

*Researcher*

Per-Erik Nilsson, Ph.D.

*Funding agency*

The Swedish Research Council (3 000 000 kr).

*Subject*

Multidisciplinary studies in the social and human sciences.

*Department*

CemFor, Uppsala Uppsala University.

*Project title*

Radicalization and Violent Extremism: An Analysis of two Contested Categories in Swedish Public Debate.

*Abstract*

In Sweden, as in other European nation-states, radicalization has become the most central aspect of explaining why and how an individual takes the step of embracing violent extremism and, while such words are apparently neutral, radicalization and violent extremism have become mostly associated with Islamic terrorism.

With this 4-year-long project the researcher sets out to analyze speech around radicalization and violent extremism in four arenas: the security and intelligence services, politics, academia, and news media. Using discourse analysis and Foucauldian theory of governmentality, the aim is to analyze, understand, and assess the social and political stakes resulting from this new speech about radicalization and violent extremism.

The project is of crucial importance for three reasons. First, it will fill knowledge gaps in the understanding of political and religious violence in Swedish public debate. Second, the results of the project should help policy makers to avoid pitfalls in counter-terrorism and de-radicalization measures. Finally, the project will generate tools for thinking critically around these issues, which is fundamental to the safekeeping of a sound and balanced democratic public debate.