

The Ethics of Reporting on Radical Nationalist Groups in Sweden

By: Sofie Axelsson

Supervisor: Nina Springer

Södertörn University | International journalism

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Sofie Axelsson

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/Abstract/

Radical nationalist groups are growing in Sweden as well as in the rest of the world due to contemporary political, cultural and social rationale, where the internet is used as a catalyzer and tool to organize and spread their ideologies. Simultaneously, the structures and the system that hold journalism seem to be altering at a similar speed. The journalistic reporting on radical nationalist groups has, for this reason, become increasingly difficult. The alt-right, a radical nationalist group in the US expanded much because of the oxygen that American journalists added in an attempt to raise awareness of the danger or the highly problematic opinions that these groups sometimes stand for (Faris et.al 2018). A similar trend in Sweden is not yet visible but the lack of an ethical code of conduct when reporting on radical nationalist groups speaks for unpreparedness. This study aims to understand the ethical approach of Swedish journalists when reporting on radical nationalist groups through the interviews of 8 journalists. "The theoretical approach is based on the structures that affect ethical decision-making along the hierarchy of influence model, by Shoemaker and Reese (1996) as well as journalists' positioning of ideology and relativism, an ethical concept developed by Plaisance (2005). Based on the interview data collected for this study, some of the journalists in Sweden claim to be consequence neutral, thus it can be assumed that the responsibility of providing accumulated attention to radical nationalist groups which contribute to their expansion is not taken by many journalists. The focus of the interviewed Swedish journalists is rather on up front nazis than the dubious groups spreading online, with some exceptions, which could help explain the more carefree approach. However, the challenges of similar groups' potential spreading in the near future is an important reason to address ethical approaches on how to best report on radical nationalist groups promptly.

Keywords: Journalism Ethics, Radical nationalism, Extreme right-wing, Swedish journalism

Table of contents

1 Introduction	3
1.1 Aim and Research questions	5
2 Background and definitions	6
2.1 Who are the radical nationalists in Sweden?	7
2.2 Radical nationalist propaganda and the clash with mainstream media	12
3 Literature review and theoretical framework	14
3.1 News coverage of radical nationalist groups	14
3.2 Factors that influence ethical decisions	16
3.2.1 The individual level	17
3.2.2 The routines level	21
3.2.3 The organizational level	22
3.2.4 The social institution level	22
3.2.5 The social system level	23
4 Method	24
4.1 In-depth semi-structured interviews	25
4.2 Selection of the journalists	26
4.3 Data Analysis and Analytical Tools	27
4.4 Validity and Reliability	28
4.6 Ethical considerations and reflexivity	29
5 Empirical results and analysis	30
5.1 The individual level	31
5.1.1 How and when should one report on radical nationalist groups	31
5.1.2 The importance of the journalist's knowledge and experience	37
5.1.3 Threats and harassment	38
5.1.4 Practical advice when reporting on radical nationalist groups	39
5.1.5 Relativism vs. Ideology	42
5.2 The external level	44
5.2.1 The routines level	44
5.2.2 The organizational level	45
5.2.3 The social institution level	49
5.2.4 The social system level	50
6 Summary and conclusion	53
Bibliography	57

1 Introduction

Radical nationalist movements have been increasingly visible across Europe, North America, and Australia during the last decade. These movements are known as the extreme right, white supremacy groups, fascism, Nazism or even far-right populism. The reasoning behind the use of the term *radical nationalists* will be developed in further sections but in short, radical comes from the Latin word meaning "going to the root" which would give an accurate description of the core for these groups; connecting an inherited commonality of people to a geographical location (Lundström & Lundström 2016). Further characteristics of many of these groups are the antagonizing against political correctness, feminism, and the diversity of culture, race, and sexuality. The groups of these movements often use violence and are a threat to democracy. Furthermore, established media are not uncommonly pronounced enemies of these groups and journalists are often subjects of direct threats. The movements are increasingly becoming transnational through activities on online forums and social media platforms and actors from these groups oftentimes use manipulative strategies to push sexist, racist and homophobic messages (Wiederer 2013, Deland et al 2016, Phillips 2018).

Prior to the US election in 2016, the radical nationalist group referred to as the alt-right grew from quite unknown to known by most in the US (Phillips 2018). Studies have shown that this development is partly due to journalists reporting on this group. Different news media outlets have been providing platforms to the alt-right that would have been difficult for the group to attain by itself. (Phillips 2018, Faris et.al 2017). Phillips (2018) also stresses that the journalistic ethical decision-making processes and the contextual additions to stories concerning these groups are important factors for avoiding the amplification of dangerous messages.

Sweden has for long had the reputation of being a nation that is liberal and open to generous immigration policies. Simultaneously, radical nationalist violent groups have been highly visible in Sweden throughout history, from militant anti-semitism in the late nineteenth century, to national socialism in the 1930s, to an upswing of organizations and political parties with radical nationalist ideologies forming in the 1990s (Deland et. al 2010). Today, the landscape of Swedish radical nationalist groups has some entangled visions but also many differences. While groups such as the Nordic resistance movement (NMR) are xenophobic and advocating the superiority of the white race, the parliamentary group

Sverigedemokraterna (SD), in this study also included among radical nationalists, focuses on cultural differentiation and the desire of "saving" the Swedish and Nordic culture from the supposed threat of immigrants.

To study the phenomenon of a growing radical nationalism has major importance for the society as a whole; to understand hateful groups and learn how to approach them. The publications of *Vita Fältet*¹ (The white field) 2010, 2013 and 2016 are the biggest attempts to fill the gap of knowledge of radical nationalist groups in Sweden. The authors are, in the three different publications, stating that too little has been written about the subjects concerning radical nationalist groups in Sweden and that further contributions to the field are yearned for. The radical nationalist groups are close to uncharted within the academic field since the nineties but have been given more attention within the journalistic field (Deland et.al 2013).

More recently, however, Mats Ekström and Andrew Morton (2017) have been looking at the mediatized performances of the right-populist parties UKIP in the United Kingdom and SD in Sweden. One of their findings was that established media was enabling the performative populist politics of both UKIP and SD. In the case of SD, televised debates and commentary were providing a platform that was favorable for the performative activities that the party was interested in, namely to talk about immigration issues and claim to be the only alternative to established parties. Even though this study is not quite comparable to the American studies of Faris et. al (2017) and Phillips (2018), it does illuminate the need of ethical considerations when reporting on radical nationalist groups to avoid amplification.

From a quick search² in the open archive of Swedish Newspapers (KB 2018) even if some material might have been deleted or removed, it is visible that the subject has been written about increasingly in the Swedish media. The year before the Swedish election in 2010 only 44 news stories with the search words "extreme right" were available, in the year before the 2014 election there were 779 hits and the year before the 2018 election it had increased to 1968 hits. An educated guess would be that this increase is following the growth of SD, which is now the third biggest party in Sweden.

Additionally, no official specific journalistic code of conduct on how to report on radical nationalist groups in Sweden has been found in the research for this thesis. Since journalists are reporting about these groups more and more, the research will focus on the

¹ A 3-part anthology of the gathered scientific research on radical nationalism in Sweden

² As part of the research for this study. This search has not been conducted with the aim to provide every potential variable that could cause these numbers, but rather give a hypothetical hint of a larger pattern.

journalists themselves, through in-depth interviews, to understand how they treat issues that are at risk of amplifying dangerous messages and whether they take particular precautions to avoid threats.

1.1 Aim and Research questions

Research questions:

- A. How do Swedish journalists reflect on and apply ethical measurements when reporting on radical nationalists?
- B. What reflections are made by journalists in regards to threats and harassment from radical nationalist groups?

The study aims to raise questions on what kind of ethical reflections journalists have on possible amplification of radical nationalist groups and ideologies and what approaches are visible when dealing with threats and/or harassment from these groups. The method of in-depth interviews with journalists who have been reporting on radical nationalist actors in different settings, such as public service or commercial outlets, and different media such as television, radio, and newspapers, will help to map out important ethical factors that should be taken into consideration when reporting on these groups. Furthermore, the interviews are intended as a space where journalists may reflect on these issues, which would hopefully be a first step into further discussions about the subject within journalistic circles and the development of a consensus for how to best report on radical nationalist groups.

The interview questions are based on what has been found in earlier research which is both described in the upcoming background section as well as in the theoretical framework section. These sections will help to understand what the radical nationalist landscape looks like and what the academic discussions have brought forth so far when it comes to journalists' reporting on these groups. The theoretical section will also bring up factors concerning internal and external influences that could affect news reporting as well as theories of journalistic moral positionings of idealism and relativism, which is intended to help understand the empirical material that will be analyzed. Moreover, the tools of analysis and steps to conduct this thesis will be thoroughly presented in the method section. Further, the

results are presented to answer the research question and afterward discussed in the light of the findings, earlier research and theory in a final concluding section.

2 Background and definitions

The Swedish government officially refers to the groups of interest for this thesis (with the exception of the party SD), as right-wing extremists, which the Swedish intelligence service defines as a "milieu of individuals, groups, and organizations that strive for ethnic homogenous societies and governance based on a Swedish ethnicity" (Säpo 2019). Furthermore, the Swedish government now uses different forms of extremism whether they are driven by Islamic, socialist or nationalist ideas, they are seen as comparable problems that could be treated with similar solutions (Deland et.al 2016).

The term right-wing extremism has, however, been criticized and increasingly discussed in the academic field in Sweden. The term is problematic mainly due to semiotics, where the words right-wing and extremism are not inclusive enough to be held as an umbrella term for all the different groupings that are relevant for this thesis and similar studies.

Firstly, to speak of these groups as right-wing can be misleading since the political attributes connected to the actors that the definition is supposed to cover, can vary immensely (Lundström & Lundström, 2016:40). Some of these groups advocate for a state social welfare and are opposing capitalism but, more often than not, these groups are quite oblivious to other political issues than the one of immigration (ibid). This concludes that all the groups referred to with the term extreme-right are not necessarily following stereotypical right-wing politics. Secondly, when speaking about extremism it implies a division of "us" and "them", "we" who are normal and "them" who are extreme, which consequently obscures ideas that could be detectable on both sides. Racism is becoming more and more normalized in both mediatic and political spheres (Deland et.al 2010) which demonstrates the importance to scrutinize this phenomenon everywhere, which can be challenging when using black and white definitions such as extremism. Extremism also suggests strong deviance from the central current of the society, which in Sweden would be quite misleading since the Swedish Democrats (SD) is the third biggest party (Lundström & Lundström 2016:40-41)

The preferred term by the authors Lundström and Lundström is radical nationalists. The authors looked at earlier research of groups such as SD, The Nordic resistance movement

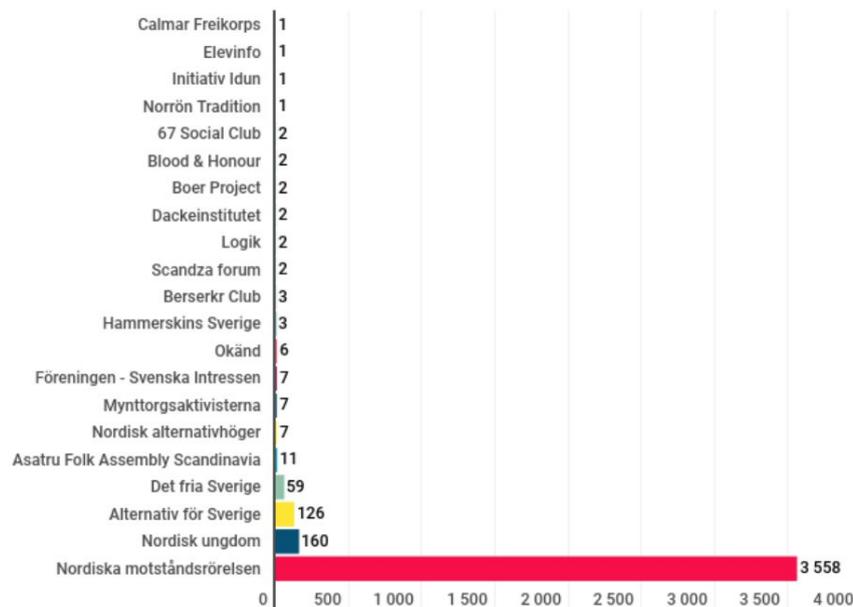
(NMR), Sveriges Nationella Förbund, Nordiska rikspartiet (NRP), Alternativ för Sverige (AFS), etc., and what they found to be essentially common is that they are all nationalists. Using the word radical – the Latin word for going to the root, seems more fitting than extremism since the meaning does not imply strong deviance but rather the central political articulation for these groups of going to the root of nationalism (Ibid).

The definition of radical nationalism has gained ground in the last couple of years and was, for example, used in a recent governmental report (Kaati et.al 2017) about the radical nationalist digital environment. The main detectable issue with the definition of radical nationalism is that there is a lack of consensus both in the academic and political sphere, which could create confusion since the term of extreme right-wing groups is the more common one. This thesis will, however, use the term radical nationalists and furthermore provide an explanation as to who this definition refers to in the next part of this section.

2.1 Who are the radical nationalists in Sweden?

According to the yearly report that maps radical nationalist groups in Sweden, made by the journalistic foundation *Expo*, there are more than 20 radical nationalist groups in Sweden today. Radical nationalist activities such as manifestations and spreading of propaganda have reached the highest record since *Expo* started to measure them in 2008, where the Nordic resistance movement (NMR) is by far the most active (Leman et.al 2018). *Expo* has been one of the main sources of information about radical nationalists since there has for long been a lack of academic studies of this sort in Sweden (Wåg, 2010, Deland et.al 2010). Even though SD is not part of the figure below, it is also considered a radical nationalist party by *Expo* (*Expo* 2019)

Figure 1



A contemporary mapping of the radical nationalist groups' activities in 2018. The scale from 0-4000 is the number of activities such as demonstrations, events, conferences, etc. carried out by the radical nationalist groups that are active in Sweden. This does not include the activities of radical nationalist websites (Leman et.al, 2018)

Deland, Hertzberg, and Hvitfeld (2010) describe the radical-nationalist groups, that they refer to as extreme-right groups, as having ideologies that reproduce categories of “us” and “them”, “the people” and “the strangers”, and use these in their political projects. The groups are often anti-feminism, anti-Zionism, anti-Islamism, anti-globalism and attain certain identities, cultures, and subcultures that are characterized by strong leaders and acceptance of political violence (Deland et. al 2010). Researcher Jens Rydberg (2010) agrees with the description from the scholars above, but concretizes that the commonality for these groups are, except for nationalism, mythical thinking about a past where an ethnically homogeneous nation with traditional values exists and with that comes a populist critique of the establishment since it denies this fantasy.

Rydberg further makes a distinction between parliamentary and non-parliamentary radical nationalist groups (that he also refers to as extreme right-wing groups). The parliamentary groups are critical towards constitutions but accept the rules of democracy, even though, as Rydberg states, they are essentially undemocratic since they are against the pluralistic values of liberal democracy. The non-parliamentary groups are however clear with

the fact that they want to change the constitution from the foundation. There has not been so many parliamentary-groups however: The Sweden Democrats (SD) is undoubtedly the most successful and Ny Demokrati (New Democracy), the only comparable party with immigration-critical opinions, was in the parliament for 3 years between 1991 and 1994 (Mulinari & Neergard 2010).

The radical nationalists can also be divided into three different branches: The social-conservative nationalism, the racial-oriented nationalism, and the identitarian nationalism. The different actors find inspirations in all three with different variations according to Lundström and Lundström (2016:44-56).

The social-conservative nationalism has historically gained the most ground in Sweden and has been the biggest source of inspiration for SD. Among organizations prior to SD was for example "The New-Swedish movement" from 1950 which cushioned the racial and anti-Semitic discourse from the 1930s with a new focus on culture. However, there have been fragmentations within this ideology, top leaders from more racial-oriented groupings have come and gone to be part of SD. Other social-conservative nationalist groups and the youth parties such as SD's youth movement SDU has had many connections to Nazism and racial-oriented views and has consequently had many conflicts with SD which is trying to wash itself off from those ideology strands (Ibid). More recent groups within this division of ideology are the contra-jihadist movement, The Swedish Defense League and different publication platforms such as Info14, Avpixlat (now Samhällsnytt) and Dispatch International that all have different connections with SD as well as more racial-oriented groups (Lundström & Lundström 2016, Kaati et al (2017)).

The more racial-oriented groups are traced down to race-biological explanation models from the 1930s. Nordiska Rikspartiet – The Nordic Party (NRP) was active from 1956 and growing in the 1980s and 1990s and was during this period the most violent radical nationalist group together with Vitt Ariskt motstånd - White Arian resistance (VAM), Nationell ungdom - National youth, The Swedish resistance movement (SMR) that later became The Nordic resistance movement (NMR) and Nationalsocialist front which later became Svenskarnas Parti- The Swedish party. The 1990's was dense with violent acts towards minorities and/or opponents. Several murders (1-2 a year), arsons against refugee residencies, attempts to murder, threats, assaults, and vandalization were frequent at this time (Lundström & Lundström 2016, Deland et.al 2010). The violence was defended in publication

platforms that mimicked journalistic news outlets, such as Info14, Nordland, and Folktribunen (Lundström & Lundström 2016).

The third branch, identitarian nationalism, derives from the French thinker Alain De Benoist who was inspired by the Marxist Antonio Gramsci. The ideology mainly builds on a human rights perspective; the individual's right to national identity. Similar to the social-conservative nationalists, the identitarian ideas suggest that multiculturalism threatens the homogenous community. Nationalism, from an identitarian view, is not necessarily tied to the state of Sweden but rather a territorial limited area, this makes the ideas more approachable in transnational cooperation, where imaginations such as to "defend" the Western world can thrive. Free nationalists, The Swedish party, NMR, Nordiska förbundet (NF), Nordic Youth, SDU and The Nordic alternative right (The Nordic branch of The American alt-right) all have inspirations from this ideology. The ideas of the identitarians are appealing and can be seen as a connecting point for many different groups and parties both on the more racial-oriented spectrum of nationalism and the social-conservative spectrum (Lundström & Lundström 2016).

Some of the radical nationalist groups are no longer active. For example: Svenskarnas Parti, VAM, and NRP. They are however mentioned in this section since they are part of the groups that have been reported on throughout the years by the journalists interviewed for this study.

Svensk radikalnationalism 1915–2015

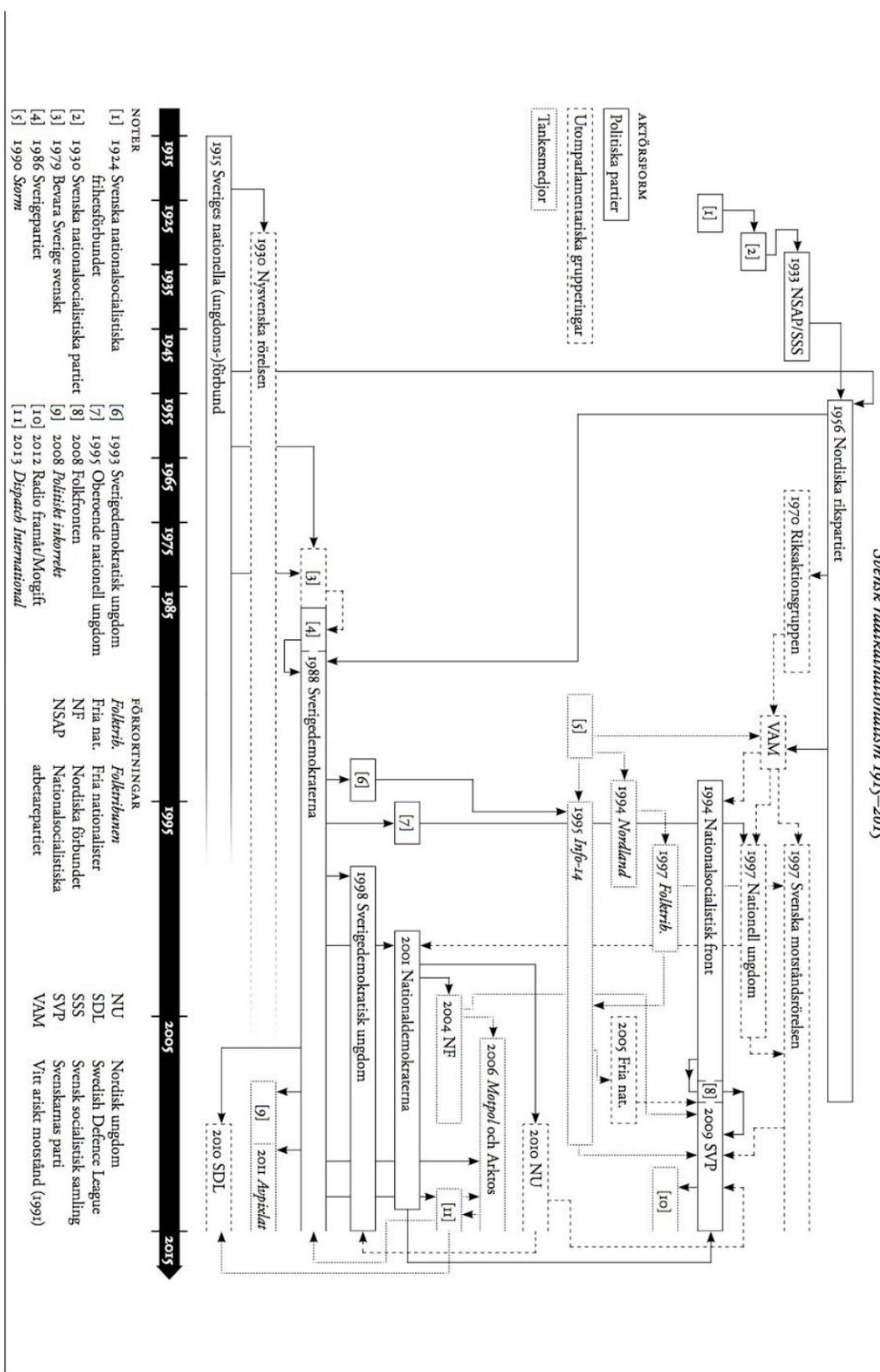


Figure 2 Swedish Radical nationalism 1915-2015

Historical map of radical nationalist parties and organizations (Lundström & Lundström, 2016:58-59). Politiska partier = Political parties, Utomparlamentariska grupperingar = Non-parliamentary groups, Tankesmedjor = Think-tanks

2.2 Radical nationalist propaganda and the clash with mainstream media

Radical nationalist actors from all over the world have especially been targeting youth subcultures since the early 1990's and continued through the era of the internet. Earlier, the signifiers and symbols for the radical nationalist youth were mostly skinheads and white power music (punk/rock influenced music genre with racist/nationalist lyrics) but has later become certain internet memes, hashtags, certain abbreviations, number combinations or symbols connected to hateful ideas (Wåg 2010, Kaati et.al 2017:28-32). The internet has also contributed to an intensified transnational contact between radical nationalists groups to develop strategies for recruitment and organizations of manifestations and events through social media platforms (Deland et.al 2010, Welk 2010, Wieder 2013). The internet is furthermore where these groups can spread propaganda and build networks in total anonymity (Wieder, 2013). The radical nationalists' websites were frequently closed down in the 1990's due to the internet service providers coming to the realization of the content. The groups, however, started to become their own internet service providers, just as they became their own book publishers when the mainstream publishers denied their books to be published (Welk 2010, Wåg 2010).

Youths get exposed to radical nationalist propaganda on the internet regularly but this gets little attention compared to the violent reactions toward "White-power-music" that was popular in the nineties according to Wåg (2010). In the 1990s, Swedish radical nationalists were the world leading producers of White Power music, more people used to gather on their concerts than on the arranged political demonstrations and manifestations (ibid). The music production, however, abruptly slowed down after police mass-arrests during several concerts in 1998. What followed was a period of publications of books and journals, however, this development was quite unsuccessful and included several shutdowns. In the beginning and mid-2000s, the radical nationalist groups started to become very active online, first with blogs and then websites that were mimicking journalistic traditional news outlets but with a clear anti-immigration agenda. This was also when new theories such as the identitarian ideas started to grow within the radical nationalist groups and parties (Ibid).

The Swedish radical nationalists sites such as Motpol, Motgift, Fria Tider, Nordisk Ungdom, Nyheter idag, Nordfront and Samhällsnytt are increasingly using tactics of criticizing mainstream media for using political correctness as means to not tell "the truth"

which usually concerns issues of immigration (Lundqvist 2010, Deland et.al 2013, Kaati et al 2017). Some of the sites see a decrease in active members while others are increasing. Nordfront for example, driven by NMR, gets 500 new active users every year and has in 2017 a total of 4451 active users (Kaati et.al 2017). These sites are often referred to as hate-sites, especially in traditional media outlets, while the actors of these sites themselves state the opposite. Recently there has also been an increase of podcasts, vlogs, and youtube-channels connected to the sites mentioned above. An important lesson derived from studying these sites is that they often have an opposite or a very different sense of reality and narrative compared to traditional media. Through suspicions that traditional media is acting after a certain political agenda to cover up the "true reality", actors of radical nationalist groups often mobilize hate campaigns and "trolling-acts"³ as a protest (Kaati, et.al 2017:26-27).

In the third edition of *Det vita fältet*, the authors state that threats and violence toward journalists, politicians, and other opposing opinion formers are increasing, especially sexual threats toward women. This development mainly has to do with the increased access to digital communication such as comment sections of newspapers and social media usage (Deland et.al 2016, Kaati et al 2017). Furthermore, these actors are often bringing the debate to freedom of expression which many of them consider is being limited due to Swedish laws such as hate speech and slander, etc. and the "political correctness" of established news media. The complaints about the lack of freedom of expression could ultimately be used as a strategy to provoke an amplification of radical nationalist exposure in the traditional media (Lundqvist, 2010, Deland et.al 2013)

To understand the contemporary environment of the radical nationalists in Sweden, especially activities online that can spread transnationally, it is necessary to also look at findings in the rest of the world, which will be done in the next section in the theoretical framework and literature review. A conclusion for this section is that radical nationalist groups interact with journalists and traditional media with hostility, and the next sections will provide more information on how journalists interact back with these groups. The upcoming section will also delve into the morality of journalists to further understand their choices when reporting on radical nationalist groups.

³ The term trolling comes from actors spreading manipulative memes or jokes or in other ways tricking people online (Phillips, 2018). The term should, however, be carefully used since it could create an illusion that racism, misogyny or violence could be taken lightly.

3 Literature review and theoretical framework

The first part of this section will focus on earlier research on the journalistic coverage on radical nationalist groups while the second will go through the theoretical concepts of ideology and relativism as well as the hierarchy of influence model (Shoemaker and Reese 1996) that will help structure this study.

3.1 News coverage of radical nationalist groups

Even though many people get information through a wider range of sources now than what was before limited to traditional media, media outlets still often have the agenda-setting position to select what is visible for a wider audience. Jens Rydberg (2013) reflects on the role of media in Sweden and whether its gateway position might aid radical nationalists to get amplified visibility. For example, tendencies of making politics more personalized in media outlets could be favorable for national radical parties who often give leaders large importance (Rydberg 2013). Another aspect is the mass medial movement towards commercialization which in a higher sense than public service media leans toward sensationalist aspects that favors disdain towards politics and the establishment, which further favors radical nationalist groups. At the time, Rydberg stated that no systematic study has yet been made in Sweden or elsewhere concerning the significance of mass media's role of amplification of radical nationalist groups (Ibid).

A collaborative study was, however, made by Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University and the Center for Civic Media, MIT University (2017) which did show that far right-wing voices were amplified and given a greater platform in the US prior to the national election in 2016. This development was mainly explained by manipulative strategies used by these groups to gain media attention and according to the Berkman Klein center and Center for civic media report, unaware journalists were, in fact, partaking in this development. Journalists in the US have gotten a lot of criticism for their reporting on groups like the alt-right, the report, for example, states that journalists are too easily manipulated and are giving too little context for readers to gain a critical understanding of the issue (ibid). The criticism comes from media and journalist research in academia but as well from critical journalists in the field. (Phillips 2018, Beckett 2017, US Guardian and WNYC's On the Media 2018)

Whitney Phillips (2018), a researcher at the independent media institute Data & Society in New York City, is one of the scholars who has done one of the biggest mappings of mistakes that journalists are making when reporting on radical nationalist groups and she provides different strategies to create new habits in news reporting to assess these sensitive subjects. She concludes that journalists with experience of, or connected to in some way, similar online platforms where many of these movements are growing, will have some advantages in understanding them but might still make mistakes such as amplifying them by “making fun of them.” Others with less experience of these subcultures would have a more difficult time to understand them and consequently might be more easily manipulated by them. In general, Phillips stresses the importance of always doing in-depth research when reporting on radical nationalist groups (ibid).

In a Swedish context, the literature that stands out as similar research is *Ska man tala med nazister* (Should one speak to Nazis) by Mikael Löfgren (2017), who describes the possible dangers with both addressing and not addressing these groups. The discussion, however, does not revolve around how these groups should be portrayed in the media as much as how they are given space in different parts of the society, such as the right to demonstrate in public and to allow extreme right newspapers to be part of the yearly book fair in Gothenburg (Ibid).

Christoph Anderson (2013) engages in the potential risks that affect journalists when reporting on extreme right groups in Sweden and in Germany. In his article, he urges for clearer guidelines to avoid threats from these groups and explains that few guidelines are adapted to the changing climate that journalists are working within. He also states that journalists who are working with radio or tv broadcasting are oftentimes more of risk to be harassed by the radical nationalists they are reporting on because of potentially dangerous reactions when meeting face to face (ibid).

In 2017, Mats Ekström and Andrew Morton wrote a collaborative report on the medial performances of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) in the UK and SD in Sweden, which the authors refer to as right-wing populist parties. They state that there are very few studies concerning how populism is communicated in the media. The report showed that the British journalists that were reporting on the UKIP, at times, mimicked their populist and informal language, and allowed for a distrust toward mainstream politicians and so created an environment that was favorable for these groups to raise and spread their opinions. The

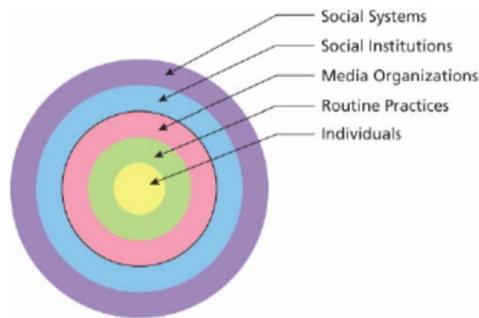
Swedish journalists, however, approached SD in quite a different way, where none of the “informal language” and less distrust toward politicians was visible. The Swedish media did, however, give SD attention in other ways which allowed for amplification of the party’s performances, mostly through organized televised debates. The political debates before elections are mainly organized through media in Sweden, which gives journalists a big role in choosing what will be debated. A great focus was on debating immigration issues with questions that in most cases, according to Ekström and Morton, lacked contextuality and complexity. The questions could be, for example, if you should say yes or no to immigrants. The simplicity allowed SD to be able to position themselves as the only alternative to established parties, and since the debates that they participated in were mostly regarding issues of immigration, they were also allowed to “perform on their own territory, namely on the issue of reduced immigration.” (Ibid:310)

Apart from these given examples, however, little literature has been found about the ethics in regard to reporting on radical nationalist groups both in Sweden and in English-speaking countries. A conclusion that can be drawn from earlier research is that it is essentially important to consider possible negative media effects of journalists’ reporting on these groups to find solutions to decrease the hate towards vulnerable and marginal groups in the society. With this background, the study aims to further look at journalists' ethical roles when reporting on radical nationalist groups in Sweden.

3.2 Factors that influence ethical decisions

In this part of the theory section, two connected theoretical concepts are presented to help guide the upcoming sections of this thesis: **Ideology and Relativism** and bring forth how different authors within the field of journalism have defined and discussed these concepts. The theoretical part will further be structured after the *hierarchy of influences model* developed by Pamela Shoemaker & Stephen D. Reese (1996), which in this study will be applied to clarify ethical perspectives from different structural levels; to achieve a more holistic understanding of how ethics can be influenced by internal and external factors in connection to reporting on radical nationalist groups.

Figure 3 The hierarchy of influences model



(Shoemaker & Reese 2013:9)

As this model visualizes, the individual will be the core for this study since the individuals are the ones who often need to make ethical decisions in their reporting, however, different factors such as routines practices, organizations, institutions, and social systems could further affect these ethical decisions which will be described in this section. The discussion will also include how different perspectives of ethical issues are connected to a changing structural environment for journalists, mainly due to technologies such as the internet.

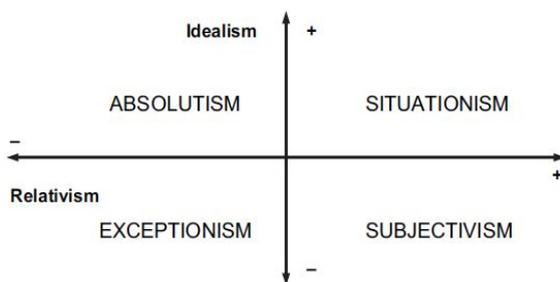
The reason as to why the specific concepts of ideology and relativism have been chosen for this thesis is because they are important fundamental ethical standpoints for understanding if journalists are aiming to follow standardized and/or universal principles or if they see the ethical decision-making as more situational and/or relativistic. This is relevant since the subject matter of the research question concerns radical nationalist groups and could lead to potential harm to society, depending on when and how the subject is being reported upon. The concepts of ideology and relativism are connected to more philosophical terms such as Kantian absolutism (deontology) or utilitarianism (consequentialism) that will be additionally explained and discussed throughout this part of the section.

3.2.1 The individual level

Individuals are the makers of ethical decisions and there are a variety of approaches of how to assess ethical decisions, among them, the psychologist Donelson Forsyth developed the Ethics Position Theory (EPT) which positions morality between idealism and relativism. Idealism is the moral standpoint of being concerned with a benign outcome. Relativism rather shows skepticism of absolutes and exemplary principles that cannot be broken. Furthermore, Forsyth

developed the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) that has been widely used in different fields, especially within journalism to determine moral positions of specific groups and employees (Forsyth 1980). The author orders four different moral ideas that could be high and/or low in idealism and respectively relativism as shown in the table underneath. The ideas are *Absolutism* (where the best outcomes are achieved when following universal morals) *Exceptionalism* (following universal principles most of the time but making rare exceptions) *Subjectivism* (following personal values rather than universal principles) and *situationism* (rejecting moral rules but analyzing each situation individualistically) as connected to *relativism*.

Figure 4 Four ethics positions



(Hanitzsch, 2007:379)

Plaisance (2005) was one of the first journalism scholars to develop Forsyth’s ideas to fit journalistic values, followed by Hanitzsch (2007). They both look at relativism as opposition to universalism, where journalists base their personal morals for decision-making somewhere in between. Hanitzsch explains that while some journalists believe that these decisions will always be situational and depend on a certain context, others mean that decisions can be made in an absolute manner. Idealistic journalists are often more concerned with consequential harm and would, therefore, make decisions after “what is morally right”. Less idealistic journalists will, however, see the harm as a necessary evil at certain levels. Situationists can, according to Hanitzsch be both idealistic and relativistic on a low level while absolutists are only ideological. Subjectivists are similar to situationists since they both are consulting personal values when making ethical decisions rather than looking at universal principles, but subjectivists are more prone to accept negative consequences for a greater good. An example that Hanitzsch makes is if a journalist could justify a harmful behavior such as bribing or

badgering informants, the situationist would say that it would all depend on the contextual details while a subjectivist would say that it would be acceptable if the outcome was good. Exceptionalists are following the standardized principles but will be more pragmatic than absolutists if challenged with an issue that will have more negative consequences if following the agreed principles (ibid:379).

Keeble (2005) makes a similar distinction as Hanitzsch and Forsyth but is adding the cynical approach inspired by Nietzsche which describes a perspective where no journalistic choice is deemed altruistic but rather the result of egoistic values. He is also adding a political approach that neglects journalistic virtues as myths and claims that everything is subjective. The two other approaches are relativistic vs. claiming a professional commitment to ethical principles. The relativism described by Keeble is one that is skeptical of codification (agreeing on a set of norms that informs a journalistic "code of conduct"), similar to the situationists explained by Hanitzsch (2007). Journalists connected to this group are claiming that they do stand for ethical values but that the exceptions should be made with a mature conscience to avoid following the rules blindly. The commitment to the ethical principles approach draws from philosophies of Aristotle and Christian values of virtue. The profession of journalism and media is here seen as a fourth estate where the free press is necessary (Keeble, 2005). The ideas from the era of enlightenment are closely linked to this perspective, where objectivity, neutrality, balance and impartiality and then later added; accuracy, truthfulness, social responsibility and code of conduct practice are valued virtues within journalism (ibid). There are similarities between the idea of ethical standardization that these journalists are aspiring to hold with every means, and the idea of idealism, where doing what is right is considered the most important.

Christopher Meyers (2010) is looking at the theories introduced by the philosophers Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill when asking the question of when a journalist should act or not act to avoid amplification of harm. Meyers investigates the questions: "Does the intended action respect all persons affected? Does it treat all persons in the situation in a consistent and impartial way?" He explains that these questions are asked from a Kantian ethical standpoint, where the importance lies in that universality equals fairness - that everyone should be treated the same and everyone has the right to avoid being caused unnecessary harm (ibid). However, through a Kantian point of view, those who will not obey the law deserve to be punished. "What overall good is promoted by this action? What overall

harm will come if the action is not taken?” are the next questions that Meyers asks, and explains that they come from the utilitarian perspective of Mill. Within journalism, Meyers further discusses that from a utilitarian standpoint, the greater good does not mean that one will have to suffer immensely but that even those that do not get the privileges of the outcome would agree that a certain publication is made (Ibid). Hanitzsch explains that journalists are using both utilitarian and Kantian moral reasoning in their decision-making that connects to idealism and/or relativism (Hanitzsch 2012).

Thomas Hanitzsch, Patrick Lee Plaisance and Elisabeth. A. Skewes (2012), conducted an interview study with journalists from 18 different countries to understand how relativism and idealism are connected to external and internal factors where the journalists work. On an individual level, a higher level of relativism is connected to the journalist's autonomy, economic influences and time. Lower levels of relativism are connected to education, professional influences such as membership in a professional journalism organization, etc., which also connect to a higher level of idealism.

On an individual level, the perspectives from the study of Phillips (2018) are highly relevant and together with the findings in this study are also what have inspired the subheadings of the individual part of the empirical section. As described in the previous part of this section, the study of Phillips (2018) was conducted as a response to the amplified messages of radical nationalist groups through traditional journalistic news outlets and the increased violence and threats that these groups brought with them through the attention. This provoked questions on when to not report, to avoid amplification and journalistic best practice when it comes to the necessary reporting on radical nationalist groups. The journalists interviewed were giving advice that largely concerned the importance of knowledge and experience, both when it comes to the groups themselves and the logic of the online platforms that they were mostly growing within.

To summarize this part, through the perspective of Forsyth and Hanitzsch: individuals can be placed on a scale of idealism and relativism which can help explain the philosophical and cultural background to journalist's ethical decision-making. Ethical decision-making can further be discussed through Kantian and utilitarian perspectives where the question of avoiding harm is central. Finally, individual decisions can be assessed quite differently, depending on the approach taken.

3.2.2 The routines level

Ethical decisions can be informed by journalistic routines, such as the practices that control workflow and daily structures, for example, deadlines, news values and information gathering (Reese, 2016). Jane B. Singer (2010) describes how changed journalistic structures lead to ethical pressure points. The narrative structure has changed with the internet as a tool, which makes the process of journalism open to more formats and personal styles and with that, the traditional guidelines of ethics change as well. The internet also gives journalists less control over their content to spread on the internet. Since the increased usage of technologies such as smartphones and laptops, journalism can go faster, and be produced both by professional journalists and so-called civic journalists (Singer, 2010).

The changes in journalistic routines which include a more rapid work pace could have possible implications on the space and time that is needed to make stories that require a certain depth. For journalists reporting on radical nationalist groups, this could potentially risk leaving out important contextual information that needs more research than what the work environment allows for. When applying Singer's arguments of content spreading uncontrollably, stories that have not been contextualized enough may face a greater risk of being spread in online environments that aim to amplify a radical nationalist ideology.

She further believes that the ethics of journalism depends on new commitments to the traditional code of ethics, such as truth-telling and accountability while creating an environment where journalists can remain relevant. Singer argues that a possible start to a solution would be to become more transparent (Singer, 2010). Angela Phillips also believes that the process of journalism must become more transparent (2010), she and other scholars within the field of journalism are pointing towards the trend of copying news which makes it almost impossible for newspapers to keep exclusivity. According to Phillips, the process goes so fast that it is difficult to know where the original story derives from. This trend also causes the problem of verification, and there have been several occasions where false news is spreading fast between newspapers because of the copying mechanism with the underlying assumption that someone else must have done the fact-checking (ibid). This is even more concerning if these are news that may cause potential harm such as an amplification of radical-nationalist messages.

3.2.3 The organizational level

The organizational level can affect journalistic ethical decision-making in different ways such as how newsrooms are built and what kind of codes of conduct that are being used (Reese, 2016). Newsrooms are constantly changing the size and creating new, oftentimes wider, roles and responsibilities which can create ethical issues (Singer, 2010). The routines issues are also connected to organizational decisions. The copying trend mentioned earlier, for example, leads to the question: Why would newspapers invest in original stories to only give it away to other newspapers or media outlets? (ibid)

Concerning roles in the newsroom, Phillips (2018) encourages to hire more pluralistic, to avoid a homogenized newsroom that potentially would lack perspectives and understanding of being affected by racism, sexism or homophobia when reporting on radical nationalists groups.

In the survey-based study made by Hanitzsch et.al. (2012), the investigators confirmed their hypothesis, that journalists' ethical orientations are varying across news organizations. They also confirmed that on an organizational level, relativism is lower when codified rules exist. To not engage with questionable methods is an issue connected to higher idealism which was confirmed at an organizational level in regard to editorial rules (ibid).

3.2.4 The social institution level

On an institutional level, the major concerns regarding ethical decision-making by journalists involve the financial structures that may push content in different ways and affect autonomy and homogeneity (Reese, 2016). Jaakola et. al (2015) describe how the modern world is "turning liquid" through the fragmentation that technologies such as the internet provides. The authors stress that ethical discussions within journalism are no longer considering truth as much as consequences.

Journalists are pushed to work with agenda-setting and be more interventional and subjective in their reporting, which could diminish perspectives of truth. Changes in the media market also create a higher competition between journalists which leads to a lack of time to make an assignment and ethical values get lost on the way (ibid).

The ownership models of media companies are becoming more and more dependent on commercial support which could essentially lead to decreased credibility among the audience. For example, companies could demand to decide more over the content and

diminish journalists' freedom to press (ibid). Singer (2010) also stresses for changed and stronger media institutions that will protect rather than abuse power against journalists.

In the context of reporting on radical nationalist groups, a financial model that rewards shallow reporting could lead to ignoring the important contextual information needed to avoid misinterpretation and amplifying dangerous messages as spoken of in previous parts of this section.

Nick Couldry (2013) does not believe that codification could fix these increasing ethical issues but neither disagrees with the argument that the structural environment around journalism needs attention. He suggests that a more robust ethical discussion must take place in the journalism community where the ethics should revolve around human needs. The gap between the conditions that journalists are working within and the need for stronger ethics is not compatible. Couldry argues that a structural change is necessary; not with codification but with the focus to work for better institutions together. Couldry admits that this might sound like a vague solution but claims that it is still the right one (ibid).

3.2.5 The social system level

Ethical decision-making can be affected by a social system level, for example, in regards to how democratic the nation within which the journalists are working, is. Cultural values could as well affect autonomy, professionalism, and levels of relativism and ideology (Reese, 2016). Globalization processes have led to increasing collaborations and exchanges of journalism around the world, which further create the need for a global collaborative ethical framework, according to Mark Deuze (2005). The idea of universal codification further reflects an idealistic viewpoint in the distinction between relativism and idealism (Hanitzsch, 2007).

Hanitzsch (2007, 2012) explains that ethical ideologies are part of journalistic cultures and so the moral values of individuals depend on the cultural context and society they are working within. The principles within the Western code of ethics are usually treated as universal principles but have been developed through a Western context, for example: *avoiding harm, freedom, and truth*. Other cultures of journalism are more inclined to speak of principles such as *social harmonization* and *unity* which are not always compatible with the “Western” ideas of ethical journalistic values. This has led to the conclusion that the national cultural context does affect journalistic ethical decision-making (Ibid).

In the survey-based study made by Hanitzsch et.al (2012), it was discovered that idealism is higher in countries where the freedom of the press is higher, however, some of the questions asked also indicate that these countries do have relativistic tendencies sometimes. For example, journalists from Germany, Switzerland, Indonesia, and Uganda are in higher respect than other countries in the study believing that some harm is okay for the greater good to be achieved.

Concludingly for this part of the theoretical section: ethical decisions and the position journalists take between relativism and idealism depend on several internal and external factors. The positioning of absolutism, exceptionalism, situationism, and subjectivism could help to determine the risks of harm that journalists are causing by reporting on certain groups. Furthermore, changed structures in newsrooms, roles and routines, media institutions and the society, due to new technologies such as the internet have made the conditions to make ethical decisions more difficult for journalists.

Hanitzsch et.al (2012) developed a questionnaire with items that can inform and inspire a guideline for qualitative interviewing. The questionnaire, will together with the external and internal factors that can affect ethical decision-making, and the concrete tips from the study of Phillips (2018) help to structure the methodological interview guideline for this study.

4 Method

To find answers to the research questions I have conducted an empirical qualitative study based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with journalists that have been the authors or creators of content that is expressing ideas about radical nationalist groups. The method of in-depth interviews is chosen since there are few other methods where one can collect data concerning deeper reflections. A quantitative survey might have reached more people but the result would have been insufficient for the aim of the study, since it is important to really understand the respondents deeper intentions and ethical mindsets. This is only possible when the respondents are able to elaborate their thoughts, and where follow-up questions to statements can be made. Deep interviews are also, according to Charlotte Davies helpful when wanting to understand a cultural phenomenon and since the ethics of reporting on radical

nationalist groups could be treated as such, it seems a suitable method for this study (Davies 2008:5).

When looking at similar studies, such as the study made by Phillips (2018) about journalists giving oxygen to amplification of radical nationalist groups, she chose to use an in-depth and semi-structured interview method to reach “the perspective of those who must navigate this territory every day: the journalists themselves” (Ibid:8).

4.1 In-depth semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured interview allows for a more natural and relaxed conversation to take place. This could lead to a collection of information that would have been difficult to achieve in a more formal setting where the respondents are less comfortable. Semi-structured interviews could furthermore provide opportunities for asking follow-up questions which a stricter format would inhibit (Davies 2008:105).

The previous section of the theoretical framework has provided tools for developing the guideline that will be used for the interview questions. The interview guideline (see appendix 1) follows the structure that Eva Magnusson and Jeanne Maracek outlines in their guide to do qualitative interviews (2015). Open-ended questions are preferable and in line with the semi-structure of the interview since it helps to reach a higher complexity in the responses and could also lead to follow-up questions (Ibid:47). The interview guide is further divided into sections, where the first one is an introductory/warm-up section to ask about the background of the journalists, their education and journalistic experience, to frame the interview and make the respondents comfortable (Ibid:47, 56). Secondly, questions were asked regarding the respondents work on radical nationalists, which in the interviews were referred to as extreme-right-groups since the journalists were usually more familiar with that term. Using a different concept in the interviews could cause confusion, however, to ensure that the results are not influenced by this decision, I clarified in more detail what groups I was interested to talk about when this felt unclear to the respondents in the conversation. The third section of the interview guide means to follow the *Influence of Hierarchy model* by Shoemaker & Reese (1996) to understand the journalists' reflections on external influences that could affect the ethical decisions of their reporting. The fourth section concerns the internet, mainly in regards to the importance of it in connection to radical nationalists groups

that is brought forth in the study by Phillips (2018). The fifth section is about idealism vs relativism where I read the three main statements connected to high idealism and the three main statements connected to relativism that Hanitzsch et al. (2012) were using in their empirical study, and asked the respondents to tell me if they agreed or disagreed with the statements and motivate why. The final two questions allowed the respondents to add anything they felt was missing in the interview and to themselves reflect on the future of their ethics in regards to reporting.

The semi-structure of the interview sometimes led the respondents into areas that were extended to what was important for this particular study. However, this was not a major issue and could be steered back quite easily through a follow-up question.

This study is written in English since it is done in the context of an international course and since an understanding of the subject of the issue in Sweden could contribute to a greater understanding of the movements around Europe and concern scholars outside of Sweden. The interviews were however done in Swedish and so the material and quotes have been translated by the author with the consent of the respondents. Every interview was around 1 hour long.

4.2 Selection of the journalists

The selection of the eight journalists interviewed was mainly based on their earlier reporting on the groups of interest for this study but also depended on interest and willingness from the journalists themselves. The sampling was partly made through the newspaper archive KB, where articles concerning radical nationalist groups were searched with the Swedish search word for Extreme right-wing (Högerextrem). Furthermore, the last years' archives of public service media SVT, UR and SR were searched for stories on radical nationalist groups through different media outlets than newspapers. Through the interviews, some of the respondents also had tips on other journalists that they recommended for this research due to their earlier reporting.

The sampling of journalists was also done to be in line with the *hierarchy of influence model* that helps to guide this thesis. The journalists come from a variety of Swedish media outlets as well as freelance journalists publishing in different outlets. The variety of journalists provides insights in routine, organization, and media institutional structures of the

media companies that they represent which currently are SVT (Public service TV), SR (Public service radio), Aftonbladet, Expressen (Tabloids), and DN (Qualitative newspaper). The journalists have additionally had earlier experience at commercial tv, local newspapers and other qualitative newspapers which they in the interviews at times as well reflected upon.

The majority of the journalists interviewed have a solid experience of reporting on radical nationalist groups, some have however started to follow these groups more recently. They are all educated within journalism and have in between eight to forty years of work experience, the majority have worked as journalists for about twenty years.

Six out of eight journalists interviewed are men and all of them are white, which reflects the identity of most journalists working with this subject. To only include journalists who themselves have no experience of racism could, however, affect the results, a risk that is emphasised in studies such as Phillips (2018). Journalists in general in Sweden are quite a homogenous group, around half are women but the majority are from middle-class backgrounds and very few have a personal background of immigration (Asp, 2012). In this particular setting, even more, seem to be white men according to the journalists themselves and through the glance of the recent journalistic publications on the subject of radical nationalists.

The age difference among journalists reporting on radical nationalist groups in the US illuminated a different focus on the internet between younger and older journalists (Phillips, 2018). The journalists in this study have less of an age difference, which might be a reflection of that there are in fact fewer young journalists working with these issues in Sweden but could, in any case, have an impact on the results of this study.

4.3 Data Analysis and Analytical Tools

The empirical findings from the interviews have been read thoroughly to place paraphrased sections and direct quotes into different categories (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). The categories were based on *the hierarchy of influence model* (Shoemaker and Reese, 1999 & 2013) to facilitate the connection of the empirical findings to theory. The individual level was then subcategorized inductively into 6 different headings that were drawn from repetitive patterns found in the transcribed material, each of these headings is directly connected to the interview guide which is further based on earlier research. The external level draws

deductively from *the hierarchy of influence model* and matches the empirical findings with those categories. From these sections with paraphrased data and quotes, I summarized what was being said from the different respondents for a facilitated reading of the results.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

Even though validity and reliability as constructs come from quantitative studies, Davies (2008) and other scholars within the field of Anthropology and Sociology have developed ways to reflect on these concepts in qualitative studies as well.

A way to control reliability in a qualitative study is to be certain of your interpretation of the interview responses, which according to Charlotte Davies can be done through repeatedly asking about the same things but in different ways (2008:97). For gaining validity, Davies suggests that one should scrutinize the accuracy of the collected material, which has been done when the respondents are referring to facts rather than personal reflections (Ibid:95). Furthermore, in the few cases where the transcribed material after the interviews could be interpreted in different ways, I did in first hand confirm directly with the respondents through phone, and secondly, I asked a colleague to read through the material to understand if she would interpret it different than from myself.

Another way to achieve validity and reliability to the study has been to look at the existing earlier research on the subject and the conclusions that the authors of those reports came to and analyze if the results of this study are comparable. However, since the main similar report of Phillips (2018) was conducted in the US, it has also been important to contextualize the findings to understand any cultural discrepancies.

The semi-structure method was effective to gain validity through the possibility of giving the respondents space to talk freely and add reflections that they thought were important. Something that could disrupt the validity in regards to the interview method, however, could be the social desirability. Since this subject was sensitive, a problem could be that the respondents would answer what was expected, in the likes of them being fully ethical in every decision of their reporting. However, I did have the feeling that the respondents interviewed were genuinely self-reflective and did provide examples of where they were insecure or had done mistakes, which leaves me to think that they were honest.

Furthermore, the three freelance journalists do not have the same demand for loyalty towards the different news outlets. This makes them freer to reflect on aspects where newsrooms and the organizations could affect the reporting and the consequences of the reporting, thus they provide a validity function to this study.

4.6 Ethical considerations and reflexivity

Prior to the interviews, I explained the purpose of the study, that the respondents would be anonymous and further asked for their informed consent to participate in the study as well as their consent of storing personal data on an external hard drive until the study has been approved by the university (Magnusson & Maracek, 2015:56).

The EU regulation of GDPR concerns data protection to ensure private integrity. To protect the personal data retrieved from the respondents, the material used for the study is first of all anonymized. The process of anonymity is important since the material concerns subjects that could evoke threats from individuals of the radical nationalist groups that these journalists have been reporting on. To ensure anonymity, all identifiable details are removed even if they would be interesting for the study. The safety of the respondents is the most important. Some of the respondents, since they are official with their standpoints as journalists did not mind if they were referenced with their full name, but for reasons mentioned above, I feel obliged to take responsibility for a situation that could potentially cause a threat to any of the respondents. The coding of the names was made on a handwritten and hidden paper. The study will use pseudonyms or use the name of the news-outlet for more general descriptions.

I used voice recordings to facilitate the process of the transcriptions, with the consent of the participants of the study (Davies 2008:55). These recordings were only listened to when transcribing the material. In the transcriptions, I further left out personal details, such as names, gender, and age and used code names to make the transcribed version less identifiable. The recordings that were on an external device were deleted after the transcriptions. The transcription process was also facilitated through a voice typing tool in a service based outside of the EU (Google) which has been made clear for the participants in an information sheet of how their personal data is stored, which has been read and given consent from the respondents (see appendix 2). The transcribed material was deleted immediately after it was done on the

Google drive service and then added on an external device where it will be stored until the study is approved. Google keeps deleted files up to 30 days until deleted permanently⁴.

The interviews were held most often in the journalists' offices, through Skype or in a couple of occasions at cafés, sitting far enough from anyone to be able to eavesdrop. The locations were chosen together with the journalists but it was important to sit somewhere where the respondents could talk freely since the subjects were sometimes sensitive.

A final ethical consideration of the study is where myself, the author could affect the material, the selection of the subject is needed for the academic field but it is also one that interests me on a personal level. Davies argues that the categorization, selection processes, and the authors own prejudices should be considered part of the study as well and since it is difficult to avoid a certain level of subjectivity in these matters, transparency is needed (Davies 2008:238). I have, to the best of my ability, aimed to not disturb the material with personal opinions or prejudices, however, since the research question concerns the possible amplification of radical nationalist voices, it is needless to say that this is something that troubles me and where I take a stand that one should at least reflect on one's actions when there is such a risk, the more interesting part for this study, however, is the question how, where I come from a genuine curiosity of what different approaches journalists have for how to deal with these issues (Ibid:111).

5 Empirical results and analysis

The findings of this empirical study are structured along the *hierarchy of influence model* (Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 2013) as mentioned in the method section, where the first part will contain reflections that are concerning the individual's perspective on reporting on radical nationalist groups in Sweden. This includes reasonings behind reporting or not reporting on radical nationalist groups, the importance or unimportance of the journalists' backgrounds, the threat and security measurements when dealing with radical nationalist groups and practical advice from the journalists themselves when reporting on these groups. Finally, a discussion of the journalists ethical positioning of relativism and ideology will be outlined.

⁴ See <https://support.google.com/a/answer/6052340?hl=en>

The second part of this section will focus on external elements that can affect reporting on radical nationalist groups. These include discussions on routines, the organizations, social institutions, and the social system. Even though the collected data is placed under categories that are best fitted, sometimes they can overlap, for example, an explanation of the organization could be necessary to understand the individual's perspective, and so it should be clarified that the data is not always mutually exclusive to one category. The eight different journalists represent Aftonbladet, Expressen, DN, SVT, two of them SR (referred to as SR journalist 1 and SR journalist 2) while two of them are freelance journalists (referred to as freelance journalist 1 and freelance journalist 2).

5.1 The individual level

This first part of the individual perspective is naturally more extensive than the second part on external elements since the empirical data comes from the individuals who themselves are the ones who report on the groups of interest for this study. The journalists seem to agree on many of the subjects brought up in the interviews, but also demonstrate some distinct perspectives on how to report on radical nationalists. Important similarities are, as mentioned in the method section, that the journalists represent a homogenous group in the sense that they are all white, they are mostly middle-aged, except for two of the respondents, where one is younger and one is older than the majority and there are more men than women. The differences are clear when it comes to public service approaches vs. commercial news outlets approaches as well as whether they work for tabloids or high-quality papers. Political affiliations that the newspapers are bound to, such as Aftonbladet which is social democratic, and Expressen and DN that are liberal may affect a different approach as well but has not been thoroughly investigated in this study.

5.1.1 How and when should one report on radical nationalist groups

The how and when matters when trying to avoid amplification of dangerous messages spreading, which the study of Phillips (2018) concludes can be done through certain ethical considerations. Some of the Swedish journalists are concerned about the risk of amplifying radical nationalist voices while others are less worried. They all have different set of reasons as to why it is important to report on them and how this reporting should be framed.

According to many of the journalists interviewed it is important to bring attention to how radical nationalist groups are spreading online, to explain how they are connected transnationally, to inform people who might be interested to vote on the radical nationalist groups that partake in national elections, who they are and what they stand for, and to call attention to the vulnerability of people with different ethnicities, skin-color, and LGBT-identities.

“One should report on contemporary phenomena of the society and follow, examine and report on how groups with a dangerous past affect the political landscape and the political conversations.” (SR journalist 2)

One of the strongest concerns through many of the interviews was the reporting on demonstrations or public manifestations of NMR or similar groups. Most journalists claimed that it is the duty of the journalist to report on these events since they are often connected with violence and affect people that are around these areas. Whole squares or parts of the cities are sometimes sealed off by the police, and buses, trains and subways can be closed off and lead to difficulties to get around in the city, which the public should be informed on. Furthermore, it is important to inform of such events when demonstrations or manifestations of radical nationalist groups are close to locations where people that are the proclaimed “enemies” of these groups such as ethnic minorities have experienced threats before.

The journalists agreed on that the main issue with these kinds of stories was the risk of these groups gaining amplified attention. Some of the journalists explain that the radical nationalist groups are, as most demonstrators, strategic in their choice of location and time to demonstrate, to be able to get as much attention as possible. They are positioning themselves to the inner city where people are affected more by their presence, or next to events that attract a lot of public gatherings, such as the book fair in Gothenburg or at the political week in Almedalen, in Gotland.

The journalists explain that there have been occasions where the demonstrations are fairly small but are still getting full-pages in the news because of the sensationalism that these groups contribute to, with their matching costumes and stiff facial expressions. It is something appealing with this scene and have been used to an unnecessary extent to produce news attention, according to many of the journalists spoken with. This connects to one of the

conclusions from the study of Phillips (2018), which is that not everything is worth reporting, if a story is only providing oxygen to a non-dignified message, it may be a good idea to hold back.

Taking pictures of the demonstrations should also be carefully considered, according to the DN journalist. Publishing a photo of a member of NMR could be legitimized through the fact that he or she made an active decision to participate in a public event, however if the same person would be caught on camera in the act of a crime such as being violent, the picture should be blurred before a conviction. The journalists mostly agree that the reporting of these events should be decreased. The SR journalist 2 further speculates that even if they, at SR, are taking a responsibility to report balanced and choose to only publish one story on a certain event, they do not take responsibility for the aggregated amount of stories published on the same event, which will lead to an over publication in general. This concern is discussed in Phillips (2018) report and connects to the danger of the “copying mechanism” (Singer, 2010), meaning that newspapers do not want to miss out, and so if one news outlet is there, another one will be quick to join. Phillips (2018) argues that even though a news outlet is only publishing one article, the publication will not lead to an overall social benefit of the public but rather to benefits for the subjected group.

The overall reasoning as to why it is important to report on these groups differs somewhat. Some journalists, especially the respondent from Expressen claimed that these groups are a threat towards democracy and that any such threat should be reported on. If they gain or do not gain attention to grow is not of particular concern for the journalist who should be consequence neutral and report on what is true and what is relevant, according to the Expressen journalist.

“They harm people who in their political world are ideological enemies, in a most elaborate way, they attack syndicalists as well as asylum residences. It is our duty to inform, in a very factual way, who they are, what their motives are and what their methods are, and we wish for this to be spread. It is important to inform the society about how they are organizing themselves to overthrow democracy. If some people may find these groups through our reporting is a lesser problem in my opinion.”
(Journalist from Expressen)

Others are more restrictive when it comes to general reporting on these radical nationalist groups. The reporter from Aftonbladet states that giving these groups attention will legitimize their existence when they, in reality, are insignificant. They will report when something of news value happens, such as violence at demonstrations or trials but rarely interview members from these groups, partly because when they are contacted they do not want to participate, but also because their opinions are mostly mixed with false statistics and manipulated facts which should not occupy space in Aftonbladet, according to the journalist. When it comes to individuals of radical nationalist groups, it is more important to take a strong stance against them than to follow journalistic principles of impartiality, the journalist adds. When asked if this might restrict their freedom of expression which is something that radical nationalist groups often cry for when they feel like they do not get a platform to speak, the Aftonbladet journalist states that they can demonstrate or use their freedom of expression elsewhere but they do not decide whether they can be part of Aftonbladet. One practical advice given in the study of Phillips is to not always follow the principle of impartiality. To provide an equal platform for radical nationalists, comparable to what is given to the victims, might just legitimize hateful messages (Phillips, 2018). This advice, however, does not seem appreciated nor followed by most of the other Swedish journalists interviewed in this study.

The argument that radical nationalist groups are being silenced in the media is something that several journalists laugh off. The journalist from Expressen argues that they are always giving someone that they report on the opportunity to respond, “on a much bigger platform than what these groups could find themselves”, but the members of radical nationalist groups are very rarely accepting this offer.

“When I have contacted them (NMR) and wanted to interview them, they would often say that “I will not speak to a zionist-supporter” and hang up, so they can’t claim that I haven’t tried.”

(Freelance journalist 2)

Some journalists criticize Aftonbladet and SvD for the publishing of names and pictures of 84 accused members of NMR in 2017⁵, without contacting them. Several journalists argue that it is an important journalistic principle to always give a criticized person

⁵ “Hotet inifrån” SvD & Aftonbladet 2017 <https://www.svd.se/om/hotet-inifran>, <https://www.aftonbladet.se/story/27ef3d5e-e788-4718-9bfe-96e09be8dd2f>

in a publication the possibility to come up with his or her best argument. Secondly, several journalists claim that accusing people of partaking in radical nationalist activities should be done with ultimate caution. In the SvD and Aftonbladet publications, 12 accused people were no longer active in NMR and their names and pictures were later removed from the site⁶.

“I can not think of a worse accusation than being named in one of the largest newspapers in Sweden as a threat to democracy. If you are, then you should at least be able to answer to that accusation.” (Expressen journalist)

Several of the journalists are also concerned with the kind of space individuals of radical nationalist groups should be given in an interview situation. The risk of spreading a certain message goes together with reporting on their mere controversiality. This must be avoided and instead the focus should be to report on what is relevant and what is true says the DN journalist, in a later part of the interview the DN reporter, however, claims that the consequence neutral perspective as a journalist must be valued higher than any risk of amplification of radical nationalist voices, which is agreed on by the Expressen journalist and the SR journalist 1.

“As long as you are not spreading anti-democratic messages, such as law-breaking hate speech, there needs to be a wide tolerance for what could be thought and said in public.” (DN journalist)

The SR journalist 1 believes that one should be careful when interviewing about their background so that they do not use the news outlet to spread propaganda. “We, as journalists need to contextualize their words, and guide the listener to a wider understanding”, the SR journalist says. This statement is agreed on by several of the Swedish journalists interviewed and the study of Phillips (2018) that stresses the importance of contextualizing. The SVT journalist explains that it is, however, sometimes difficult to know exactly how much that should be explained to the audience. To not show different sides of the radical nationalists and to only give the impression that “they are all idiots” becomes anti-intellectual in a way. If the audience would see these people in other forums where they are more articulate, it could create a distrust for the journalists, the SVT journalist adds.

⁶“Stora nazist-kartläggningar av tidningarna -99 och idag”, SR 2017
<https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2795&artikel=6790146>

“I think it is sad that some people are not able to analyze these things. A person could say that “he seemed wise” about a person who has strongly racist opinions, since they often are articulate. If you lack experience of being around these groups, their underlying agenda might be difficult to recognize. But this is difficult to explain dramaturgically” (SVT journalist)

Phillips (2018) mentions in her study that calling the radical nationalists articulate or well-dressed in publications is common among journalists and she suggests to be careful to not weigh in too many positive attributes, but rather only report of what is necessary, to not misdirect too far from the victims.

To directly criticize the person you are interviewing is something that some of the journalists are discussing in the interviews and believe is difficult since it disrupts the flow of the conversation. SR and SVT are as public service outlets bound to a so-called democracy paragraph⁷, where they should take an active stance towards groups that are threats to democracy, which does help in “having to ask critical questions” says SR journalist 1. Although, the SR journalist 1 explains that the shift between reporting through principles such as impartiality and reporting with respect to the democracy paragraph can be abrupt and quite challenging. At the same time, some controversial statements should be heard in radio as well, to reflect the reality and not pretend it does not exist, “but that is where contextuality becomes important again” says SR journalist 2. The SVT journalist claims that criticizing these groups does not only risk a disruption to the conversation but also risk even having a conversation. The SVT journalist tells about a situation when the crew was being kicked out from a house where they were interviewing a radical nationalist because of asking “the wrong questions”. Being too adamant in an interview might also risk the security of the journalist, some journalists acknowledge.

Freelance journalist 2 believes that a lot of the flaws of radical nationalist groups are self-explained when interviewing or reporting on them. “Their crimes or violent behavior often speak for itself”, according to the journalist. “There is no need for additional adjectives on how bad/stupid or evil they are, it goes without saying”. Sharp questions are what is

⁷ Part of the Swedish Radio- and TV law 2010:696, chapter 5. For more information about the regulations and law of Radio and TV see <https://www.mprt.se/en/broadcasting-radio-and-tv/requirements-and-regulations/> and for the ethical press system see <https://po.se/about-the-press-ombudsman-and-press-council/code-of-ethics-for-press-radio-and-television-in-sweden/>

necessary in all different interviews the freelance journalist claims, to let them explain: “What do you mean by this, who exactly should leave and why, who should stay, and how is it possible to actualize” Something that is bothering the freelance journalist is that nowadays, both in commercial and in public service television, the reporters are sometimes completely forgetting about the complexity of these issues.

“They could ask “How much immigration can Sweden take?” And it feels like you are back in the 1930s. There are no such things as “The Jews”, there are people that can be jews. The same goes for “The immigrants”, it doesn’t exist. There are people crossing the national borders because of millions of different reasons.”
(Freelance journalist 2)

This reflection correlates to the study by Ekström & Morton (2017) that warned of the amplifying function that questions without complexity has in televised debates.

5.1.2 The importance of the journalist’s knowledge and experience

Phillips (2018) stresses that journalists must do extensive research before reporting on radical nationalist groups, much due to the manipulating strategies used by these groups that less experienced journalists find more difficult to spot. To have knowledge and experience about the subjects that radical nationalist groups are involved in is important to most journalists interviewed, while some think it matters more than others. The SVT journalist explains that you learn as you do the obligatory research before a story, while SR journalist 2 states that without a deep knowledge of terminology and division of groupings after years of reporting, there is a risk to be manipulated by these groups. “The more you know, the more pleased these groups are, they like when you are specialized in the subject,” says SR journalist 1.

It helps to also report on other extremist groups such as the extreme-left or Islamist groups, freelance journalist 2, the SVT journalist, and the DN journalist all argue, since this is often appreciated by the radical nationalists.

When it comes to obtaining certain internet skills as discussed in the theoretical section, and something that is extremely important in the context of the American alt-right, as concluded in Phillips’s study, the journalists interviewed had quite differing opinions. Some journalists really emphasized the importance of having a deep knowledge of algorithm logic; to understand the movement of ideas online and how members of radical nationalist groups

keep in contact, when reporting on them. The freelance journalist 1 explains that these groups are using the internet in a very organized way, the strategies between the groups might look a bit different but, for example, the site of Motpol is using manipulative communication styles much similar to those of the American alt-right group. The groups that are online are not necessarily members of specific radical nationalist groups but rather exist and spread on internet forums. The freelance journalist 1 calls this the “middle group”, they could have attitudes and opinions close to NMR but do not want to do the work that this group demands of its members, such as paying fees and showing up on demonstrations. They could, however, also be members of SD and discuss identitarian or other ideas connected to immigration. To understand the structure of the groups that are not on the map, you need to have knowledge of on which forums they are active and how they communicate to be invited to more secret forums, the freelance journalist 1 adds.

Other journalists believe that you need less of hacker skills and more of common sense and a bit of patience. You can get a lot of information only by going through radical nationalists’ official websites such as Nordfront, the Expressen journalist claims. They are on many occasions reporting on their activities quite blatantly, and not uncommonly documenting their own crimes such as fighting someone who threw away their book leaf or something similar, he adds. The Russian social network VK is where many of the more out-and-about Nazis are at since Nordfront is constantly reported for hate-speech, whereas, at VK, they do not get bothered by the Swedish police, “but it is no rocket-science” the Expressen journalist describes the online knowledge needed for understanding radical nationalist groups.

5.1.3 Threats and harassment

The threats and harassment that comes with reporting on these groups is pointed out as a fact in the study of Phillips (2018). Even though Christoph Andersson (2013) is particularly worried for the TV and Radio journalists who are reporting more closely on radical nationalists to receive threats and harassments, it seems as though this is a risk for everyone who reports on these groups, but how the reporting is framed also matters considerably .

The journalists all agree that when you are reporting on radical nationalist groups there are risks of threats and harassment. Or in the Expressen journalist’s words: “if you are covering hateful groups, do not get surprised if they prove to be hateful”. The most common

threats are online, the Aftonbladet reporter explains, where individuals from radical nationalist groups are naming you or giving your home address away on forums like Flashback⁸.

“Every time you report on these groups, you are in a risk-situation, so I have a protected personal record. However, I still have a family who do not have protected records and they have been threatened, and there is always a risk that they will find you anyway. It is easy to make mistakes online and blow your cover in some way.”
(Freelance reporter 2)

The SR journalist 2 describes a situation where a colleague had reported a story and left out the ethnicity from a direct quote. One hour after the publication, members of a radical nationalist group had mobilized an action to spray paint threats in the stairway of the colleague’s home. Even though the SR journalist 2 claims that you need to be careful to not change in direct-quotes, the journalist marvels at how quick these groups could come to action when media makes “mistakes”.

One journalist points to the whiteness of his skin, as an explanation for being in the lower part of what he calls “the threat hierarchy”. The journalist says that even though he has a lot of opinions on different things, being a middle-aged white man, people are not bothered by him that much in comparison to a young woman, with a foreign background, especially if she is Muslim. Such a profile is threatened constantly, he adds.

5.1.4 Practical advice when reporting on radical nationalist groups

In the study of Phillips (2018), journalists in the US advised on how to best report on radical nationalist groups. This is important, the author claims, to be able to update a consensus on which ethical considerations that should be taken into account before a publication. Since cultural differences may reflect different ethical approaches, as explained by Hanitzsch (2012), it is necessary to ask the Swedish journalists what they consider important in a Swedish context when reporting on radical nationalist groups.

Several journalists call attention to live situations when either interviewing or reporting live from a public demonstration or trial. There have been situations when individuals from radical nationalist groups have been taking advantage of live-interviews to

⁸ A Swedish discussion-site with anonymous members

propagate freely, says the SR journalist 2. In these situations, where the necessity of reporting live first of all should be decided carefully, the reporter needs to be extremely knowledgeable of both the groups and the terminology and be able to steer the conversation and contextualize the situation, argue the SR journalist 2 and the Expressen journalist. When reporting live from a demonstration, the journalist needs to be aware of the surroundings, to not film radical nationalist flags, symbols, and slogans and to avoid being too close to hear racist exclamations in the recordings, the Aftonbladet journalist advises.

Something that many of the journalists are recommending is to report on these groups with professionalism, they should be quoted correctly and be treated with politeness. To treat them with dismay often hits you back, the DN journalist explains. The Expressen journalist believes that one should always try to contact people who are being criticized in the media, to let them have the opportunity to come up with their best argument. The freelance journalist 2 says that you should be clear with your intentions and ask sharp questions, do not get into a pointless discussion about details, these can go on forever, the journalist says. Instead, focus and steer to what is important and demand answers to your questions, “as you would with any party”. The DN journalist suggests that the questions asked in an interview situation do not always have to be about the core interests of these groups since most people already know where they stand, it is more interesting to ask for example an AFS-member about how they would work in other political areas if they were voted into the parliament.

Being very correct with the words is also important for many of the journalists, if you are interviewing Nazis you should call them Nazis, etc says the DN journalist. If you might be insecure about wording, it is better to discuss with the editorial staff than to take a chance, the DN journalist adds, “you could, for example, write an article about the Sweden Democrats being tax evaders for 20 years but if you call them a xenophobic party in the same article, it will create a pseudo-debate.” They are often extremely sensitive when being described in a belittling or ridiculing way, what you write should be true and relevant, the freelance journalist 2 concludes.

The SVT journalist, however, stresses that you should not let the radical nationalists dictate the words used by the journalists. The journalist explains that some words that connect to human rights and democracy should be held onto.

“In 2015 there was a public discussion concerning if you should use the word refugee or migrant, where SD campaigned for migrant, which is what almost everyone uses now for people fleeing across the Mediterranean sea”⁹. (SVT journalist)

The freelance journalist 1 does not believe that one must name a certain group in the case of a demonstration since this will only lead to them getting more attention, neither do you have to name the different sites and channels where they spread their propaganda. Moreover, the journalist refers to a Norwegian documentary that teaches what you should not do when reporting on radical nationalist groups. The freelance journalist 1 explains that the creators of the documentary made an agreement with NMR to call them national socialists instead of Nazis and to show only the side of NMR in a violent situation with the police that could be described differently from the other side, this, the journalist says, is to agree with someone else's agenda. Something else that should be avoided according to the freelance journalist 1 and the SR journalist 1 is that one should be careful to name members of radical nationalist groups. Partly because someone could be wrongly accused, as mentioned in the previous part of this section, but also because this might isolate groups, and make it more difficult for these members to leave when it becomes so public. However, one could also argue as the Expressen journalist, that it should not be of the journalist's concern if they leave these groups or not.

Both the freelance journalist 1 and the SVT journalist were concerned about situations of infiltrating radical nationalist groups, either in real life or online. To pretend that the journalist is someone else may force him or her to share questionable statements to be believed by these groups and consequently cause an ethical dilemma for the journalist, another risk is of course to be discovered. The SVT journalist argues that one needs to be very careful with how to present stories that have derived from such sources. The freelance journalist 1 says that a way to get around the issue of pretending to be one of them is to have them making assumptions to your comments rather than saying something explicitly racist to get their trust.

⁹ This statement is what is experienced by the journalist interviewed and has not been confirmed by any academic study, however, official statements by UNHCR says that using the word *migrant* instead of *refugee* does often undermine a fleeing group's international human rights since migrants are mainly referred to people who leave their countries voluntarily.
<https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>

Several of the journalists also argue that there should be a more consistent collaborative work with journalists in other countries. Since radical nationalist groups are moving transnationally, journalists should be able to follow them says SR journalist 2.

Other advice given by the journalists is that one should be careful with spreading radical nationalist symbols and memes, to be suspicious, to always tell the truth, fact-check and to rotate within your newsroom who are reporting on these groups so that you do not end up becoming their biggest enemy.

The most significant difference of the advice given by US journalists and the Swedish journalists (see Phillips, 2018:19-23) is the focus to look out for manipulative behavior of these groups, especially in an online setting, which is mentioned by some Swedish journalists but much less emphasized. This mainly has to do with that the American alt-right is the group that the American journalists are mostly worried about among radical nationalist groups, and as for now, most Swedish journalists spoken with explain that it does not exist an equivalent group in a Swedish context. This does not exclude the fact that they might be up and coming, or as the freelance journalist 1 explains, greatly spread online already but not yet covered by the established Swedish media.

5.1.5 Relativism vs. Ideology

The three statements that determined relativism in the study of Hanitzsch et. al (2012), and presented to the journalists in this study were: 1. “What is ethical in journalism varies from one situation to another”, 2. “Ethical dilemmas in news coverage are often so complex that journalists should be allowed to formulate their own individual code of conducts” and 3. “There are ethical principles which are so important that they should be followed by all journalists, regardless of situation and context” (signifies low relativism).

The journalists all agree that ethical decisions are situational and a few add that it can be situational over time as well. In the statement of “what is ethical depends on the situation”, some of the journalists relate to the issue of reporting on radical nationalist groups, to more specifically say that on those occasions, it is okay to have a hidden camera or to approach them differently than another group.

Only one journalist (from Aftonbladet) seems to agree with the statement that journalists should be able to formulate their own codes of conduct. All journalists, however, agree that there are some foundational ethical principles that should be followed by everyone,

even though these principles differ somewhat in between the journalists. Some of the journalist claim that you should always tell the truth, others stress that anyone criticized in the press should have access to share their best counterargument. Another one is to remember that you are in a powerful position as a journalist and to not misuse that power.

The journalists interviewed seem quite contradicting when it comes to relativism, but are overall more leaning towards the lower part of the spectrum, most of them are more likely situationist rather than subjectivist. A situationist would consider harm as a consequence of reporting to depend on the contextual details while a subjectivist would rather ask if the harm led to any good (Hanitzsch et. al 2012). A low level of relativism is mostly, according to Hanitzsch et al, connected to a high free press system, longer education and work experience and membership in professional organizations which is true for the journalists interviewed.

The three statements that determined idealism were 1. “journalists should avoid questionable methods of reporting in any case - even if it means not getting to the story.” 2. “Reporting and publishing a story that can potentially harm others is always wrong, irrespective of the benefits to be gained” and 3. “There are situations in which harm is justifiable if it results in a story that produces a greater good” (indicates low idealism).

Only the DN journalist agrees on the first statement, to avoid questionable methods in any case. Neither of the journalists agree with the second statement. In the third statement, most of the journalists agree, while one journalist (SVT) did not feel able to answer the question with so little information.

A higher level of idealism should also be able to connect to individuals with professional influences such as education, work experience and membership in professional organizations, which in this case does not seem to correlate. The idealism level of the interviewed journalists is seemingly low when comparing the interview answers to these statements. A higher level of idealism does not have any correlation with a stronger free press system according to the study by Hanitzsch et. al (2012), which in this case seem to correspond. The DN journalist could also be an example of an exceptionalist rather than being an absolutist, where the journalist seems to have idealistic principles while being pragmatic (Ibid).

There needs to be a bigger sample of journalists to be able to derive any affirmative cultural generalizations from the ethical positionings of Swedish journalists when it comes to relativism and idealism. In the other parts of the interviews, many journalists seem to be more

strict and assume a professional journalistic role with ethical principles that seem to connect with a higher level of idealism, such as principles of reporting true and relevant content. The consequence neutral principle that both the SR journalists and the DN and Expressen journalists many times come back to seem mostly connected to a situationist level. Several journalists complained that it was difficult to answer the questions without a specific situation which seem to be quite a relativistic answer in itself. The situationist could have characteristics of both relativism and idealism, according to Hanitzsch, which could explain the varying and at times contradicting answers of the journalists.

5.2 The external level

The second part of this section is going to focus on the external elements that may influence the reporting of radical nationalist groups and/or the overall reporting. As mentioned earlier, the journalists have experiences from many different media outlets which helps to understand the issues or the preconditions in general and/or for more particular media outlets.

5.2.1 The routines level

A systematic issue for journalists worldwide, according to Reese (2013) and Singer (2010) is that the work pace is more rapid than ever, much because of how the internet pushes media outlets to attempt to be first in news stories that are spreading fast online.

Many of the journalists interviewed, however, say that they do have enough time to be able to do their work. Of course, news should go fast, the SR journalist 2 says, but it should not be published unless it is true and relevant and that you take an active position against controversial statements. The Expressen journalist claims that the long experience that Expressen has on doing these kinds of stories makes the take-off distance shorter, and so it is possible to produce qualitative material in a shorter amount of time than a less experienced journalist in a less experienced news outlet.

Some of the journalists bring up the difficulties with live reporting again, for example, live streaming text to a televised event leaves no room for mistakes. The Aftonbladet journalist says that on these occasions one may share unnecessary detailed information with the audience.

The DN journalist and the freelance journalist 2 acknowledge a big difference in routines in news outlets 10 years ago and now. The DN journalist says that there is a higher stress now, staff shortage and a rapid news pace, which leads to a systematic tiredness among the journalists. Fewer people have time to read a text before publication which risks more mistakes to go through. “To not have time to think through, creates a danger to draw wrong conclusions, formulating incorrectly, etc.” says the DN journalist. Of course, the reporting on radical nationalist groups are best written by journalists with experience, but sometimes a person is working alone on a Sunday when something happens, and then you just have to trust that they know their limitations, the journalist asserts. The freelance journalist 2 complains about the lack of resources in general, there are no opportunities to investigate as much as before in the newsroom, the journalist says.

Freelance journalist 1 says that something that is missing as a freelancer is to be able to discuss ethical dilemmas or issues that might affect the reporting on radical nationalist groups with colleagues in the newsroom. Sometimes it is difficult to make these decisions on your own, the journalist says.

5.2.2 The organizational level

Many media and communication scholars such as Singer (2010) are claiming that the importance of codes of conduct within journalism is greater than ever, while some like Couldry (2013) rather believe that ethical discussions could be sufficient to improve the structures that surrounds journalism. None of the news outlets where the interviewed journalists are employed seem to have a specific code of conduct in regards to report on radical nationalist groups. In the Public Service outlets, however, there is the so-called democracy paragraph (see p.36) that is connected to the broadcasting license. It means that if there is, for example, a racist statement on the radio, “we should respond and take an active position against it”, says SR journalist 2.

“I believe the press ethical system if you compare to other countries, is very developed in Sweden, there is an ethical press system for the media in large, then there is granskningsnämnden¹⁰for TV and Radio, and after that, there are editorial policies such as a broadcasting license. We also talk a lot about ethics within the organization,

¹⁰ Swedish Broadcasting Authority that controls TV and Radio

how to assess different situations through these publicly admitted directives.” (SR journalist 2)

Sometimes it is a bit difficult to know how to respond to certain statements, especially if the statements could be interpreted in different ways, the SR journalist 2 explains. The journalist brings up an example of an event that occurred in the fall of 2018 when, after a televised political debate where Jimmie Åkesson, party leader of SD said something quite generalizing about immigrants, SVT denounced the comment as racist, and something that SVT disagreed with. A heated debate of the role of the media followed this event and SVT decided it was best to not continue stating their opinions in these kinds of political settings again. This event, however, led to productive seminars on how to deal with similar situations at SR, the SR journalist 2 says.

The DN journalist says that there is no general approach on how to cover radical nationalists, it is more a matter of competence of the journalists and the bosses, “but we have had discussions in the newsroom about, for example, being careful with showing symbols, citing their speeches, etc”. Aftonbladet also has more meetings than written codes of conduct when it comes to how journalists should report on these groups. The Aftonbladet journalist says that they mostly talk about what should be shared or not with the audience. There is a quality policy at Expressen which is followed by all journalists but that they do not have any specific code of conduct for when reporting on any specific groups, the Expressen journalist explains. Freelance journalist 1 follows the Swedish Union of Journalists’ code of conduct and says that ethics is reflected upon a lot, and that people even comment that the journalist takes too nuanced and neutral approaches in the reporting at times. Freelance journalist 1 also believes that the code of conduct should be updated more often to concern the contemporary reality and that it would be a good idea to let the older generation do training to catch up, mainly in internet skills.

When it comes to roles within the newsrooms, what worry scholars like Phillips (2010) and Singer (2010) are the wider responsibilities that are given to each journalist. This connects to what was explained in the routines section, that, for example, fewer people have time to look at stories before publication, and so the journalist writing the story is more responsible for the final publication than before. Another aspect of roles in organizations is the issue of who is covering these stories. The journalists in the US is in large a homogenized

group of mostly white, straight, middle-aged men (Phillips, 2018). This pattern seems to be detectable in Sweden as well when it comes to reporting on radical nationalist groups.

“Sometimes, knowing about these groups can evoke a weird kind of “nerd-pride”, usually men who are reporting on these groups are collecting and counting the interactions they have had with radical nationalists and it is in some way perceived as tough or cool to be reporting on these issues.” (Freelance journalist 1)

One journalist explains that there are more men in general who are reporting on these issues than women, this is something that she sees as problematic since a female journalist might be perceived differently, less threatening for example, and be allowed closer to these groups than if you were a man. This idea is recognized by the other three female journalists as well. Another journalist further explains that women might also be interested in reporting on different subjects than men, which could be important for creating a more holistic and nuanced picture of these groups, such as being interested of their families or their “soft sides”.

The lack of diversity in newsrooms can be dangerous, Phillips (2018) states, since perspectives of racial or sexual differences that could have provided a wider understanding of these issues, and how to best report on these groups, get lost.

Several journalists bring up that your ethnicity and origin could make a difference when reporting on these groups. Most of them argue that being non-white would create issues in a reporting situation and that the journalists interviewed themselves are able to speak to these groups much because of their whiteness. The Aftonbladet reporter explains that a person with a foreign origin could be more emotionally affected by the reporting as well as more vulnerable to threats. The SVT reporter gives an example of when the crew members for a story were chosen to evoke trust in the radical nationalists interviewed, while expressing that a person with a foreign background was not selected to be part of the crew due to this criteria. The Expressen journalist, however, claims that the recurring appearance of the same journalist would create a stronger agitation in these groups than the issue of how you look or where you come from. Two of the journalists (both white and male) seemed to not have reflected on this issue and rather proclaimed that a story from their news outlets should look similar no matter the origin or identity background of the journalist making the story. Being white, however, freelance journalist 1 argues, could lead to lost perspectives. The fact that most of the

journalists are white (and male), could, for example, result in a normalization of these issues, since racism is not as present in their own lives.

Furthermore, to have a certain political profile could also affect how these groups perceive the journalist and could affect the reporting according to some journalists.

The advice from Christoph Andersson (2013) that urged news outlets to create clearer guidelines for safety measures when reporting on radical nationalist groups seems to have been widely accommodated within the last couple of years. From a security perspective, the different organizations all seem to take the safety of their staff seriously but have somewhat different perspectives. For the Expressen journalist, security is an employer's issue. If the employer decides to cover these kinds of stories, there should also be a strong security and the understanding that this might be very strenuous for the reporter. The security should at the same time, however, not be restricting the reporter from doing his job, the journalist adds. The Expressen journalist explains that some news organizations seem to cuddle their staff so that they cannot do their job, "to keep the distance is important, but if you are too far away, you do not see anything". In the case of demonstrations, one should be able to move quickly, if you wear too much life jackets and masks, and big helmets, you get too clunky the Expressen journalist adds.

The Aftonbladet journalist might be one of the journalists referred to by the Expressen journalist: during bigger demonstrations they were wearing masks and life jackets and had lifeguards around them. It is also expressed that if something goes wrong, they should back out of the situation and report from a distance. The Aftonbladet journalist, however, adds that if they would spot a competing journalist in the middle of the crowd, they would most likely stay anyway, which again relates to the ideas of Phillips (2018) and Singer (2010) of a competitive journalistic environment where media outlets copy each other.

SR journalist 1 explains that the security approach when doing an interview is to always bring someone with you and/or to have contact with the security department. After a story is published it is also good to have someone who can do the external monitoring for you, so that you do not have to read the threats since that can be quite exhausting, the journalist adds. According to the freelance journalist 1, the tabloids have been pretty bad with security measures for freelancers. At SR, it has been much better the freelance journalist says, but as soon as you leave the project, you are left out, which means that all the external monitoring, for example needs to be taken care of by the freelance journalist. It would be insanelly

expensive to pay a private security company, the journalist adds. Being without a security department forces one to be creative. Both Freelancer 1 and 2 shared their own tricks that they had learned through the years of reporting on radical nationalist groups, such as feeling packages before opening them, sitting at the end of the bus to have a clear sight or adding a camera device to the door that shoots pictures of whom is outside and sends them directly to your phone. There have been occasions where Journalist 1's personal record had been uncovered and the journalist was still staying at the address that was exposed online, with several known NMR members living nearby, because the journalist could not afford or find a place to move, an issue that should be more seriously taken by the news outlets responsible for the publication, according to the journalist. The freelance journalist 2 also adds that when being a local journalist you need to think in a different way since people are closer and could come up to you at any time.

“As a local journalist, you are working under completely different circumstances, where you could either choose to not report at all, or to report very objectively and restrained, which does not necessarily mean that is a worse reporting.”
(Journalist 2)

The Freelance journalist 2 and the SR journalist 1 also reflect on the organizational roles of sensationalizing these subjects. The SR journalist believes that the organizations sometime probably think it is exciting or tough to report on radical nationalist groups, which may lead to extensive reporting. The Freelance journalist argues that in the strong dismissal of the radical nationalist groups lies disguised sensationalism.

“You announce that you're against it but really there's something tickling, which sometimes leaves objectivity and other important ethical principles left out because you want to show how bad these groups really are.” (Freelance journalist 2)

5.2.3 The social institution level

The financial structures of journalism are today often leading to simplified and homogenous news stories and concepts according to scholars like Singer (2010) and Reese (2013). The sensationalism of reporting about radical nationalist groups could be found as an easy pull and/or clickbait online, and furthermore something that generates income. This connects to

for example the demonstrations that are blown up out of proportion in the media, even though there are less than 50 people attending says SR journalist 2.

Most of the journalists do not see budget as a major issue for being able to report on these groups, the biggest expense that should be covered when reporting on radical nationalist groups or groups alike is security which the employees of the different news outlets feel is being met, with one exception. Freelance journalist 1 explains that there is a major difference in how much you are getting paid as a freelancer and as a full-time employee. At SR the projects always take longer than what you first estimated, but you will still not get a higher salary, and it is also hard to let go of a project that far in which they are aware of, according to the journalist, both SR and SVT are difficult to negotiate with.

“My security situation was from the start poorer than many of my colleagues’ and the consequences I faced were worse. To afford to stay at a hotel, when my address was uncovered, I had to take on other jobs which affected me quite a lot.” (Freelance journalist 1)

Freelance journalist 2 also believes that different media outlets provide different opportunities to report on radical nationalist groups. As a local newspaper journalist, you are closer to the subjects you are reporting on and consequently more vulnerable. Moreover, local newspapers rarely have the investigative resources that can be requested at larger national newspapers. The freelance journalist and the SR journalist 1 both believe that a longer format such as a radio or TV documentary could help to establish a more nuanced story when reporting on radical nationalist groups, something that, however, is costly to produce.

5.2.4 The social system level

Cultural values, norms and an increased globalization affect the system of journalism differently around the world, according to Hanitzsch (2007), Deuze (2005) and Reese (2016). The growing digital platforms enable comments and criticism to be communicated rapidly. SR journalist 2 explains that the presence of the audience feels more intense than when people had to call in or send letters. Parts of radical nationalist groups are using social media channels systematically to affect journalism to focus on a certain narrative, the journalist adds.

This is also something that worries the DN journalist, “there is no longer a process of cutting out letters from different newspapers and buying a stamp and mailing it by post”,

leading to threats and harassments spreading faster online. “The distance between being an idiot and acting on it has decreased by a lot”, the journalist adds. Moreover, the DN journalist believes that you should not take everything that is going on on the internet too seriously, it is better to get stories from reading papers, books, watching documentaries than getting a “last-minute-fix” on Twitter. But almost all publishers want to spread their content on social media nowadays, Freelance journalist 1 explains:

“I have been in many different newsrooms, and they are all talking about the same thing: how important it is that everyone works with their social media channels and how important it is to get spreading on the internet. It is an important part of the journalistic work, in TV, radio, and newspapers, and when you want something to spread easy online it often requires simple format, that pushes emotions, and those kind of stories are rarely very nuanced.”

(Freelance journalist 1)

The increasing normalization of racism is further a concern for many journalists. The radical nationalist groups are good at lobbying and they push xenophobic or immigrant-critical attitudes and language into Swedish politics and social media, the SVT journalist claims. It is not uncommon that symbols and signs are sneaking into children and youth cultures, which adults need to be highly aware of. The SVT journalist believes that knowledge is the best counter-act and is thus one reason to keep reporting on these groups. The Aftonbladet journalist illuminates a growing tendency of racism and/or racist undertones and explains that it is getting more space in media reporting. Radical nationalists are being directly cited more frequently and there is a democratically elected party with opinions that in the bottom line are racist but the party is gradually more treated as any party in the media, the Aftonbladet journalist adds. The DN journalist says that being consequence neutral is important but becomes more and more difficult. For, example, he says that if you publish a picture of a white rapist but not a black rapist, people would complain that the newspaper is using some kind of reverse racism (which is an idea that he is very skeptical about). If you, however, agree with this kind of idea and do publish the story of the black rapist, you know that it will contribute to more racism in society. The DN-journalist says that more and more people are being de-identified in these kind of crime stories, no matter their ethnicity¹¹.

¹¹ This statement has not been confirmed in this study

According to Freelance journalist 2, the normalization process of these groups are visible all over Europe, and journalism is not immune to norm changes.

Some people have blamed the media for giving too much attention to SD, leading to their expansion, while SD is constantly blaming media for being “too leftist” implying that the publicity they are getting in the media is bad for them, says the Aftonbladet journalist. Now when AFS is participating in Swedish elections, this is something that you have to consider, what role media should take, the Aftonbladet journalist adds. The strategy to blame public service for being “too leftist” is something that might actually have been very effective for radical nationalist groups according to the freelance journalist 1. Sometimes, public service editorial rooms are so afraid to be framed as left-wing that they have gone overboard towards the other side, freelance journalist 1 claims. In some occasions, co-workers have wanted to name the ethnicity of a criminal because they are too worried about the reactions on Avpixlat or Samhällsnytt, and other platforms of the internet, the journalist adds. The strategies of framing Public Service left-wing, to discredit them from being an objective news media outlet can be seen as an example of how radical nationalist groups use media to get attention, similar to what Lundström & Lundström (2010) conclude when referring to how political correctness is provoking radical nationalists. Journalists should work more on rebuilding the trust of the audience, to show what is true, reasons for why we need the press ethical system more than ever, the freelance journalist 1 says.

The biggest threat concerning radical nationalist groups, according to both the Freelance journalists is that people are not reporting enough on the “middle groups”, and the so-called identitarians. Reporting on NMR has looked quite similar for the last 5-10 years, they are so radical in themselves which makes it easy to frame them and report on them. But the group that came after the election of Trump, “the new right” is increasing in Sweden, Freelance journalist 1 claims.

“These are all the people in between SD and NMR that are fighting their cause on the internet. But just like the reporting on EU migrants, these are stories that no one is interested in anymore. It is a “done” subject which I think is because people are not reacting in the same way anymore due to changed norms in the society.”

(Freelance journalist 1)

Through these changed norms, people forget that radical nationalist and racism is a systematic threat to the victims of their crimes. To only report about these issues from a perspective where most journalists are white is dangerous, freelance journalist 1 adds, since it reduces the perspective of people experiencing racism in their daily lives. The freelance journalist 1 admits that after reporting a lot on these issues you could feel a bit numb towards the subject, something that the journalist imagines would not happen to a person who is personally affected by these groups. Concludingly for this part of the section it could be said that the norms are increasingly enabling racism in the media in Sweden. Furthermore, routines, organizations and social institutions all have strong impacts on how journalism is practiced in Sweden and should be taken into consideration when reflecting on journalists' individual ethical decisions when reporting on radical nationalist groups.

6 Summary and conclusion

Based on the *hierarchy of influences model* and ethical concepts of relativism and ideology, this thesis answers the research questions of how Swedish journalists are reflecting and operating when reporting on radical nationalist groups and what their approaches are to the threats and harassment coming from these groups, by means of eight interviews with journalists covering radical nationalist groups. The study found that the journalists share many ethical concerns and strategies when reporting on these groups, but that there are also some clear methodological differences depending on whether the journalists are freelancing or employed, and on what news organization they are working with rather than on individual beliefs. The external influences of ethical decisions may also have a bigger impact than what the journalists recognize at first, but when approaching the subjects and issues around routines, media institutions and the norm impact from the society more deeply in the interviews, a greater importance seems to be acknowledged to these aspects.

Conclusions that can be drawn from the individual perspective of the journalists are that the greater knowledge and experience of reporting on radical nationalist groups the better results, but the format and the situation create different ethical challenges. When reporting live, the journalists should take extra precaution, and when many news outlets are reporting on NMR demonstrations or similar events it could lead to unnecessary attention to these groups. The main and most repetitive practical advice that is given by the journalists on how

to best report on these groups is to always contextualize, to not let anyone propagate their ideologies without placing them into a context. While some journalists believe that the most important is to criticize the groups, some are rather focusing on giving them the opportunity to their best argument and contacting them when being reported on. Being correct with words is another advice given by most journalists, to avoid harassment and threats from these groups. The journalists mostly seemed to be positioned in what Hanitzsch (2007) refers to as situationists, which indicate a low level of both idealism and relativism, with the exception of an exceptionalist, which indicates a higher level of ideology while still making rare ethical exceptions when necessary.

The external perspective on ethical decision-making when it comes to reporting on radical nationalist groups was more visibly challenging for freelance journalists who in a newsroom did not have colleagues to discuss ethical dilemmas with, and who got paid less to do the same work and got less protection in the case of harassment or threats from the groups reported on. A few of the journalists believe that reporting on radical nationalist groups is on some occasions connected to sensationalism and used as a click-bait to generate income, while the journalist from Expressen was more determined that potential threats to democracy are almost always relevant to report on. The format of longer features or documentaries were agreed on by several of the journalists to produce more nuanced stories than shorter news articles while the larger focus on social media can be problematic in the sense of it leading to a production of simplified news.

The public service journalists came from slightly different conditions, where the democracy paragraph ensures them to always take an active stance against threats to democracy such as radical nationalist groups. Other news outlets are rather discussing different risks or outcomes that a reporting could lead to within the newsroom where safety measures in varying degrees seem most important to reflect on. The personal backgrounds of the journalists mattered to some journalists, mostly in the sense of worrying for the possible increased threats and harassment that a person of color would receive from these groups if he or she reported on them. Only the freelance journalist 2 mentioned what was brought up more intensely in the discussions in the US (see Phillips 2018): to include perspectives of diverse ethnicities when reporting on these groups is important, since the journalists are mainly white in Sweden they could miss important elements in regards to racism. The lack of this perspective among the other journalists in the study appears a bit surprising since the growing

norm of racism seems to be an acknowledged fact among all the journalists interviewed. Most journalists furthermore agreed that a larger co-operation among journalists would be an essential asset for reporting on transnational issues in general and radical nationalist groups in particular.

Another important conclusion that can be made through this study is that the cultural differences between the US (see Phillips 2018) and Sweden should be taken into consideration since the expansion of the alt-right through the aid of reporting is not quite comparable to a Swedish context. However, there are aspects that point to a movement where more and more radical nationalist groups are active online, and when individuals who were not involved in any group get better at organizing themselves, as was seen with the alt-right, the Swedish journalists seem to be unprepared. In a way, through the focus on radical nationalist groups that are interesting to report on because of demonstrations or violent acts with newsworthiness (such as NMR demonstrations), the other groups (such as the identitarians and the manipulative intellectuals) are getting less attention which eradicates the risk of them growing because of the reporting. The focus on truth and relevance is also something that media scholars claim to be more important now than ever, and some are even saying that consequences are spoken of too much (Singer, 2010, Jakoola et. al, 2015). This kind of prioritizing makes the Swedish journalists who often are claiming consequence neutrality in their reporting leading among international colleagues. But when the online groups of the intellectual manipulators are able to organize events that will become of newsworthiness for the Swedish journalists, there are no certain rules or codes of conduct on how to deal with the strategies used by these groups.

As mentioned in the method section, younger journalists reporting on radical nationalist groups in Sweden were not detectable and consequently not invited to participate in this study. The younger journalists in the US (See Phillips 2018) were the ones who focused the most on internet elements and often understood the manipulating strategies that these groups were using in comparison to older and more traditional journalists. Since there was only one journalist interviewed (Freelance journalist 2) who had similar experiences and knowledge among the Swedish journalists, it is difficult to make a generalized conclusion, but since the freelance journalist was also the youngest it does point to the fact that the older journalists might not have enough knowledge about the online groups to be able to engage with them in a reporting situation. The freelance journalist 2, however, did want more

journalistic attention to these potential threats of organizing online. However, since Swedish radical nationalist groups online do not seem as organized as the US-based groups, there may be a risk of giving them attention to grow if reporting on them, which would suggest that the “older” journalists’ approach might be less risk-taking for now.

An important addition to the conclusion is that the journalists seem to be individually thinking about these issues while not always applying them due to the idea of consequence neutrality and not discussing it enough with colleagues that together could come up with updated forms of a code of conduct in regards to reporting on radical nationalist groups.

A limitation of this study is that the results from the data of the 8 Swedish journalists, even though it represents some of the largest established media outlets in Sweden, cannot provide any generalizable conclusions, but rather point out the probable directions that journalists are heading when reporting on these issues. The reflections from the journalists provided many answers for the research question on security, although, to get a better grasp on what measures were taken, this question may have been even better answered by the responsible security departments at the newsroom. Overall, to answer the questions of external factors that are impacting journalists’ ethical decisions more fulfillingly, perhaps a more extended group would be necessary to interview, such as responsible actors on the organizational level, as well as responsible actors at the media institutional level. To conduct this kind of research would, however, have required more resources than what was possible for this study. While this study was limited to the journalists’ perspective, looking more precisely into the actual growth of radical nationalist groups in connection to journalistic reporting in Sweden could be another future study necessary to understand if there are yet any links visible, perhaps through similar methods as was conducted in the Harvard and MIT research (See Faris et.al 2019).

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Interviews

Aftonbladet journalist. Interview by author. April 8, 2019. Recorded interview in Swedish, translated by author. Transcribed by the author. Stockholm, Sweden.

Expressen journalist. Interview by author. April 3, 2019. Recorded interview in Swedish, translated by author. Transcribed by the author. Stockholm, Sweden.

DN journalist. Interview by author. April 10, 2019. Recorded interview in Swedish, translated by author. Transcribed by the author. Stockholm, Sweden.

SVT journalist. Interview by author. April 11, 2019. Recorded interview in Swedish, translated by author. Transcribed by the author. Stockholm, Sweden.

SR journalist 1. Interview by author. April 15, 2019. Recorded interview in Swedish, translated by author. Transcribed by the author. Stockholm, Sweden.

SR journalist 2. Interview by author. April 23, 2019. Recorded interview in Swedish, translated by author. Transcribed by the author. Stockholm, Sweden.

Freelance journalist 1. Interview by author. May 7, 2019. Recorded interview in Swedish, translated by author. Transcribed by the author. Stockholm, Sweden.

Freelance journalist 2. Interview by author. May 8, 2019. Recorded interview in Swedish, translated by author. Transcribed by the author. Stockholm, Sweden.

Appendix (In Swedish)

1

Intervju guide

Personligt

- Berätta lite om dig själv, vad har du för utbildning?
- Bakgrund inom journalistik?
- Hur länge har du arbetat som journalist? Frilans?

Högerextrema grupper

- Vad är dina kopplingar till rapportering av högerextrema grupper?
- Hur funderade du kring etiska förhållningssätt innan rapporteringen?
- Hur tror du att din personliga bakgrund (utbildning, kön, utseende etc.) har påverkat hur din rapportering har sett ut?
- Har du blivit utsatt för några hot/trakasserier av personer inom dessa grupper?
- Har dina tankar om etiska förhållningssätt kring rapportering av dessa grupper förändrats i efterhand?
- Vad är fördelarna vs. nackdelarna att rapportera om dessa grupper?

Externa faktorer för etiska beslut

- Hur har du upplevt att dagliga rutiner – som deadlines, faktakoll, etc. påverkar en journalists etiska beslut att prata med dessa grupper?
- Hur har du upplevt att ditt nyhetsrum och organisationen påverkar en journalists etiska beslut att prata med dessa grupper? T.ex. angående journalistiska roller, vem som gör vad – får andra personer än vita cis-män göra dessa stories? har organisationen en specifik code of conducts vad gäller dessa ämnen?
- Hur har du upplevt att media-institutioner påverkar en journalists etiska beslut kring att prata med dessa grupper? Alltså, hur t.ex. organisationen blir finansierad – per klicks, annonsering etc. Hade du rapporterat på ett annat sätt om det funnits en annan budget?
- Samhället? Finns det en viss kultur i Sverige som påverkar hur du kan rapportera om dessa grupper?
- Har dessa etiska förhållningssätt för olika nivåer som påverkar journalistik (rutiner, nyhetsrum, organisation, samhälle) förändrats över tid? Hur upplever du det?

Internet

- Vad tänker du om internets påverkan kring dessa grupper?
- Vad har du för erfarenhet vad gäller sociala forum som t.ex. reddit och 4chan?
- Tror du att man behöver ha vissa ”Internet-kunskaper” för att rapportera om dessa grupper?

Relativism/Idealism

Jag kommer att komma med lite olika påståenden som kan vara allmänna inom journalistik men du får gärna ha rapportering av högerextrema grupper i bakhuvudet. Det jag önskar är att du berättar om du håller med eller inte och motivera kort varför:

- Journalister bör undvika tvivelaktiga metoder i alla lägen (t.ex. muta eller lura någon) - även ifall det betyder att man inte kommer att få storyn
- Att rapportera och publicera en story som potentiellt kan orsaka skada för andra är alltid fel – oavsett fördelarna som det kan leda till
- Det finns situationer där en del skada är berättigad om det resulterar i en story som producerar mer gott än ont
- Vad som är etiskt inom journalistik varierar från en situation till en annan
- Etiska dilemman i nyhetsbevakning är ofta så komplex att journalister borde få formulera sina individuella codes of conduct
- Det finns etiska principer som är så viktiga att de bör följas av alla journalister oavsett situation och kontext

Övrigt

- Har du någon fundering kring framtiden? Är det något som journalister bör se upp med?
- Är det något som du vill lägga till?

2

Informationsbrev om GDPR

Information till dig som ska delta i en undersökning som genomförs av en student under Utbildning Master i internationell journalistik i kursen Master thesis på Södertörns Högskola.

Information om studien: Studien avser att undersöka journalisters etiska perspektiv vid bevakning av högerextrema grupper.

Kontaktuppgifter till studenten och handledaren:

Handledare: Lektor Nina Springer

nina.springer@sh.se

08-608 52 15

Student: Sofie Axelsson

18soax@student.sh.se

07xxxxxxx

Personuppgiftsansvarig: Undersökningen/studentarbetet genomförs som en del av

studenternas utbildning vid Södertörns högskola som är juridiskt ansvarig för studenternas personuppgiftsbehandlingar. Du kan alltid nå Södertörns högskola via epost registrator@sh.se eller telefon 08 608 40 00.

Dataskyddsombud: Har du funderingar eller klagomål kring hur dina personuppgifter behandlas kan du alltid vända dig till Södertörns högskolas dataskyddsombud via dataskydd@sh.se. Dataskyddsombudet är expert på reglerna för personuppgifter och har rätt att granska hur högskolans studenter och personal behandlar personuppgifter.

Lagliggrund: Personuppgifterna behandlas enligt ditt informerade samtycke. Deltagande i studien är helt frivilligt. Du kan när som helst återkalla ditt samtycke utan att ange orsak, vilket dock inte påverkar den behandling som skett innan återkallandet.

Mottagare av personuppgifter:

Alla uppgifter som kommer oss till del kommer behandlas så att obehöriga inte kan ta del av dem. Uppgifterna sparas på en extern ljudspelare fram till transkribering i verktyget google docs med hjälp av voice typing. Det transkriberade dokumentet överförs sedan till personlig dator och raderas på google docs.

Lagringstid: Personuppgifterna kommer bevaras till dess att uppsatsen är godkänd och kommer därefter att förstöras.

Överföring utanför EU: Personuppgifterna överförs till tredje land (utanför EU och EES) genom datalagring i molntjänster (Google Drive) i USA.

Rättigheter: Enligt EUs dataskyddsförordning har du rätt att gratis få ta del av samtliga uppgifter om dig som hanteras och vid behov få eventuella fel rättade. Du har även rätt att begära radering, begränsning eller att invända mot behandling av personuppgifter.

Klagomål: Du har alltid rätt att lämna klagomål till Datainspektionen. Du når dem via epost: datainspektionen@datainspektionen.se eller telefon 08-657 61 00.