report (SOU 1997:45), the report State Support to Other Religious Communities Other than the Church of Sweden\textsuperscript{195} (Ds 1999:12) that was presented in 1999 did differ in some respects. Specifically, the tone was more formal, and it was less focused on the resulted-oriented approach. Also, from the outset, the overall objectives and conditions for minority religious communities were stated; government grants should be given to “improve the conditions for religious communities to conduct an active and long-term focused religious activity in the form of worship, teaching and care” (DS 1999:12, p. 14). Compared to the previous report, the foundational role of providing religious service was therefore once again a central aim of the support. Yet, the formulation also differed to the conditions that were set in the beginning of the 1970s when the grant was aimed towards economically weak congregations. Now, focus was on supporting minority religious communities long-term and not merely in relation to religious service but also religious activities. Regarding the proposed conditions, there were similarities to the current condition; namely that minority religious communities should be organisationally stable and have a life force of its own\textsuperscript{196} in order to obtain government grants. Importantly, however, a new condition was added, namely that minority religious communities should contribute to maintaining and strengthening the fundamental values of Swedish society.\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{195} Statens stöd till andra trossamfund än Svenska kyrkan
\textsuperscript{196} This constituted continuously running an operation in Sweden for at least five years (although new congregations could be supported for integration purposes) and having at least 3000 members (for those with fewer members, organizational grants could be achieved through councils)
\textsuperscript{197} However, despite being included as a new condition for faith communities in order to receive funding, it was not implemented in the budget proposal until 2004.
In order to fully understand what this new condition meant and how it was to be controlled, there is a need to look closer at the underlying motives that were presented as to why minority religious communities should be supported. Even though there was a very limited discussion regarding the principle of freedom of religion, the committee maintained that this was one of the primary motives for supporting minority religious communities. Specifically, it was stated in the Instrument of Government that the rights of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities should be promoted in order to provide opportunities for preserving and developing their specific cultural and social life (1 chapter. 2 §). A second motive was also presented without any further ideological consideration or discussion. This motive, based on the 1995 Principle Decision (prop.1995/96:80), stated that similar working conditions to the Church of Sweden should be given to minority religious communities. While the first two motives were founded in principles, the third motive, that was also set as a condition, was concerned with the impact minority religious communities could have in public life. In particular, what impact they could have on the public good. The committee argued that government grants to minority religious communities could be motivated by the fact that minority religious communities (at least often), in similarity to organisations in civil society, could be beneficial to society as they contributed to maintaining and strengthening the fundamental values of society.

Religious communities, together with other good forces, participate in the ongoing standardisation process that is necessary in order to maintain and strengthen the fundamental values on which our society is built on. (...) The fact that different ideologies and faiths, which work to maintain, strengthen and develop the democratic state, are given good opportunities to assert themselves is therefore of great importance to the vitality of Swedish democracy.

(Ds 1999:12, p. 38)

Interestingly, whilst the quote above has many similarities to the democracy argument put forth in proposing government grants to minority religious communities by the 1968 State and Church Commission, there is a crucial difference. In the 1968 commission, it was claimed that it was vital for the Swedish democracy that different faiths were given equal opportunities to engage in society and partake in the public debate. In the quote above, on the other hand, it is stated that minority religious communities are important for Swedish democracy as they
maintain, uphold and develop the common, existing values of society. This clearly illustrates a shift in the discourse in which although minority religious communities were clearly described as one of many good forces in society, the question arises whether this was dependent upon whether they worked in line with the values of the wider society.

In order to assess what minority religious communities could do to strengthen the fundamental values and be beneficial to society, the committee presented a long list of examples. It was stated that they must oppose all forms of racism, discrimination, violence and brutality, as well as “distance themselves from anti-democratic currents in society” (Ds 1999:12, p. 45). They were also required to ensure further equality between women and men. Regarding their members, minority religious communities “should ensure that members are guided by ethical principles that are consistent with society’s fundamental values” and make sure their “members participate in society” (Ds 1999:12, p. 45).

Although the state supported minority religious communities through the offer of government grants, the support was clearly heavily conditioned and the social problems that minority religious communities were asked to help solve were often issues that were seen to exist or that could arise within the communities themselves. As such, although framed as a resource and in a positively charged perspective, the underlying motives were decisively more risk-based. By again framing the risks in a resource perspective and attaching financial support to solutions, the state could manage groups that could otherwise, if purely a risk rhetoric was used, be potentially isolated and out of state control. Interestingly, the potential exclusion of minority religious communities from government grants was not regarded as a constraint against the freedom of religion.

In this context, it should be emphasised that should a faith community be judged as not meeting the conditions set for state subsidies, that cannot, in itself, be considered to constitute a restriction on the constitutionally protected freedom of religion. This freedom should not alone justify any right to a state subsidy, but the proposed conditions must be in place in order for the state subsidy to be granted.

(DS 1998:12 p. 44)
Although the new conditions clearly indicated a tougher rhetoric from the state, it was simultaneously argued that the criteria should be viewed as formal conditions given that the freedom of religion hindered the government from questioning the teachings or confessions of a minority religious community. From a practical perspective, this would make it difficult to determine whether conditions were followed or not. It could therefore be argued that the formulated conditions for support came to shape the religious field more from the perspective of changes in rhetoric than on changes in regulations.

The requirements that are set should primarily be of a formal nature, but there should also be an examination of how the faith community relates to society's fundamental values. However, this must not mean that there are any closer examinations and evaluations of the teachings of the faith community.

(Ds 1999:12, p. 41)

The overall expectation of minority religious communities was that they should take on a more civic role in which they contributed to society, for example by taking an active role in crises and disasters, rather than merely providing service for their own members (although this role was also highlighted, not least regarding the provision of identity and a social community for the individual). Concerning more practical and formal issues, a discussion was held in the report regarding what form the grant should be given, particularly due to the criticism that had been raised in the referral process following the previous report (SOU 1997:45). It was proposed that the support should predominantly be given as an organisational grant given that the primary aim of the grant was to support core activities, as well as a continuation of operational grants in order for the state to support, for example, pastoral care. Likewise, project grants were viewed as important, for example, in order to support and educate leaders in immigrant religious communities. Returning to the above-mentioned conditions, it was stated that these extra grants should not be regarded as problematic as long as the religious communities agreed with the state concerning the objectives of the activity. As a result, it was proposed that from the 1st of January 2000 minority religious communities should be entitled to both organisational, activity and
project grants, as well as help in receiving support through taxation or the collection of fees provided that they fulfilled the conditions of the support.\textsuperscript{198}

Connected to SST there should also be a particular council with representatives from different minority religious communities where issues relating to the grant could be discussed. In addition to this council, it was suggested that a forum was created that could be a link between minority religious communities and the state and where common issues of interest could be discussed. In many ways this was one of the clear signs that the state wanted to cooperate more closely with minority religious communities. Compared to previous reports and commissions, it was no longer promoted that the state should hand out grants without any relationship with the religious communities or without any type of regulation regarding whom would obtain the support.

\textbf{7.1.3. The Outcome of the State and Religious Communities Commission}

Based on the committee’s submitted proposals (DS 1999:12), the government proposed that the grants should be given predominantly in the form of organisational grants in order to promote the autonomy of the religious community. Yet, the proposed conditions were accepted in order to have further control of who was supported.\textsuperscript{199} The following statement sums up the government’s perception and stance regarding the government grant.

\begin{quote}
The objective of the grant to faith communities shall be to contribute to the creation of favourable conditions to enable an active and established faith community through worship, pastoral care, teaching and benevolence. Support should only be provided to faith communities that contribute to maintaining and strengthening society’s fundamental values and that are stable and have their own vitality. According to the Government’s assessment, the majority of the state subsidy should be
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{198} Practically, it was suggested that financial support to minority religious communities should be granted through an application process, controlled by SST, where every application was to be evaluated individually.

\textsuperscript{199} However, the government declined the committee’s proposal that it should be stated in law what other activities and projects a minority religious community can be supported in conducting, such as pastoral care and other activities that meet the urgent needs of society.
\end{footnotesize}
given in the form of organisational subsidies. The government shall decide which faith communities that can receive support


While the majority of the consultative bodies had no objections to the proposals in the referral process, The Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency\(^{200}\) criticised the specific condition that minority religious communities were to contribute to maintaining and strengthening the fundamental values of society.\(^{201}\) They put forth that the wording of the conditions was too vague and may result in many religious communities who previously had received government grants now being excluded. The criticism was rejected with the government stating that there were “good reasons not to state the conditions for the grant more specifically” \((prop. 1998/99:124, p. 66)\),\(^{202}\) for example due to fundamental values in a society evolving over time.

Two perspectives are important to note concerning the government’s understanding of fundamental values. First, given that the values were to be common and existing, the perspective that these would evolve and change is somewhat contradictory. Second, by claiming that fundamental values in a society naturally change over time and that minority religious communities should uphold and maintain these values, there was an implicit requirement that minority religious communities should follow the trends and the changing values of the Swedish society. Compared to previous time periods, when financial support was decided by well-defined principles, this perspective was distinctly variable and changeable. Interestingly, for the Church of Sweden the policy outcome was slightly different. While some conditions were stated for the Church of Sweden, for example that it was required to be an open public church, meaning that through a collaboration between its democratic organisation and the ministry of the church, nationwide services were to be carried out, it was not explicitly stated that the Church of Sweden had to maintain and strengthen the fundamental values of society.

\(^{200}\) Kammarkollegiet
\(^{201}\) For statement see prop. 1998/99:124
\(^{202}\) Staten och trossamfund – stöd, medverkan inom totalförsvaret, m.m.
On the 1\textsuperscript{st} of January 2000 the historic separation of the Church of Sweden and the state was implemented, and the Church of Sweden was regulated by the Church of Sweden Act (SFS 1998:1591). The act was formulated in such a way that it was clear that a certain continuity would exist in which the Church of Sweden’s status as the national \textit{folkkyrka} would be upheld. The Church of Sweden would become a religious community amongst others and all public administrative functions were moved from the Church of Sweden to the state. However, the special relationship between church and state would remain, as the Church of Sweden would continue to have a responsibility for the maintenance of burial grounds (SFS 1990:1144) and for the administration and preservation of old churches, etc. (SFS 1988:950). The separation also coincided with the introduction of the new legal form for minority religious communities, “Faith Communities”, and new regulations through The Faith Communities Act (SFS 1998:1593), The Support to Faith Communities Act (SFS 1999:932) and the Regulations on State Subsidies to Faith Communities (SFS1999:974).

Overall, the historical reforms between religion and state in Sweden in 2000 would mean very different things for the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities. While the reforms led to a further separation between church and state, the reforms seem to have led to an increased convergence between minority religious communities and the state. The partnership between minority religious communities and the state was strengthened both pre- and post-separation, not least through the introduction of the new council, headed by the Ministry of Culture, with representatives from the government, government agencies and religious communities, where important subjects of common interest could be discussed (Ku2000/564/Ka). Alongside this, the goal-oriented approach towards minority religious communities, both through budget proposals and in regulation letters, as will be discussed in the following section, could also be seen as a way for the state to further engage with, and govern, minority religious communities.

\textbf{7.1.4. Policy Changes Following the Reforms in 2000}

As shown, the expectations regarding minority religious communities to have a distinct role as providers of religious service and addressing individual’s religious needs during the 1970s and 1980s started to change during the 1990s. However, it was not until the late 1990s that these new expectations on minority religious
communities, and their role in contributing to the common good, started to be expressed in budget proposals and regulation letters. The first signs of a shift could be seen in 1997 when it was stated for the first time that minority religious communities, apart from offering religious services, should also counter xenophobia and racism (prop. 1997/98:1). Following the reforms in 2000, these types of ambitions and expectations of minority religious communities became more common and shortly after 2000 it was stated that an increase in religious diversity, as well as a growing general interest in ethical and existential issues, meant that the state had a “growing interest in contributions from religious communities” (prop. 2000/01:1 (17), p. 50). Whilst the exact expectations differed year-to-year and the main objective of the support remained, it was clear that the expectations of minority religious communities had expanded. They were now expected to play an important role in contributing to the wider public good in an increasingly religiously diverse society and minority religious communities were, for example, highlighted as central actors in national crisis management.

In recent years, the efforts of faith communities in crisis situations have received attention in various contexts. Faith communities fulfil an important function in society through their activities and government efforts in this area contribute to the promotion of religious diversity in the country (prop. 2001/02:1 (17), p. 57)

The shifting expectations occurred gradually. In line with the new condition stating that minority religious communities should contribute and strengthen fundamental values being included in the budget proposal of 2004 for the first time, the statement that minority religious communities had an important role in

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203 Stating that the main objective of the grant was to contribute to creating conditions for minority religious communities to conduct an active and long-term oriented religious activity in the form of worship, pastoral care, teaching and care.

204 This particular emphasis must be understood in light of the fact that during the 1990s two disastrous events highlighted the pivotal role of religious communities. First, the Estonia ferry disaster of 1994 that killed 501 Swedes. Second, the fire at a party in the premises of the Macedonian organisation in Gothenburg in 1998, in which 63 young people were killed. After these incidents, the need for co-operation between different organisations was highlighted, in particular after the fire in Gothenburg. A large majority of those at the party were from different ethnic minorities and the experiences afterwards identified Muslim congregations and culture centres as vital resources (see, for example, SOU 1999:68).
covering the religious need of the individual was removed. Instead, focus turned to their role in contributing to the common and public good, for example related to integration, as well as being encouraged to further cooperate with other religious actors.

Through their activities, faith communities can contribute to increasing the understanding and respect for different faiths and cultures and are thus of great importance in the integration process. This underlines the importance of contacts and collaboration between different faith communities and also of faith communities’ participation in different areas of society.

\cite{prop. 2004/05:1 (17), p. 52}

SST, whose previous role had been to examine different aspects of the government grants, was also encouraged to further collaborate and have an ongoing dialogue with minority religious communities concerning issues that were deemed to be of importance for the government. For example, in 2004, SST was commissioned to deepen their dialogue with minority religious communities on issues concerning women’s and children’s rights while also “assisting them in their work to increase awareness and spread knowledge about the Swedish society and the values on which society is based” \cite[p.53]{prop. 2004/2005:1(17)}. Similarly, SST was encouraged to further develop the collaboration with other organisations and authorities in issues concerning religious communities as well as develop and coordinate crisis preparedness amongst minority religious communities \cite{SFS 2007:1192}. The increased focus on co-operation between the state and minority religious communities, as well as between religious communities, can be understood both from both a resource and risk perspective. On the one hand it was desirable that minority religious communities should be further engaged in society, not least through co-operation and dialogue with other religious communities. Thereby, the state attempted to utilise many of the resources found

\footnote{When the religious aspect was reintroduced in 2008 it was stated that minority religious communities had an important role “in offering important meeting places where people could express spiritual and existential needs and issues” \cite[p.21]{prop. 2008/2009:1 (17)}. Clearly, such a wording differs considerably to the previous role of ensuring that a “natural human need” was ascertained, as was highlighted originally.}
in minority religious communities. On the other hand, from a risk perspective, there were increasing tendencies of trying to control a religious field that was becoming more problematic. Although not stated, by encouraging minority religious communities to work with women’s and children’s rights, there were indications that there was a belief that such rights were (or could be) threatened in (at least some) minority religious communities. As such, although rarely mentioned, the risk aspect can be seen to been embedded in many of the new expectations.

Overall, in the period following the reforms in 2000, it was clear that a more defined policy sector was being developed that revolved around issues regarding “religion”, i.e., minority religious communities, their role in society and the co-operation between state and religion. In contrast to previous time periods, therefore, the practicalities and policies directed towards minority religious communities were no longer determined by the state’s ongoing relationship with the Church of Sweden.

7.1.5. Summary: Religion and State

The distant reading of the state and religion category provides a good insight into the main discussions during this time period. The main theme of Faith Communities as well as the third theme of Government Agency illustrates how the state progressively tried to manage and regulate the support given to minority religious communities and increase collaboration through SST. While the second theme, Church, illustrates that the issue of minority religious communities was still deeply embedded in the discussion regarding the Church and state relationship, the relationship between the state and minority religious communities was not dependent upon how the political debate between church and state developed to the same degree as previously. Interestingly, looking at the differences in the debate concerning the relationship between the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities, we can see that while the church-state relationship was about to cease, the religion-state relationship was moving in very much the opposite direction.

206 However, despite being promoted, the support to minority religious communities was considerably more restrictive during this time-period compared to previous time periods, remaining at approximately the same level between 1996-2010 (approx. 50 million SEK per year).
7.2. Education

The tensions between opening up for minority religious communities whilst also trying to implement further regulations and control, can also be found in the education category.

**Table 14. Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Independent (fristående)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: independent, schools, education, grants, students, public, activities, Swedish National Agency for Education, municipality, approval, school system, goals, primary school, requirements, teaching, school law, supervision, government, costs, negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Movement (rörelser)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: movements, religious, new spiritual, people, boundaries, society, perspective, religion, problems, children, growing, people, members, help</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Children (barn)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: children, knowledge, rights, child, parents, individual, social, law</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Needs (behov)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: needs, support, financial, conditions, tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first theme, *Independent*, illustrates that the primary discussion concerned independent schools more generally and in these discussions the issue of religious schools was also highlighted. The main questions concerned the approval and support of these schools and whether there was a need for further inspection, i.e., should there be stricter objectives and criteria for approval? The fourth theme, *Needs*, is closely related, discussing the economic support and conditions for these schools.

The second theme, * Movements*, predominantly highlights the discussions concerning religious schools in one of the commissions concerned with so-called new religious movements (or sects, as they were also described) and their role in Swedish society. Questions that were raised were, for example, what risks and problems could arise for people (especially children) who grew up in these groups? Should activities be limited (including, for example, the running of their own schools) and how should the state support individual members, including children, who needed help and support in these groups? Lastly, the third theme, *Children*, sheds light on a tension visible throughout the documents, namely the tension between the rights of children and the rights of parents. Should the rights
of parents to choose a school for their children be prioritised ahead of children’s rights to a comprehensive education and knowledge? In similarity to the category of state and religion, legal elements were included in these discussions. In the case of the tension between the rights of parents and children, which different laws should be prioritised (the Swedish Education Act or the ECHR)?

7.2.1. Background

Before the 1990s, Sweden’s education system was almost entirely centralised, with less than 1% of all students attending independent schools. However, as described in the previous chapter, major changes occurred in the decentralisation of the widely cherished public education system towards the end of the 1980s. Finally, in 1991, when the Social Democrats lost office and a centre-right coalition government gained power, free choice was solidly implemented in the Swedish education sector (Björklund et al., 2006). In 1992, the so-called Independent School Reform transformed the Swedish education system. This reform resulted in increased decentralisation as well as giving parents the choice of sending their children to any school without extra cost, including independent schools, and, as such, religious schools. According to scholars, this demonstrated a radical ideological shift in the Swedish education sector and a movement “towards decentralisation, goal steering, accountability, parental choice, and competition” (Björklund et al., 2006, p. 12). This development is clearly seen in the table below:

Table 15. The development of the number of independent schools and the number of students attending independent schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>9,946</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>51,081</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>105,136</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the ideological transition, the previous discussions regarding whether independent schools should be supported financially or not, were no longer an issue. Rather, in line with the reforms in the education sector and guided by ideals such as freedom of choice and competition, religious minorities could now

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207 Data collected from the Swedish National Agency for Education
establish independent schools on the same economic terms as other actors, leading to a number of new religious schools established during this time (SOU 1995:109). Parallel to these reforms, a new national curriculum was introduced in which it was stated for the first time that Sweden was a multicultural society. However, it was also highlighted that the common value foundation and fundamental values were to be implemented and communicated in all subjects.

7.2.2. The Independent School Committee

In 1994, the newly elected Social Democratic minority government appointed a new parliamentary commission, The Independent School Committee, to further investigate the approval, supervision and inspection of independent schools as well as issues regarding grants and fees. Despite the general emphasis on freedom of choice and competition (factors deemed to be of importance for the development of the entire Swedish school system), concerns and fears had been raised regarding the risk of increased segregation that independent schools could possibly lead to, not least due to some independent schools charging tuition fees.

The growing number of independent schools may risk leading to increased segregation. The subsidy system for independent schools has in many cases benefited independent schools at the expense of public schools. We want to safeguard the vision of a comprehensive school for all children and hinder the development of a segregated school system.

( Dir 1995:16)

Interestingly, in the debates concerning the risk of segregation and the need for further regulations, religious schools, despite only accounting for 20% (SOU 1995:109) of the total number of independent schools at the time, were particularly highlighted. It was proposed that religious schools may not live up to the standards of neutrality in their delivery of religious education, nor the criteria of tolerance and openness. Thereby it was declared that “although these schools are few in number, it is important for the trust in the entire independent school system” (Dir 1995:16) that these schools, in particular, heed to certain standards

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208 However, in the Swedish Education Act it was still not stated that independent schools could have a confessional orientation.

209 Friskolekomiteen
of openness and tolerance. In similarity to the terms of reference to the State and Religious Communities Commission, appointed in the same year, the new commission was to inquire whether new conditions were required for approving religious schools. However, importantly, before proposing any conditions, the commission needed to consider international laws, in particular ECHR, to balance any policy recommendations.

The Independent School Committee presented their final report, Equal Education on Equal Terms (SOU 1995:109),\(^{210}\) in 1995, the same year it had been appointed. In the report, ideals such as free choice and pluralism were presented as central and, as such, independent schools were understood as an important complement to the traditional educational system. Yet, despite this, and in line with the terms of reference, further and clearer requirements for the approval of these schools was suggested. In order to propose new regulations, the committee presented both the relevant international commitments and national regulations. From the outset, a tension was clearly visible between the international regulations (such as the ECHR) of ensuring that parents could choose a religious and moral upbringing in line with their own confessions, and the regulations in the Swedish Education Act, that was written in accordance with the objectives of the general curriculum where it was stated that all children have the right to an education that is objective and comprehensive. Also, parents should be assured that their children, when educated in Swedish schools, were not influenced with a bias towards one viewpoint. Rather, children should have the right to express different ideologies. However, such diversity should be limited; the new national curriculum, implemented in 1994, required that democratic values should be promoted and that, for example, traditional gender roles should be counteracted.

All schools shall actively and consciously promote the equal rights and opportunities of women and men. Schools also have a responsibility to counteract traditional gender bias. It is not sufficient to merely impart knowledge about basic democratic values in teaching

\[(SOU\ 1995:109,\ p.\ 41)\]

Despite not coming to an agreement regarding many of the other questions discussed in the report, a consensus was reached concerning religious schools.

\(^{210}\) Likvärdig utbildning på lika villkor
The conclusion of the committee was that religious schools could not be banned, predominantly as a consequence of international commitments. However, it was concluded that schools who, for example, had religious education that failed to follow the objectivity that permeated the general school curriculum, could be banned. This would also be the case for schools that lacked openness and transparency and whose activities were not characterised by democratic values.\footnote{This conclusion was also shared by The Commission of Independent High Schools (SOU 1995:113).}

We believe that an independent school, as long as it corresponds to the values and general goals of the public-school system, can have a confessional orientation. However, the activities must rest on democracy and respect values such as human equality, equality between women and men and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable. Teaching in a school with a confessional orientation can include teaching in one's own faith, but the teaching must be designed in such a way that the school does not unilaterally indoctrinate its students.\footnote{The committee’s conclusion was further supported by the National Agency for Education that stated that schools with a confessional orientation could only be a complement to, rather than a substitute for, important goals in the national curriculum (SOU 1995:109). Specifically, religious schools could risk that the principle of objectivity within the education sector was not met (if they, for example, censored material).}

(SOU 1995:109, p. 46)

It was evident that the committee placed children’s right to an objective and comprehensive education where not one religious view was promoted ahead of another, in front of the rights of parents and the freedom of choice. There were, therefore, clear limits to the diversity.\footnote{This conclusion was also shared by The Commission of Independent High Schools (SOU 1995:113).} Overall, the risk aspect of religious schools, although not always stated clearly, was evident throughout the report and no positive aspects of these schools were highlighted.

Following the referral process, the government stated that they largely agreed with the commission’s conclusion. It was stated that due to different international regulations, as well as the incorporation of ECHR into Swedish domestic law in 1995, there was no possibility to require schools to refrain from having a confessional orientation. Yet, this did not mean that the government could not introduce new conditions for approval and entitlement to grants for independent schools. According to the new condition, independent schools (both compulsory schools and upper secondary schools) should “meet the general objectives” and
be open to all (prop. 1995/96:200). Those schools who failed to show an openness or allow further inspections would not be approved. The Committee of Education stated that they fully supported the government proposal.

The committee agrees with the Government’s view that the pupil's right to objective and comprehensive high-quality teaching can never be subordinated the parents' right to choose a teaching that is in accordance with their religious or philosophical convictions.

(1996/97: UbU4)

In 1996, the new regulations for independent schools (particularly directed to religious schools) were published in the Education Act (SFS 1996: 1206). Only a year later a new paragraph was added in the Education Act, in accordance with ECHR, declaring that independent schools could have a confessional orientation (SFS 1997:1212), thereby clearly illustrating the tension between international and national legislation, whilst also indicating the underlying desires of the state. There is little doubt that the state’s true desire was to strongly regulate religious schools. However, their commitment to international regulations made this impossible.

7.2.3. In Good Faith: Society and Innovation

The issue of minority religious communities in the field of education was not only raised in commissions regarding independent schools but also in a commission concerned with the risk of new religious movements in Swedish society, as seen in the distant reading. The commission had been appointed as a result of a debate in Parliament regarding the risk to the well-being of individuals within so-called sectarian groups (rskr. 1994/95: 263). In the terms of reference, it was stated that the appointed commission, led by an inquiry chair, should investigate the issue of so-called spiritual abuse, the potential psychological issues amongst individuals that left these movements, and recommend possible ways of preventing these

213 It was the National Agency for Education that was to assess applications and requests for grants for the establishment of independent schools.

214 Subsequently, the Social Affairs Committee stated that the government should appoint a commission to investigate this field and the extent of the issue, as well as their effects (1995/96: SoU17). However, interestingly, the Constitutional Committee made a reservation on behalf of the Social Affairs Committee’s statement meaning that this could only be achieved if the freedom and rights of these groups, as constituted in the Instrument of Government, was protected and no specific groups were pinpointed. In accordance with both the Constitutional Committee and the Social Affair Committee, Parliament approved the appointment of a new commission.
groups, as well as give suggestions on how to support victims (Dir 1996:121). One particular focus was the issue of children’s well-being, both in the home environment and in schools. In this discourse, the issue of religious schools for religious minorities was once again highlighted.

In 1998, the final report, In Good Faith: Society and Innovation (SOU 1998:113) was submitted. The primary question that was raised was how a democratic society such as Sweden, with rights such as freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of association, should manage minority religious communities and particularly new religious movements (e.g. the Hare Krishna Movement, Transcendental Meditation, Church of Scientology and the Osho movement) that may restrict democratic freedom for others. Importantly, this was to be achieved without taking a stance for or against different religious communities and no undemocratic methods were to be implemented to further regulate them. It was stated that although these new religious movements were often a concern for the majority society when they were first established, they would frequently diminish after a while, either due to them becoming more integrated in society or simply disappearing. However, this did not alter the potential risk these groups posed on violating the freedom and rights of the individual within the groups. According to the commission, this type of pressure or manipulation of the individual's will could never be accepted by the state or society at large. It was also in this context that the issue of children’s rights was raised.

A number of potential risks were raised regarding children in these movements. Authoritarian nurturing of children, where obedience was set as a norm, was particularly emphasised as a potential problem. Similarly, it was believed that children may not be encouraged to be critical in their thinking as a more black-and-white, unambiguous worldview was imposed. This could lead to children becoming isolated from the surrounding society without interacting with others outside of their own religious communities. Lastly, it was also considered that there may be abuse of children, for example through inadequate diet and health care. It was in relation to these risks that the issue of religious schools more generally was raised. The purpose of the commission, in regard to religious

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215 I God Tro – Samhället och nyandligheten
schools, was to assemble an overview of these schools and investigate whether the before-mentioned fears and risks corresponded to reality. Overall, the primary concern was to investigate how to ensure the safety and security of children attending these schools and protect the individual child’s rights and freedoms.

One fear is that students will be subjected to one-sided teaching and significant personal control. Strict rules and isolation from Swedish society are further concerns that have been raised. These children would not only receive a worse education than the children in public schools, they would also not be able to act fully as citizens. The lack of critical thinking and questioning of authorities is assumed to be considerable and this could lead to great mental suffering as a result of the individual’s dealings with society. Such a development appears to take place when the individual decides to break with the religious group in order to create their own identity.

(\textit{SOU 1998:113, p. 273})

However, despite the fears, when the results of the inquiry made by the commission\textsuperscript{216} were presented, it was shown that many of the risks that had been raised regarding religious schools were overstated. Teaching was both factual and comprehensive and there was no evidence that would indicate that children were growing up in isolation from the rest of society. In fact, the results demonstrated that the schools were committed to ensuring that the students grew up as community citizens with a good insight into the local community. Other issues, such as the quality of the teaching, were also judged as good and students generally performed very well in national tests. The teaching of democratic skills was also well covered through, for example, class and student councils. It was therefore concluded that no segregating effects could be seen and that “students who complete their compulsory schooling in an independent religious school receive a full education” (\textit{SOU 1998:113, p. 298}).

Despite this, the commission proposed that further inspections of independent schools should be enforced to ensure that the rules for administration and management were followed, as well as to ensure the quality of the school’s independent health care organisations at each school. In similarity to the result

\textsuperscript{216} As well as data from The National Agency for Education regarding a number of different parameters
regarding religious schools, the results focusing on religious movements more in general, presented from the extensive study based on surveys and interviews, declared that although many of the new religious movements could contain values that were in stark contrast to society at large, the overall impression was that many of the feared risks of these organisations were exaggerated and sometimes even wrong. Rather, the largest identified risk factor was for society to further isolate these groups, which in turn could lead to growing polarisation. Therefore, the conclusion of the commission was that increased dialogue was critical, alongside further research in this field and that the state needed to deal with the multicultural and religiously diverse society it was now facing.

Following the commission, despite the government’s opinion that more knowledge was required regarding new religious movements, it was determined that this could be gained within state agencies or institutions. As such, no further action was taken, and the commission was largely ignored (prop. 2000/01:1).

7.2.4. Policy Changes Following 2000

During the early years of 2000, the debate regarding religious schools continued, though with less prominence. Although several commissions were appointed to investigate whether a revision of the current school legislation was required, religious schools were not in the limelight of these discussions. However, the question of what it meant for a school to have a confessional orientation was raised several times in two commissions (SOU 2002:121 & Ds 2009:25). In particular, it was highlighted that there was a dissonance in Swedish policy concerning religious schools. Specifically, schools could have a confessional orientation, in accordance with international regulations, but education was to be non-confessional, in accordance with Swedish laws and in accordance with the public school value foundation.

In one of the appointed commissions concerning a new education act (SOU 2002:121), it was argued that given the international regulations and that parents

217 The commission proposed that a new state-funded knowledge centre, with a focus on dialogue, should be started in order to develop methods to provide help to individuals who had left a movement, as well as gather knowledge and counteract polarisation.

218 Skollag för kvalitet och likvärdighet

219 Den nya skollagen – för kunskap, valfrihet och trygghet
actively choose these schools, it would be reasonable that religion could be present in the school day.

Choosing an independent school with a confessional focus is voluntary. Parents make a conscious choice to ensure their child receives an education and upbringing on religious grounds. The parents therefore believe that the confessional school will be characterised by religious values. It is reasonable that one's own religion is given a certain amount of space during the school day, e.g. in the form of morning prayer. There should also be no hinderance to a school with a confessional focus to characterise this in its physical environment, e.g. in the form of religious images or decorations

(SOU 2002:121, p. 222)

In a government bill in 2009 (prop. 2009/10:165), the government stated that all teaching should be non-confessional. However, in line with the proposal from both commissions, it was also argued that the education in independent schools could have some confessional characteristics (for example prayer before lunch or school trips) but that these occasions should always be voluntary. This formulation was later approved in the new Education Act (2010:800).

**7.2.5. Summary: Education**

In summary, within the category of education many similar concerns were raised, as in the main category of state and religion, and the distant reading illustrates what was at stake during this period. There were clear tensions regarding the handling and management of religious schools and a considerable number of concerns regarding these schools. In particular, the well-being of the children within these schools was the central concern, particularly whether they received an all-encompassing education that lived up to the politically determined objectives. However, greater concerns were also raised, particularly within religious schools, regarding the possible isolation of children from Swedish society. Yet, such concerns collided with principles such as freedom of choice, thereby resulting in a complex situation. Reforms within the education sector had opened up for the possibility for minorities to run their own schools and thereby create a growing space. When the growing space was combined with the concerns of a potential negative impact on children in religious schools, there was a need for further regulations. Such regulations were also affected by a conflicting
situation and visible tension between the children’s right to an education based on common values, as formulated in the Education Act, and the parents’ rights, grounded on international regulations, to choose schools for their children in accordance with their own confession. The balance between these different ideals was clearly a challenge.

7.3. Integration

In terms of integration, the distant reading sheds light on several pivotal issues that were discussed during this period. Even though none of the three first themes highlight the issue of minority religious communities, the distant reading provides an important contextual setting.

Table 16. Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme: Society (samhället)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Concepts: society, opportunities, work, ethnic, cultural, background, needs, support, conditions, groups, rights, develop, integration, individual, contribute, society, basic, diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Theme: Swedish (Svenska)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concepts: Swedish, Sweden, people, knowledge, language, country, people, children, social, political, problems, country, young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Theme: Immigrants (invandrare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concepts: Immigrants, policies, measures, general, newcomers, labour, economic, responsibility, immigration policy, development, time, participation, future, information, areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Theme: Education (utbildning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concepts: education, imams, Muslim, religious, teaching, religion, school, university, congregations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first theme, Society, highlights the central question of how integration into Swedish society was to be solved and whether the state should support the rights of ethnic groups to not only preserve but develop their cultural tradition. Also, how should Swedish society deal with the presence of ethnic and cultural diversity? In turn, this theme clearly sheds light on the next two themes (Swedish and Immigrants), that address questions concerning how to ensure that everyone gains knowledge in Swedish and in social norms? How should the state deal with the problems that youths and children who have immigrated to Sweden experience? How should the new immigration policy be formulated? How could the active participation of people who immigrated to Sweden be assured? The last theme,
Education, highlights the aspects raised in the final commission in this category; namely, how should the education of imams be resolved? Should the Swedish state support the teaching of religion? Should the education of imams be offered by universities or through the congregations themselves?

Overall, the distant reading provides an important overview of the primary concerns that were raised at this time. For example, how the state proposed to integrate people into Swedish society and solve the many issues raised as a consequence of increased immigration.

7.3.1. Background

Although Sweden had become more restrictive towards asylum seekers compared to the previous period, it still had one of the more generous asylum policies in Europe during the beginning of the 1990s. Yet, the multicultural policy was increasingly questioned and the anti-immigrant debate heightened, most likely as a consequence of a large rise in the number of asylum applicants coinciding with economic setbacks and growing unemployment rates (Bergmark & Palme, 2003). Immigration rates peaked between 1992 and 1994, and continued to be at an internationally high level throughout this period. However, the countries that people immigrated from varied. During the 1990’s a large percentage were asylum seekers coming mainly from former Yugoslavia and the Middle East. During the 2000s, asylum seekers primarily came from Asia and Africa. Also, given that Sweden joined the EU in 1995, the number of EU citizens working and living in Sweden increased (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999). As a result, cultural and religious diversity became more established in Swedish society.

7.3.2. The Immigration Policy Committee

In 1994, a new government commission, the Immigration Policy Committee, was appointed to overview, evaluate and reconsider the overriding goals of the current immigration policies (Dir 1994:130). The appointment of the new commission was based on the challenges that faced Swedish society with increased immigration from non-European countries together with rapid

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220 From just over 27,000 in 1991 to 84,000 in 1992 (Abiri, 2000)
221 Invandrarpolitiska kommittén
222 Översyn av invandrarpolitiken
economic change (meaning that many immigrants were long-term unemployed). Coupled with this, it was argued that the social and economic changes were “testing for a society’s traditional norms and values, as well as for its traditional ideas of goals and life values” (Dir 1994:130). Social unrest and a search for simple populist solutions was feared where “immigrants may be singled out as scapegoats” (Dir 1994:130). Although a multicultural society was described as a central and positive ideal, in the terms of reference there was no precise definition of what this actually meant. Whilst ideals such as diversity, tolerance and openness, as well as the importance to facilitate contact between religious, ethnic and social groups, were raised regarding a multicultural society, the negative potential consequences of such a society were also raised; for example, the risk of segregation and intolerance.

One of the central tasks of the commission was to further investigate how cultural and ethnic diversity could be supported, thereby raising the issue of minority religious communities. It was proposed that the appointed commission should consider whether further action should be taken by the state, or by others, to improve the situation for immigrants. Specifically, the issue of how they wished to live their life in accordance with their religious views, given that religion was seen to play a greater role in the life of many immigrants than amongst native Swedes. The comforting role religion could have for people who had recently arrived in Sweden and left their home country was particularly emphasised.

It was also stated that it was vital to manage society’s increasing diversity in which people had a desire to organise themselves based on ethnic and religious affiliation. Therefore, it was necessary to identify strategies for how to channel this in order for people and organisations to become involved in society; for example, in the integration of individuals into Swedish society. Interestingly, although the importance of supporting religious diversity was highlighted and encouraged, the development of an increased religious diversity was also seen as something that had led to an increased fear and mistrust, not least towards Muslims, amongst the Swedish population.

The encounter with other religions has made many Swedes think and reflect on their own faith and their own values. To some extent, it has also led to anxiety and fear. Not least, this has been directed at Islam and
Muslims. This fear has, for example, manifested itself in local opposition to planned mosques in several places.

(Dir 1994:130)

This risk was in many ways similar to the concerns raised regarding the fear of rapid social changes connected to increased immigration. However, an important shift can be seen from the previous time period. The risks of conflict and polarisation were now not primarily highlighted due of ethnic diversity, but rather as a risk of religious diversity.

7.3.2.1. Pluralism and Social Cohesion

In 1996, the Immigration Policy Committee submitted its final report; Sweden, the Future and Diversity (SOU 1996:55). In the report, new guidelines and objectives were presented, both for social and immigration policies. The general standpoint was clear – immigrants should not be treated any differently to the rest of the Swedish population. It was stated that they should have the same rights and obligations as all Swedish citizens and a division of “us” and “them” was to be avoided. The long-term integration policy was to involve everyone and include different policy areas. It was stated that as Sweden was becoming increasingly multicultural with an increased religious diversity, this was to be taken as an obvious starting point for the formulation of general policy at all levels (SOU 1996:55 p. 353). In terms of multiculturalism, the commission understood the concept in two ways. On the one hand, it was grounded in values such as human rights and freedoms, thereby emphasising the rights for minorities to maintain and develop a cultural heritage. However, on the other hand, it was important to also work for the cohesion of society and find common meeting points for the population, a perspective grounded in the fundamental values of democracy. As such, it was evident that there was a balance between different ideals and a promotion of both the importance of recognising the rights of groups whilst also furthering the importance of social cohesion.

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223 Sverige, framtiden och mångfalden
224 Albeit a shorter introductory period in which they could be viewed as different ethnic groups with different rights and obligations to the general population and be treated thereafter, i.e., a focus on integration.
Despite being highlighted in the terms of references, in the commission’s final report, religious diversity was discussed considerably less than ethnical diversity, a topic that was decidedly more central throughout. Also, from a risk perspective, the risk of “social segregation based on ethnicity” (SOU 1996:55, p.9) was highlighted. The greatest concern regarding religious minorities was the increasing fear of, and negative attitudes towards, Islam. The committee stated that different studies between 1990 and 1995 had shown that 50 to 75 percent of the Swedish population were negative towards Islam and Muslims. Naturally, this was regarded as a potential risk for further tensions and conflicts in society. Therefore, it was argued that increased dialogue between both religious groups and within the wider society should be encouraged in order to avoid conflicts.

The committee considers that there could be a significantly greater willingness to accommodate religious interests and wishes from groups with an immigrant background. Openness and respect towards other religions and beliefs naturally follow the constitutional freedom of religion in Sweden though in order to achieve greater openness and tolerance towards other religions and beliefs, a dialogue is needed both between representatives of different religions and between these and the general public. Multi-religious meeting places at a local level could provide opportunities to deal with conflicts in a constructive spirit, spread knowledge and expose different groups’ ideas about each other.

(SOU 1996:55, p. 363)

The quote clearly illustrates the commission’s overall conclusions concerning minority religious communities. There was a willingness to further recognise minority religious communities and protect their rights, yet, how this was to be done was not discussed at any further length. Simultaneously, there was a strong promotion of co-operation and interreligious initiatives in order to reduce the risk of conflict.

7.3.2.2. The Outcome of the Immigration Policy Committee Proposals

In the government bill that followed (prop. 1997/98:16), the government presented the new integration (rather than immigration) policy. The focus of the new integration policy was to provide support to individuals in order for them to maintain and create their own livelihood and participate in society. The overall

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225 Sverige, framtiden och mångfalden – från invandrapolitik till integrationspolitik
standpoint was that everyone should be treated equally in Swedish society regardless of their background and that all integration should “protect democratic values, work for equal rights for men and women, as well as prevent and counteract ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and racism” (prop. 1997/98:16, p.1). Interestingly, it was underlined that focus needed to shift from merely concentrating on ethnic diversity. Therefore, the use of the term diversity\textsuperscript{226} rather than multiculturalism\textsuperscript{227} was encouraged as this was seen to be more inclusive of religious and linguistic perspectives. It was also maintained, in line with the committee’s recommendations, that it was important to create common meeting points to encourage people to interact with each other. Finally, minority religious communities were considered a central resource in creating community cohesion for newly arrived immigrants, as well as functioning as an important link between their members and society at large.

Many immigrants have a stronger relationship to religion than the majority of the Swedish-born population. Faith communities can therefore play an important role for those who have recently come to Sweden and their representatives can spread knowledge about Swedish society. Likewise, fellow believers can become part of the network of contacts that all newcomers need. In the introductory program, municipalities should inform immigrants how they can get in touch with their respective faith communities

\textit{(prop. 1997/98:16, p. 87)}

Although both the Immigration Policy Committee as well as the government had highlighted the important role minority religious communities could have for immigrants, little further practical action was taken. Indeed, in 1997, i.e., the same year as the government bill, the extra subsidy to support immigrant religious communities for building new premises in order to perform religious service, was withdrawn.

Following the government bill, a new authority, the Swedish Integration Agency, was established in order to promote integration and monitor that different state agencies followed the integration policy objectives. As such, integration policy objectives were included in, for example, regulation letters to SST and in 2001,

\textsuperscript{226} Mångfald
\textsuperscript{227} Mångkultur
when co-operation was further promoted and SST was given the task of deepening the dialogue with minority religious communities on issues related to women’s and children’s rights, this was part of the wider integration policy objectives (skr. 2001/02:129).

7.3.3. The State and the Imams: Religion, Integration, Autonomy

Whilst previous commissions in the category of integration focused on more general immigration policies and the support available for minority religious communities, the commission appointed in 2008 and led by an inquiry chair with the primary task of inquiring whether there was a need for an education for imams in Sweden (Dir. 2008: 66), differed considerably. In the terms of reference, it was put forth that in similarity to other European countries, the Muslim population in Sweden was growing and Muslim congregations had on several occasions pointed out the need for educating imams in Sweden.

The point of departure for the new commission were the principles found in the Support for Faith Communities Act (SFS 1999: 932) where it was stated that minority religious communities should maintain and strengthen the fundamental values that Swedish society is based upon, be stable and have a life force of their own. Interestingly, in the terms of reference, it was stated as an established fact that minority religious communities “partake in the norm-building process necessary to strengthen and uphold the fundamental values that society rests upon” (Dir 2008:66). Also, in line with American social capital theory, it was stated that active association and religious communities in many ways strengthened the democratic system. By attaching a civil society theory, the resource role of religious communities was clearly stated prior to the commission.

The commission presented its final report, The State and the Imams: Religion, Integration, Autonomy (SOU 2009:52),228 in 2009. The inquiry chair focused particularly on the potential importance of imams for the cultural integration of immigrants, although this was not clearly stated in the terms of reference.

The commission has focused on the possible significance of imams for the cultural integration of immigrants. Although imams vary in terms of

228 Staten och imamerna - Religion, integration, autonomi
background, education and time in Sweden, many lack sufficient knowledge of the Swedish language, Swedish legislation and social organisation. These are shortcomings that many of them would like to address in order to continue to play a role as religious leaders. Without such familiarity, they risk losing credibility, especially among younger generations.

(SOU 2009:52, p. 12)

In the report it was argued that the positive aspects of religion should be recognised for those wanting to belong to a religious community. Also, it was argued that the negative aspects needed to be recognised, i.e., the right for secular Muslims not to belong to a religious community or partake in religious activities. Similarly, while it was stated that religious identity could function as a resource in providing comfort and a social network, the restrictive and oppressive side of belonging to a group was also highlighted. As such, it was noted that while it was beneficial to support religious groups, it was also vital to protect citizens from religious oppression. From this perspective, therefore, it was deemed problematic to highlight imams as possible integrators. In order to ascertain whether the state should be involved in the education of imams, a number of considerations, based on different principles in various policy sectors (not least regarding religion and integration), were discussed in order to determine what political action was to be taken. From the outset it was clear that there were a number of conflicting principles and rather than presenting different principles, motives or conditions that would guide the commission, as was the case in many of the other commissions during this period, a variety of aspects and principles were weighed against each other. For example, whilst it was plausible that imams could have a positive role in integrating the Muslim population, this should not be exaggerated. Rather, experiences from other countries had shown that educational programmes for imams had not solved problems related to integration and tensions between different groups, nor assisted in counteracting extremism (as imams with more radical views were those most likely not to attend).

Similarly, there was a tension between the state promoting religious minorities in preserving and developing their own cultural and social life, while also remaining neutral by treating all people equally, regardless of religious belonging. As such, given the abolition of the state-supported vocational degree for priests/pastors in
2007 and that the educational requirements for priests/pastors were now organised by the different religious communities themselves, introducing an education for imams would mean that the Muslim religious communities would be unfairly prioritised. Also, from the principle of freedom of association, in which the importance of maintaining autonomy from the state was central, there were problems, especially as the state could use imams to further their own aims and objectives. However, whilst all of these principles were important, the main factor that affected the conclusion of the commission report was the integration policy in which a central principle was the idea of a general policy. I.e., group- or immigrant-based solutions should be avoided as they could underpin the idea of “us” and “them” and thereby increase stigmatisation and segregation in Swedish society (skr. 2008/09:24).

After an extensive survey and analysis of the needs and wishes of Islamic congregations, where different opinions and wishes were recorded, alongside the different ideals and principles presented above, it was proposed that the education of imams should be covered within the current university education system and within Swedish language training where knowledge in different cultures was included. The confessional elements of the education, it was argued, should be left to the religious communities themselves to organise.

Above all, it is the principled reasons that override this conclusion: the state should not engage in authorising and giving legitimacy to religious education. This is a matter for the religious communities themselves and the state should remain neutral in terms of different confessions, and not contribute to either strengthening or weakening the role of religion in society. The state should treat all faith communities and religious leaders as equals and neither favour nor disadvantage particular religious communities and leaders. In this way, the state both recognises and promotes diversity in religious terms, while at the same time observing neutrality between believers within the constitutional boundaries of what we can jointly consider acceptable

*(SOU 2009:52, p. 105)*

The predominant argument behind this conclusion was that the state should be neutral in terms of confession, i.e., that the state should treat all religious communities equally and not prioritise any particular group. However, as has been seen throughout this period, this did not mean that the state was neutral regarding
fundamental values and ethical principles. It was proposed that the state should have a more passive, rather than active, approach to religious communities, meaning that no further actions were proposed to correct the inequalities in terms of the education for religious leaders in minority religious communities. Rather, it was hoped that if the education was to be at universities in Sweden, people from different backgrounds could meet which, consequentially, would facilitate a deepening of democratically indispensable values. Given that the commission had a somewhat different approach to the education of imams than had been described in the terms of reference, it is perhaps not surprising that the recommendations failed to lead to any policy outcome.

7.3.4. Summary: Integration

The integration category of this period illustrates a shift in the overall discourse towards an awareness of the potential negative consequences of a multicultural society and the risk of segregation. However, religious diversity was still valued, as was the importance of religion and the role minority religious communities could play in immigrants’ lives. Further emphasis was also placed on integration and that minority religious communities should take part in the norm-building process of Swedish society, for example by opening up for the education of imams, in order to utilise resources found in religious communities.

7.4. Conclusion Chapter Seven

In the following section of this chapter I will, in similarity to chapter 5 and 6, summarise the themes and tensions that have become visible through the close and distant reading.

7.4.1. Closing Ties Between Religion and State

There is no doubt that the relations between state and religion entered a new phase during this period. While the ties between church and state weakened due to the reforms in 2000, the ties between religion and state seem to have been strengthened as the governance of minority religious communities became further institutionalised. Minority religious communities were no longer merely embedded in the discussions concerning the future relationship between church and state but rather seen as an issue that needed to be handled separately. This could be attributed to three major developments. First, the state and church
separation in 2000 that opened up for a new policy sector concerned with religion and state, rather than church and state. Second, the increased tension between the emphasis on values such as freedom of choice and diversity, but also common shared values and social cohesion, thereby leading to both further inclusion and further regulation of minority religious communities. Third, the increased importance of supranational influences on human rights, not least through the incorporation of ECHR into Swedish domestic law, meaning that the rights of religious minorities were further stressed.

Regarding the reforms in 2000, the path dependency of the state’s strong relationship with the Church of Sweden, that had been evident throughout both of the previous time periods, changed. Rather than being dependent upon how the political debate between church and state developed, it was now clear that the issue of minority religious communities started to become a central and important topic of its own. Minority religious communities were, on the one hand, increasingly recognised as actors that could contribute to the public good and therefore needed further support to facilitate their capacities. However, on the other hand, they were also increasingly viewed as a potential problem for society. As such, there was a need for further regulations and reformation of those who were viewed as problematic. Interestingly, these two somewhat contradictory perceptions led to further co-operation and strengthened the ties between religion and state towards the end of the 1990s. That said, it was also clear that the development of further legal recognition and the introduction of a special legal form for minority religious communities, was rooted in the fact that the state wanted to maintain an alliance with the Church of Sweden. As a consequence of equality principles, the state also had to provide similar privileges for minority religious communities.

However, this new phase cannot merely be understood by studying the separation between church and state. Rather, it needs to be understood in light of larger transformations of the Swedish welfare state. Just as the Church of Sweden’s position in Swedish society was questioned during this period, so was the state’s domination in many other fields, resulting in considerable decentralisation and deregulation. A central part of this transformation was the promotion of values such as freedom of choice, diversity and competition meaning that minority religious communities, alongside other actors, were invited to take a greater role
in service delivery in a number of different fields. For example, the previously centralised education system was radically transformed resulting in unique opportunities for minority religious communities to start independent schools, financially supported by local municipalities. Minority religious communities were therefore increasingly included in a much larger narrative outside of the sphere of covering religious needs. Instead, alongside other actors in civil society, they were expected to play a role in the contribution to the public good.

Yet, alongside the welcoming of freedom of choice and diversity, and therefore creating new opportunities, minority religious communities were also deeply impacted by the shift towards a more objective- and result-oriented focus on civil society more generally. Whilst minority religious communities were able to start independent schools and be entitled to government grants, they were also forced to observe certain conditions and fulfil certain objectives. In turn, this increased governance of minority religious communities was guided by a value discourse with a focus on social cohesion as well as common and shared values that also challenged values such as freedom of choice and diversity, therefore further increasing the tension between inclusion and control.

The final development that can help explain the observed changes is the incorporation of ECHR into Swedish domestic law in 1995. By incorporating ECHR, religious freedom was further strengthened in Sweden and although international regulations had previously influenced the national handling of minority religious communities, the impact of supranational influences increased, seen not least in regard to religious schools and the rights of parents to raise their children in accordance with their faith. Clearly, when these international influences conflicted with Swedish norms and celebrated values, such as children’s rights, conflicts arose. Therefore, third-party relations also indirectly affected the state’s perception and approach to minority religious communities during this period. As a result of these developments, a policy sector on religious issues developed in which the state no longer was only concerned with discussing and providing government grants to minority religious communities to perform religious service. Instead, emphasis was on further co-operation, not least through SST. The autonomy of religious communities was therefore no longer as pronounced as it had been previously. Instead, collaboration and dialogue (both with the state and other religious communities) were the guiding ideals in the
state’s handling of minority religious communities. In a new, more engaged relationship, the state could be increasingly active in promoting central values, which they in turn encouraged minority religious communities to implement. Notably, with the introduction of the common legal form of faith community and the specific act concerning minority religious communities, it was easier to direct policies towards all religious communities (with the exception of the Church of Sweden, despite the fact that the Church of Sweden was now also a religious community). Thereby, a homogeneity was implied amongst religious minority groups and in budget proposals that governed who would receive government grants, Free Churches, non-Lutheran churches and non-Christian communities were grouped together and treated as one entity.

7.4.2. A Balancing Between Different Ideals

In order to understand what ideals and principles guided the state’s perception of minority religious communities during this period it is necessary to look at the wider context. Specifically, compared to previous periods that were guided by an understanding and expectation that society was becoming more diverse and secularised, this period was clearly characterised by the fact that Swedish society was multicultural and religiously diverse. Although this diverse society was accepted and often cherished, there were also increasing concerns and problematic questions that needed to be answered. For example, how should society deal with groups that did not integrate into, nor adhere to, the central values of Swedish society? Could government grants be given to minority religious communities that did not respect the rights of individuals or the specific rights of women and children? The common theme of the questions was the conflict of celebrating diversity but also protecting the social cohesion of society.

Contradictory arguments were often put forth that were based on opposing ideals and principles. On the one hand, a rhetoric that emphasised ideals such as openness, pluralism, human rights, freedom of choice, recognition of minorities and multiculturalism, meaning that minority religious communities should be further accommodated and included. On the other hand, however, a desire to protect society against fragmentation and segregation. This meant that civic integration, as well as common and shared fundamental values, were emphasised as well as a need to control and regulate minority religious communities. This led
to new ways of dealing with minority religious communities. For example, the principle of freedom of religion, that had previously been a widely accepted and supported principle in discussions regarding church and state, not least in regard to the positive aspects of the principle, no longer received the same attention. Also, rather than promoting a certain principle to govern the politics towards minority religious communities, focus was turned to formulating clearly defined conditions that enabled the exclusion of those prioritising competing values to the wider society.

7.4.3. From Recognition to Expectation

Perhaps one of the biggest changes during this period was how minority religious communities became a potential instrument for the government agenda and were thereby brought out of the private realm and invited into the public realm. This instrumentalization of minority religious communities happened gradually, but towards the end of the 1990s they were increasingly seen as a resource and a tool for solving different social problems. The motive for supporting minority religious communities was no longer only to cover the religious needs of the individual. Rather, they could be beneficial to society, in similarity to other organisations. Although the central function of minority religious communities was still to act in the private sphere and organise religious services, religious counselling, etc., this role became increasingly overshadowed as their potential as a means of pursuing the state’s priorities was increasingly highlighted. Whilst the commission that emphasised this aspect the most was ultimately rejected (SOU 1997:45), the fact that a commission could propose the possibility of conditioning government grants to minority religious communities on the basis that they should fulfil the needs of the government agenda, is noteworthy and clearly indicates the shifting discourse of the time. Alongside the promotion of so-called common values of society, the importance of multi-faith co-operation and a continued dialogue with the rest of society was seen as pivotal for minority religious communities and a necessity in a multicultural society. Even from this perspective, therefore, minority religious communities were expected to be a resource in working against segregation and divisions in society by working for the common good, not least illustrated in the appointment of a commission regarding the education of imams with the underlying purpose of utilising them as a resource.
However, although many new hopes and expectations were expressed and directed towards minority religious communities during this period, some reforms, such as in the education sector, were not purposeful. On the contrary, new opportunities for minority religious communities, such as the freedom to start their own independent schools, was an unintended consequence. Therefore, not all developments that led to further inclusion of, and increased possibilities for, minority religious communities can be seen to be part of a specific government agenda of extending the involvement of minority religious communities. Rather, some elements of inclusion occurred inadvertently.

7.4.4. Embedding the Risk in a Resource Narrative

Despite the fact that the importance of minority religious communities in Swedish democracy had been accentuated previously, there was clearly a renewed focus on the process of strengthening and upholding the fundamental values of Swedish society. While this could be seen as a way of viewing minority religious communities as a tool for promoting values that were of importance for Swedish society, the resource role is more complex. Specifically, within the resource role, the role of counteracting risks, which they had potentially created themselves by being narrow communities with a hot religiosity, was embedded. Many of the highlighted risks during this period were associated with different aspects of globalisation, such as international conflicts and terrorism and led to a rise in suspicion, particularly towards new religious movements and Muslims religious communities. Disregarding the obvious societal risks of extreme fundamentalist groups, the international discourse also resulted in a more general wariness of minority religious communities. In particular, this wariness was towards narrow communities with hot religiosity that articulated conflicting values to the liberal values promoted by the state, including groups that were less in favour of dialogue and multi-religious co-operation. Therefore, rather than particular activities being regarded as a risk, it was the promotion of conflicting values that was feared, with the state believing that they needed to protect the general and common interests. This aspect is particularly visible regarding education and the well-being of children within narrow religious communities. There was an evident fear that the reforms in the education sector had opened up for problematic minority religious communities to start their own state-funded schools. Therefore, while freedom of choice and diversity was promoted, new regulations were implemented in order
to protect children from harm and, ultimately, their right to a comprehensive education. Accordingly, it was clear that despite international conventions, such as ECHR, the rights of children were to be promoted ahead of the rights of minority religious communities and the rights of parents.

While the risk for children was the most prominent fear, there was also an emphasis on protecting individuals within minority religious communities, an element not least seen in the expectations of becoming socially beneficial by helping to solve different issues in society. Although framed in a society-based and positively-charged perspective, the underlying motives were in fact internal and risk-based. By asking minority religious communities to promote and work with the rights of women and children, one can assume that these groups were thought to be at risk within the minority religious community. Likewise, by ensuring that minority religious communities worked proactively for their members to be more active in society, an assumption can be made that there were fears that these individuals and groups were isolated from wider society.

The fear of anti-liberal tendencies within certain minority religious communities meant that the state increasingly tried to engage with them. Specifically, the state tried to shape those who were regarded as problematic to become more civic, i.e., to adhere to the same liberal values as society at large. Although the governance of minority religious communities was grounded in the idea that all should be treated in the same way, it could be hypothesised that an idea was that some minority religious communities, such as many of the Free Churches, would have no difficulties in adapting to the new conditions. Therefore, although applied to all groups, new regulations and opportunities were merely a way of correcting the anti-liberal tendencies within certain groups by limiting the negative effects of narrow religious communities and including them in the wider community.

7.4.5. Concluding Remarks Chapter Seven

There is no doubt that this time period represents a new phase concerning the state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities. The previous view of minority religious communities as actors in a strictly private and religious sphere was replaced by a newer understanding of them as actors contributing to the common good, while simultaneously being regarded as a potential problem and risk within Swedish society. By balancing different ideals, the state tried to
handle both these perceptions, leading to further engagement and regulation of minority religious communities.

This final period differs from the previous three, not only due to merely covering nine years whereas the other periods covered approximately 20 years, but also due to it merely focusing on a total of two government commissions. However, as already stated in chapter four, these commissions stand out. The commission in the religion and state category is the first that entirely focuses on minority religious communities (and not church-state relations) and the commission in the education category is not concerned with independent schools more in general, but is entirely focused on the issue of religious schools. This in itself clearly illustrates the new prominence of minority religious communities in Swedish public policy. This new prominence may at least partly be understood in light of societal changes, such as increased immigration and increased controversy regarding religion (and particularly Islam) within Swedish politics.\footnote{In 2015, during the so-called refugee crisis, Sweden received the highest number of applications for asylum in the EU, leading to fundamental changes in the Swedish asylum system, with stricter restrictions in the following years (Fratzke, 2017). Towards the end of the period, approximately 22 percent of the Swedish population were either born abroad or born in Sweden with two foreign parents (SCB 2020). As such, the Swedish religious landscape was radically different compared the starting point of this thesis in 1952.}

8.1. Religion and State

Given that the government commission and budget proposals analysed in this chapter only concern the issue of minority religious communities, it is unsurprising that (for the first time) Church is not included as a central theme. Instead, all themes are in some way related to the issue of minority religious communities.

\footnote{For example, the Swedish Democrats, a nationalist right-wing political party with an open dislike and resentment towards Islam, grew considerably. From being a political party without parliamentary representation in 2009, they became the third largest party a decade later.}
Table 17. Religion and State

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme: <strong>Faith Community</strong> <em>(trossamfund)</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Concepts: religious community, support, state, community, law, conditions, SST, grants, work, organisations, goals, requirements, conditions, government</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme: <strong>Religious</strong> <em>(religiösa)</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Concepts: religious, activities, society, civil society, basic, values, worship, people, strengthen, democratic, Swedish, care, pastoral care, value, role, gender equality</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme: <strong>Sweden</strong> <em>(Sverige)</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Concepts: Sweden, education, representatives, needs, social, religious communities, Muslim, spiritual, care</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme: <strong>Rights</strong> <em>(rättigheter)</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Concepts: rights, freedom of religion, protection, democracy criterion, purpose, European Convention, human rights</td>
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The first theme, *Faith Community*, clearly shows the main discussions regarding minority religious communities: practical issues and the issue of state support for minority religious communities. The questions that were raised were, for example, should minority religious communities be supported by the state in similarity to other organisations? If so, what conditions, requirements and objectives should there be for the support? And, what conditions should be applied regarding their activities?

While the first theme mainly focused on practical issues, in the second theme, *Religious*, practical questions were set aside. In their place, there are traces of the discussions concerning some of the central expectations that were directed towards minority religious communities. What role should minority religious communities have in Swedish society and, not least, as actors in civil society? How should they be supported in order to ensure good working conditions for their religious activities, such as organising religious service, while also ensuring that they strengthened the fundamental and democratic values of society, such as gender equality? In turn, these questions were closely related to the third theme, *Sweden*. Yet, focus in the third theme was more related to the needs of minority religious communities. Could representatives with different religious background take part in pastoral and social care? If so, how could it be facilitated? Was there a need for education programmes for certain religious representatives in order for them to take on these roles, not least in Muslim congregations?
The final theme, *Rights*, sheds light on the central principles and the balancing between different rights and criteria that guided the discourse in the religion and state category during this period. How should freedom of religion be understood in relation to a strengthened democracy criterion in the support to minority religious communities? How would the European Convention of Human Rights relate to such criteria?

Given the commission’s focus on minority religious communities, the distant reading provides an important overview of the discourse at the time. Clearly, although the focus on practical issues (as seen in the previous period) concerning the support remained, other themes give an important insight into a somewhat changing discourse where greater attention was placed on the role they should take in society and issues concerning civil society and human rights.


In the previous time periods, commissions were appointed at the start of a period and, therefore, had consequences on the subsequent politics. As such, budget proposals have been presented at the end of the religion and state section. In this final period, however, the commission was appointed and published towards the end of the period. Therefore, as the political outcome of this commission is currently unclear, in this chapter, budget proposals will be presented at the start to facilitate the understand of the context in which the new commission was published.

**8.1.1.1. From Minority Religious Communities to Religious Civil Society Actors**

Although differing year-to-year, the expectation that minority religious communities should work for the public good became increasingly pronounced during this period. While the provision of religious service for their members was the basis for support, their role in contributing to the common good became increasingly evident. Particularly after the reforms in 2000, minority religious
Communities were not merely promoted as religious actors but also as civil society actors.

Faith communities have come to be perceived as a very important and significant part of civil society with unique contributions in integration processes and major community initiatives in the form of pastoral care in health care, child and youth activities, cross-generational activities, etc. In many areas, faith communities complement where the state is not enough, e.g. the social responsibility of excluded people.

(Prop. 2011/12:1(17), p.22)

As the quote above illustrates, alongside minority religious communities being understood as a central part of civil society, for example in budget proposals, it was evident that the state increasingly opening up a growing space in the public realm for minority religious communities. It was stated that they could complement and assist the state in a number of different areas where the state needed support, not least regarding integration. Minority religious communities were understood as having a central role in “giving people who immigrated to Sweden the opportunity to find security here through their culture and religion” (Prop. 2013/14:1 (17), p. 22) and function “as a bridge between Sweden and the home country as well as a bridge into society” (Prop. 2015/16:1 (17), p.36). They

230 Simultaneously the support to minority religious communities and SST increased. Government grants increased by 24% in 2011 for the first time since the beginning of the 2000s (from 55 million to 67 million SEK). The funding to SST, meanwhile, increased by 250% (from two to seven million SEK).

231 It has been argued that this rhetoric shift and increase in funding may depend on the change in the responsible government department and minister. Following the 2010 election, issues concerning minority religious communities were transferred from the Minister for Culture to the Minister for Public Administration. According to the Director General of SST at the time, Åke Göransson, this could be seen as an indication that minority religious communities were to be viewed as a part of civil society (Lindqvist, 2011)

232 Other official government reports also highlight the importance of religious communities in civil society during this time. For example, in the government report Palette for a Strengthened Civil Society (SOU 2016:13), the role of religious communities as democracy actors was highlighted.

233 The increased expectations are also clearly illustrated in the report The Social Efforts of Religious Communities - A Preliminary Survey (Ds 2015:3) that was appointed by the government in 2014. The aim of the study was to investigate and present an overview of the social role of religious communities with the ambition that the report would lead to a wider understanding of the social roles of religious communities in Swedish society. The report, that had the structure of a research report, was presented in 2015 and highlighted the roles of religious communities in society, in pastoral care, in crises, in the running of their own schools, in the public debate, in the support of refugees, etc. However, in particular, the report shed light on the new hopes for religious communities in Swedish society. Although interesting and relevant for this study, the report has not been included as it fails to meet the inclusion criteria.
were also expected to be a support to the state in reaching out with information to individuals that were hard to reach.

Overall, there was an emphasis on the religious identity of those who had immigrated to Sweden and minority religious communities were seen to have potential to function as a “a safe place in everything new” (prop. 2013/14:1 (17), p. 22). Perhaps consequentially, during the influx of asylum seekers in 2015, minority religious communities’ role as integrators became further highlighted. Together with other civil society organisations, minority religious communities were highlighted in budget proposals as an important resource both during the acute phase as well as during the aftermath and funds were allocated directly to social interventions for the support of refugees and asylum applicants as a sign of appreciation for their work (Ku2015/02981/D). Such provision of extra support for providing social services had not occurred previously and clearly shows the increasing expectations that occurred during this period on the role of minority religious communities and their capacity to contribute to the common good.

Finally, the government considers that faith communities actively contributed to socially beneficial activities during the year. An important conclusion from the past year is that faith communities have become an increasingly important actor for many municipalities and authorities. Faith communities gather many individuals and fulfill important tasks in the local community. This became particularly clear within the framework of the reception of asylum seekers in 2015/2016, when several faith communities played a decisive role and thus contributed to important socially beneficial activities.

(prop. 2017/18:1 (17), p. 144)

Alongside the important role minority religious communities could play in the integration process, it was also stressed that giving those who arrived in Sweden the possibility to maintain their own religious affiliation in their new country was in line with both the Swedish constitution and international regulations. However, in line with the increasing expectations, there was also an emphasis on the importance of co-operation and being active in dialogue with the surrounding society. In fact, this was set as a prime reason for promoting the support for premises for minority religious communities; having functioning premises was identified as a way of opening up for the possibility to not only be noticed in
society and be in contact with the surrounding society, but also to become “part of the society” (prop. 2012/13:1 (17), p.22). This was regarded as particularly important for minority religious communities mainly serving people of foreign descent. In turn, this can be understood in relation to the government’s increasing focus in the budget proposals on the connection between religion and conflict. As such, following 2015, multi-religious coexistence and dialogue became increasingly promoted and stressed.

It is the view of the government that the increased need for co-operation and dialogue across religious borders is a result of religiously coloured conflicts in the world around us and an increased arrival of refugees in Sweden. Faith communities’ work to provide a forum for meetings between people with different cultural backgrounds has contributed positively to the development of society.

(prop. 2016/17:1 (17), p. 130)

Interfaith dialogue, that was promoted and given extra government resources, was stated as a strategy in combating different problems such as polarisation and “racism and extremism” (prop. 2016/17:1(17), p.130). Similarly, increased dialogue and contact between the state (and also different state agencies) and minority religious communities was also increasingly promoted, partly in order to utilise the resources of minority religious communities, but also to discuss and combat problems within the religious field. For example, following the terror attacks in Paris, the government took initiatives for extra meetings with religious actors.

It is clear that following 2015 the risk aspect in the religious field, i.e., religious extremism, religious conflicts, terror and polarisation, was increasingly highlighted. Such risks were not merely stated as a reason for why new attention had been directed towards minority religious communities, but also as a reason for why the state had “greater expectations on activities from religious communities” (prop. 2015/16:1 (17), p. 144) to help deal with and solve different social problems that existed in society. As previously, many of these social problems were seen to arise or exist within the religious communities themselves. Importantly, however, conflicts and polarisation were not only seen to be an increasing problem for society at large, but also for minority religious communities. As such, extra support was given to improve security. The changing
expectations on minority religious communities, coupled with increased funding, culminated towards the very end of the period. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the increased expectations were followed by a growing emphasis on the role of SST as a dialogue partner, educator and expert in religion.

8.1.1.2. A New Religious Sector

Although SST’s role had changed following the reform of 2000, their role was further expanded in the last time period. Specifically, from 2012, SST was highlighted in both budget proposals and in regulation letters as an important agency that could contribute with knowledge on religion and issues concerning faith communities. Likewise, they were appointed to start an education programme aimed at leaders of minority religious communities, covering subjects such as democracy and knowledge of the Swedish society, and hold a continued dialogue with minority religious communities with the aim of stimulating the communities’ internal work with democracy, democratic values and countering anti-democratic tendencies. Also, SST was designated to provide general support for religious communities, coordinate religious communities in contingency planning and disaster management, encourage co-operation between minority religious communities and the public sector, and be a forum in which issues relating to social values could be discussed. Finally, it was also highlighted that SST’s knowledge was increasingly sought after by a number of other government agencies (for example, The Swedish Contingency Agency, The Police, and The Swedish Migration Agency) who required or desired improved co-operation with minority religious communities, for example as part of contingency planning and disaster management (see for example prop. 2016/17:1; prop. 2011/2012:1; prop. 2014/15:1).

SST were thereby given a considerable number of government mandates in which they were encouraged to expand their co-operation with minority religious communities in a number of different, and at times disparate, fields. For example, SST was assigned to stipulate how minority religious communities should work for democracy, democratic values, counteracting anti-democratic expressions, preventing violent extremism, child marriages and forced marriage,

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234 For a full list of the tasks, see Statskontoret (2015)
compile an overview of xenophobic acts against minority religious communities, and reach out to groups with low electoral participation.

In accordance with the Budget for 2018, SST is assigned with supporting the work of faith communities with information initiatives prior to the 2019 European Parliament elections, including information regarding the importance of voting rights and the practical voting procedure. Activities shall focus on groups of eligible voters with low turnout in previous general elections.

(Ku2018/02248/LS)

Many of the roles appointed to SST indicate that the state was interested in, through SST, accessing minority religious communities and thereby accessing groups in society that were difficult to reach. Clearly, SST were increasingly given the role of supporting minority religious communities in being civil society actors, whilst also acting as a control function to prevent anti-liberal tendencies and similar values existing within minority religious communities.

8.1.1.3. The Debate Leading up to the New Commission

Despite a very evident resource role, with minority religious communities being identified as having key characteristics that, from the perspective of the state, could be utilised, the risk perspective remained present. Specifically, the commission that will be the focal point of the religion and state category during this period was explicitly appointed to further examine the need for strengthened criterion for minority religious communities to obtain government grants. This coincided with a heated debate concerning the government grant to minority religious communities (see for example mot. 2013/14:Kr341, mot. 2015/16:1414; mot. 2015/16:1103) in which it was argued that stricter criteria, not least regarding the discrimination of women and the LGBTQ community, should be imposed in order for minority religious communities to be eligible for government grants.235 In light of the debate a government commission was appointed (Dir 2016:62) with the aim of putting forth new motives, objectives and conditions for the government grant that would gain broad support in Parliament, as well as among the general population. The commission was also to propose new, clearer criteria

235 It was also argued that the government should appoint a government commission to review the current legislation and investigate whether the support could also be given to non-religious life-philosophy organisations.
for the government grant, in which the relationship to democracy was made compatible with the principle of freedom of religion. Importantly, the new democracy criteria would thereby both facilitate the approval and the retraction of support towards minority religious communities.

Since the act was introduced, Swedish society has changed and the diversity and activities of faith communities has broadened. It is important that the goal of government grants to faith communities is formulated in a way that is adapted to the current and future diversity of faith communities in Sweden as well as the needs of society.

(Dir 2016:62)

The new democracy criteria should be understood in light of the debate and an ambition of bringing an end to the support of minority religious communities who did not respect human equality, gender equality and democracy, whilst simultaneously directing support to those who actively supported such values. In 2017, an additional term of reference was added, requesting an inquiry into the demands and needs for confessional and non-confessional education for religious leaders as well as how the educational needs of minority religious communities could be covered within existing financial frameworks (Dir 2017:63). In similarity to the previous commission in 2009 regarding the education for Imams (SOU 2009:52), the terms of reference highlighted the potential for a religious leader to act as a link between members of the minority religious community and society at large. However, in order for such a link to be successful, it was understood that a sound knowledge of, and connection to, Swedish society was essential, not least, in order to meet the current requirements of contributing to maintaining and strengthening the fundamental values of society.

To sum up, therefore, the new commission was appointed to propose motives and conditions for the state’s support to religious communities as well as assess whether there should be any changes to the current model. Furthermore, the commission was appointed to suggest a clarified democratic criterion, that was consistent with religious freedom, and offer suggestions regarding the education of religious leaders. The commission was to be led by an inquiry chair with the support of references groups.
8.1.2. The Commission Concerning the Review of State Support to Minority Religious Communities

In 2018, a new milestone was reached in the relationship between the state and minority religious communities when the report State Support for Religious Communities in a Multi-Religious Sweden\(^2\) \(^{236}\) (SOU 2018:18) was published. The premise for the commission was, in similarity to previous church-state commissions, that Swedish society had undergone major societal changes and had a changed religious landscape.

Today, Sweden is considered one of the world's most secular countries. (...) At the same time, Sweden has become more religiously diverse through immigration than ever before. This means that different religious traditions encounter one another more often and it has also contributed to such religious expressions becoming more visible in the public sphere. Sweden has also been brought closer to an active religious world.

(SOU 2018:18, p. 83)

Given these changes in society, the question was whether the state support to minority religious communities met the needs of both minority religious communities and the society at large, and how it should be ensured that the government grant was not used to support anti-democratic tendencies.

8.1.2.1. A Tool for the Common Good

In the commission, two main motives were set to guide the discussion regarding the support towards minority religious communities. First, the principle of freedom of religion and, second, the fact that minority religious communities were understood as being beneficial to society\(^2\) \(^{237}\). The first motive was connected to the first proposed objective, namely, to provide good working conditions for minority religious communities to actively conduct religious activities long term. The second motive, on the other hand, was connected to the new objective for support, namely that they should contribute to maintaining and strengthening the fundamental values on which society is based on.

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\(^2\) Statens stöd till trossamfund i ett mångreligiöst Sverige
\(^236\) Samhällsnytiga
In previous periods, the perspective of strengthening fundamental values had been set as a condition rather than an objective. Whilst this could be viewed as a semantical difference, the differences between an objective for the support and condition for the support could also signify a new perception of minority religious communities. Specifically, a condition determines whether or not an organisation is eligible for grants based on its current state. An objective, meanwhile, declares the state’s desire of what minority religious communities should aim to become. A primary reason for including the principle of freedom of religion was that if minority religious communities were only supported for being beneficial to society, they should be given the same support as given to other organisations. Motivating the support to minority religious communities through the principle of freedom of religion was also a way of protecting a human right, i.e., letting everyone, regardless of faith, have the same rights to practice their faith. The principle was seen to be guided by Article 9 in the ECHR where it was stated that everyone should have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. In turn, this meant that the state should treat different religious communities equally and remain neutral to different religious views.

Freedom of religion should be understood as the main motive for why the state provides support to faith communities. The state support provides different faith communities with similar conditions for religious activity and gives all people, regardless of religious background, the same basic opportunities to practice their religion in Sweden.

(SOU 2018:18, p. 223)

Basing the support on the principle of freedom of religion meant that the main objective for supporting minority religious communities, i.e., supporting them in their religious activities, would remain unchanged in the future. Meeting people’s existential needs through worship, prayer and rites of passage was also, throughout the report, declared as the predominant role of minority religious communities in Sweden. It was therefore argued that the state should continue to support minority religious communities both by providing government grants and by supporting them in collecting membership fees. Basing the support on this principle also protected the autonomy of minority religious communities as it would mean that their religious activities could not be investigated or questioned. However, although the positive aspects of the principle of freedom of religion
and the element of autonomy were placed as main motives, it is important to note that one of the main aims of this commission was to identify ways to also exclude religious communities from support from the state. Given the importance of distinguishing minority religious communities from other actors in civil society, being beneficial to society could not be a primary aim. However, it was still a central motive for supporting minority religious communities. Interestingly, although the principle of freedom of religion guaranteed the autonomy of minority religious communities, the motive of being beneficial to society opened for further co-operation between state and religion.

An additional motive for supporting faith communities is the value of the socially beneficial activities they can perform. The support also creates positive conditions for a dialogue between faith communities and the state and can contribute to democratic development within faith communities.

(SOU 2018:18, p. 223)

It was argued that demographic and social changes, together with a “deregulation in public welfare, has given civil society organisations more leeway as welfare providers” (SOU 2018:18, p. 140). Therefore, there was a growing space for minority religious communities. In this space, minority religious communities could (or could potentially) perform activities that were beneficial to society, particularly in reaching vulnerable groups, such as addicts, EU immigrants and newly arrived refugees, i.e., groups that the state could not always reach or support. Thus, minority religious communities could simultaneously help solve issues both internally and externally. For example, an imam working with pastoral care within the prison system could both be of great significance for the supported individual, but also for society at large by potentially preventing radicalisation. As minority religious communities were viewed as central resources and as religious civil society actors, the performing of beneficial activities for society was set as a motive for the support. Interestingly, this motive was connected to the second proposed objective with the main focus of ensuring that support would not go to minority religious communities “that act in contrary to the fundamental values on which society rests and which thus cannot be considered to contribute to the benefit of society” (SOU 2018:18, p. 225).
As mentioned previously, this objective had previously been labelled as a condition for the support. Despite the fact that “condition” can be seen as stronger terminology when a refusal or exclusion was desired, by placing it as an “objective” it could be connected to a more easily defined democracy requirement that would make it easier to exclude minority religious communities from the support. The objective declared the state’s intention for the grant and, being an objective rather than a condition, encouraged the recipients to work towards these goals by engaging in activities that were beneficial for society. Whether the goal of maintaining and strengthening the basic values of society was accomplished or not could be achieved by, for example, evaluating the number of women on the boards of different religious communities.

In this way the objective better reflects the intention expressed by the government with the support; to promote democracy and participation with respect for equality and the equal value of all humanity. Some faith communities also demand support for developing their work on democracy issues. By formulating this as an objective, it becomes clear that the support will contribute to developing and strengthening the work on these issues.

(SOU 2018:18, p. 230)

The objective was introduced to ensure that all minority religious communities worked towards an objective set by the state that included the values deemed central by the state. From the state’s perspective, therefore, the second motive meant that minority religious communities could be considerable resources to society if they worked towards the state’s goals and priorities. Consequentially, it also enabled the state to identify which religious communities were not identified as resources. However, in relation to the principle of freedom of religion and the autonomy of religious communities, such an approach was not uncomplicated.

8.1.2.2. The Exclusion of Non-Democratic Minority Religious Communities

There was clearly a tension between the state’s governance and the importance of minority religious communities’ autonomy. However, by focusing on a democracy criterion that highlighted which fundamental values were in need of protection, a different perspective was taken. Specifically, anti-motives, i.e., reasons for not giving support, were specified rather than specifying motives that
should be reached as this could negatively affect the minority religious communities’ autonomy.

In the commission, it was argued that the current democracy criteria, i.e., the requirement regarding a strengthening of fundamental values that had been included in the preparatory work ahead of the 2000 reform, was vague, unclear and poorly motivated. In part, this was due to the fact that it did not raise the issue of the fundamental values in relation to the principle of freedom of religion. However, it was also in relation to what it primarily meant that religious communities should contribute to maintaining and strengthening fundamental values. Without a clear definition, it could be misunderstood that all religious communities could contribute to the common good in the society. Additionally, it was argued that there was a lack of clarity in the understanding of the concept “fundamental values” that in many ways composed the democracy criteria. Yet, despite the identified conceptual confusion, it was still argued that fundamental values could strengthen the social cohesion of society.

However, the concept is used extensively in the public debate, for example in relation to integration issues, and most people seem to agree that it is important to safeguard such values. Common fundamental values strengthen the community in society and can ultimately be considered a prerequisite for social cohesion

(2018:18, p. 302)

Given the lack of clarity, the risk was that the democracy criteria could become arbitrary and difficult to apply in practice. It could also be in conflict with the ECHR. For example, actions could be understood as problematic though simultaneously be understood as a manifestation of the religious group’s conviction and thereby be protected by the ECHR. The committee, therefore, suggested a new, clarified democracy criteria that would allow restrictions of the freedom of religion under certain specific conditions, in line with ECHR. 238

These restrictions were to have a clear legitimate purpose and be based on certain key values that were deemed worthy of greater protection in a democratic society.

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238 In ECHR (article 9) it states that freedom of religion can be subject to limitations if the actions counteract principles and actions “prescribed in law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others”. 
They should also be clearly expressed to minority religious communities to ensure that they were aware of their actions and the limits of what was acceptable and what was not. Overall, it was argued that “a new criterion must be both clear and practicable” in order to make sure that support would not be “given to religious communities that do not respect values that are fundamental to our democratic society” (SOU 2018:18, p. 275). A clarified criterion would also eliminate the risk of arbitrary decisions when proposing that a religious community should not be entitled to support. This was of considerable importance as such decisions could lead to a restriction of religious freedom.

The committee argued that the fundamental values that were to be considered particularly worthy of protection in Swedish society could be found in The Form of Government’s Programme and Goal Statutes\(^{239}\) (prop. 1973:90). These were largely in accordance with human rights, as formulated in international conventions such as the ECHR, the Children’s Convention and UN International Conventions Concerning Civil and Political Rights. The values that were particularly highlighted were:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{The equal value of all human beings and the freedom and dignity of the} \\
\text{individual, the ideas of democracy (including human rights equality and} \\
\text{non-discrimination), participation and equality in a broad sense as well as} \\
\text{protection against discrimination, the individual's private and family life} \\
\text{and children’s rights}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{(SOU 2018:18, p. 338)}\)

Consequentially, it was stated that restrictions on freedom of religion could be implemented if minority religious communities overstepped these values, restricted other people’s freedoms and rights, or if their actions were in conflict with Swedish laws. Specifically, five grounds for exclusion of government support (as well as repayment of previous support) were presented by the committee:\(^{240}\)

1. **Violence against a person, force and threats**, including, for example, the spreading of propaganda or calls for violence.

\(^{239}\) Regeringsformens program- och målsättningsstadgar

\(^{240}\) See, SOU 2018:18 p. 337

272
2. **Violation of children’s rights** that could lead to a significant risk to a child’s health or development, such as refusing a child the right to education or care.\textsuperscript{241}

3. **Restrictions on the freedoms and rights of members** that could be of harm to the individual.\textsuperscript{242}

4. An active **opposition of the democratic system of government**. For example, if a religious community encouraged its members not to follow Swedish law.

5. **Discrimination and clear violations of the principle of equal value for all human beings**. Examples included expressing disrespect towards specific groups and individuals; these could be based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnic orientation, etc.\textsuperscript{243}

### 8.1.2.3. Good and Bad Minority Religious Communities

In order to understand the new exclusion criterion, it is important to further understand which risks were highlighted regarding minority religious communities in the commission. Interestingly, throughout the commission, minority religious communities were presented both as a resource and as a potential problem and risk. This did not mean that all minority religious communities were inherently perceived as containing both of these elements, but because a differentiation was made between what could be referred to as good and bad minority religious communities. In other words, there was a differentiation between moderate, liberal and inclusive religious communities from immoderate and anti-liberal religious communities.

This distinction is particularly well illustrated when studying the community aspect in minority religious communities and whether this aspect was to be regarded as a resource for the individual or as a risk. Whilst the question of

\textsuperscript{241} Although international conventions highlighted the rights of parents in terms of religious upbringing, it was argued that there were still cases in accordance with the law of mandatory care of minors where children should be protected from the harm of a religious community.

\textsuperscript{242} The committee highlighted the difficulty of limiting such restrictions though emphasised the right for an individual to leave a religious community.

\textsuperscript{243} However, it was highlighted that as a result of international regulations (that placed an emphasis on the religious community’s autonomy) discrimination could occur. For example, based on their teachings, certain minority religious communities may choose not to have women as leaders without being excluded from government support. However, not letting a woman have other positions in the religious community could be grounds for exclusion from state funding.
whether the community aspect of minority religious communities was to be regarded as a risk or resource had shifted between commissions, the perspective had always been consistent within each commission report. In this commission, however, both aspects were highlighted simultaneously. In the field of integration, for example, it was stated that minority religious communities could provide important community cohesion, as well as comfort and stability for the individual member. They could also function as a bridge between the religious community and society at large, and, as such, play a central role in the integration process. However, it was also highlighted that they could be a barrier to integration by, for example, imposing restrictions on women’s rights and freedom, as well as maintaining norms and values that underpinned such restrictions and be “an obstacle in the creation of a social cohesion and integration” (SOU 2018:18, p.139).

The individual could therefore be helped by the community aspect that was offered by minority religious communities, but the community could also pose a risk to their personal freedom within a group. I.e., the community aspect was viewed both as a resource and a risk in terms of integration depending on whether or not it was working in line with the public and common good. Likewise, minority religious communities were understood as playing a potentially central role in offering a social community for youths, children and older people. However, although this could be of considerable importance for the creation of a sense of belonging and meaning for these groups, thereby resulting in a positive impact on society, such activities could also limit people's freedom and thereby have a negative impact on society.

By people sharing a faith and following the same ethics, symbols and rituals, strong social communities can be formed. In this way, the faith community can create social cohesion between people and give an individual an identity and a sense of belonging, which in itself is important in order for life to be perceived as meaningful. At the same time, faith communities can, through their activities, limit individuals' own life choices and the development of their identity. The faith communities' contribution to social and meaningful activities therefore contains aspects that in a broader societal perspective can be both positive and negative

(SOU 2018:18, p. 135)
Such risk elements were highlighted as greater in minority religious communities offering culturally conserving activities. Although positive aspects for both individuals and society were raised, it was also stated that such activities could help preserve conservative cultural norms and promote anti-liberal values.

Conflicts can arise with the fundamental principles of democracy, such as the freedoms and rights of the individual, equality for all and religion. Such tensions have, for example, been expressed in areas of family policy, gender equality and LGBTQ rights.

(SOU 2018:18, p. 149)

As is clear from the examples above, certain minority religious communities were seen to represent conflicting values to society and were thereby deemed as risks, particularly in limiting the freedom of the individual. Those groups representing a more open attitude with values more in-line with the wider society, however, were regarded as resources. This complexity and tension-filled relationship between democracy, fundamental values of the society and religious minority communities, transcends the commission. In terms of democracy, several other similar examples were highlighted by the commission regarding what roles minority religious communities could play.

First, it was proposed that minority religious communities had considerable potential, in similarity to other organisations in civil society, to function as a “voice”, i.e., to make the minority religious community heard in society and lobby for different interests. This could include being active in the debate concerning the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and individuals whose unemployment benefits had expired. Taking on this role would mean that they could play an important role in developing democracy. However, it was also stated that being a voice could also inadvertently mean that minority religious communities could, when inspired by religious teachings, promote values in conflict to liberal values, for example, the promotion of restricting women’s and LGBTQ rights that could be understood as a risk to a democratic society. A similar tension was identified regarding the contributing aspect of minority religious communities to increase the societal participation of their members. On the one hand, minority religious communities were seen to have the potential of being an important link between members and society at large and thereby increase social participation, for
example, by urging people to vote. However, on the other hand, it was raised that this would depend upon the characteristics of the minority religious community. Groups with strong leaders and undemocratic structures could work counterproductively, for example, by requiring certain values from, or applying pressure on, members. In these cases, the free will and participation of individuals, including children, could be at risk.

The question was also raised whether religious groups could generate trust and tolerance in Swedish society. It was stated that minority religious communities had the potential of both increasing the sense of community, thereby contributing to people’s trust and tolerance, but also the potential to reduce the tolerance of differences, openness, humanity and trust. According to the committee, what impact a religious community had on society would differ between different religious communities. For example, reduced trust and tolerance could be linked to conflicts between different religious groups in other countries that were then transferred to Sweden. Another example, highlighted in the commission, was in cases where religious leaders in Muslim religious communities had promoted an “extremist interpretation of Islam that may have inspired individuals” (SOU 2018:18 p. 162). However, positive examples were also presented of interreligious work and groups actively acting against extremism within the Muslim community.

Lastly, the issue of women’s and LGBTQ rights was raised and how minority religious communities contributed or opposed these rights. It was stated that many advocated patriarchal and conservative values. However, it was also highlighted that some minority religious communities promoted women’s rights and that more open tendencies could be seen in relation to some groups’ views of homosexuality. Overall, however, the risk perspective was strongly highlighted in the commission regarding this subject.

All of these examples reiterate the commission’s perception that there were good and bad religious communities and that this was mainly decided in relation to four values or statements. First, individual freedom should always be prioritised and placed before the rights of the group; conversely, the community aspect could never be placed before the individual’s well-being. Second, a number of values (including gender equality, LGBTQ rights and human equality) were deemed unnegotiable in Swedish society and therefore in need of greater protection.
Minority religious communities who disagreed with these values were regarded as undemocratic. Third, the protection of children from the values that immoderate minority religious communities represented was particularly important. Lastly, minority religious communities that did not cooperate with the wider society were problematic. Yet, importantly, minority religious communities that respected these issues were regarded as resources and beneficial to society.

Crucially, not least considering the change from a condition to an objective, through co-operation, anti-liberal and immoderate minority religious communities could transgress and become good. An important part of the support was that it enabled co-operation between the state and minority religious communities through different councils and forums and it was stated that these councils and forums could create opportunities to express and share opinions and interests, as well as for the state to reach out to minority religious communities. As civil society actors, minority religious communities could be vital resources in reaching out to groups that the public welfare system struggled to reach, such as newly arrived migrants. It was therefore suggested that the support to religious communities should open up and support a democratic development of a religious civil society. However, it could also push so-called problematic minority religious communities in another direction.

8.1.2.4. The Final Proposal and the Policy Outcome

The final proposal of the commission was that the government grant should predominantly be distributed as an organisational grant, given the principle of freedom of religion in which the autonomy of a religious community was central. However, as an organisational grant was difficult to evaluate and follow up, no guarantees could be given regarding whether the funds would be distributed in line with the intentions and objectives for the support. Also, it was unclear if those religious communities most in need of the support would benefit the most. Therefore, it was suggested that (compared to previously) a larger proportion of the support should be distributed as project grants. It was also proposed that an organisational development grant should be introduced. Such a grant could not only support the infrastructure of religious communities that needed support for financial and administrative activities, but also be given for the confessional (e.g. application for education at colleges and universities) and non-confessional (e.g.
to increase the knowledge of basic democratic principles, including gender equality) education of religious leaders in order to reach further equality amongst different religious groups.

The commission also proposed that apart from the exclusion criteria regarding democracy, further criteria should be introduced. For example, it should be possible to withdraw support if the minority religious community was no longer registered as a faith community, if it had less than 1000 Swedish resident members (rather than the previous level of 3000), and if it was no longer funded predominantly by residents of Sweden. It was also suggested that SST and a specific decision-making body connected to SST, should examine cases and determine eligibility. Finally, the commission proposed the introduction of a new act in which both the regulations of the government grant, as well as the state fee assistance, would be included. In the suggested act, the definition of what was to be included in a faith community was broadened and made more inclusive towards people from different religious backgrounds. Specifically, an extra section was included where congregation and other religious activities, such as prayer and meditation, were defined.

In conclusion, therefore, the stricter regulations, alongside the increased focus and financial support of project and activity grants, was clearly in line with the state’s sense of needing to further govern a sphere that, on the one hand, had so much potential and, on the other hand, was seen as deeply problematic. Yet, despite a large number of organisations, religious communities, agencies and institutions taking part in the referral process following the final reports (Ku2018/00653/D), at the time of writing (spring 2021), the outcome of the commission is still unclear and it seems as if the commission’s policy recommendations have largely been ignored.

8.1.3. Summary: Religion and State

Returning to the central themes in the distant reading, the primary concern, as found in the first theme, was to highlight different conditions, requirements, criteria and objectives for the support towards minority religious communities. The other themes, meanwhile, clearly show the central aspects of the changing discourse and of the expanding ambitions of minority religious communities. No longer should they merely function as religious actors but also as civil society
actors, strengthening the fundamental and democratic values in society, thereby contributing to the common good while also limiting the space for those who did not contribute. However, in contrast to other organisations in civil society, policies directed towards minority religious communities could not only be guided by how they contributed to the public good. Rather, they were also guided by the principle of freedom of religion and international regulations, thereby guaranteeing religious minorities certain rights, albeit to a limited extent.

8.2. Education

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, and in similarity to the situation in the state and religion category, this period’s commission within education was the first commission in which the issue of confessional elements and orientation was not embedded in a greater discussion. Perhaps consequently, similar questions were raised that were discussed in the state and religion commission, even though there was a focus on the judicial and legal aspects of regulating religious schools rather than on principle discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 18. Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Topic: Confessional (<em>konfessionella</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: confessional, focus, principal, elements, schools, independent, activity, recreation centers, pre-school, establishment stop, requirements, non-confessional, holidays, pre-school class, primary special school, high school, graduations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Topic: Education (<em>utbildning</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: education, children, students, teaching, exercise, school, opportunity, school system, covered, guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Topic: Independent (<em>enskilda</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: individual, the Education Act, approval, principals, supervision, consequences, owners, management assessment, conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Topic: Free (<em>fri</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: free, basic, commitments, international, persons, relationship, democratic, law, purpose, required, discrimination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The first topic, *Confessional*, is very closely related to the third theme, *Independent*. Both highlight the dominating issues in the education category, namely the issue of regulations and governance of religious schools and whether such schools could be banned. Central questions were: should there be new conditions for religious schools as well as for confessional elements more generally in public and
independent schools? For example, should confessional elements be allowed at end of school year celebrations?

The second topic, *Education*, sheds light on two intertwined aspects; first, questions regarding the differences between education and teaching in religious schools and, secondly, how the rights of children and parents should be balanced in terms of these questions. For example, to what extent should parents be able to make decisions regarding their children’s schooling? And, how can the rights of children to a comprehensive education be ensured? The fourth topic, *Free*, highlights the discussions between Sweden’s commitment to both international regulations and to democratic and fundamental values. Specifically, how should new regulations be formulated to ensure that international regulations are upheld?

### 8.2.1. Background

Despite the new opportunities given to minority religious communities and other religious groups after the school reforms in the beginning of the 1990s, there were still relatively few schools with a confessional orientation. In 2017, there were 66 primary, middle or secondary schools with confessional orientation with a total of 9300 students, thereby accounting for less than 1% of the total number of students in Sweden (Qvarsebo & Wenell, 2018). Of these 66 schools, 55 were Christian. However, despite the rarity of religious schools in general, as well as the fact that a large majority were Christian, this did not greatly affect the tone of the public debate. On the contrary, the mere existence of these schools was controversial and resulted in heated political and media debates.

### 8.2.2. The Commission Concerning Confessional Elements in Schools

During this period a number of motions were submitted,\(^{244}\) with a large majority being highly critical of religious schools (see for example mot. 2015/16:1295; mot. 2016/17:3730; mot. 2017/18:499; mot. 2016/17:905) and with some proposing a ban of religious schools. The main criticism of such schools was the belief that the teaching was not objective and that the existence of such schools could lead to honour-based abuse, a promotion of conflicting values to society at large and potential extremism. Also, it was believed that religious schools led to segregation,

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\(^{244}\) Primarily from the Swedish Democrats, the Liberals and the Social Democrats,
an isolation of children and the creation of parallel societies. Perhaps due to relatively sparse hard evidence of the negative impact of religious schools, many of the motions referred to media reports that described the risks of the harmful conditions that existed in religious schools – in particular in Muslim schools.

As a consequence of the debate, a new commission was appointed in 2018 to inquire the potential need for further regulations in the Education Act (2010:800) of confessional elements in both public and independent schools (Dir. 2018:15). Importantly, any suggested regulations were to be discussed in relation to international regulations on human rights and the Instrument of Government. Given that some of the highlighted issues regarding religious schools were the issues of gender equality and the risk of segregation, from the perspective of children, it was also declared that children’s rights should be particularly stressed. However, in line with ECHR, parents’ rights were also to be taken into consideration by the commission. Finally, a central aim of the new commission was to define confessional and non-confessional concepts as well as delve deeper into both the negative and positive aspects of confessional elements in schools. In terms of schools with a confessional orientation, the commission was to inquire whether new regulations and increased control could be implemented. Interestingly, despite the hard-line approach in the terms of reference, it was also anticipated that exceptions could be made for confessional elements during, for example, end of year school celebrations.

In 2019, the commission was provided with additional terms of reference by the government, stating that the commission should “submit such constitutional proposals that were necessary for a stop for new-establishments of independent schools with a confessional direction” (Dir. 2019:25). Although it was stated that the commission was to raise possible consequences of such a ban, it was clear that the government no longer merely wanted to stop funding these schools, but rather ban them completely.\textsuperscript{245} At the end of 2019, the commission, led by an inquiry

\textsuperscript{245} In the terms of reference there was no statement to clarify why this addition was made. However, on the government webpage a statement from the government supplements the new terms. In the statement it is declared that a major reason for the added terms of reference is that religious schools are thought to work against equality between boys and girls and are not providing the students with an objective education (Regeringen, 2019). Of all the commissions that have been included in this thesis, this is the first time the terms of reference took a clear stance in the issue that was to be investigated. Also, it is unclear what evidence the government had for the claims they made, given
chair, presented its final report. Although the original terms of reference had highlighted the need for an inquiry into confessional elements in all schools, the name of the report clearly indicates the changed focus of the report: New Rules for Schools with a Confessional Direction (SOU 2019:64).

8.2.2.1. Balancing Different Rights and Commitments

Before delving into the report, it is important to note that the commission report had a decidedly different approach to many of the previous commissions. Specifically, the outcome of the commission had effectively already been determined in the terms of reference – namely that a ban of religious schools should be implemented no matter what the end result of the commission was.

This complicating factor was highlighted in the report, where, perhaps as an indirect criticism of the terms of reference, it was stated that often, many perceptions concerning schools with confessional orientation had their roots in the person’s own ideological standpoint and was not always supported by empirical evidence. It was also stated that the topic itself was deeply polarised. Therefore, it would be difficult to objectively study the problems and advantages of schools with a confessional orientation.

To start off, the commission can state that the attitude to confessional elements in the school system is often a fundamentally ideological and to some extent subjective issue. It can therefore be difficult to objectively determine the advantages or disadvantages of confessional elements in the school system. What some see as advantages can be considered disadvantages for others, depending on ideological and principled starting points.

(SOU 2019:64, p. 192)

In order to study such perceptions, proponents and opponents were interviewed, and the research within the field was presented. Potential problems were that religious schools may have a segregating effect, that confessional elements were not always voluntary, and that the teaching was not always in accordance with liberal values such as gender equality. Proponents of religious schools, however,

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highlighted the rights of parents to choose schools for their children, the rights of children to religion, that religious schools could have an integrative function, and that children in religious schools were not vulnerable to victimisation due to their faith. Given the difference of opinion, it was clear that it was complex for the inquiry chair to assess whether these schools were to be seen as a resource or a risk, as this would differ depending on the particular school and also on who was asked. In terms of school results, similar tendencies could be seen. Religious schools varied in quality, in similarity to other schools. Also, it was difficult to assess whether the problems some schools experienced, for example regarding gender equality, were a result of their confessional orientation.

It can be determined that at some schools with a confessional focus, a large proportion of students belong to the same religion. The question is whether it would have made any difference if the school in question had a non-confessional focus or if there are other factors that influence the students to choose the school, for example school results, linguistic or cultural factors or housing segregation.

(AOU 2019:64, p. 205)

Another central question was whether the issues raised were sufficiently significant to justify a ban, not least in relation to the consequential effects on other freedoms and rights. Much of the work of the commission, therefore, was a balancing of different rights. How should children’s right to, versus children’s right from, religion be balanced? How should the rights of parents be weighed against the rights of children? How should the rights of a religious community to run their own school be understood in relation to the rights of children to receive an open and versatile education, and the importance of a comprehensive school for all? And, how should international regulations be balanced against national regulations? Many of these questions were then discussed in relation to empirical facts and, as such, the general tone was legal and factual, with little or no focus on guiding values or principles. An example of how different rights needed to be carefully balanced is seen regarding the discussions concerning the positive and negative freedom to religion for children. Although it was considered that all confessional activities had to be voluntary in religious schools, it was highlighted that public schools should also provide opportunities for students (and schools) to organise gatherings of a confessional character.
Perhaps as a consequence of the complexity of balancing different perspectives, as well as the previously mentioned problematic terms of reference, clear standpoints were rarely taken by the inquiry chair. However, regarding the negotiation between national laws and international commitments, it was declared that it was difficult to suggest a further regulation of the ownership and management of independent schools with a confessional orientation. The same conclusion was made in regard to prohibiting new schools with a confessional orientation.

The commission has concluded that a stop for new establishments entails challenges with regard to fundamental freedoms and rights such as freedom of trade and religion, as well as equal treatment and discrimination. In order for an establishment stop to be implemented despite these challenges, it is crucial to determine which reasons can be given for such an establishment stop and the different treatment of schools.

(SOU 2019:64, p. 424)

Given these considerable problems in prohibiting religious schools, other reasons needed to be found in order to meet the terms of reference without coming into conflict with any legal provisions. Specifically, although religious schools could contribute with elements such as increased segregation and may not provide the same educational standards as other schools, it was unlikely that such reasoning would be a strong enough argument. Also, the question was raised whether prohibiting new schools would lessen segregation. Likewise, further proof was needed that these schools were particularly problematic due to their confessional orientation. Evidence that the commission could not provide.

Nonetheless, in line with the terms of reference, the commission did present a simple suggestion. In a new section in chapter 2 of the Education Act (2010: 800) it was proposed that it would state that it was no longer possible to be approved as an independent school if the school had a confessional orientation. However, whilst new religious schools would thereby be hindered from being established and, if already established, be regulated, this would clearly be in conflict with a number of legally binding freedoms and rights. Therefore, other alternatives (that were not strictly in line with the terms of reference) were also presented.
8.2.2.2. Further Regulations Regarding Value-Foundation and Democracy

Several alternatives to banning the establishment of new religious schools were proposed in the report. For example, stricter supervision of religious schools, no public funding, a regulation of confessional elements, and opening up for, or providing increased opportunities in the school system to adapt, an individual student’s schooling to include the practice of religion. Purely related to the first terms of reference, in which the commission was to investigate whether there was a need to impose specific requirements on the management of an independent religious school in order to gain approval (if banning religious schools was not possible), focus was on further regulation and supervision. Specifically, a strengthening of the democratic principles in the approval of management was deemed necessary. However, given the school system’s construction, such a legal requirement could not merely be enforced for independent religious schools, but for all independent schools.

Similarly, if criteria concerning value foundations and democracy were to be implemented, such criteria would need to be implemented universally, regardless of whether problems in meeting such criteria were thought to exist or not. The new democracy condition, which was not seen to be a problem in terms of international commitments, was also suggested to be formulated in a manner to ensure that the regulations that were already stated in both international and Swedish law were clarified. Overall, the democracy criteria were formulated in a similar manner to the suggestions in the commission regarding state and religion (SOU 2018:18). I.e., schools were not allowed to:

1. use violence, coercion, threats or otherwise unfairly violate the fundamental freedoms and rights of individual children or adults;
2. discriminate or otherwise violate the principle of the equal value of all human beings;
3. exercise abusive treatment against children or students;
4. otherwise oppose the principle of the best interests of the child;
5. oppose the democratic system of government, or
6. justify, promote or encourage the actions set out in paragraphs 1 to 5.

(SOU 2019:63, p. 43)

As is clear, many of the regulations focused on the well-being of children and their protection. From the basis of the principle of what is best for children, schools that used overly authoritarian methods of upbringing or teaching, or restrictions in terms of health care or medical care, would therefore not be approved. The recommended criteria would also mean that it would be easier to prohibit religious schools that, for example, treated boys and girls differently. As can be seen above, no particular aspects were highlighted that specifically focused on religious schools. Rather, the commission was wary of identifying any particular risk or resource aspect with religious schools even though the democracy criteria could be seen as an indication of the risks that were thought to exist in those schools. An approach typical of this commission. Finally, in the report’s conclusion, the commission clearly distanced itself from the terms of reference and its central aims by giving recommendations that, at least in part, were in conflict with the original terms of reference.

In similarity to the state and religion category, a large number of organisations, religious communities, agencies and institutions took part in the referral process (Dr U2020/00060/S). At the time of writing (spring 2021) no further action has been taken and the policy outcome remains unclear.

8.2.3. Summary: Education

As seen in the distant reading, the primary issue raised during this time was the discussion of implementing further regulations for religious schools and the proposal of an establishment ban. However, in the report, the commission highlighted the many difficulties of banning such schools, not least due to the consequential effects this would have on other freedoms and rights that Sweden had committed to. Therefore, focus turned to the conflicts that may occur between the competing interests of different rights. Despite this, however, further restrictions were presented by the commission, predominantly on how the approval of religious schools that could be of possible harm for the individual child could be refused.
8.3. Integration

In this shorter period no commission analysed or investigated issues within the category of integration. Most likely, this is related to the decision in 1997 when it was declared that immigrants and native Swedes should be treated equally, and that no specific immigrant-related policy field should exist. Instead, integration policies and objectives should be included in the work of all government agencies as a horizontal policy perspective. As such, although no specific commissions occurred during this period, this does not mean that the issue was absent from the political agenda; on the contrary, as seen above, integration was very much a central issue.

8.4. Conclusion Chapter Eight

In the following conclusion I will highlight the primary findings in this chapter and central themes that have been found.

8.4.1. Common Shared Values and Discussions of Rights

Even though this period covers fewer years and includes fewer commissions compared to previous periods, it provides a vivid picture of the state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities during a particular period. Clearly, minority religious communities were no longer embedded in a discourse concerning the Church of Sweden. Rather, as seen in the distant reading, they were at the centre of attention and had become a matter of great public concern. Many of the previously raised questions and concerns intensified and issues such as polarisation, extremism and conflicts were no longer described as future or potential risks, but rather as current social problems that needed to be dealt with. In the midst of this, questions were raised regarding what roles minority religious communities could play in an increasingly diverse and polarised society – would they be a catalyst for integration or segregation? Overall, there was sense of urgency in dealing with, and managing, the situation in a distinctly hands-on manner, both in terms of handling the many identified risks and problems that were seen to exist in the religious field, but also in utilising the potential capabilities that could be found in minority religious communities to solve these same issues.
The continued development of the policy field concerning religion, with increased emphasis on knowledge of religion, co-operation and multi-religious meetings, may be indicative of the fact that although diversity was emphasised, there was also a need to further reiterate the importance of social cohesion and common shared values to avoid further polarisation. Rather than merely highlighting, as a rhetorical question, the importance of, for example, that minority religious communities could strengthen the fundamental values in society, further action was now promoted to further regulate and reform those minority religious communities who did work in accordance with these desires. Overall, a central question during this period was how the state on the one hand could better utilise the good resources found in many minority religious communities so that they could contribute to the public good and, on the other hand, how to further regulate and reform those minority religious communities who were regarded as problematic. As such, while minority religious communities were highlighted as being important tools for solving different issues and for being central actors in civil society, the risk aspect of minority religious communities was also more evidently stated than before, as seen in the terms of references for the commissions. As the state’s handling of minority religious communities was no longer dependent on its relationship with the church, less attention was directed towards issues concerning equality. Focus was rather on finding motives for continuing the support while simultaneously finding ways to urgently both incorporate minority religious communities into working in accordance with the fundamental values of Swedish society through co-operation, as well as more clearly excluding minority religious communities that were understood to be in conflict with the wider society.

However, although voices were raised for stricter regulations and control, any further regulations needed to be balanced against international legislation. As such, this period became a negotiation between so-called democratic (Swedish) values and internationally regulated principles. Specifically, the Swedish values focused on the rights of women, the LGBTQ-community and children while international regulations focused on the rights of minority groups and of parents. Many of these negotiations were complex and it is clear that the international legislations were often seen as obstacles that needed to be overcome in order to pass further regulations. As such, the policy recommendations in both
commissions were a complex (and often judicial) balancing between different perspectives.

Such negotiations and the somewhat outspoken perspective of the state characterises this period and it is clear that the increasingly diverse religious landscape was handled by working for both further inclusion and co-operation, though also through further restrictions of minority religious communities. As a result, the most prominent element during this period was the parallel growing and shrinking space for minority religious communities.

8.4.2. A Growing Space for Religious Civil Society Actors

The growing space for minority religious communities during this period can largely be explained by the fact that they increasingly became part of a civil society discourse. Minority religious communities were described as central actors in civil society and, as such, they should be supported. Specifically, the argument was that the state should not support religion per se, but they should support minority religious communities as they were important actors in civil society. Parallel to this development, government contributions to religious communities increased significantly and, for the first time, minority religious communities obtained government grants for their social activities. Therefore, they were included in a rhetoric in which they were promoted due to their instrumental role as actors for the common good, both for wider society and for individuals within the community. By being included in the discourse of civil society, several potential traits and abilities were prescribed to them. For example, being supportive in integration, being quick in responding to crises, generating trust, being a voice, etc. Thereby, minority religious communities were included in the move towards increased expectations on the public role and function of civil society more in general.

Importantly, their particularity of being religious communities was emphasised together with their primary purpose, i.e., offering different religious services to their members. Their role in offering religious services was regarded as a resource, not least as it was thought that religion and the community offered by religious communities could be an important aspect in the integration process. The religious aspect also meant that in contrast to other civil society organisations, the principle of freedom of religion would be the central guiding principle for
support. This also explains why minority religious communities were not merely included in policies directed towards civil society in general, but rather in the policy field of religion. This differentiated them from other civil society actors, but also meant that the state could govern religion and minority religious communities separately. Therefore, certain privileges could be asserted through the principle of freedom of religion, although regulations of the policy field were also possible, by, for example, proposing certain criteria for support. The differentiation also allowed for the state to more easily and directly engage with minority religious communities and its leaders.

Although the community aspect of minority religious communities was raised as a resource, not least in terms of integration where religious communities could offer a safe and comforting space, this was not their only resource role. Rather, it was regularly emphasised that co-operation with other religious groups, organisations, government authorities and the state was as important. In particular, minority religious communities who were supported by the state were encouraged to collaborate with the new expert authority in religion, SST, in a variety of areas. SST received increased resources and was expected to expand the dialogue with religious communities to stimulate work with democracy and democratic values. Importantly, this co-operation was grounded in the fact that minority religious communities should be pursuing aims for the public good. As such, they were provided with a growing space. However, the co-operation should not merely be understood as a way of providing a growing space for minority religious communities but also as a way of further controlling both individual actors and a religious field that was understood as deeply problematic. Therefore, although there were expectations on civil society and religious communities’ positive role as a resource, there was an awareness regarding the risks of a pluralistic civil society, especially regarding the risk of minority religious communities becoming too autonomous.

The perception of minority religious communities as a resource during this period needs to be understood in its contextual setting. The Swedish state expected civil society, and thereby also minority religious communities, to take a role in supporting the welfare state in aspects in which the state experienced a lack of success. For minority religious communities this included increasing electoral participation, working with democracy, integrating people and supporting the
Minority religious communities were therefore provided with a growing space and increasingly understood as an important bridge between minority groups and the majority population, as well as a solution to many of the problems facing Swedish society. However, they were also seen as part of a problem that needed to be controlled and prevented.

8.4.3. A Shrinking Space for Narrow Minority Religious Communities

Clearly, the risk perspective of minority religious communities was increasingly highlighted during this time. There was a policy narrative with the ambition to further prevent and control their space, although, as mentioned throughout this chapter, the risks were not seen in all minority religious communities. Rather, this was aimed at minority religious communities that were considered inward-looking and conservative, with conflicting values to society at large, or, those who were more inward-looking and less interested in dialogue and co-operation with other parts of society.

The risks of such minority religious communities were particularly related to the social cohesion of society, not least as they could threaten the freedom of the individual, especially women, children and the LGBTQ-community, but also because they had the innate risk of isolating themselves from the rest of society and thereby increase the risk of segregation. Also, in worst case scenarios, this type of isolation from the wider society could lead to extremism and conflict. The risk of a hot and communitarian form of religion, that represented anti-democratic and anti-liberal values, seems therefore to have been regarded as one of the central challenges to the core values of Swedish society, not least the importance of the freedom of the individual. In light of this, it was evident that the religious freedom of minority religious communities should never triumph over the religious freedom of the individual. Rather, the freedom and rights of the individual was always to be prioritised.

A number of intervening strategies were presented to try and further govern and manage minority religious communities that were regarded as a risk. The first was to continue the support and thereby guarantee continued dialogue and co-operation. By conditioning the grant and placing an emphasis on co-operation, dialogue and activities such as arranging education programmes for religious
leaders, it was hoped that a reformation would occur. The government grant could therefore be understood as a tool to ensure that minority religious communities worked in line with Swedish values. The second strategy, closely related to the first, was to encourage and support interfaith dialogue. Such methods seemed to have been considered as a particularly useful way to ensure social cohesion and combat problems such as polarisation and extremism. This strategy can be understood in relation to the risk of narrow religious communities becoming isolated and, eventually, becoming more extreme. The third strategy was to have clearer exclusion criteria that would exclude religious communities that were regarded as problematic. Thereby, the state could support and provide a growing space for minority religious communities that were regarded as a resource, while excluding those that were regarded as a risk. By attaching these exclusion criteria to central democratic values, anti-liberal minority religious communities could be excluded. A confusing aspect, however, was the desire to propose exclusion criteria to religious schools given that many of the proposed elements in the presented criteria were already found in Swedish legislation.

The final strategy was to remove the government grant or ban the establishment of independent religious schools completely rather than incorporating minority religious communities into a policy sector. Although this strategy was not visible in the commissions, it was clearly a strategy voiced by both sides in the political debate. Rather than trying to separate moderate from immoderate and so-called good from bad, this strategy was embedded in a narrative that inherent risks existed in all minority religious communities and, as a result, tax money should not be given to any religious communities. However, such a strategy would be difficult to implement given the strong protection of the freedom of religion and Sweden’s commitment to international regulations of human rights. As such, although the government tried to ban religious schools, this was clearly difficult.

In summary, all of the four different strategies sum up many of the overriding aspects regarding the state’s perception of minority religious communities during this period. In all of the different strategies, with the exception of the third alternative, there was a reduced focus on the autonomy of minority religious communities. The transcending view was an ambition of further control and regulation, albeit in different ways, and although the resource perspective was ever-present, the fear of the potential risks within minority religious communities
was clearly greater. Crucially, a coherent perspective can be seen throughout these strategies, namely that the state was understood as the protector of the common good, shared values, and therefore the individual. From this perspective, minority religious communities were perceived as either working together with the state in fulfilling certain goals and thereby earning a growing space, or alternatively standing in conflict with the common goals and thereby experiencing a shrinking space.

8.4.4. Concluding Remarks

This final time period ends with a number of un-answered questions regarding which strategies the state will choose in the future and how the public policies towards minority religious communities will develop. Clearly, the issue of minority religious communities has gained new prominence in public policy during the last decade and the risk and resource perspective has firmly placed itself in the limelight. Much has clearly changed since the beginning of the first time period and therefore, before turning to the final discussions and conclusion of this thesis, the four different time periods will be summarised and placed both in a larger context and in relation to each other. In particular, distant reading will be used to further shed light on the shifts and trends that have occurred regarding the relationship between minority religious communities and the state during the between 1952 and 2019.
9. Changes in the State’s Perception and Handling of Minority Religious Communities

In this chapter the results from the diachronic analysis, i.e., the analysis of the central overarching trends and changes of the state’s perception of minority religious communities over the entire period, will be presented. The chapter will focus on the shifts and stability in the overall discourse concerning minority religious communities, including how different ideas, principles and values either preserved or reformed policies towards minority religious communities and how they were perceived as a risk and a resource. The findings will be presented from the perspective of the aim of this thesis: to contribute to the understanding of the contradictory and contested perspective of religion in the public realm today by describing, analysing and discussing changes in the Swedish state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities between 1952 and 2019 as well as the thesis’ two initial research questions:

- How are minority religious communities portrayed in Swedish government documents between 1952 and 2019, in particular from the perspective of being perceived as a risk and/or a resource?

- Which ideals, values and principles underpin the state’s perception of minority religious communities and how do these affect the polices aimed towards them?

In order to answer these questions, each section will begin with an overview of similarities and differences between the different time periods. In similarity to the previous four synchronic chapters, this chapter will also combine distant and close reading.

9.1. Why was the Issue of Minority Religious Communities Raised?

Before presenting the distant reading regarding how the issue of minority religious communities was raised during the different periods, the close reading of the
previous chapters needs to be applied in order to understand why the issue of minority religious communities was raised.

Table 19. Why was the issue of minority religious communities raised?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Church-state relationship</td>
<td>The Church-state relationship</td>
<td>The Church-state relationship</td>
<td>The changing religious landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A changing religious landscape</td>
<td>A changing religious landscape</td>
<td>A changing religious landscape</td>
<td>Debates concerning the need to further regulate the support to minority religious communities and the right to establish religious schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching of Christianity and religion in schools and the education of immigrants</td>
<td>The inequalities facing immigrant religious communities</td>
<td>The fear of new religious movements and of religious schools</td>
<td>The fear of new religious movements and of religious schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions concerning the adjustment of immigrants</td>
<td>Discussions concerning independent schools</td>
<td>Discussions concerning independent schools</td>
<td>Hopes for the contribution to the public good</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussions concerning education for Imams</td>
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<td>The embedding in a civil society agenda</td>
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</table>

As is seen in table 19, the main reason during the first three periods that the issue of minority religious communities was raised was the state’s continued relationship with the Church of Sweden. However, in all four periods, the issue of minority religious communities was highlighted due to the changes in the religious landscape. Interestingly, although the religious landscape changed significantly between 1952 and 2019, and that immigration differed considerably between certain years or periods, the changes in the different periods were often described in a similar fashion – that society needed to handle increasing immigration, religious diversity and secularisation. Therefore, although the actual context differed between the different periods, the questions were often the same; how should the state handle the fact that society is becoming more religiously diverse and, how should religious minorities be accommodated and managed?

Although the questions were of a similar nature, the proposals regarding how to relate and respond to these changes, as well as what the state’s approach should be, differred. In part, this could be explained by whether such changes were viewed with optimism or with concern. In the first period, for example, the concern was how religious minorities that immigrated to Sweden were to adapt into Swedish society. In the second period, however, the issue was how to further recognise and promote the rights of minority religious communities in Swedish society. In
the last two periods a mix of optimism and concern was visible, with both a recognition of the rights of religious minorities, whilst simultaneously emphasising the importance of social cohesion, and common and shared values.

In the field of education, similar tendencies are observed. Although religious schools quite persistently were understood as problematic, there are differences in why the issue of religious schools were raised. In the first period it was mainly related to how the teaching of Christianity and religion should be solved for those belonging to minority religious communities, as well as whether children of parents from minority groups who had immigrated to Sweden should be allowed to start their own schools. The questions were therefore focused on solving an urgent problem for minorities and their children who staying long-term in Sweden. In the second period, given the decision not to support religious schools, the discussions regarding religious schools and the issue of education for religious minorities was largely absent and only raised in relation to the risk of independent schools in general. When the issue was raised again, in the third period, school reforms had created new opportunities for religious schools meaning that the issue was highlighted once again. However, despite being a period of explicit focus on openness for diversity in school provision and providing religious minorities with a growing space, there was also a growing reluctance towards religious schools. How to further regulate these religious schools, given the provision of a greater public space for them, was generally seen as problematic and resulted in a proposed establishment ban towards the end of the final period.

Overall, therefore, in the final two periods the issue of minority religious communities was raised with a sense of concern and an emphasis of further wanting to regulate a religious field that was increasingly seen as a source of a number of different problems. Simultaneously, however, the issue of minority religious communities was also increasingly embedded in a narrative of how they could be beneficial to society. Many of the discussions in these final two periods were similar to those raised in the first period, with the difference that this was predominantly a phase of deliberation meaning that few polices were implemented. Interestingly, in all these time periods similar concerns and tendencies regarding the categories of religion, state and education are seen. The second time period, however, stands out from the other three, as a time of focus on the further recognition of minority religious communities.
9.2. The Shifting Perception of Minority Religious Communities

Following the question of why the issue of minority religious communities was raised, is the question of how they were raised during the different periods. Given that a diachronic analysis focuses on changes and continuities over time, targeted ACA is used. By purposefully choosing a concept (for example, in table 20, “faith community”) an overview is provided of not merely the questions being asked and subjects being discussed in certain periods or certain documents, but also how concepts and themes change and remain throughout the entire studied time period by combining all documents together (rather than studying specific categories). This means that the diachronic analysis produces a complementary analysis to the synchronic by pinpointing the strongest associations and trends not only in each period but between periods.

Given that the focus of the thesis is to study the state’s perception of minority religious communities, it is natural to start with an overview of which concepts are connected and clustered to the concept of “faith community” during the different time periods.

Table 20. Concept: Faith Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members, membership, Church of Sweden, freedom of religion, religious, congregation, confession, neutral, individual, groups, activities, support, freedom, Christian, religious, organisation, principles, requirements, religious education, Free Church, population, economic, liberation</td>
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<th>Time period 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom of religion, hospital, Church of Sweden, relationship, churches, individual, premises, religious, members, freedom, spiritual, support, grants, government grants, voluntary, care, principle, financial, future, ecclesiastical, local, state, principles</td>
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<th>Time period 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Church of Sweden, government grants, ordinance, support, values, help, obligations, form, activities, funerals, state, regulation, basic, legal, conditions, tried, church, identity, non-profit, religious, members</td>
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<th>Time period 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grant eligible, SST support, strengthen, state grant, fee assistance, ordinance, congregations, Muslim, grants, spiritual, society, values, state, law, church, conditions, organisations, members, extremism, orthodox, goals, reclaim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although table 20 clearly reiterates the results seen in the previous chapters, it also sheds light on some particular issues that are present in certain periods. For example, during the first three time periods the issue of minority religious communities was deeply embedded in the discussions concerning the Church of Sweden and the relationship between church and state. However, this changed considerably in the last period when the concept of the Church of Sweden was not included as one of the most common 23 concepts connected to minority religious communities.

Regarding the church-state relationship, questions were often related to how minority religious communities should become more equal to the Church of Sweden, for example regarding pastoral care within hospitals (see time period 2) and in legal terms (see time period 3). As such, many of the policies that aimed to improve the situation for minority religious communities were entrenched in the discussions regarding the church-state arrangement. It is mainly after the reforms in 2000 that the issue of minority religious communities gained prominence in Swedish public policy as a separate entity, predominantly regarding how they should be further included or excluded from support. It is also around 2000 that the state began applying a more active approach, contrary to the more pending and passive (though positive) approach that could be seen in the first two periods, not least illustrated by the increased emphasis on co-operation with authorities (as exemplified by the fact that the concept of SST appears in the last period).

A central factor in discerning the Swedish state’s perception of minority religious communities over the entire period is to understand that the issue of government grants has been central to the discussions concerning them as a group (the concept of government grant is found in time periods 2-4). One of the core questions has been if minority religious communities should be given the same opportunities as the Church of Sweden. As a result, several practical questions emerged. For example, how many members should a minority religious community be required to have in order to qualify for support? Through such practical questions and limitations, lines have been drawn regarding which groups should be defined as a faith community and thereby entitled to support.

Regarding the issue of government grants, an important element is seen when comparing periods. Although no support was given during the first period, the
concept of “support” was still present, thereby illustrating that the issue was being discussed and was of importance. In the following periods, concepts related to support are not only present, but they occur earlier (in this particular analysis the concepts during each time period are hierarchically determined) for each time period. As such, it is clear that the importance of government grants increased in relation to minority religious communities over time.

Also, the tone and content of the discussions regarding the support changed. When the support was introduced in the beginning of the 1970s, as well as in the preceding time period when the issue of support was being deliberated, discussions of what the leading principles should be were in focus. Crucially, the principle of freedom of religion was highlighted and questions were asked as to whether the state should be neutral and how to balance the religious freedom of groups and the religious freedom of individuals. In the mid-1990s, meanwhile, focus was more on what objectives and conditions should be introduced and concepts such as regulation, trial, conditions, objectives, obligations and reimbursement are seen both in the third and fourth time period. This clearly shows a change in the discourse and the underlying ideas. In accordance with this, a shift is seen towards trying to reform policies and further control minority religious communities, as well as to exclude those who did not live up to the state’s expectations, for example related to a fear of extremism (see time period 4).

Another key difference between the periods was that rather than focusing on central principles, focus in the last period was on so-called fundamental and shared values. However, as seen in table 20, such discussions did not appear out of nowhere. Although the concept of value was not included in the second period, this is unsurprising given that, as highlighted in the previous chapters, discussions concerning the importance of common and shared values were relatively absent during that time. However, value-related aspects were discussed during the first period, especially regarding Christian values. In particular, the question of how to maintain a Christian community of values was discussed, and considerable importance was placed on the issue. Yet, a reason why the concept of values does not appear in the distant reading during this time may be that other concepts, such as morals and ethics, were also present in the discussions.
Another difference between the periods, especially when comparing the first and last period, is which minority religious communities were in the limelight of the discussions. During the first period, Christian and Free Church groups were focused upon whilst in the last period, Muslims and Orthodox religious communities were the predominant focus. However, although these groups were clearly highlighted to the greatest extent and are therefore the most prominent in table 20, as has been seen in the previous chapters, the distant reading does not always shed light on the entire debate. For example, Catholic religious communities, so-called immigrant religious communities or new religious movements are not seen in table 20, despite the fact that they were included in the discussions.

As is clear, the question of how minority religious communities were portrayed varied and changed depending upon the underlying context. However, behind the contextual variations there are also elements of continuity where the state, in regard to an increasing diversity, needed to deal with the issue of minority religious communities and the question of whether government grants should be given or not and, if so, under what circumstances.

9.3. The State’s Handling of Minority Religious Communities and the Underlying Principles and Ideals

As has been discussed previously, a central discussion throughout the studied period concerned whether minority religious communities should be financially supported by the state. As is shown in table 21, the perspectives and attitudes shifted considerably both regarding the issue of state support and the state regulation of minority religious communities. Whilst introduced in the second period, the government grant became increasingly questioned in the final two periods. Alongside the increasing ambiguity towards the support, further regulations were put in place and a desire for further co-operation was promoted. However, interestingly, although the government grant became increasingly questioned towards the end of the studied period, funding also increased.

Similar tendencies can be seen in the field of education, where increased regulation coincided with increased support and new opportunities. Again, this
reiterates the fact that both the main and supplementary categories in this thesis were greatly affected by a more general discussion and overall approach of the state regarding minority religious communities. Specifically, following 2000, the state encouraged further co-operation and control of minority religious communities.

Table 21. The state’s dealings of minority religious communities: Support and Regulation

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No government grant is given to minority religious communities in general. Government grants are not given to religious schools (except the Jewish Hillel school). No support is given to religious minorities that have immigrated to Sweden nor for their adaption into Swedish society.</td>
<td>Government grants are introduced to all minority religious communities fulfilling basic conditions. Funding increases annually, and new grants are introduced, including establishment grants. No government grants are given to religious schools (except the Jewish Hillel school). Extra support is given to immigrant religious communities (for example establishment grants).</td>
<td>Government grants are continued to be given to minority religious communities. New motives and objectives for the government grant are introduced alongside new legislation for minority religious communities in 2000. New opportunities provided through welfare reforms. Religious schools start to receive support and also become more regulated. Extra support to immigrant religious communities is withdrawn.</td>
<td>Government grants increase annually. Government grants are given to social intervention initiatives during refugee crises. New conditions and exclusion criterions for the support is proposed. Stricter conditions, as well as an establishment ban, of religious schools is proposed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While table 21 provides an overview of the state’s handling of minority religious communities, it is important to note that the policies directed to them were always guided by central principles and ideals. These principles and ideals were then balanced against different central values and ideas that were promoted at the time. By looking closer at these values and ideas, one can also identify the fears, as these were often the antithesis of the central principles and ideals. For example, if a
central ideal was assimilation and social cohesion, the fear was the situation that could arise if this was not achieved.

In terms of the leading principles and ideals that have underpinned the expectations on minority religious communities over time, there are, as seen in table 22, signs of both continuity and discontinuity.

Table 22. Leading principles and ideals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Principle of Freedom of Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutrality in terms of the promotion of equal treatment of different religious communities</td>
<td>Impartial treatment of different religious communities</td>
<td>International regulations on Human rights</td>
<td>International regulations on Human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom for the individual and the individual within religious communities</td>
<td>Positive aspect of freedom of religion</td>
<td>Strengthening the legal status of minority religious communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Principle of Democracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include the demands of both the minority and the majority</td>
<td>A new condition for support</td>
<td>A new objective for support</td>
<td>Democratic Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fundamental Values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is clear from table 22, the principle of freedom of religion has been a central guiding principle of public policies towards minority religious communities during the entire period. No other principle or ideal has received the same level of attention or focus, nor been discussed in such varied terms or perspectives, although it should be noted that the principle was more clearly visible in the first and second period (as seen in table 19). In the first two periods, for example, freedom of religion was highlighted as a central guiding principle, whilst in the last periods it was regarded as a principle to consider in line with international regulations on human rights, alongside other central principles and perspectives.

Given that the principle was central in all time periods, it is relevant to analyse the concept more deeply and develop an understanding of what other concepts were most commonly used in conjunction with freedom of religion in the different periods, through directed ACA.
As seen in table 23, during the first period, although positive aspects of freedom of religion were present, the primary focus was on the negative aspect of freedom of religion, not least the individual’s freedom from religion. There was also a focus on how the principle of freedom of religion should be understood and implemented. Different aspects and interests were debated, particularly whether the state should be neutral and how freedom of religion for religious communities, and the individual within the religious community, should be weighed against each other in the case of a changed relationship or separation between church and state. As shown previously, the first period was heavily characterised by the balancing of different interests. However, the position was often clear, not least regarding the state’s prioritisation of the freedom of the individual. There were also clear limits to the state neutrality, not least concerning central values and what ideological position the state should take in terms of society becoming more diverse.

The approach to freedom of religion in the second period, by contrast, concerned itself with accommodating minority religious communities, in particular the individual’s right to religion, the positive aspect of freedom of religion, and how it should be protected and realised. As such, although it was stated as a central principle, the primary focus was how freedom of religion was to be realised from a practical perspective and how the state should ensure that minority religious communities received increased rights, such as gaining access to hospitals and
spiritual care, whilst also ensuring that individuals had access to religious service. The overall perception of the principle was that the state should keep a supportive and impartial approach towards different religious communities.

This perspective did not continue in the third period. Rather, the understanding of freedom of religion turned to more legal perspectives and, in particular, international regulations on human rights. Whilst the principle of freedom of religion was always concerned with legal perspectives, at this time there was also an increased focus on legal implementation and international laws. Also, as the freedom of religion was a human right (incorporated into Swedish law) there was a need to implement policies to avoid discriminating any religious community or religious movement in a diverse society. It was in the light of this that a new legal entity, “faith community”, for religious communities was created.

Yet, despite such positive sentiments, there was a visible shift, with the principle of freedom of religion becoming more ambiguously discussed. More specifically, the principle was no longer merely followed as a noble principle. Rather, it was also identified as a principle that created difficulties for Swedish society and the state. Similarly, international law concerning human rights forced the state to reconsider, and even uphold, religious freedom in a stronger fashion than it maybe would have liked to, both when discussing further restrictions of the religious field, but also to differentiate the policy field of minority religious communities from organisation in civil society in general. Religious freedom was also discussed in relation to other rights, particularly children’s rights as they were stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but also in relation to a proposed democracy criterion and similar central values seen as worthy of protection. The limits of freedom of religion were therefore emphasised and although it was clear that one should be allowed to freely practice one’s religion, this could not be done indiscriminately without considering other rights and principles.

In terms of the entire time period, although the principle of freedom of religion was clearly discussed in very varied terms in the different periods, there were also similarities, particularly regarding which of the aspects that were weighed against each other. As will be discussed further in the following chapter, the negotiations concerning the importance of freedom of religion as it is stated in Swedish and international law, with the importance of central values of society and the state
therefore being unable to be entirely neutral, transcended several time periods. In this respect it is important to note that the second period stands out as an exception.

Leaving the principle of freedom of religion to one side, as well as the distant reading, similar tensions and a balancing of different interests can be seen regarding other values, ideals and principles. On the one hand, the state can be seen to promote values such as pluralism, different freedoms and rights, equality, multiculturalism, tolerance, objectivity and freedom of choice. On the other hand, there was a promotion of common and shared values (in the first period these were described as Christian and later fundamental and democratic values), a celebration of certain rights and freedoms (particularly for the individual which were non-negotiable), civic integration, assimilation, and, overall, the importance of social cohesion. It was often in the process of negotiating these values and ideals that the issue of minority religious communities was embedded. The balancing between different ideals and values can be found in all three categories at different time periods and when seen in one category, it was often strengthened by other categories.

This inherent conflict can to a large extent explain the often-contradictory view of minority religious communities in Sweden. On the one hand, they are recognised as a central part of Swedish society that needs to be further included and recognised. On the other hand, they are seen to challenge the common good and therefore need to be restricted. Only in the second period were these tensions less obvious. Instead, focus was predominantly on pluralism and the recognition of differences, particularly in relation to so-called immigrant religious communities. However, even during the positively-charged second period, there were exceptions to the positivity; the plurality of the education sector. In terms of education, the discussions largely followed similar approaches to those seen in the other periods. Although school reforms (most likely unintentionally) opened up for religious schools in the beginning of the 1990s, it is clear that such schools were seen to stand in conflict with the general view of the Swedish school system throughout the entire studied period. An illustrative example of this is how children should not be placed in certain schools in accordance with their religious belonging. Rather, the aim has been that children from different backgrounds should meet and teaching should be guided by common values or a common
value-foundation. In such discussions, therefore, the importance of unity and the rights of children were prioritised ahead of values such as pluralism, equality and freedom of choice.

Although only highlighted in passing in the first and second period, the principle of democracy was also regarded as a central guiding principle in the state’s approach to the Church of Sweden and minority religious communities, determining that the relationship needed to be guided by the demands of both the majority and the minority. However, despite its importance during the first two periods, both the principle and perspective was largely absent in the final two periods. Instead, when democracy was discussed in these later periods, it was from the point of view of the importance of common shared values in Swedish society, of the equal democratic rights for everybody, the equal value of all individuals, gender equality, children’s rights, etc. This shift could, at least in part, be explained by the fact that democracy was seen as a guiding principle in the first two periods, while being beneficial to society became a leading principle in the last two periods (see table 22). Democracy was no longer discussed as a principle, but rather in terms of how it could be operationalised in objectives, conditions and regulations in regard to the support. In turn, this must be understood from the perspective that general changes from the mid-1990s had occurred meaning that focus was no longer on which principles should guide the state’s management of minority religious communities. Rather, focus was on the objectives and the underlying motives. Alongside the focus on objectives, new conditions also followed. In terms of new conditions, the main change was the inclusion of a condition regarding the benefit to society that was first included alongside the 2000 reforms and was then proposed to become part of the objectives in the last period. This shift indicates that rather than being guided by principles concerning what would be the most appropriate way to handle minority religious communities, in regard to the Church of Sweden and other profane organisations, it became a question of how the continued support could be justified when the Church of Sweden and state separated. Specifically, how could the state avoid giving support to minority religious communities that appeared to be a risk? This was a dramatically different perspective compared to that seen in the beginning of the 1970s when the support was introduced and when immigrant religious communities were regarded as a resource.
Returning to the second research question, concerning which ideals, values and principles underpin the state’s perception of minority religious communities and how these affect the policies aimed towards them, the results show that they both remain similar over time but also change. Throughout the periods there was an ongoing tension and a balancing of different interests that often deeply affected the policy discussions, for example regarding further regulation and control. The second period stands out compared to the others as focus was largely on the positive aspects of different rights and the impartial treatment of different religious communities. In this respect, the state’s hands-off approach during this time is perhaps not surprising.

9.4. Minority Religious Communities as a Risk and Resource

The view of religious communities as, on the one hand, a risk and, on the other hand, a resource, changed considerably. In particular, the understanding of the risk and resource role altered, as is seen in table 24 and 25.

Table 24. The perception of minority religious communities as a resource

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offering religious services</td>
<td>Covering the religious needs of the individual</td>
<td>Assisting in crises and disasters, and in integration</td>
<td>Reaching out to groups that the state cannot reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Christian morals and ethics</td>
<td>Religious welfare</td>
<td>Solving different social problems</td>
<td>Providing religious service for members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and religious welfare</td>
<td>Offering community for their members</td>
<td>Strengthening and upholding fundamental values of society</td>
<td>Promoting trust, democracy and community cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>So-called immigrant religious can offer social and cultural activities</td>
<td>Religious activities for members</td>
<td>Solving different social problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in table 24, there is an underlying trend that while religious communities were first played out from the traditional service role in different areas and not encouraged to take a public role, from the mid-1990s they started to be played in and identified as a potential actor in the public domain. Specifically, although seen as having a central role to play in the 1950s and 1960s, both in spiritual and social welfare, Free Churches and other religious communities were encouraged to stay in a strictly religious sphere during the 1970s. During the second period, all work
was expected to be characterised by their religious messages, the provision of community and the creating of bonds between members. Only so-called immigrant religious communities were regarded as eligible for having an extended role of offering social and culture services for their members.

In the 1990s, however, this changed as the social functions, and not the religious content, was increasingly highlighted. Minority religious communities were both intentionally (an emphasis was placed on their service role) and unintentionally (for example due to reforms in the education sector) included in the public realm, not only in the capacity of offering religious services for their members. As such, minority religious communities became included in a civil society narrative in which they were seen as an important tool for combating different social problems. They thereby became central partners to the state, other authorities and organisations in society and, given that they were regarded as beneficial to society, also became worthy of financial support. This narrative continued and became even more evident in the last time period when minority religious communities were increasingly highlighted as a tool for promoting trust, democracy and social cohesion. It was believed that minority religious communities could reach individuals and groups that the state struggled to reach, whilst also creating cohesion within the groups and providing a sense of belonging for their members.

Table 25. The perception of minority religious communities as a risk

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk of limiting the freedom of the individual, particularly in regard to children</td>
<td>No particular risks are highlighted</td>
<td>Terrorism, conflict, segregation, polarisation, etc.</td>
<td>Extremism, conflict, terrorism, polarisation, segregation, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A parallel school system</td>
<td>Religious schools are understood as problematic though mainly in relation to the fear of independent schools and a fragmented school system</td>
<td>A fear of a fragmentation of society</td>
<td>Threat to social cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fear of a fragmentation of society</td>
<td></td>
<td>Competing values</td>
<td>Limited freedom and discrimination of children, women and LGBTQ-groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow religious communities</td>
<td></td>
<td>The risk of limited freedom for children and women in narrow religious communities</td>
<td>Narrow religious communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A parallel school system</td>
<td>Competing values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parallel school system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although minority religious communities were *played in* during the 1990s, it is also apparent that there were wishes to control and prevent the risk elements of minority religious communities, as seen in the shift in the discourse around 2000 when further prevention and control of harmful religious communities was highlighted. Stricter conditions for support were introduced and exclusion criteria were proposed in order to exclude groups with values and ideals conflicting with those of the state. Also, the need for co-operation intensified in order to manage the risks associated with minority religious communities, such as the risk of terrorism, extremism, segregation and polarisation.

Importantly, however, the increasing emphasis on co-operation and partnership was not only intended to minimise risks. The intention was also to make use of the so-called good forces in society and capitalise on the resourcefulness found in minority religious communities. Minority religious communities could thereby support the government in different fields. Without the support, the state would lose its co-operation with, but also its influence on, minority religious communities. As such, government grants were further emphasised.

Although the risk aspect was more obvious following the reforms in 2000, the state’s fears were not absent during previous periods. On the contrary, not least in the first period, fears were clearly visible, for example regarding the risk of diminishing individual rights within minority religious communities. Also, a continuous fear was that if society became more religiously diverse, which was frequently raised as a potential future risk, many of the aspects that had previously been regarded as potential risks, would become actual problems.

Interestingly, although the risk aspect varies, there are some risks that reoccur. For example, the risk that the freedom of the individual would be limited in minority religious communities permeates all periods, with a limited exception in the second period. In particular, children’s freedom and rights within minority groups, but also the rights of women and later LGBTQ-groups, were highlighted as needing the state’s protection. A key element in the risk of minority religious communities is that despite the fact that the most feared groups changed, the risks were often grounded in the fear of narrow religious communities. For example, fears changed from Catholic groups and Free Churches, with issues concerning ecstatically prayer meetings and monasteries, to Muslims and new religious
movements, with issues of isolation, the promotion of extreme values and their segregating effects. Specifically, these were groups that represented a hot and communitarian form of religion and who did not emphasise the common shared values or the importance of individual freedom to the same extent as Swedish society at large.

As raised previously, in the second period the risk aspect is almost completely absent, at least regarding minority religious communities, per se. Importantly, however, the lack of a risk perspective coincides with an argumentation and approach in which religious communities should only be actors in a strictly private sphere, providing religious service for its members. Therefore, it is particularly interesting that regarding religious schools, when religion is clearly in the public sphere, the arguments were largely similar throughout all time periods. The fear of a parallel and fragmented school system was highlighted in very similar terms both in the 1960s and 2010s, and there was a strong continuous desire to limit the space of these schools whilst still respecting international regulations. In particular, a general and consistent view throughout was that although international law made it necessary to respect such regulations, the rights of children were always to be prioritised ahead of the rights of both parents and religious communities. Overall, therefore, there was a hidden assumption that the state knew better than parents regarding what would be good for their children.

In conclusion, the results regarding how minority religious communities have been perceived as a risk and/or resource sheds light on both dramatic changes, particular regarding how they could function as a resource in society, yet also clear continuity regarding the risk-aspect – most clearly illustrated within the category of education.

9.5. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter the major shifts and changes, though also continuations, regarding the state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities have been highlighted. Clearly, the discourse regarding the state’s urgent need to handle increased immigration, religious diversity and secularisation is not new, nor are some leading principles such as the principle of freedom of religion. Rather, these are also seen historically. Yet, although many of the leading principles and ideals may have remained constant, the underlying understanding of them has evolved.
Some dramatic shifts have occurred and the continuity and discontinuity in the state’s perception is clearly visible when studying the risk and resource perspectives. Some key changes can be seen in what role the state wishes minority religious communities to play in society; yet there is also continuity, not least in the risk aspect concerning social cohesion and the discussion of individual versus group rights.

In the following chapters these results will be set in relation to the third research question; how the continuity and discontinuity in the state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities can be understood in relation to the moral and political logics informing the position of the state?
10. Theoretical Perspectives on the Swedish State’s Perception and Handling of Minority Religious Communities

In this chapter the results from the preceding chapters will be analysed in light of the theoretical framework of this thesis. The third research question will particularly govern the direction of the analysis. In the first part, how the perception and handling of minority religious communities can be understood in light of the theoretical debates regarding the handling of religious diversity in Europe will be examined. Here, I will particularly focus on how the political logics that inform the position of the state have shifted in line with two major policy shifts. In the second part, I will deepen my perspective by also looking at the underlying moral logics and how the empirical results, particularly the way in which minority religious communities were perceived as a risk and/or resource, can be viewed in light of the theoretical debates regarding civil society. The chapter will end by discussing how the connection between these two theoretical debates can be understood and how they may inform and challenge each other.

10.1. Two Policy Shifts

In other European countries, researchers have discussed the emergence of a faith sector and a new policy paradigm in the handling of religious communities and other religious actors (Dinham, 2009; Griera, 2012; Beckford, 2015). One of the questions that triggered this study was whether the same development could be seen in Sweden?

While the result shows that it is possible to see a similar policy shift in Sweden towards the end of the 1990s, as in other European countries, another fundamental shift in the policy discourse occurred prior to this. Combined, these two policy shifts help to demonstrate how the current situation and the developing relationship over the past 70 years can be understood. Specifically, the first policy shift, resulting in a Policy Phase of Recognition, occurred in conjunction with the introduction of government grants to minority religious communities in 1974. The second policy shift, the Civic Religion Policy Phase,
occurred parallel with the reforms in 2000 when the ties between the state and minority religious communities were deepened. As such, the results show that similar shifts have occurred in Sweden to other countries where there have been large transformations in the state’s handling of minority religious communities and where the state has attempted to adjust policies and politics that have been seen to have failed in the handling of minority religious communities – in similarity to what can be seen in a paradigm shift (Hall, 1993). However, the results also show that there is a continuity in the state’s perception of minority religious communities. In order for a policy paradigm shift to occur, fundamental changes in the underlying ideas and perceptions held by the state need to have occurred (Hall, 1993). Thereby, although the state’s handling of minority religious communities has shifted dramatically, given that there are clear elements of continuity in the underlying ideas and moral logics informing the position of the state (as will be discussed further on), I would suggest that it would be more appropriate to speak of phases, rather than paradigms.

10.1.1. From Deliberation to Recognition: The First Policy Shift

As noted previously, the analysis shows that there was a policy shift in 1974 when it was determined in Swedish law that minority religious communities should be entitled to government grants for the first time in Swedish history. The rights of religious minorities were also strengthened as it was determined in the Instrument of Government (1 chapter. 2 §) that minority groups, including religious minorities, should be allowed to keep and develop their own culture and religious life. Combined, 1974 marks an important shift in the state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities as they for the first time in Swedish history became officially recognised as having the same rights as the Church of Sweden. For this reason, this phase has been named the Policy Phase of Recognition.

According to Hall (1993), in order to understand a policy paradigm shift (and in this case a policy shift) the transformation in the underlying ideals and principles must be understood, not merely the results from the policy shift. As such, the time before the actual shift is as important to study as it gives an insight into the process of social learning that eventually led the state to further recognising
minority religious communities in Sweden. When the Freedom of Religion Act was introduced in Sweden in 1952, it inadvertently allowed for new ideological discussions on what the future church-state relationship should look like. As minority religious communities were mainly highlighted as a consequence of the state’s intentions of retaining its strong bonds with the Church of Sweden, the discussion was shaped by the long-lasting church-state relationship and a clear mechanism of path dependence (Griera et al., 2014; Tatari, 2009). Combined with the principle of freedom of religion, the rights of minority religious communities could no longer be overlooked as the state should take a neutral stance in terms of treating different religious communities equally. However, the church-state relationship pattern and path dependency led to a complexity and a wider narrative of the ideological position of the state was comprehensively discussed, particularly regarding the balancing of different ideals. Therefore, the time period preceding the first policy shift has been named the Policy Phase of Deliberation.

In relation to the theory of ideologies (Tatari, 2009), i.e., how different central ideas affect the handling of religious diversity, different central ideas were weighed against each other. For example, assimilation vs recognition, pluralism vs social cohesion, state neutrality vs Christian values, and individual vs group rights. As a result of such differentiating ideals, the complexity of policymaking was also highlighted and, perhaps consequentially, very few policies were introduced during this phase. Regarding previous research, there is to my knowledge very little written about the governance of religious diversity during this time and it is therefore difficult to contribute to or challenge previous theoretical debates.

From the beginning of the 1970s a shift is visible in the overall discourse. The problems that were raised in the Policy Phase of Deliberation, concerning the further accommodation of minority religious communities, was largely placed to one side and a more positive and active position was taken, leading to a policy shift. Yet, importantly, the underlying political logic remained and the policy shift leading to the Policy Phase of Recognition was governed, not least, by the mechanism of path dependence and the strong patterns that were seen in the previous Policy Phase of Deliberation and the state’s desire to further equate minority religious communities with the Church of Sweden.
The contributions from church-state theories can help to explain this policy shift to a considerable degree (Fetzer & Soper, 2005). Put simply, the theory argues that the specific church-state relations and patterns will affect how religious diversity is managed in different countries and the way different countries accommodate religious minorities (Griera et al., 2014). Given that the Swedish state had a desire to continue its relationship with the Church of Sweden, it was impossible not to further equate minority religious communities. Thereby, whilst principles such as the freedom of religion, democracy and the importance of the religious need of the individual were central, these aspects were deeply embedded in the discussion of how the state was to handle the future church-state relationship and the logic of equalisation. We can therefore see, in line with those arguing for the importance of a country’s church-state pattern (Fetzer & Soper, 2005), that in order to understand the Policy Phase of Recognition, insight is needed in the relationship between church and state and how deeply it has shaped the handling of minority religious communities.

In this regard the Swedish context is similar to that of Britain (Fetzer & Soper, 2005) and Spain (Griera et al., 2014). In Fetzer & Soper’s (2005) study of how Britain, Germany and France handled religious diversity, it was clear that compared to Germany and France, who do not have an existing state church, the British government have been more willing to accommodate Muslims groups, mainly as a result of its ongoing relationship with the Church of England. Therefore, although a state church could initially be understood as a discriminating factor, such a system seems, at least in Britain, to have been advantageous for minority religious communities. In Sweden, similar patterns are visible, with the church-state relationship contributing to greater opportunities for minority religious communities in Sweden than would probably otherwise have been the case. Even in the subcategory of education, a similar relational effect can be seen, albeit with an opposite result. Specifically, the Swedish state had a considerably more restrictive approach towards religious schools, and it is worth noting that at the time, Sweden, in similarity to France (Fetzer & Soper, 2005), lacked a close relationship between the state and church in issues concerning education.

Whilst much of the research concerning how the church-state relationship may affect the state’s handling of religious diversity has focused on the handling of
Muslim minorities (Fetzer & Soper, 2005; Humphrey, 2009), it is also clear, at least in a Swedish context, that the church-state relationship is an important aspect to consider in order to understand the handling of religious minorities more generally. Also, it may help to explain cross-national variations. Specifically, Sweden, at least before the separation in 2000, seems to have followed similar trends as seen in other European countries with an established state church, while differing from those countries with an official separation (Fetzer & Soper, 2005).

Yet, although church-state relations and path dependency are important theories in order to understand policy outcomes, in line with Tatari (2009), the analysis shows that more than one theory can explain policy outcomes in different countries. In Sweden, a second factor that led to a further recognition of minority religious communities and their rights is the political ideology theory (Tatari, 2009) that focuses on how central ideas about nationhood and pluralism shape the political agenda toward minority religious communities (Fetzer & Soper 2005; Tatari 2009).

During the Policy Phase of Recognition, the overall positive approach towards minority religious communities was embedded in what Karin Borevi (2010) has called a radical multicultural policy. This multicultural policy differed considerably to the previous policy phase when the Swedish state either tried to push immigrants to assimilate into Swedish society or support them in the development of their religious life. The multicultural immigration policy was mainly orientated towards supporting immigrants’ ethnic affiliation (Borevi, 2010), given that the state saw a need to treat immigrants equally and further recognise diversity. Given that religious diversity was included in this approach, the issue of religious minorities was also raised. Similarly, considerable focus was placed on the positive rights for immigrants, where immigrants’ right to uphold and develop their own sub-cultures was emphasised and supported (Borevi, 2010). Therefore, the positive aspect of freedom of religion was simultaneously emphasised and with it the rights of immigrants to develop their religious identity. According to Borevi (2010), this type of positive right can be distinguished from “multiculturalism as a negative right” where the state tries to interfere as little as possible with minority groups, for example when religious communities are exempt from certain laws, such as religious slaughter.
Although multicultural immigration policy can contribute to the understanding of this phase, as well as the general interest and openness for diversity during this time (Borevi 2010), it is important to note that on a more general level minority religious communities received relatively limited attention. In line with previous research (Cato, 2012; Davie, 2015), it is clear that greater focus was placed on groups with ethnic, rather than religious, affiliation during this phase. This is further illustrated by the fact that when support towards ethnic and linguistic affiliations began to be questioned (towards the late 1980s and the mid-1990s), the issue of minority religious communities was largely absent from these discussions. Cato (2012) puts forth that this may have been due to an assumption that religious groups and individuals were essentially ethnic and that the social significance of religion was downplayed, in accordance with traditional theories of secularisation (see also Mitchell (2006)). Whilst this may be partly true, there are also visible signs during this phase of the state particularly highlighting the important social function of immigrant religious communities.

Finally, as highlighted previously, educational policies in Sweden during this time (with a shift in the early 1990s), in similarity to France (and contrasted to Britain), did not fully implement multiculturalism (Soper & Fetzer, 2003). Support to religious schools (in similarity to other independent schools) was largely rejected and, as such, a different underlying logic evidently informed the position of the state in the educational sector, where emphasis was on cohesion and unity.

In summary, the handling of minority religious diversity following the policy shift cannot merely be understood through the theory of church and state (Fetzer & Soper, 2005). Instead, the political ideology theory (Tatari, 2009) and the ideas of multiculturalism that developed during the 1970s need to be included given that they most likely affected the recognition and the policy outcomes towards minority religious communities (apart from in education policies). Specifically, the ideology of multiculturalism seems to have created opportunities for minority religious communities while it was mainly the church and state patterns that opened up for a wider discussion. As such, it is also problematic to compare the handling of minority religious communities in Sweden to other countries with established churches. Rather, other central ideas and ideological discussions have to be included, not least regarding immigration policies, as although several countries applied multicultural policies, there are different interpretations,
depending upon, for example, whether focus was on negative or positive rights. Finally, to further add to the complexity of making cross-national comparisons, there may also be different underlying ideological discussions depending on which policy field is being studied in different contexts.

10.1.2. Civic Religion: The Second Policy Shift

In the 1990s, the Policy Phase of Recognition was gradually coming to an end as both the church-state relationship and the multicultural policies became increasingly challenged. Minority religious communities were also no longer merely seen as actors covering the religious needs of individuals. As such, in similarity to many other European countries (Beckford, 2010; Dinham, 2009; Grier, 2012), the results from this thesis show that a dramatic shift occurred around the turn of the century in the handling and discourse surrounding minority religious communities. This shift led to a new phase that can be described as the Policy Phase of Civic Religion.

Although it is difficult to pinpoint an exact year, as has been done in other countries (1997 in Britain and 2004 in Spain, for example (Dinham, 2009; Grier, 2012)), the reforms in 2000 can be understood as a central time when the handling of minority religious communities shifted. Not only were new conditions implemented for the support and a new legislative form introduced, but cooperation and partnership were increasingly emphasised, in similarity to other countries (Beckford, 2010). There was also a sense that the previous regulations of minority religious communities no longer served their purpose and that the state needed to further engage and regulate the religious field, thereby strengthening the ties between the state and minority religious communities.

Although major transformations in the governance of minority religious communities can be said to have occurred in 2000, in similarity to the Deliberation Phase before the first policy shift, this policy shift did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, changes in the discourse concerning minority religious communities started to occur from the mid-1990s, when the underlying ideas, values and principles gradually shifted alongside the changing underlying political logics informing the position of the state. As such, before turning to the different theoretical approaches that I believe illustrate central factors in the Policy Phase of Civic Religion, the ideas that church and state patterns affect the state’s
handling of religious diversity (Fetzer & Soper, 2005) must be returned to as it provides a crucial insight into the process preceding the policy shift. Specifically, although the Policy Phase of Civic Religion can be explained through a number of different underlying political logics, as will be described below, it is worth asking: would the reforms of creating a Faith Community Act (SFS 1998:1593) have been proposed without a decision to separate the Church of Sweden and the state in 2000? Also, had the state proposed such an act for the Church of Sweden, and continued the support, if the state had entirely separated with the church, rather than providing it with a semi-official status (Pettersson, 2011)? Whilst purely hypothetical, it is plausible that the continued support to the Church of Sweden meant that the state (still grounded in the logic of equalisation) had to continue to support, and engage with, minority religious communities.

In terms of different theoretical explanations for the policy shift and the new policy phase, a number of underlying political logics informing the position of the state need to be addressed. The theories that I will highlight and that I believe collectively explain this policy shift are: the theory of control (Humphrey, 2009; Turner, 2007), the theory of convergence (Koenig, 2007) and the political ideology theory (Tatari, 2009).

Starting with the theory of control (Birt, 2006; Griera et al., 2014; Humphrey, 2009; Turner, 2007), there have been a number of different publications in recent years that have tried to explain the shift in the handling of religious diversity and the aim to further control religious minorities who have increasingly been recognised as a risk (Birt, 2006; Humphrey, 2009), not least after 9/11, the commuter train bombings in Madrid in 2004 and the London transport suicide bombings in 2005 (Griera et al., 2014; Humphrey, 2009). These events have led to certain groups (particularly Muslims) being perceived as security concerns and therefore in need of state intervention (Humphrey, 2009). According to Turner (2007), a general crisis of liberalism and secularisation has also led to a desire to further manage Muslims and religion in several different countries. Importantly, while Turner (2007) and others (Humphrey, 2009) have focused on Muslims, the theory of control can also be useful in explaining the policy shift in the governance of minority religious communities as a single group.
In the Swedish context, the theory of control can be understood in light of the fact that the risk aspect of minority religious communities was increasingly highlighted in the time leading up to the reform. However, the desire to prevent and control minority religious communities became more evident around the turn of the century when new discussions emerged regarding how to limit the impact of certain minority religious communities who, for example, promoted conflicting values to society at large. As such, the results show that traditional strategies of a hands-off approach, as seen in the Policy Phase of Recognition, was being replaced by what scholars such as Turner (2007) have called a much more intense governmental activity.

One aspect that stands out in the theory of control, that has been raised by many and also resonates regarding the situation seen in the Swedish context, is that one of the prime strategies is a desire to shape (and reform) minority religious community groups that are not regarded as liberal or moderate (Birt, 2006; Humphrey, 2009; Turner, 2007). The strategies are based on the logic of “spatial exclusion and inclusion focused on disciplining bodies” (Humphrey 2009), meaning that elements of inclusion and exclusion occur simultaneously. In this regard, the situation is Sweden is similar to the development seen in other countries where the state, through further co-operation and engagement with minority religious communities and their leaders (for example through education programs), compels them to work more in line with so-called common values (Birt, 2006; Humphrey, 2009). In the Swedish context, this shift is perhaps best illustrated by SST’s expanded role following the policy shift when they were increasingly encouraged to promote dialogue between the government and minority religious communities and attained responsibility for stimulating work for democracy, democratic values and working against anti-democratic ideas. By inviting minority religious community groups to discuss their inherent values in relation to government policies, a type of good religion would be created in which explicit boundaries are set regarding what can be considered as good minority religious communities with good leaders.

In similarity to the results found by Turner (2007), who has analysed how states manage and control Muslims, the aim to further control and prevent, in this case minority religious communities in Sweden following the policy shift, has often been disguised and embedded in more neutral terminology, such as pluralism or
multiculturalism. Perhaps consequentially, there are considerable contradictions in the budget proposals. On the one hand, it was stated that minority religious communities should be supported in order to promote pluralism. However, on the other hand, they were required to comply with the fundamental values of society such as promoting gender equality. Such discrepancies mean that it is difficult to distinguish the actual desires and point of view of the state. However, there is clearly an attempt to create a conditioned pluralism, or what some scholars have called the creation of a “politically correct religion” or “civic religion” (Birt, 2006; Griera, 2012), a “strategy of upgrading” (Turner, 2007), or a “process of domestication” (Humphrey, 2009).

The underlying idea is that good religious communities and good religious leaders (particularly good imams) should acquire the skills to promote “civic religion” by, for example, being proficient at integration and simultaneously challenge bad religious communities and religious leaders, as well as extremist views and activities (see also Birt (2006) and Humphrey (2009)). An illustrative example of these underlying logics of “upgrading” and the creation of “politically correct religion” in the Swedish context is how interfaith dialogue was increasingly supported and emphasised during this policy phase. The promotion of interfaith co-operation became a new method to deal with both the concerns of a lack of social cohesion, as well as issues regarding public security (Birt, 2006). As such, the promotion of interfaith dialogue can be understood as a new form of governance of religious diversity during this new phase.

Closely related to the theory of control is, what I would call, the international convergence theory, also known as the European convergence theory (Koenig 2007; Griera et al., 2014). This theory puts forth how the national governance of minority religious communities is greatly affected by the transnational policy field of religious governance. While some have focused on how separate European countries have been influenced by a common European model for the handling of religious diversity, the Swedish way of handling minority religious communities following the policy shift can be seen to be affected by a global governance of religious diversity, as described by Hurd (2015a), that in turn has been driven by a religious freedom agenda.
Clearly, although international regulations were discussed during the Policy Phase of Recognition, following the policy shift, the hopes for reforms and control of minority religious communities were increasingly weighed against the freedom of religion for religious communities and individuals. Through, for example, the ECHR, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the control strategy was impacted, not least when the government tried to impose stricter regulations on religious schools. Importantly, there was an overall sense that the state was troubled by the obligations of international law and human rights regarding religion. The supranational processes of a particular human rights discourse thereby strongly affected the national handling of minority religious communities (Koenig, 2007). The promotion of, for example, interfaith dialogue in Sweden and the wish to shape minority religious communities into representing a moderate type of religion that can combat extremism, can also be seen as a convergence process where the Swedish state was influenced by a global form of governance of minority religious communities (Hurd, 2015a). In line with the global governance of religious diversity, it has been argued that there is a development of construing religion as a stable object in law (Hurd, 2015a), providing minority religious communities with further rights in the name of religious freedom. In Sweden, the introduction of a new legal form meant that minority religious communities could be registered as “faith communities” and be regulated through the Faith Community Act. From a global perspective, some scholars (Hurd, 2015a) have put forth that strategies such as this function as a method to push religious minorities groups to define their religious identity, in the name of religious freedom, in order to gain legal recognition as religious communities and thereby privileges in the form of government grants. However, this has also been a way to exclude those who do not live up to the right standards.

Lastly, the political ideology theory (Fetzer & Soper, 2005; Tatari, 2009) needs to be touched upon. Although it often focuses on ideas regarding citizenship and assimilation, I would widen this perspective to include the more general transition of central ideas. In order to fully understand the Policy Phase of Civic Religion we have to recognise the impact of neo-liberal ideas and the introduction of the civil society concept that followed with this rather than solely focusing on a shift from the previous multicultural policy to a growing focus on civic integration. The gradual introduction of neo-liberal ideologies in the 1980s and 1990s and the
growing emphasis on freedom of choice, competition, diversity and, importantly, a critique against a strong state (with an emphasis on decentralisation) are all important factors to understand the policy shift in the handling of minority religious communities that happened in 2000. These ideas did not only lead to intentionally creating a growing space for minority religious communities by placing greater emphasis in the policy documents regarding how minority religious communities should contribute further to the public good. They also led to unintended consequences of providing a growing space in the education sector as a result of deregulation, in turn based on shifting ideological foundations.

Since the introduction of such ideas there has been a growing emphasis on non-profit organisations and their role in welfare and care, not least in the shape of new political opportunity structures for minority religious communities. As such, during the Policy Phase of Civic Religion, the normative visions of the role of minority religious communities in Swedish society expanded as they became more embedded in a civil society narrative. In light of this, one can return to the theory of control (Turner, 2007) and the theory of convergence (Koenig, 2007). Specifically, although the shift towards further inclusion and exclusion, in trying to create a more civic religion, may be understood as a shift in the governance of religious diversity, it can also be understood as a result of the more general policy shift directed at all organisations in civil society.

The second shift in ideology and ideas during this phase, that affected the policy outcomes towards minority religious communities, was the shift towards a focus on a type of civic integration (from the previous multicultural approach) where emphasis was on shared moral standards and common values. Although it was regularly highlighted, in line with a religious freedom agenda, that religious minorities should keep and develop their religious life, a shift occurred in parallel to the reforms in 2000 when the importance of social cohesion was increasingly mentioned, for example, when minority religious communities were encouraged to work in line with and strengthen fundamental values of democracy. In contrast to the previous phase, this represented a major shift. Previously, the state had promoted and encouraged minority religious communities to uphold and develop their own sub-cultures. Now, the social cohesion of society was in the foreground. Again, the expanding role of SST clearly illustrates this change given their new
responsibility of stimulating work for democracy and democratic values as well as working against anti-democratic ideas.

In summary, therefore, the handling of minority religious communities in Sweden has clearly been affected by a multiple number of factors that all require further research, and which complicate the view of the state only reacting to problems seen in the religious field (Tatari, 2009). Much of the research in the field of governance of religious diversity has focused on, or highlighted, one particular theory to explain different countries’ handling of religious diversity and cross-national variation. A contribution that this thesis makes is therefore to show that there is a need to look at how different theoretical explanation interact and how these interactions shift and change over time. Also, while the theoretical debate in this field is central in order to understand the policy outcomes towards minority religious communities, what seems to be missing in the literature in understanding the governance of religious diversity is how the state defines its relationship with civil society, and with the individual, and how this may affect both the handling and perception of minority religious communities in a particular setting.

10.2. A Risk or Resource?

In the following part I will discuss how certain moral logics, underpinning the position of the state, can contribute to, and deepen, the understanding of continuity and discontinuity in the state’s perception of minority religious communities as a risk and resource between 1952 and 2019. Although, the results show that there are visible shifts, it also reveals some continuing conflicting perspectives that have remained constant throughout the entire studied time period. These continuities and discontinuities can inform us a great deal regarding the contested role of minority religious communities in the Swedish context that we see today, not least in terms of where the Swedish state draws the line between, for example, a moderate and an immoderate religious community.

As highlighted previously, it could be suggested that the state’s view is largely dependent on the specific normative aim and ambition of civil society in a particular context, as well as on what aspects and principles that are in conflict with the normative hopes of the civil society-state relationship. In order to understand and interpret the result of this thesis it is useful to return to the two normative traditions of civil society and the state. The first tradition is grounded
in a Neo-Tocquevillian understanding and represents a more Anglo-American tradition (Edwards & Foley, 2001). In this tradition, civil society is celebrated for community building, the provision of welfare and altruism, and the individual is thought to be deeply connected to the communities of civil society. The state, meanwhile, is viewed with suspicion. In the alternative tradition, the Neo-Hegelian tradition, that is considerably more embedded in the Swedish social contract, the state is understood to be the protector of common interests and individual autonomy (Trägårdh, 2010). Civil society, on the other hand, is seen as a place for particular interests and political actions.

By using these two traditions as a lens to deepen the understanding of the Swedish state’s perception of minority religious communities, it is possible to understand why certain elements are celebrated while others are feared in the discussions regarding minority religious communities in the Swedish context. Also, in order to comprehend how the state perceives minority religious communities as risks or resources, there is a need to understand the underlying moral logics informing the position of the state. Not least, given that much of the previous research regarding the risk perspective has been written in an Anglo-American context that may not entirely mirror a Swedish context.

10.2.1. The Risk - The Individual, the State and the Minority Religious Community

Starting with the risk perspective, a perspective that fuels much of the international research about minority religious communities, it is important to note that risk, in this context, is related to what may also be regarded as a social problem; something that stands out from the social norm that a group or, in this case, the state, values (Fuller & Myers, 1941; Hjelm, 2009). However, as risk, when compared to social problems, also includes elements of time and uncertainty, i.e., problems that potentially may arise in the future (O'malley 2012), I believe risk is a more appropriate concept to use. Many of the concerns that are raised regarding minority religious communities are related to an unknown future of increasing religious diversity. As such, although the discourse in the academic debate has often focused on the issue and term social problems (Hjelm, 2009), I would suggest that the concept of risk should be used when discussing these issues given
that the term provides a more encompassing understanding of the issues at hand by both including immediate and potential problems.

As highlighted in these final chapters, many of the controversies, fears and identified risks concerning minority religious communities in Sweden are not new. On the contrary, similar risk-related concerns were noted during the Policy Phase of Deliberation as well as in the Policy Phase of Civic Religion. It could therefore be suggested that the risk aspects often highlighted today regarding minority religious communities are not predominantly related to changes occurring during the last twenty years, but rather embedded considerably deeper in the Swedish social contract. Many of the perceived risks and fears can be framed within two concerns that in turn are deeply embedded in a Neo-Hegelian understanding of not only the state and civil society, but also of the individual (Trägårdh 2010), and that were persistent and unaltering throughout much of the studied period. First, the concern of the individual’s rights becoming weakened or diminished in minority religious communities and, second, the importance of the state protecting common values and maintaining societal cohesion.

Starting with the first concern, the result of the analyses shows that from the perspective of the state’s role in maintaining such perceptions, the Swedish state had a central role both as the protector of individual freedom (and sometimes also as the liberator of individuals from minority religious communities in which freedom was limited) and as the protector of equality, the common good, common values and social cohesion. Rather than being concerned with ensuring the freedom of religion for religious communities, the underlying approach was that such freedoms, if left unchecked, would limit the freedom of religion for the individual and this freedom was always to be safeguarded. With such an underlying approach, it is clear that minority religious communities who did not seem to share the same values as the wider society, i.e., that did not promote the autonomy of the individual but rather promoted communitarian virtues and a narrow community where the individual was connected to his or her communal obligations rather than to society at large, were seen as deeply problematic. Importantly, one of the most central shared elements of such problematic religious communities was that they represented a hot religiosiity with more conservative values.
Although the state could be largely neutral by treating all religious communities relatively equally, in line with several different principles and values such as freedom of religion, the state would not stay neutral in relation to central societal values worthy of protection. Throughout the 70-year period, the specifics of these central values varied, albeit slightly, ranging from outspokenly Christian values to fundamental values or democratic values. However, regardless of the label, emphasis has always been on the autonomy of the individual and, although not always explicitly stated, such autonomy was not negotiable. In particular, one individual freedom was always particularly worthy of protection: that of the individual child.

In the field of education there was an ongoing fear, without exception, of religious schools seemingly being allowed to damage and sabotage the cohesive school system. The argumentation for restricting religious schools was the importance of a comprehensive school for all, promoting common values and a common value-foundation. Interestingly, the concerns raised in the 1960s regarding Catholic schools are astonishingly similar to those raised regarding New Religious Movements wanting to start schools in the 1990s and the Muslim religious schools that were started during the 2000s. Regardless of denomination, the fear was that individual children within religious schools would become isolated from the rest of society, become embedded in their religious community rather than the society at large, and be taught alternative values. Therefore, it is clear that from the state’s perspective everything should be done to avoid parallel school systems. As such, although there was always an emphasis on promoting different rights, as constituted in different international legislation, and a need to balance different values and rights against each other, for example the rights of parents’ vs the rights of children, such alternative viewpoints were continually downgraded in order to protect the individual child.

These patterns clearly echo the underlying logics of the particular Swedish modulation of the Neo-Hegelian tradition (Trägårdh, 2010), not least the underlying values embedded in the statist-individualism, i.e., the alliance between the individual and the state rather than between civil society and the individual as seen in the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition (Foley & Edwards, 1998). Thus, the considerable support for individual rights (and particularly the rights of children, women and sexual minorities), ahead of the rights of communitarian groups, is
unsurprising. This also differs considerably from the normative tradition found in the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition that includes a scepticism of the state and a celebration of civil society with its communitarian virtues, in which individual freedom is seen to be realised (Foley & Edwards, 1998) and where mediating structures provide comfort for the individual.

The underlying specific Swedish social contract, based on a Neo-Hegelian view, therefore functions as a foundation throughout the different periods. As shown previously, although there were changes in the state’s view, the state was unfalteringly seen as the protector of the common good and the protector of the freedom of the individual, an aspect most clearly seen in the education category and regarding children. Therefore, although there are shifts, the underlying logics remain.

It is thereby also understandable that the discussions concerning the risk perspective in Sweden differ, at least partly, from that seen in more Anglo-American traditions (Smidt & Smidt, 2003; Dinham & Lowndes, 2009) and findings in such contexts may not be entirely transferable to a Swedish context. For example, although there is a fear of bonding social capital and religious groups with exclusive claims in other countries, the predominant concern does not seem to be that the freedom of the individual could be at threat within the religious community. Rather, the main fear is the negative impact that bonding social capital could have for society at large, in similarity to Putnam’s (2000) understanding of social capital. In a Swedish context, although the external effects are at times highlighted, the bonding aspects have often been regarded as a problem for the autonomy of the individual. Examples of this, from the Policy Phase of Deliberation, include when monasteries and “confessional” religious communities were regarded as problematic for the individual freedom. Likewise, during the Policy Phase of Civic Religion, the risk of potentially restricted rights for women and LGBTQ groups within religious communities was highlighted. Also, although the community aspect of religious communities and the importance of community cohesion has not entirely been understood as negative in Sweden, a more restricted approach has been applied, largely due to the fear of what the community aspects might mean in relation to the freedom of the individual. The strive for community cohesion, as seen for example in Britain (Dinham, 2009), is therefore not visible to the same degree in the Swedish context.
Instead, the public and active community has often been looked upon with suspicion, albeit simultaneously, also encouraged from a resource perspective.

As shown previously, the fear of a diminished freedom for the individual within religious communities has not been raised in all time periods. Particularly during the Policy Phase of Recognition, the 1970s-1980s, communitarian aspects were promoted and the importance of protecting the individual largely diminished. The community aspects stood out as an important resource, especially for immigrants in their new home country. However, this phase emerges as an anomaly to the typical Swedish perspective. This phase involved a time when it was clear that minority religious communities should only be concerned with strictly religious issues. As such, the individual was embedded (and protected) by the universal welfare provided by the welfare state. In line with the Neo-Hegelian tradition, minority religious communities were mainly concerned with the particular interests of the individual. Therefore, given that minority religious communities were solely responsible for offering religious service, they were not seen as doing any harm to the surrounding society.

The overarching perspective, therefore, was that the state was the protector of the common good, rather than being viewed with suspicion as in the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition (Foley & Edwards, 1998), and the rhetoric used in the promotion of common and shared values in the first and last policy phase are very similar. Much of the discussion was based on how to protect the unity of society, of which the Church of Sweden was an important integrated part, and how to protect the Christian values from conflicting values. Since the turn of the century, a similar rhetoric and focus is seen in terms of maintaining cohesion in a democratic society and protecting it from conflicting values. In both phases there is a clear wariness of minority religious communities that articulate conflicting values to society at large and that threaten social cohesion. Also, a central theme has been that individuals should primarily be members, not of their religious community, but of society at large. Throughout, the approach is clear that when values collide between the wider society and a religious community, the state should protect its own interests, not least in protecting and liberating individuals from subordination in minority religious communities (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2015).
Clearly, the Swedish risk perspective needs to be viewed through a Neo-Hegelian perspective as it provides an important insight regarding what types of religious communities and activities that the state sees as a risk. In turn, this deepens our understanding of the fact that international research regarding the risk perspective may not be entirely transferable to a Swedish context and that in order to comprehend the risk perspective raised today, we need to further understand how religious communities have been perceived as a risk historically.

10.2.2. A Resource - In Line with the Needs of the State

In terms of the resource perspective, this also differs between the Neo-Tocquevillian and the Neo-Hegelian tradition. In the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition, civil society is regarded as a sphere connected to welfare, community building and altruism, while in the Neo-Hegelian tradition, civil society is understood as an arena “in which individuals and groups seek to advance particular political and private interests, to satisfy needs and desires and to realize hopes and ambitions” (Trägårdh, 2010, p. 227). Whilst the risk perspective is clearly planted in the moral logics of the Swedish social contract, there are, as mentioned previously, also expectations regarding the resource role. As will be discussed below, these expectations seem to be embedded in the state’s perception and normative hopes of civil society, of which minority religious communities are a part.

In order to understand the state’s expectations of the resource role, it is useful to return to the concept of “hot” and “cool” religiosity that enables a distinction between those minority religious communities who have been regarded as a problem and those who have been regarded as a resource. Overall, the minority religious communities representing a cool religiosity, i.e., those who have worked in line with the values and morals put forth by society at large, have not represented different values, have been democratic, represented bridging social capital and have been open to all and outward-looking, have been emphasised and seen as a resource in Swedish society. An illustrative example is how the Church of Sweden, in the Policy Phase of Deliberation, were contrasted to the so-called confessional churches. The Church of Sweden represented a cool religiosity and was open to all. Therefore, it was not regarded as problematic. Similar examples can be seen throughout the studied time period, though perhaps most clearly in the final phase when clear distinctions were made between the
minority religious communities working in line with the values and morals of society and those who were not. Clearly, there were concerns, in accordance with Wuthnow (2003), of minority religious communities promoting communal relationships without cooperating with the surrounding society. The second policy shift differs slightly, though it is still clear that those who were regarded as a resource were those who took a privatised role and the role the state prescribed to them, focusing on covering the religious needs of the individual.

Throughout, the state has had clear normative visions related to ideas about religion and what role minority religious communities should play. As is generally more common in the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition, the direct government grant has consistently been prioritised as these grants have been viewed as a tool to ensure that organisations do what is expected from them (Trägårdh, 2010), rather than implementing other forms of support that have been discussed, such as tax-exemptions. So long as a minority religious community worked in line with the needs of the state, they were not regarded as problematic. Therefore, throughout the different policy phases, the state has been the central actor in pushing minority religious communities to work in accordance with the state’s priorities and purposes, regardless of whether this was to ensure that they covered the religious needs of the individual, or to combat extremism.

Until the 1990s, it was clear that the state’s ambitions for the role of minority religious communities was not to become an alternative provider of human services or to be actors contributing to healthy societies, nor to be an alternative to the state, as seen in the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition (Foley & Hodgkinson, 2003). Rather, they were to be actors focusing strictly on religious matters. However, as shown previously, this changed, particularly with the second policy shift. As such, a more complex picture emerges regarding the moral logics, as normative hopes and ambitions from the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition became more persistent. Although the state continued to be seen as a guarantor for democracy, community trust and freedom, in line with the Neo-Hegelian tradition (Trägårdh, 2010), it is evident that alongside the ideological shift that highlighted that civil society, and thereby in turn minority religious communities, were important actors that could complement the state, minority religious communities were also seen as possible actors that could contribute with welfare and different social services. Such ambitions were clearly based on the Neo-Tocquevillian
normative visions of civil society (Foley & Edwards, 1998) in which not only the state should promote trust, welfare and democracy. Minority religious communities were also important tools in this work. Thus, there was a tendency to both celebrate minority religious communities and their contribution to trust, community cohesion and democracy while also seeing them as a threat towards the same values.

In Sweden, there therefore seems to be balancing and jostling between a Neo-Tocquevillian and Neo-Hegelian view of minority religious communities in which they are both celebrated whilst simultaneously viewed with suspicion. In other words, the results would suggest that the contested role of minority religious communities in Sweden today can be explained by a tension that exists between two normative ideals. On the one hand, the civil society-based resource role and the Neo-Tocquevillian tradition, in which organisations within civil society are thought to contribute to the creation of social capital, community cohesion, democracy, etc., and where pluralism and diversity is celebrated and promoted. On the other hand, the principles in the Neo-Hegelian tradition where social cohesion, the protection of individual freedoms and the underlying Swedish social contract is emphasised. For minority religious communities in today’s Sweden, this results in confusing and contradictory expectations, with the state promoting both inclusion and exclusion.

Balancing between different normative ideals can also be understood from the perspective that there are different logics informing different policy fields. In the field of integration, for example, there has been a general view that minority religious communities can play a central role in providing comfort and community for newly arrived refugees. However, in the policy field of education, there has been a clear logic that the state is the protector of universal interests and the freedom of the individual child. In light of this there is a need to be aware that different logics may exist in different policy fields, thereby further explaining why minority religious communities can be regarded both as a risk and a resource. As such, although the Neo-Tocquevillian visions of civil society have become increasingly encouraged, regarding minority religious communities, such changes have not been accepted unequivocally. Rather, as stated above, there have also been counteractions, in accordance with the Swedish social contract, to ensure
that common values and the common good was maintained. Consequentially, the unrelenting view of the state as the protector of the individual has prevailed.

10.3. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter the results have been understood and discussed in relation to theoretical debates concerning the handling of religious diversity and the relationship between civil society and state. A central part has been to show that in order to understand the stability and changes in the perception and handling of minority religious communities, there is a need to look at how different factors interact simultaneously, how these then remain and shift over time, and not merely focus on one particular factor to explain policy outcomes and policy shifts.

The results show that there are two main theoretical implications. First, while the literature in the field of governance of religious diversity gives important insights into the handling of minority religious communities, in order to gain a deeper understanding, there is a need to dig deeper and look at the moral logics underlying the position of the state in terms of the view on civil society and the individual. The risk and resource perspective cannot be understood as something that is easily transferable between different countries and settings. Instead, the risk and resource perspectives need to be understood in a particular context. Within the research regarding the new visibility of religion and the risk and resource perspective, much is understood and written in a Neo-Tocquevillian tradition. As a Nordic researcher it is easy to merely reproduce this tradition without appreciating or recognising the implications of one’s cultural context. The need to contextualise how the state understands and defines its relationship to society is critical in this type of research, especially the state-individual relationship and the state-civil society relationship. As such, this thesis attempts to theorize not within an Anglo-American or even continental European theoretical and cultural framework, but to challenge these perspectives from a Swedish cultural/theoretical framework. Second, and in line with the first point, although there have been dramatic shifts in the handling of minority religious communities, there are also clear signs of continuity, not least in the underlying moral logics informing the position of the state. Therefore, it is central to not overemphasise or overdramatise the size and nature of the changes, as would be the case if these
shifts were to be labelled as policy paradigm shifts. This is also a perspective I will return to in the following final chapter of this thesis.
11. Religious Change in Sweden

In the preceding chapter I have discussed the results of my analysis of the state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities as expressed in government commissions between 1952 and 2019 in relation to theoretical debates from the fields of sociology of religion and civil society research. In this concluding chapter I will clarify the implications of my results and highlight my own contributions by returning to the discussions from the first chapter, where I presented the overall research problem of how to understand today’s contradictory view of minority religious communities and the scholarly context that I wished to contribute to. As such, I will first highlight my contribution regarding the discussion of a new visibility of religion, second, problematise the idea that many of the controversies surrounding religion are new, and third, highlight my contribution to the research field on civil society-state relations in Sweden by looking at the example of minority religious communities. At the end of the chapter I will discuss, where the result leaves us and give suggestions for further research.

11.1. Religious Change Through the Prism of the State

Starting with how the findings of this study relate to scholarly discussions concerning the new visibility of religion in public life (Casanova, 1994; Davie, 2015; Furseth et al., 2019; Habermas, 2006) and particularly how religious change can be understood through the perspective of the state and in relation to government policies (Beckford, 2010; Hjelm, 2015), this thesis contributes with several empirically based insights. Although, in similarity to other scholars, this thesis puts forth that the new visibility of religion can be understood by studying the shift in the official discourse – from private to public, the thesis also shows there is considerably more ambiguity and complexity to this issue than sometimes presented by other scholars. A complexity that would have been difficult to identify without studying a longer time period.
11.1.1. A Process of Secularisation Alongside a Will to Religion

In the previous chapter I proposed a periodisation of three different policy phases; the Policy Phase of Deliberation, the Policy Phase of Recognition and the Policy Phase of Civic Religion, to help understand and shed light on distinct periods and central transformations in the state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities. In terms of understanding these policy phases in relation to religious change, the so-called Policy Phase of Recognition, that occurred simultaneously as religious communities started to obtain government grants in the early 1970s, was clearly deeply embedded in a secularisation narrative. Yet, secularisation cannot be understood as one large process. Rather, one can use Casanova’s (1994) distinction between three different processes of secularisation; differentiation, religious privatisation and religious decline, that should be studied separately.

Regarding the processes of privatisation and differentiation, my results show that both of these processes became extensively expressed in government documents in the Policy Phase of Recognition. Previously, particularly during the 1950s and the first part of the 1960s, Christianity played a central role in Swedish society. However, in conjunction the shift towards the policy of recognition the government clearly stated that religion should be kept in the private sphere and that the main task of minority religious communities was to offer religious service for its members, given that other services were to be covered by the welfare state. Through the creation of an overarching public welfare system, the Swedish state assumed the role previously held by religious communities, and minority religious communities were therefore not to make any public claims. Similar findings have been seen in both the Nordic and other Western European countries, where the welfare state was set as the ideal to look after the individual from “cradle to grave” (Bäckström et al., 2010; Woodhead & Catto, 2013).

However, although a secularisation narrative may in part explain the policy shift of further recognition, it is interesting to note that Casanova’s third aspect of secularisation – religious decline – cannot be seen as an explanation of further recognition. Rather, in the Policy Phase of Recognition religious diversity was understood as an issue that the state needed to deal with. The religious needs of
individuals, not least those who had immigrated to Sweden, was understood as natural human need. As the welfare state was to ensure that everyone in Sweden had their human needs covered, this also applied to religious needs. Consequently, religious needs should be incorporated into the overarching welfare system, just as social needs were to be covered. Such results differ to other contexts. Griera (2012) puts forth, from a Spanish perspective, that the secularisation thesis was the dominating discourse during this phase and that policies towards minority religious community were largely absent. Similarly, Woodhead (2013a), from a British perspective, argues that the welfare state ideal during these years was largely secular, a result that seems to differ from the Swedish context. In turn, the unproblematic nature of supporting minority religious communities and to do so with a hands-off approach, is also understandable, given that the support was mainly seen as a support to religious activities and to ensure that religious needs were met.

These results are also interesting from another perspective. Scholars today have highlighted that there is a “new normal” in the policy discourse, i.e., a change in the last few decades from being mainly secular to state’s assuming that we are all religious or at least have spiritual needs (see Beaman (2013) and Hurd (2015a)). Yet, at least in the Swedish context, this sentiment of a “will to religion” (Beaman 2013) is not entirely new. Rather, the results of this thesis show that the importance of the religious needs of the individual has been clearly stated in considerably earlier time periods, such as during the 1970s. As such, I would argue that the secularisation narrative only partly explains the Policy Phase of Recognition.

11.1.2. Religion as a Policy Concern
Despite the emphasis on religious needs during the 1970s and 1980s, one can see a gradual shift in the official discourse during the 1990s as the state was unwilling to let religious communities take an entirely privatised role. This can clearly be understood as a process of deprivatization (Casanova, 1994) with a new visibility of religion in the public sphere where the issue of religion and minority religious communities increasingly became a policy concern. With deprivatization, Casanova (1994) means, at least from a normative perspective, that religious actors challenge the roles that have been prescribed to them in modern societies,
no longer accepting the marginal and privatised role that theories of modernity and secularisation have reserved for religion. However, a central argumentation of deprivatization is that religious actors act independently in a civil society sphere, separate from the state and market.

In similarity to Beckford (2010), it could be argued that this strict division between state and civil society fits poorly with the Swedish context, not least given that the state has been deeply involved in the process of deprivatization. Particularly following the reforms in 2000, when there has been a convergence, rather than separation between the state and minority religious communities in Sweden, the state regularly promotes minority religious communities to work in accordance with the government’s agenda. Also, in similarly to the development seen in Britain (Beckford, 2010; Dinham, 2009) the Swedish example shows that governments increasingly highlight religious communities as partners in the delivery of its policy objectives, such as gender equality and combating extremism. This instrumentalism of religion, i.e., looking for the usefulness in religion (Dinham & Lowndes, 2009), therefore seems to have occurred also in Sweden and brought back religion from the private realm to the public thereby bringing religion from the private to the public realm. The growing convergence between state and religion also brings attention to the question of differentiation (Casanova, 1994) that has been understood as a central process in secularisation.

Scholars in the Nordic countries (Furseth et al., 2019) have previously highlighted that the differentiation theory may be in need of revision, although have had limited research to confirm this. However, the results from this thesis clearly contributes with empirical evidence to support such claims. Alongside the resource perspective and in line with previous research (Birt, 2006; Griera, 2012; Turner, 2007), the new political attention on minority religious communities has also involved the state wanting to further control so-called problematic minority religious communities. As such, many conflicts that have previously been identified as ethnic are now increasingly identified as religious (see also Cato (2012) and Davie (2015)) and this change could contribute to the understanding of the shift from private to public in the official discourse.

Although a shift from private to public occurred, it is clear that the policy shift in 2000 was not grounded in a general desire or aim of ensuring that all minority
religious communities were provided with a growing space in public life. Rather, the desire was that those who represented a cool religiosity and that shared the common values of society should be provided with a growing space whilst those who did not live up to such expectations and represented a hot religiosity with alternative values should either be shaped into more moderate forms or otherwise excluded, thereby given a shrinking space. To complicate matters further, in some policy fields, such as in education, the growing space for minority religious communities and the bringing back of religion into the public arena was predominantly an unintentional effect of other reforms rather than being grounded in either a resource or risk perspective.

Continuing with Casanova’s third dimension of secularisation, religious decline, the analysis shows that during the Policy Phase of Civic Religion the sentiment that minority religious communities should cover the religious needs of the population and the will to religion, received less attention. As such, the new visibility of religion through the prism of the state in Sweden seems to, at least partly, follow the assumption of other scholars that have recently discussed the idea of a “secular return of religion” (Hjelm, 2014), i.e., when the state is interested in what good and bad deeds minority religious communities can contribute with to society, though are less interested in religion per se. However, while this approach can be compared to earlier phases in which there was a focus on the recognition of religion, without taking the social dimensions into account, there is ample complexity to the secular return of religion.

Clearly, the results show that the Swedish state has a growing interest in religion, not least seen in the growth of a specialist policy sector developed predominantly for issues of religion and minority religious communities, as well as the appointment of an expert agency in religion. The new religious policy sector in Sweden is clearly similar to the development seen in Britain (Beckford, 2010) where the government has invoked a “faith sector”, distinct from other parts of civil society, for faith-groups that work in line with the government agenda. The development of a more distinct religious sector in Sweden seems to have occurred in conjunction with the policy shift in 2000 when faith communities became the new specific legal entity, thereby creating a specific and defined group that the state more easily could cooperate with and develop. Importantly, while the concept “faith sector” has been used in Britain for this new policy sector, the term
“religious sector” is more appropriate for the Swedish context. Specifically, although the sector is concerned with registered faith communities the discourse is more concerned with religion rather than faith. For example, SST, whose previous role was mainly as an agency that allocated government grants to entitled religious communities, has now been assigned to be an expert agency on religion, not faith. Also, religion has become the most widely used term when distinguishing this sector from the rest of civil society. Despite differences in terminology, the ambitions seen in policy documents in Sweden are decidedly similar to those seen in Britain (Beckford, 2010). The development of this new religious sector also clearly follows other global trends (Hurd, 2015a) with increasing interest and demand for knowledge concerning religion, often with a focus to study and/or shape minority religious communities in different ways. In this respect, the changing role of SST is interesting to shed light on given that it now has a central mission of promoting dialogue between the government and minority religious communities and organising educational programmes and dialogues concerning central values in Swedish society. SST’s new role as an expert agency on issues regarding religion, can therefore be understood a form of “expert religion” (Hurd, 2015b), with new engagements regarding religion, religious freedom and minority religious communities.

Whether the development seen in this thesis could be described as a return of religion to public life or as a move to a more post-secular society (Casanova, 1994; Habermas, 2006), the results show, in similarity to other studies (Furseth et al., 2019), that one cannot focus on only one single dimension of secularisation. While there are reasons to discuss Habermas’ normative approach to post-secular (see, Beckford (2012) and Furseth (2018a)), his descriptive account of post-secularity, where he sheds light on a new public consciousness of religion, seems to fit well with the development seen in Sweden in recent years. Specifically, although the results show that both of the policy shifts were grounded in a changing perception of the perceived role of minority religious communities in Swedish society, the Policy Phase of Civic Religion was clearly grounded in a new awareness of the role minority religious communities could play in public life.

To sum up, this thesis has shown that the resurgence of religion in public life can be understood by studying the shift in the official discourse – from private to public. Based on the changing needs of the state, and the role of minority religious
communities as a tool, the shifting perception of minority religious communities may, at least in part, explain the increased visibility of religion in public life in Sweden today. The changing contract between state and religion sheds light on how the state forms the role of religion in the public sphere, thereby showing that Sweden has had a similar development as seen in other contexts (Beckford, 2010; Dinham, 2009; Griera, 2012; Hurd, 2015a) where religion has returned as a policy concern from the 1990s and where the state has attempted to further engage and control religion through a number of different governance strategies. In turn, this result adds to the perspective of a religious complexity in the Nordic countries (Furseth et al., 2019).

Although considerable research has been published in Sweden (and in the other Nordic countries) during the last decade regarding the new visibility of religion in politics, welfare and media (Bäckström et al., 2010; Furseth et al., 2018), the perspective of the state’s central role in setting the terms and conditions for much of the religious field, has been missing. This thesis is therefore an important contribution in understanding secularisation, the new visibility of religion and the seemingly contradictory role religious change in the Swedish context. Aspects that will be developed further in the following parts of this chapter.

11.2. An Ongoing Story of Pluralisation

The emergence of religion as a policy concern can be understood in several ways. Apart from the underlying logics informing the position of the state, as discussed in the previous chapters, many researchers have pointed towards important occurrences during the studied period that have affected the contextual setting for minority religious communities. For example, the increase in immigration to Europe, in particular a growing Muslim population (Furseth et al., 2018), the fear and an awareness of global religious conflicts, not least after the terror attacks of 9/11 (Turner, 2007), and increased secularisation (Furseth et al., 2019), have all created new political controversies regarding religion. Also, some have argued that the new situation can be framed in the Huntington’s (2000) theses of Clashing Civilisations (Griera, 2012), thereby helping to explain the new visibility of religion.

However, although minority religious communities have doubtlessly received new political attention in the last decades, this thesis can show that many of the
controversies concerning minority religious communities in Sweden are not new. Rather, many of the discussion seen today are part of an ongoing narrative of how to handle the pluralisation of Swedish society. In turn, this long-going process has played a central part in creating the expectations and setting the terms of what role minority religious communities should and should not have in Swedish society. Likewise, although religion has increasingly become viewed as a source, or solution, to social problems after 9/11 (Hjelm, 2011), this thesis shows that, at least in Sweden, a fear of parallel societies and a loss of national identity due to increasing religious diversity, in turn caused by increased immigration, are not a feature of the 21st century. On the contrary, very similar fears were raised in the 1950s, thereby raising the question of whether the risk perspective of minority religious communities is embedded in the inherent tensions in the Swedish social contract rather than merely being related to societal changes during the last twenty years.

It could be argued that the current debate in Sweden concerning minority religious communities and religious schools can be understood in terms of a fear of a growing Muslim population, in turn based on the hypothesis that the increasing risk perspective is a result of global impacts of immigration, terrorism and new religious groups settling more permanently in Sweden (Furseth et al., 2018). However, although Muslims are often highlighted in the current debate, this thesis clearly shows that the fear is considerably more embedded in the underlying moral logics of the Swedish context rather than being concerned with a religious community or growth of a particular group. Throughout the studied time period there has been a fear of so-called narrow religious communities, representing hot religiosity, that limits the freedom of the individual and the individual child and represents conflicting values, thereby threatening the cohesion of Swedish society. As such, the proposed establishment ban of religious schools in 2019 should not merely be understood from the perspective of a new fear of Muslim groups wanting to start new schools. Rather, it should be understood in relation to the long-term discussions of how to regulate and stop the funding of religious schools in order to stop a parallel school-system from developing. Casanova (2012) has put forth similar claims in that there are similarities in the political discourse regarding Catholic immigrants in 19th century America with the discourse towards Muslim immigrants in Europe today. From a Swedish context, there are
considerable similarities between the discourse concerning the concerns and risks of Muslims religious communities today, to those raised in relation to Catholic religious communities and Free Churches in the 1950s-1960s. It would seem, therefore, that the risks are not specifically related to Muslim communities, Free Churches nor Catholic religious communities. Rather, the concerns are generated in the underlying strive in maintaining cohesion in Swedish society and retaining a common set of central values. This is further supported by the fact that although scholars such as Cato (2012) have shown that there has been a development in Sweden of controlling Muslims and creating more moderate form of Islam during the last decades, previous studies have shown how Catholics were understood as a threat to the norms and values of Swedish society until the 1960s (Werner, 2015). Similarly, during the interwar period, the Jewish group was particularly exposed (Berggren, 2014). The rhetoric proclaiming Islam as anti-modern, fundamentalist and immoderate, as seen in Swedish today, can therefore be seen to be a continuation of the rhetoric regarding other religious minorities and an ongoing construction of “the religious other”.

In similarity to the risk perspective, the resource role has also received new attention during the past decades. However, the understanding that governments are increasingly “using or managing religions for their own purposes” (Beckford, 2010), should perhaps be softened and modified, at least from a Swedish perspective. Although minority religious communities have increasingly been highlighted for their instrumental role in combating different social problems in recent years, the state's needs and priorities have always been central in governing minority religious communities and there has been an ongoing contestation of the state’s normative aim, ambition, visions and fears related to ideas about religion. Throughout the studied 70-year period, the state has specifically expressed their ambition of what role they want minority religious communities to take in Swedish society, whether it is to strengthen morals, cover religious needs or promote gender equality. Similarly, questions regarding how the state should manage religious diversity has also been raised throughout. However, it is evident that there is a new sense of urgency in dealing with these questions following the reforms in 2000.

By combining a synchronic and diachronic perspective, this thesis has clearly questioned the commonly held view that religious issues were absent in the policy
debates before the 1990s. By studying the voice of the state in policy documents since 1952, both the complexity and similarities over time become considerably clearer. The governance of religious diversity has not merely arisen since the 1990s or following 9/11. Rather, the issue of how to handle religious diversity was an ongoing and highly contested topic many decades before. Without studying a longer period and thereby understanding the Policy Phase of Recognition and its consequences, it would be difficult to fully understand the often more highlighted policy shift that occurred later, given that it in many ways occurred as a result of the first policy shift. Specifically, whilst not always clearly stated in the government documents from the 1990s, one of the underlying issues was how the state should deal with problems that had largely occurred as a consequence of support being given to minority religious communities with very few regulations and with a hands-off approach for several years.

The combination of synchronic and diachronic perspectives in this study thereby reveals the fact that policy changes or ideological perspectives can have effects many decades later. Often, both in the media and political debate, though also in the academic discourse, claims and narratives regarding societal changes are accepted as truths, without having studied the actual changing process. Political changes are largely ongoing slow processes that are the results, or by-products, of previous decisions. Without studying a historical development of an issue, one cannot make sense of a current discourse, as clearly seen in relation to the current risk perspective on minority religious communities. As such, situations may appear to be new though are in fact considerably more grounded in the past.

11.3. Civil Society, Religion and the State

In recent years a growing number of studies have pointed to large transformations of civil society and the changing relationship between civil society and the state (Loga, 2018; Lundström & Wijkström, 2012; Reuter et al., 2012; Selle et al., 2018; Trägårdh, 2007c). This thesis aims to contribute to this discussion by shedding light on how one specific part of civil society, minority religious communities, has been handled and perceived in government documents over time. By studying the official discourse towards a particular part of civil society over a longer time, insights can also be made in the greater discourse of civil society (and its relationship to the state) that has emerged in recent decades. Yet, if large
transformations in the perception of civil society has occurred, the changes seen in the handling of minority religious communities could be an effect of a changed relationship between state and civil society rather than a changed relationship between state and religion. As such, while the application of theories concerning civil society and the state theory on the field of sociology of religion is rare, as shown in this thesis, it is an important and useful perspective.

Starting with the general role of civil society, this thesis clearly shows that the fact that the state’s needs and priorities govern what the role of civil society should be in Swedish society is not new. Rather, the normative visions and ideas of what a particular actor in civil society should do and not do, is seen throughout the studied time period. The terms and conditions for minority religious communities in Swedish society has always been set in line with the needs of the state. However, the state’s particular needs have varied, from being concerned with the task of covering the religious needs of its citizens to increasingly viewing minority religious communities as a tool that can solve many of the problems facing society. Yet, alongside an expectation of covering more of society’s needs, a parallel increase of state control has occurred, and it is likely that similar patterns exist in other parts of civil society. This means that the tension between competing normative ideals, in which minority religious communities are both increasingly played in and played out, may be seen towards other voluntary organisations in civil society. The knowledge concerning minority religious communities may therefore give valuable insight into what is at stake in the current, more general, civil society-state relationship in Sweden (and perhaps the other Nordic countries). In fact, a recently appointed government commission concerning civil society organisations indicates that such a development may be undergoing. The commission A Palette for a Strengthened Civil Society248 (SOU 2016:13), was recently appointed from the perspective that civil society should contribute to “democracy, welfare, public health, community and social cohesion” (Dir 2014:40). Likewise, another commission, Democracy Conditions

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247 Here, I refer to the analytical concept of civil society, i.e., in which civil society is understood as a sphere separated from the state and market.
248 Palett för ett stärkt civilsamhälle
for Grants to Civil Society (SOU 2019:35), was appointed to propose stricter democracy criteria for grants to all civil society organisations.

There are therefore indications that the situation for minority religious communities is not unique. Rather, there seems to be contradictory signals towards actors in civil society more generally, where the state both welcomes civil society with open arms, whilst simultaneously taking a restrictive position towards groups and actors representing “other values”. While research in the Nordic countries has pointed towards changes in the state and civil society relationship, with more control and an emphasis on policy implementation (Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018; Sjöstrand, 2018), there is surprisingly little discussion concerning the underlying logics driving this development, nor how to understand it. Considering this, the theoretical implications of this thesis, in which these issues have been discussed not merely within an Anglo-American theoretical framework, but also within a Swedish theoretical framework, is an important contribution.

Continuing with this perspective, given the indications of changes in the civil society-state relationship, it could be asked whether the recent changes in the hopes and expectations on minority religious communities are related to religion at all, or if all organisations in civil society with competing values may be regarded as problematic. However, although there are similarities between minority religious communities and other civil society organisations, there are also elements that indicate that even if minority religious communities are a part of civil society, they are not viewed as “just” organisations within civil society. For example, although there are considerable expectations on organisations in civil society to take a greater role contributing to the public good, this expectation does not transgress to the field of religious schools. Despite changes in the attitude and approach to both minority religious communities and civil society between 1952 and 2019, religious schools have continuously been pin-pointed and feared, with the state showing an unfaltering need for control and regulation. Such general fears have not been seen regarding schools run by other organisations in civil society and indicates that the issue of the “religious civil society” is unique and

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249 Demokrativillkor för bidrag till civilsamhället
that there are some areas in which minority religious communities are not seen as civil society actors amongst others.

In terms of whether religious change can be understood in relation to theories concerning civil society and the state, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the discussion above sheds light on the importance of taking elements from different research fields into account when trying to understand the controversies regarding religion in today’s modern societies. Civil society-state theory has undoubtedly helped to widen the understanding of the shifting expectations on minority religious communities and the tension between being perceived as a risk and/or resource in Swedish society and that it is not easily transferable between different countries and settings. As shown in this thesis, to fully understand the controversies regarding religion in a Swedish context (and perhaps also in other Nordic countries), one cannot simply reproduce research written in a Neo-Tocquevillian tradition. Rather, the Swedish modulation of the Neo-Hegelian tradition and the strong alliance that exists between the state and individual needs to be understood and taken into consideration when approaching issues such as those studied in this thesis. Also, from the perspective of the field of sociology of religion, this thesis shows the importance of including both the state perception of religious organisations and religious communities and how the state relates to the individual within these groups. This perspective is important, not least considering the growing emphasis on human rights globally (Hurd, 2015a) and the focus on individual rights. These issues may open up for new questions for states to consider regarding the rights and freedom of individual members within religious communities and organisations.

Finally, given the disputed, complex and controversial nature of religion and civil society, for example regarding religious schools, state funding of religion, and the fear that religious communities may be a hotbed for extremism, it is not enough to attempt to understand the discourse (or development) by using only one approach. As shown in this thesis, in order to fully understand the controversies that exist in the extensive field of religion, state and civil society there is a need for an interdisciplinary approach, combining different theoretical explanations that together contribute to a more complex and multifaceted understanding of the situation.
11.4. Concluding Remarks

In this final part, several overarching perspectives, but also supplementary findings, will be presented. I will start by mention a secondary finding regarding the development of government commissions since the 1950s that is in several ways related to the questions of how the Swedish state understands and handles minority religious communities over time.

11.4.1. The Shifting Character of Government Commissions

My analysis of government commissions points to a number of shifts that have occurred concerning the role and process of government commissions. First, it is clear that the time allocated to each commission has reduced continuously and many of the newly appointed commissions have been given very limited timeframes. Purely from the perspective of the material in this thesis, I have found that this has often resulted in fewer ideological discussions of how policies should be formed and a greater focus on how to legally and pragmatically solve the issue at hand. Second, perhaps as a consequence of both shorter and more presupposing terms of reference, in which the wanted outcome is already presented, the terms of reference are considerably less refined and formulated than during the 1950s and 1960s. For example, in the government commissions during the last time period the government specifically requests the commission to deliver an establishment ban of religious schools. No further instructions or reasoning were given, leaving the commission with a very difficult task of turning the terms of reference into an investigable recommendation. Third, over time, parliamentary committees have become considerably less common. Instead, inquiry chairs, together with an advisory board, are often used. Although this may not always be a problem per se, with less time being given and with more poorly formulated terms of reference, extensive responsibility and power is left to one person. There are examples of this leading to commissions that almost become personal investigations by one individual, which in turn leads to fewer political compromises on deeply complicated issues. Lastly, looking at the outcomes of government commissions (Marier, 2009), there seems to be a trend that the result of the commission either leads to Status Quo or Ignoration, meaning that the policy recommendations made by commission have either limited, or no, effect.
This sheds light on the fact that some commissions may be appointed solely for the government to show that they are taking action regarding a perceived problem, although are perhaps less interested in trying to solve the problem.

Combined, there is a distinct risk that these developments could, from a worst-case perspective, lead to an undermining of the democratic process. Government commissions could become less open or consensus-driven and, not least, less elaborate and grounded in previous and current research, knowledge and relevant discussions. Due to the complexity of the state’s handling of religious minority communities in which many, often incompatible, values, principles, rights and ideals needs to be balanced, such process-related issues could be problematic, not least in a situation where minority religious communities seem to be both more appreciated and more despised than ever before. Henceforth, it is therefore important that the political agenda is not driven by quick-fix solutions, regardless of whether this entails increasing support in order to solve different issues that the state needs help solving, or by stopping the support and not giving the same rights to minority religious communities as other civil society organisations are given in providing public benefits, for example in education and healthcare. Otherwise, the risk is that the current development could lead to increased tensions in Swedish society.

11.4.2. Religion as a Policy Category

A second overarching perspective is that this thesis has primarily studied governed and expert religion, i.e., the Swedish state’s perception and handling of minority religious communities. However, as a consequence of this process, the state’s visions and ideas regarding religion have also become visible. Throughout the nearly 70 years included in this thesis, the state seems to have been interested in categorising religion, as illustrated by the fact that minority religious communities are described as a single unity in government documents. However, in similarity to other scholars (see, for example, Beaman (2013) and Hurd (2015a)) one should be cautious to such an approach, not least, in regard to how religion is set as a policy category, how religion is used as a key identity marker (not least for those immigrated to Sweden) and the constructed distinction between good and bad religion in the official discourse. Such categorisation of religion overlooks the fact that religion may only be one of many identity markers (Beaman, 2013).
Also, such an approach makes the distinction between religious and secular too sharp, in turn running the risk of increased tension and conflict, and reinforcing lines of division (Hurd, 2015a).

Given the development in recent years, in which religion has increasingly become a policy concern, this is a crucial point, not least considering the creation of a policy category by making minority religion an object in law (by the introduction of the legal form of “faith community”) and the development of a state agency with an expertise on religion, that are to produce knowledge about religion and have dialogues with religious communities. In many ways this can be seen as a strategy from the state to more easily engage with, civilise and reform an identifiable and definable religious sphere with distinct religious communities and religious leaders that are either regarded as a resource or a threat to the common good. Yet, this development runs the risk of delimiting the complex and diverse religious field that exist. Or, as Hurd has express it, “there are no religions with clean boundaries and neat orthodoxies that are waiting on the sidelines to be engaged or reformed, condemned or celebrated” (Hurd 2015, p. 121).

In light of this, it is worth returning to Beckford’s (2015) critique of the general concepts such as faith communities. In Sweden, the definition of the concept was first formulated in the 1950s (see prop. 1951:100) and has always implied a homogeneity amongst religious minority groups and created clear boundaries of who should or should not be included and consequentially who should or should not become recognised by the state. I would agree with Beckford (2015) that the use of this type of concept may omit the inherent diversity, thereby suggesting that religious minority groups are undifferentiated entities, when reality is far more complex. This complexity is most clearly seen following 2000 with the gradual development of a religious sector in Sweden and the creation of a more civic religion. Such hopes and expectations on a religious sector indicate that faith communities are cohesive with absolute boundaries. Overall, the construction of a religious sector by the government raises questions such as: In interfaith dialogue, who represents whom? Similarly, what does it mean that a faith community can help during crises and catastrophes? And, what type of help is desired? Likewise, when are faith communities to be regarded as a risk and should an identifiable religious leader be responsible for the actions of members in a faith community?
When posing such questions, one may also ask where lived religion, i.e., religion as practiced in or by groups and individuals in everyday life, fits into this development when focus is so clearly oriented towards organised religion. I would suggest, in line with others (Hurd, 2015; Beckford, 2015), that rather than reproduce distinctions of religion and faith communities, it is central to continue to study how these concepts are constructed by those with political power in specific political and historical contexts. Also, a continued analysis of minority religious communities is needed in order to counteract its understanding as a uniform category that inspires and includes different activities, and where what is regarded as good or bad changes over time. Continuous research on minority religious communities is needed not least given that policies directed to faith communities may deeply affect the shape, as well as limit and change the practices, of minority religious communities over time, and thereby affect the individuals within these religious groups.

11.4.3. The Contested Role of Minority Religious Communities

Finally, although this thesis has not focused on the question of whether, or to what extent, minority religious communities are willing to fulfil the roles and promote the values expected by the Swedish government, it is clearly a relevant question, not least for future research. There is undoubtedly a possible risk of tensions arising when the state tries to shape the actions and values of minority religious communities and determine whether they will be played-in or played-out of the public realm. In a previous study (Lundgren, 2019), I studied minority religious communities’ experiences of their response to the 2015 refugee crises. From a practical sense, it was clear that the response differed considerably depending upon whether the religious community represented a hot or a cool religiosity, with those representing a hot religiosity experiencing considerable exclusion, whilst still being provided with a growing space for social actions. Such results strengthen the indications of a shrinking space for those representing immoderate and hot religiosity and the state’s desire to exclude those with conflicting views, alternatively shape them into more moderate actors. However, the question is what an exclusion of these minority religious communities would actually entail and whether exclusion is desirable? Although exclusion of certain groups would save on government funds and could be an important political
statement, such a decision would also lead to a loss of control or insight from the perspective of the state. Given the underlying desire of maintaining control of religious communities that are regarded as problematic, this is clearly a dilemma that the Swedish state needs to deal with.

This predicament also illustrates the complexity of how government rhetoric and policy outcomes always lead to both wanted and unwanted consequences, and both in the short- and long-term. As is the benefit of studying long time periods, it is clear that decisions taken easily, from one singular perspective at one point in history and with one expected result, can lead to unexpected consequences at a later date. For example, it is clear that the recognition and support of minority religious communities without any extensive regulations led to considerable consequences. Likewise, from the state’s perspective, there have clearly been inadvertent and unwanted consequences of encouraging and celebrating a diverse civil society and opening up for a freedom of choice in the education sector.

Many of the discussions regarding both the intentional and unintentional provision of increased space for minority religious communities and a further recognition of a public role, have been grounded in a rhetoric of pluralism, democracy and multiculturalism. However, parallel to this, at times stated and at times unstated, clear ideas have existed of what the acceptable limits for participating in public life have been. In other words, in a Swedish context, although pluralism, democracy and multiculturalism may be promoted as treasured values, they are clearly conditioned. From the perspective of religious communities, it becomes exceedingly difficult to relate to such culturally- and historically-charged, often unwritten, rules, deemed as fundamental or democratic values, determining what is acceptable and what is not is. As such and alongside increased immigration and globalisation, the likelihood of conflicts related to such underlying ideas and principles seems likely to increase.
11.5. Looking Ahead

It has been said that religion and politics are the two subjects one should avoid, given their immense sensitivity and opinionated nature. However, consequentially, combining such subjects also reveals the centrally contested ideals and principles in a society. At least from a Swedish perspective, when such discussions concern the issue of religious minorities, the sensitivity is pushed even further. Specifically, what can and should be accepted in the name of pluralism? What ideals and principles are highly valued, and, what is the foundation to the institutionalised fear of others?

This thesis has attempted to contribute to an answer, or at least an understanding of such questions. However, it must be noted that only a glimpse can be provided in a thesis. I have approached the issue by studying the national level and from the perspective of the state but there is also a need to study these questions from the local level as well as from the perspective of minority religious communities. From a local level, do the policies, principles and ideals transcend to the practical reality? Are the same developments visible? From the perspective of religious communities, do the hopes and expectations of the state mirror their own view of their role and their desires? There is also a need for studies on media’s role in spurring conflicts and tensions as well as international comparative studies regarding the governance of religious diversity and how we may understand the relationship between the state and religious communities and the individuals within these religious communities in different contexts, not least to further understand what impact governed religion has on lived religion.

Such research fields and questions are important to study in the future as it is evident that the ongoing relationship between state and religion will not diminish. Rather, at least from a short-term perspective, the balancing of conflicting roles will undoubtedly continue. From a long-term perspective, however, the findings from this thesis clearly show that the religion-state relationship can, at least on the surface, change over time. Meanwhile, as is also clear, a number of underlying continuous perspectives seem likely to persist.
Sammanfattning

References


Rothstein, B. (1994). *Vad bör staten göra?: om välfärdsstatens moraliska och politiska logik*. SNS


**Government Documents**

Dir. 1979:123 SEH-kommitténs direktiv Skolor med annan huvudman än stat och kommun

Dir. 1994:130 Översyn om invandrarpolitiken

Dir. 1995:162 Andrade relationer mellan staten och Svenska kyrkan m.m.

Dir. 2008:66 Utbildning för imamer

Dir. 2014:40 Ett stärkt och självständigt civilsamhälle

Dir. 2016:62 Översyn av statens stöd till trossamfund

Dir. 2017:63 Tilläggsdirektiv till Utredningen om Översyn av statens stöd till trossamfund

Dir. 2018:15 Konfessionella inslag i skolväsendet

Dir. 2019:25 Tilläggsdirektiv till Utredningen om konfessionella inslag i skolväsendet

Dir. 1992:45 En kyrkoberedning

Dir. 1995:16 Utredning om fristående skolor på grundskolenivå

Dir. 1996:121 Samhällets stöd till människor som av särskilda skäl befinner sig i psykiska kristillstånd
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Swedish Governments (1952-2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prime Minister</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type of Government</th>
<th>Political Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tage Erlander</td>
<td>1951 – 1957</td>
<td>Majority coalition</td>
<td>The Swedish Social Democratic Party (S), The Centre Party (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Majority government (1968-1969)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minority government (1971-1974)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorbjörn Fälldin</td>
<td>1976 – 1978</td>
<td>Majority coalition</td>
<td>The Centre Party, The Moderate Party (M)(^{250}), The Liberals (L)(^{251})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ola Ullsten</td>
<td>1978 – 1979</td>
<td>Minority government</td>
<td>The Liberals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingvar Carlsson</td>
<td>1986 – 1990</td>
<td>Minority government</td>
<td>The Swedish Social Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{250}\) The Moderate Party (Moderata samlingspartiet) have changed their name a number of times throughout the studied time-period. Between 1938-1952 they were called The Right and, between 1952-1969, Right Wing Party.

\(^{251}\) The Liberals (Liberalerna) have changed their name a number of times throughout the studied time-period. Between 1934-1990 they were called People's Party and, between 1990-2015, Liberal People's Party.
|--------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|

Appendix 2 – Government Commissions

Table A2:A Time period 1 (authors in foot-note)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1963:26 The Importance of Religion as a Societal Factor. Opportunities and Methods for a Sociological Investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1963:39 Churches and Congregations in Sweden: Scope and Activities</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>SOU 1964:13 Freedom of Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1965:70 Legislation and the Administration of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1967:46 Church Property, Tax Issues, Priesthood Privileges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1968:11 The Church of Sweden and the State: Final Report</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>1958 Church and State Commission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1964:30 Teaching of Christianity with Special Regard to the Church – State Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1968:11 The Church of Sweden and the State: Final Report</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>1964 Expatriate and Boarding School Commission (1964–1966) 253</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1966:55 Schooling Away and at Home - Schooling of Expatriate Children - School Accommodation - Schooling for Children of Certain Minorities 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prop. 1968:67 - Education for Swedish Expatriate Children and for Certain Minorities in Sweden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

252 Head committee for the 1958 Church and State commission: Iwar Wieslander, President of the Court of Appeal; Bertil Bolin, Secretary of the National Organisation in Sweden; Olle Engström, Headmaster, Ruben Josefson, Associate Professor and Archbishop; and Åke Zetterberg, Pastor Primarius and Member of Parliament. Sture Waller, Associate professor (was the author of SOU 1964:13)

253 Gunnar Helén, Education Councillor, Chairman; Åke Fältheim, Editor; Bengt Gustafsson, Director of studies; Rolf Hillman, Rector; Alva Myrdal, Ambassador; Sten Karling, Professors and Per Zethelius, Director.

254 The report Schooling Away and at Home (SOU 1966:55) was later included in the final report of the 1958 Church and state commission
Integration

The Foreigners Inquiry (1961–1967)²⁵⁵
SOU 1967:18 Immigration: Problems and Handling: The Foreigner Commission’s report
Prop. 1968:142 Guidelines for Policies Towards Foreigners, etc.

Table A2:B Time period 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion and State</th>
<th>The 1968 Commission on State and Church Relations²⁵⁶ (1968-1972)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1972:36 Society and Religious Communities. Final Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1972:38 Society and Religious Communities - Appendix 20. Finances of other Religious Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KRU 1971:15 The Committee on Culture’s Report on Motions for Financial Support for Free Christian Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFS 1974:404 Regulation on state subsidies to some religious communities. Stockholm: Ministry of Civil Affairs</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Commission on Independent Schools²⁵⁷</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1981:34 Independent Schools for Compulsory Schooling (Interim Report of the Committee on Independent Schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prop. 1982/83:1 about independent schools, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>The Commission on Immigration (IU) (1968 – 1974)²⁵⁸</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prop. 1975:26. Government Bill on Guidelines for Immigration and Minority Policy, etc.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration and Immigrant Policy (IPOK) (1980-84)²⁵⁹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prop. 1985/86:98 On Immigrant Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁵⁵ Bengt Lännergren, Chancellor of Justice, Chairman; Bengt Elmgren, (S) Member of Parliament; Carl Eric Hedin, (M) Member of Parliament; Eskil Hellner, Judge of Appeal; Jan-Ivan Nilsson, (C) Member of Parliament; Ingrid Segerstedt Wiberg, (L) Member of Parliament; Essen Lindahl, Director Ingemar Lindström, Department Director (included to assist the investigation as an expert) Per Blomquist (M) Bertil Bolin (Assistant Director General, International Labour Organisation), Olle Dahlén (L), Gunnar Gustafsson (S), Lena Hjelm-Wallén (S), Gunnar Larsson (KD) and Alva Myrdal (S)
²⁵⁶ Staffan Edmar, Civil Servant, Chairman; Ulla Ekelund (C), Member of Parliament; Frans Carlgren, expert. Ingemar Karlsson, County Councilor; Göran Malmström, Rector; Olof Marcusson, Civil Servant; Birgit Rodhe, Rector Ingrid Olsson, Appellate Court Assessor
²⁵⁷ Yngve Möller (S), Member of Parliament; chairman; Hugo Bengtsson (S), Member of Parliament; Ingrid Diesen (M), Member of Parliament; Bengt Fagerlund (S), Member of Parliament; Nils Kellgren (S), Member of Parliament; Lennart Mattsson (C) Member of Parliament; and Rolf Wirtén (L) Member of Parliament.
²⁵⁸ Lahja Exner (S), Member of Parliament, Chairman; Elvy Olsson (C), County Governor, fmr. Member of Parliament; Conny Andersson (S), Municipal Commissioner; Rune Backlund (S), Member of Parliament; Alexander Chritisopoulos (C), Member of Parliament; Hans Göran Franck, Left Party** (V), Member of Parliament; Roland Larsson (C), Member of Parliament; Carl Lidbom (S), Ambassador, fmr. Member of Parliament; Ivar Nordberg (S), Member of Parliament; Sten Svensson (M), Member of Parliament; Lennart Widing
**Table A2:C Time period 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1997:41 The State and Religious Communities: Legal Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1997:45 The State and Religious Communities - Support, Taxes and Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ds 1999:12 Support to Other Religious Communities Other than the Church of Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prop. 1998/99:124. The State and Religious Communities - Support, Participation in the Total Defense, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFS 1998:1593 The Faith Communities Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Budget proposals and regulation letters between 1991–2010</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th><strong>The Independent School Committee (1995)</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1995:109 Equal Education on Equal Terms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Utredning om nya religiösa rörelser</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1998:113 In Good Faith: Society and Innovation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integration</th>
<th><strong>Integration Policy Committee (1995 -1996)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 1996:55 Sweden, the Future and Diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prop. 1997/98:16 Sweden, the Future and Diversity - from Immigration Policy to Integration Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOU 2009:52- The State and the Imams: Religion, Integration, Autonomy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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260 Lars Carlzon, Bishop; Göran Göransson, Civil Servant; Gösta Hedberg, fmr. leader of the Mission Covenant Church; Göran Lindqvist, Civil Servant; and a number of external experts.

261 Pär-Axel Sahlberg (S), Member of Parliament and Pastor, Chairman

262 Görel Bohlin (M), County governor with advisory board

263 A working group with representatives from the Ministry of Culture. In turn, the working group worked together with representatives for minority religious communities that were represented in SST and the Church of Sweden.

264 Ulla Ölvbro, Municipal Commissioner, Chairman; Sten Ljungdahl, Civil Servant; Erika Andersson, student; Catrine Arvidsson, Lecturer; Jan Björklund (L), City Councillor; Inger Davidson (KD), Member of Parliament; Anna Fält, Teacher; Ulf Melin (M), Member of Parliament; Arne Melqvist (S), Member of Parliament; Kjell Norberg, Municipal Commissioner; Conny Tyrberg, Economist; and Ingegerd Wärnersson (S)

265 Margo Ingvardsson (S)

266 Björn Rosengren (S), Chairman; Anders Ameson (S); Rune Backlund (C) (was by Marianne Andersson (C)); Helena Duroj (V); Gustaf von Essen (M); Juan Fonseca (S); Hardy Hedman (KD); Lars Johansson (S); Anita Jönsson (S); Ingela Mårtensson (L); Yvonne Ruwaida (MP); and Eva Sjöstedt (S).

267 Erik Amnå, Professor and Inquiry Chair. Was assisted by an expert group and a reference group.
Table A2:D Time period 4

| Religion and State | Commission into the Review of State Support for Religious Communities (2016-2018)\(^{268}\)  
|                   | SOU 2018:18 State Support for Religious Communities in a Multi-religious Sweden  
|                   | Policy documents between 2011-2019  
| Education         | Commission on Confessional Elements in Schools (2018-2019)\(^{269}\)  
|                   | SOU 2019:64 New Rules for Schools with a Confessional Direction  

Appendix 3 – Members in Minority Religious Communities

Statistics of members and registered participants in Minority Religious Communities entitled to government support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniting Church (A union formed in 2011 between the Baptist Union of Sweden, Mission Covenant Church of Sweden &amp; United Methodist Church of Sweden)</td>
<td>123,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelic Free Church</td>
<td>50,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>9,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal Movement</td>
<td>114,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Day Adventist Church</td>
<td>3689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Alliance Mission</td>
<td>20,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Faith Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosniak Islamic Community</td>
<td>11,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Islamic Association</td>
<td>30,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Fatwa Association</td>
<td>7,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of Islamic Cultural Centres</td>
<td>17,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shia Muslim Alliance</td>
<td>31,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Islamic Communities</td>
<td>20,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Muslim Federation</td>
<td>35,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Denmark in Sweden</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonian Evangelical Lutheran</td>
<td>4,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Iceland in Sweden</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church</td>
<td>1,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Evangelical Mission</td>
<td>36,711</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{268}\) Ulf Bjereld, Professor and Inquiry Chair. Was assisted by a parliamentary reference group and expert group.  
\(^{269}\) Lars Arrhenius, Lawyer and Inquiry Chair. Was assisted by a number of experts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faith Community</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of Norway in Sweden</td>
<td>2,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Protestant Church in Sweden</td>
<td>5,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orthodox and Eastern Churches</strong></td>
<td><strong>145,279</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch</td>
<td>747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian Apostolic Church</td>
<td>4,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian Orthodox Church</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrean Orthodox Church</td>
<td>8,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopian Orthodox Church</td>
<td>4,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish Orthodox Church</td>
<td>664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian Orthodox Church</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Sweden</td>
<td>22,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coptic Orthodox Church</td>
<td>4,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonian Orthodox Church</td>
<td>6,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian Orthodox Church</td>
<td>7,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Orthodox Church</td>
<td>3,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian Orthodox Church</td>
<td>23,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Orthodox Deanery</td>
<td>2,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Orthodox Church</td>
<td>47,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assyrian Church of the East</td>
<td>7,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Faith Communities</strong></td>
<td><strong>148,237</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alevi Federation in Sweden</td>
<td>4,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican Church</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Council of Swedish Jewish Communities</td>
<td>8,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandaean Sabean Community</td>
<td>7,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman-Catholic Church</td>
<td>116,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Buddhist Union</td>
<td>9,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>819,713</strong></td>
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</table>

**Appendix 4 – Original Distant Reading Tables**

**Table 4. Time Period 1: State and Religion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Theme:</strong> Kyrkan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concepts: kyrkan, svenska kyrkan, staten, kyrklig, frågan, förhållandet, Svenska, ställning, verksamhet, församling, fria, uppgifter, form, trossamfund, ekonomiska, fri, bestämmelser, medlemmar, möjligheter, församling, område, ekonomiska, utveckling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> Religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

374
Concepts: religion, religiösa, frihet, kristen, religionsfrihet, samhället, Sverige, liv, undervisning, samhälle, kristendomen, tro

**Theme: Samfund**

Concepts: Samfund, enskilda, fria, svenska, intresse, uppfattning, kravet, inflytande, skilda, princip, samband, enskilde, problem, fritt, länder, grupper, lära

**Theme: Kyrkomötet**

Concepts: kyrkomötet, lag, kyrkomöte, borgerliga, lag, präster, ordning, vigsel, lagstiftning, egendom, prästen, lagstiftning

**Theme: Frikyrkan**

Concepts: frikyrkan, frikyrkliga, skismässa, folk, stadskyrkan, stöd

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**Table 5. Time period 1: Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Theme: Elever</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>Theme: Undervisning</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Theme: Barn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: barn, svenska, Sverige, föräldrar, språk, åtgärder, land</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 6. Time Period 1: “Confessional”**

**Theme: Konfessionella**

Concepts: religionsundervisning, befrielse, katolsk, undervisning, föräldrar, statsbidrag, statliga, skolor, befolkningen, länder, bekännelse, barn, kristen, hänsyn

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**Table 7. Time Period 1: Integration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: svenska, arbetskraft, Sverige, utlänningar, möjligheter, invandringen, länder, behov, omfattning, förhållanden, medborgare, invandrare, sociala, samhället, hänsyn, ställning, ekonomiska</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>Theme: Landet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: landet, vistas, tillstånd, arbetstillstånd, skyldig, syfte, riket, anställning, lagen, utlänning, arbete</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Theme: Kontrollen</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: kontrollen, uppehållstillstånd, stat, bestämmelser, generella, visering, medel</td>
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**Table 8. Time Period 2: State and Religion**

<table>
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<th>1</th>
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Table 9. Time Period 2: Education

<table>
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<th>Theme: Skolor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: skolor, statligt, fristående, statsbidrag, elever, grundskolan, stöd, verksamhet, skollagen, skolväsendet, statsunderstödda, pedagogiska, villkor, arbetsmiljö, konfessionell, arbete</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Undervisning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: undervisning, hemmet, barn, svenska, förutsättningar, möjlighet, lag, ekonomiska, språk</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Bidrag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: bidrag, kommun, bidrag, kostnader, basresurs, förstärkningsresurs, tilläggsbidrag, årskurserna, hänsyn, arbetsgivaravgifter</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 10. Time Period 2: Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Sverige</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: Sverige, svenska, medborgare, invandringen, utländska, personer, landet, barn, länder, sociala, bosatta, nordiska, utlännningar, förhållanden, medborgarskap, Finland,</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Invandrare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts: invandrare, möjligheter, språk, organisationer, verksamhet, åtgärder, information, myndigheter, organisationer, samhället, minoritetsorganisationer, språk, situation, sociala, hänsyn, ökad, ekonomiska, stöd, behov, problem, bakgrund, grupper, kommuner, myndigheter, insatser, kulturella</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Politiska</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Table 13. Time Period 3: State and Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Trossamfund</td>
<td>Trossamfund, staten, stöd, verksamhet, statliga, form, samfund, grundläggande, värderingar, religiösa, statsbidrag, bidrag, SST, personer, samhället, framtida, avgiftshjälp, självvård, långsiktigt, utgångspunkt, krav, upprätthålla, uppbördhjälp, livskraft, intresse, mål</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kyrkan</td>
<td>Kyrkan, Svenska kyrkan, lagen, församlingar, kyrkliga, bestämmelser, uppgifter, församlingar, stift, organisation, tillhör, kyrkomötet, princip, egendomen, relationsändringen, ställning, samfälligheter, ordning, samband, identitet, hänsyn, upphöra, uppdrag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Myndighet</td>
<td>Myndighet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Föreningar</td>
<td>föreningar, ekonomiska, Sverige, svenska, medlemmar, ideella, ändamål, betala, behov, lokala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. Time Period 3: Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Fristående</td>
<td>Fristående, skolor, utbildningen, bidrag, elever, offentliga, verksamhet, Skolverket, kommunen, godkännande, skolväsendet, mål, grundskolan, krav, undervisning, skollagen, tillsyn, regeringen, kostnader, negativa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rörelser</td>
<td>Rörelser, religiösa, nyandliga, personer, gränser, samhället, perspektiv, religion, problem, barn, växer, människor, medlemmar, hjälp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Barn</td>
<td>Barn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Behov</td>
<td>Behov</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16. Time Period 3: Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Samhället</td>
<td>Samhället, möjligheter, arbete, etniska, kulturella, bakgrund, behov, stöd, etniska, förutsättningar, grupper, rättigheter, utveckla, integration, enskilda, bidra, samhälle, grundläggande, mångfald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Svenska</td>
<td>Svenska</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17. Time Period 4: Religion and State

1. **Theme: Trossamfund**
   - Concepts: trossamfund, stöd, staten, samfund, logen, förutsättningar, SST, bidrag, arbete, organisationer, mål, krav, villkor, Regeringen

2. **Theme: Religiösa**
   - Concepts: religiösa, verksamhet, samhället, civilsamhället, grundläggande, värderingar, gudstjänst, människor, stärka, demokratiska, svenska, omsorg, själavård, värde, roll, civila samhället, jämställdhet

3. **Theme: Sverige**
   - Concepts: Sverige, utbildning, företrädare, behov, sociala, Trossamfundens, muslimska, andliga, vård

4. **Theme: Rättigheter**
   - Concepts: rättigheter, religionsfriheten, skydd, demokratikriterium, syfte, Europakonventionen, mänskliga rättigheter

Table 18. Time Period 4: Education

1. **Topic: Konfessionella**
   - Concepts: konfessionell, inriktning, huvudman, inslag, skolor, fristående, verksamheten, fritidshem, förskolor, etableringsstopp, krav, icke-konfessionell, högtider, förskoleklass, grundsärskola, gymnasieskola, skolavslutningar

2. **Topic: Utbildning**
   - Concepts: utbildning, barn, elever, undervisning, utöva, skolan, möjlighet, skolväsendet, omfattas, vårdnadshavare

3. **Topic: Enskilda**
   - Concepts: enskilda, skollagen, godkännande, skollagen, huvudmän, tillsyn, konsekvenser, ägare, ledningsprövning, förutsättningar

4. **Topic: Fri**
   - Concepts: fri, grundläggande, åtaganden, internationella, personer, förhållande, demokratiskt, lag, syfte, kravs, diskriminering

Table 20. Concept: Trossamfund och Samfund

**Time period 1**

Medlemmar, medlemskap, Svenska Kyrkan, religionsfrihet, religiöst, församling, bekännelse, neutral, enskilde, grupper, verksamhet, stöd, frihet, enskilda, kristna, religiösa, organisation, principer, krav, religionsundervisning, frikyrkliga, befolkningen, ekonomiska, befrielse
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religionsfrihet, sjukhus, Svenska kyrkan, relation, kyrkor, individens, lokaler, religiösa, medlemmar, frihet, andliga, stödet, anslag, statsbidrag, frivillig, vård, principiella, ekonomiska, framtid, kyrkliga, lokala, staten, principer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Svenska kyrkan, Statsbidrag, förordningen, stöd, värderingar, hjälp, skyldigheter, form, verksamhet, begravningsverksamheten, staten, reglering, grundläggande, juridisk, förutsättningar, prövas, kyrkan, identitet, ideella, religiösa, medlemmar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bidragsberättigade, SST stöd, stärka, statsbidrag, avgiftshjälpen, förordningen, församlingar, muslimska, bidrag, andliga, samhället, värderingar, staten, lagen, kyrkan, villkor, organisationer, medlemmar, extremism, ortodoxa, mål, återkrav</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23. Directed ACA: Religionsfrihet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>neutral, frihet, krav, tvång, religion, intressen., samfund, tvång, princip, fri, enskilde, hänsyn, debatten, grupper, bekännelse, kyrka-stat, skilsmässa, andliga, principiella,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>individens, frihet, religion, relation, religiösa, rätten, rättigheter, princip, krav, politiska, tillgång, trossamfund, skydd, princip, kyrkor, internationella, service, tillgodose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mänskliga rättigheter, frihet, religion, gränser, rättigheter, perspektiv, religiösa, regleras, internationella, människor, demokratiska, mångfald, diskriminering, juridisk, samfund, samhället, rörelser, grundläggande</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inskränkning, utöva, barnkonventionen, tro, skydd, demokratikriteriet, ordning, hänsyn, regeringsformen, konventionen, religion, rättigheter, demokratiska, fri, barn, internationella, förutsättningar, religiösa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doktorsavhandlingar från
Ersta Sköndal Bräcke högskola


Nr 3. Lilian Pohlkamp (2020) Bereaved mothers and fathers. Grief and psychological health 1 to 5 years after losing a child to cancer.


Nr 6. Filip Wollter (2020). The reasoning behind social work intervention design.

Nr 7. Elin Hjort (2020). Experiences of care and everyday life in a time of change for families in which a child has spinal muscular atrophy.


Nr 11. Anna O'Sullivan (2021) Bereaved family members’ VOICES of support and care during the last three months of life for people with advanced illness.

In Sweden, as in other European countries, there seems to be an increasingly dichotomous and contradictory view of the role and function of minority religious communities. On the one hand, they seem to be viewed as a resource and a positive and integrative factor in society, whilst on the other hand, they seem to be perceived as a risk and a problem that needs to be controlled and managed. In this thesis, this contradictory and contested perspective of religion in the public realm in Sweden is analysed from a historical perspective by studying government documents between 1952 and 2019. The results show that although religion has become a new policy concern from the late 1990s, many of the recent controversies concerning minority religious communities are not new. Rather, these controversies are indicative of an ongoing story of the Swedish state’s perception and handling of increasing religious diversity and a balancing-act between different rights and values.

Ersta Sköndal Bräcke University College has third-cycle courses and a PhD programme within the field The Individual in the Welfare Society, with currently two third-cycle subject areas, Palliative care and Social welfare and the civil society. The area frames a field of knowledge in which both the individual in palliative care and social welfare as well as societal interests and conditions are accommodated.