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# Can Malmö Learn From Freetown?

Comparing the Promotion and Protection of Religious Tolerance

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to identify and explain the main differences between the promotion and protection of religious tolerance in Freetown and Malmö. This study investigates to what extent Malmö can possibly draw inspiration from Freetown in order to increase religious tolerance. The idea behind this research comes from material collected regarding the situation of religious tolerance in both societies. Furthermore, former Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, recommended religious leaders, states and the international community to look at how Sierra Leone maintains its high level of religious tolerance. A framework connecting religious tolerance to human rights is used in order to understand the promotion and protection of the concept. The study analyses the promotion and protection of religious tolerance through four different levels connected to each city: international, state, municipality and civil society level. Data for this study was gathered from secondary sources and field trips to both cities, where interviews were conducted with persons involved in inter-religious work. The results of this research suggest that there is inspiration worth drawing from Freetown. However, the historical, cultural and demographic differences between the cities, are in general too great for Malmö to realistically increase religious tolerance by following the main methods of the promotion and protection in Freetown.

# Abbreviations

**ACHPR** - African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

**AU** - African Union

**CoE** - Council of Europe

**ECHR** - European Convention on Human Rights

**ECtHR** - European Court of Human Rights

**EU** - European Union

**FoRB** - Freedom of Religion or Belief

**GC22** - General Comment No. 22

**HDI** - Human Development Index

**HRC** - Human Rights Committee

**ICCPR** - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

**IGO** - Inter-Governmental Organisations

**IRCSL** - Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone

**OIC** - Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

**NGO** - Non-Governmental Organisation

**OHCHR** - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

**SST** - Commission for Government Support for Faith Communities

**UDHR** - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**UMAF** - Young People Against anti-Semitism and Xenophobia

**UN** - United Nations

**UNDP** - United Nations Development Programme

**UNHRC** - United Nations Human Rights Council

**UNESCO** - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 “*The international community is encouraged to pay more attention to Sierra Leone.*” (Bielefeldt, 2013a:17)

Sweden is generally perceived as a highly developed country, as it is ranked at number 14 in the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) of 2016. The country has a life expectancy of 82.3 years and 16.1 years of expected schooling (UNDP, 2017a). In addition, since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Sweden has been viewed internationally as one of the most secular countries in the world, with a proud attitude of tolerance. However, as the state has become increasingly multicultural and less homogeneous, great challenges have arisen, especially regarding tolerance (Demker *et al.* 2014:2). A form of tolerance that is certainly decreasing in Sweden is religious tolerance. According to the Swedish hate crime registers between 2013 and 2015, crimes of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Christophobia and other hate crimes of religion, have each increased by about 100 cases, with some categories well above 100 (Djäv *et al.* 2014:71-89; Axell. Westerberg, 2016:80-103). A city in Sweden that has and is currently facing a great portion of these challenges, is Malmö. Which is a vastly multicultural city, with today almost a third of its population being born abroad (Malmö Stad, 2017b). Additionally, it has the fastest growing city population in the country (Malmö Stad, 2017c). As will be further displayed later on, religious intolerance is nothing new to the city and it is not decreasing. To sum up, the city of Malmö is in a great need of an upsurge within religious tolerance, in order for its increasingly diverse population to live in harmony. As this seems to be a growing problem for many societies in the increasingly religiously diverse Western world, it might be hard to find and draw inspiration from a developed model resulting in high levels of religious tolerance nearby. So where outside of the Western world can Malmö look for a model which could possibly provide inspiration for a solution?

A country far away from the standards and international reputation of Sweden is Sierra Leone. Being positioned at number 179 in the UNDP’s HDI of 2016, with a life expectancy of 51.3 years and 9.5 expected schooling (UNDP, 2017b). Add to this a quite recent history of independence, civil war and Ebola. This has produced an international picture of the state which most states generally do not want to model their own after. Nevertheless, the state is flourishing within one area where many developed states are currently struggling, religious tolerance. This is despite having a population of about 40 percent Christian, 55 percent Muslim and 5 percent made up of African traditional religions. Former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, went on a

country visit to Sierra Leone in 2013. Before the visit, Bielefeldt claims that he had anticipated that Sierra Leone would be characterised by a high degree of religious tolerance, even so, what he experienced far exceeded his expectations (Bielefeldt, 2013a:6). In the recommendation part of his report, Bielefeldt says that *“The international community is encouraged to pay more attention to Sierra Leone. While remaining one of the economically poorest countries, Sierra Leone has developed a rich culture of inter- and intra-religious open-heartedness which can serve as an example of best practise in many regards.”* (Bielefeldt, 2013a:17). In the summary, this recommendation is extended to states and religious leaders also (Bielefeldt, 2013a:2). In addition, he says that *“Persons interested in interreligious communication are encouraged to gain first-hand information on the situation in Sierra Leone, where religious communities cooperate in an admirable way in the ongoing process of rebuilding the nation.”* (Bielefeldt, 2013a:17). This report together with other forms of material describing the religious tolerance situations in Malmö and Freetown, are the sources of inspiration for this research. It helped to develop the idea to examine if a society such as Malmö, could possibly learn from one such as Freetown. This study aims to find out if this is really possible.

## **1.2 The Idea and Relevance for Malmö and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

This thesis will identify the main differences in the promotion and protection of religious tolerance between Malmö and Freetown. It is an attempt to find possible inspiration, which could possibly lead to an increased level of religious tolerance in Malmö. Due to the great differences between the cities, the study will not strictly look for an immediate solution. It will instead look for inspiration, which Malmö could possibly use in order to develop its own solution. The fact that Bielefeldt, while sitting as the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, recommended Sierra Leone as an example of best practise for religious tolerance in many regards, makes Freetown a relevant place for Malmö to look for inspiration.

If this research proves that it is possible for Malmö to increase religious tolerance by drawing inspiration from Freetown, the multicultural and religiously diverse city of Malmö could further become the model for religious tolerance in Sweden. Malmö could even become a model internationally, as it currently seems to be a normality for societies to struggle with religious intolerance worldwide. Since Sweden is generally more cherished than Sierra Leone, societies who feel more closely related to Sweden, might prefer to learn from Malmö over Freetown. Moreover,

this could have a great impact on human rights, in Malmö and other societies struggling with religious intolerance. This because religious tolerance is crucial for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), as religious intolerance often is the cause for FoRB violations (Bielefeldt, 2016b:9).

### **1.3 Literature Review**

Earlier research has been conducted regarding the religious situations within both countries. Maybe the most prominent example in Sierra Leone is the one mentioned above by the former Special Rapporteur on FoRB. Several studies have also been conducted on how the Inter-Religious Council in Sierra Leone promotes and protects peace and religious tolerance, an example is Thomas Mark Turay in 2000. The religious situation and religious tolerance have also been studied in Sweden, an example is Marie Demker, Yvonne Leffler and Ola Sigurdson in 2014, as well as Anne Sofie Roald in 2000. These studies, however, focus on the causes of religious intolerance and the attempts being made in order to decrease it. They do not attempt to find any new solution, especially not from a developing country perspective. Additionally, it is hard to find any research that entirely focuses on religious tolerance within Malmö and Freetown, even harder is it to find a comparison between the two. This lack of academic data, makes the research even more relevant, as it will provide a new perspective on the promotion and protection of religious tolerance.

### **1.4 Objective and Research Questions**

This study sets out to investigate and analyse the main differences in the promotion and protection of religious tolerance between different actors connected to the cities of Malmö and Freetown. The main objective of finding the answers is not to come up with a clear solution of how to increase religious tolerance in Malmö. Instead by comparing with Freetown, the thesis aims to provide inspiration and develop recommendations that can lead to increased religious tolerance in Malmö. It will do this by focusing on four different levels: international, state, municipality and civil society level. In order to reach this, the study will need to answer the following research questions:

- *What are the main differences in the promotion and protection of religious tolerance between Malmö and Freetown and how can these differences be explained?*
- *Despite the differences, to what extent can Malmö possibly increase religious tolerance by drawing inspiration from Freetown?*



## **2 Background and Contemporary Situation**

### **2.1 Sweden**

Between the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sweden was seen as a sending country of migrants and not a receiving country, as it is today. This transformation started in the 1930s (Roald, 2013:118). Although it was not until the 1960s, that Sweden saw its first sizable wave of immigrants. Since then every forthcoming decade, Sweden has seen a continued increase in immigration (Johansson Heinö, 2014:136-149). First, in the 1980s, the Swedish immigrant community transformed from labour migration to refugee and family reunification. Moreover, it changed from European immigrants to non-European immigrants. Which for the first time in Swedish history led to a substantial Muslim minority. It was during these developments in the 1980s, that racism and xenophobia started to increase and make a mark among the Swedish population (Johansson Heinö, 2014:143).

As a result of the continued increase of immigration, in 2012, 15 percent of the Swedish population were immigrants, with an additional 5 percent children of immigrants (Johansson Heinö, 2014:134). Furthermore, according to Freedom House, in 2015 Sweden received more asylum seekers per capita than any other European Union (EU) member state. Additionally, it had an approval rate of 70 percent, showing that the country tried to keep its well-known open-door policy alive. However, the open-door policy came to an abrupt end in November 2015, as the government introduced tighter border controls and entry requirements, in order to decrease the immigration flow (Freedom House, 2016b). Today, between four and six percent of the Swedish population are believed to be Muslims (USCIRF, 2016:224). While around 60 percent of the population are members of the Church of Sweden (Church of Sweden, 2016:73). Unfortunately, no statistics can be found displaying how many of the Church's members consider themselves as practising Lutheran Christians, or are just members not practising or believing in the religion.

Culturally, Sweden is considered a highly individual country, as Henrik Berggren and Lars Trägårdh claims that Sweden is the country where the individualisation process has developed the most. They argue that resources in Sweden are oriented towards the individuals instead of the family or the organisation (Berggren. Trägårdh, 2006:74). According to Anne Sofie Roald, this form of individualism is often contrary to what minorities in Sweden come from and are used to, especially parts of the Muslim community, where the family instead of the individual is the social core (Roald, 2013:119).

Since the 1960s, the society has experienced a multicultural and religiously diverse transformation, which has come with consequences regarding religious intolerance. For example, Roald claims that there is today a clear problem between the non-Muslim majority and the Muslim minority (Roald, 2013:122). Moreover, Freedom House reports that several incidents of Mosque vandalising and anti-Semitism has occurred and show no signs of ending (Freedom House, 2016b). Additionally the Swedish hate crime registers between 2013 and 2015, demonstrate the increase of religious hate crimes. Crimes of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Christophobia and other anti-religious crimes has increased by about 100 cases within each category, with some closer to 200 (Djäv *et al.* 2014:71-89. Axell. Westerberg, 2016:80-103). These statistics clearly illustrate an increasing problem of religious intolerance in Sweden. Furthermore, the Sweden Democrats, a political party in the parliament received close to 13 percent of votes in the 2014 national elections (Valmyndigheten, 2014a). They are often criticising religious traditions such as veil wearing and the Islamic culture in general (Johansson Heinö, 2014:152). The news and polls suggest the support for the Sweden Democrats is increasing. Sifo surveys suggests that in June 2017, they have reached 18 percent, making them the second largest political party in Sweden (Sifo, 2017).

## **2.2 Malmö**

Located in the very south of Sweden, connected to the rest of the European continent, is the country's third largest city Malmö, with about 328 000 inhabitants (Malmö Stad, 2017). This connection means that Malmö is the first sight for the majority of immigrants entering Sweden by land. The city was for a long time one of the leading industrial cities of Sweden, however today it is turning into a modern University City, leaving its industrial history behind. In addition, Malmö has the fastest growing population in Sweden. The reason for this is a mix of international and domestic immigration as well as young families more often today choosing to stay in the city (Malmö Stad, 2017c). Of the population, 32 percent are born abroad, with an additional 12 percent born in Sweden with both parents born abroad. Furthermore, 178 nationalities are represented within the city's population (Malmö Stad, 2017b). These statistics greatly illustrate how diverse the city is. At the same time, it is important to know that not all parts of Malmö are equally diverse, as segregation clearly exist.

The city has had and continues to have troubles with religious intolerance. In the 1980s a political party named Skåne Party, named after the province where Malmö is located, entered the local parliament with the slogan "Remove Islam from Skåne" (Johansson Heinö, 2014:143). In the 2014

municipal election, the Sweden Democrats received 13.5 percent of the votes (Valmyndigheten, 2014b). If assuming that the city follows the pattern of the national voters, the political party has grown more popular.

There is an estimated number of 1500 Jews in the city while 15000 in Sweden in total. The majority live in Stockholm and Gothenburg. Despite this, there is still more anti-Semitic crimes reported in Malmö than anywhere else in Sweden. These problems are illustrated by a documentary by the state-owned TV channel, Swedish Television. In the documentary, a reporter dressed in traditional Jewish clothes, receives numerous anti-Semitic curses and threats of violence while visiting Rosengård, a segregated area with a high percentage being Muslim. Anti-Semitism in Malmö is according to the documentary, mostly believed to be a result of the Israel and Palestine conflict (Sveriges Television, 2014). However, during interviews for this research, two Priests mentioned that anti-Semitism is also caused by an old Nazi movement that exists within the city and its surrounding societies (Annex 1: MA2 & MA3).

The Muslim population, which is estimated to be just below 50000 (Lagervall. Stenberg, 2016:6) as well have several times become the victim of religious intolerance. An example is the Islamic Center in Malmö, which for about 30 years, has been one of the leading Muslim institutions in Sweden. Through the years, the mosque of the Islamic Center has been vandalised several times. In 2003 most of the mosque was destroyed in an act of arson. In addition, several times graffiti containing Islamophobia has been found on the walls and once a pig was released into the mosque (Lagervall. Stenberg, 2016:29).

Within the Christian population, Church of Sweden has about 135 000 members in Malmö, representing around 41 percent of the population (Church of Sweden, 2016:34). During interviews for this study, two Priests said that acts of Christophobia, they believe are most often conducted by non-religious people. Additionally, they claimed that these acts are not as common as acts of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia (Annex 1: MA2 & MA4). These are some examples displaying that the city evidently has a contemporary problem with a low level of religious tolerance.

## **2.3 Sierra Leone**

Located in West Africa, is the state of Sierra Leone, a country that has been through colonisation, slavery, a brutal civil war and recently an Ebola epidemic. Together with this Bielefeldt adds that it

is one of the economically poorest states in the world (Bielefeldt, 2013a:17). As if this was not enough, Freedom House claims that corruption remains a pervasive problem at every level of government (Freedom House, 2016). The state's population is religiously diverse, and there is no exact data on the religious demography in Sierra Leone. Therefore, Joseph Gaima develops and comes to an educated conclusion that the population is probably around 40 percent Christian, 55 percent Muslim and five percent made up of African traditional religions (Gaima, 2016:16). A possible reason for being so hard to estimate an exact number might be because in Sierra Leone religious conversions is not only constitutionally protected, it is as well widely publicly accepted and most of the time endorsed by family, communities and religious leaders (Bielefeldt, 2013a:8). In many countries around the world, religious diversity has become a factor usually playing a major role when it comes to fragmentation and conflict escalation. However, in Sierra Leone this is not the case, instead, religious diversity is seen to have helped unite the nation and then reunite it after the Civil War in 2002 (Bielefeldt, 2013a:14). Religious tolerance is seen as the cornerstone of the countries peace (Bielefeldt, 2013a:6). Religious diversity is widely cherished as an asset on which to build community life, from the local to the national level. Furthermore, it is not uncommon that people practice both Islam and Christianity simultaneously, and inter-religious marriages are common (Freedom House, 2016a). Muslims and Christians, when their houses of worship are full, are often allowed to pray at the other religions place of worship (Bielefeldt, 2013a:6). Additionally, a sign of unity is that no matter Muslim or Christian, it is believed that around 85 percent of the Sierra Leonean population feels attached to African spirituality (Bielefeldt, 2013a:8). Bielefeldt also identifies that within the Sierra Leonean society, there is no inherent contradiction between passionate religious commitment and religious open-mindedness (Bielefeldt, 2013a:11). Lastly, in the public area, it is common to see many religious symbols and slogans, especially on cars where people write religious slogans such as "*God's mercy for everyone*" (Bielefeldt, 2013a:10).

Despite religious tolerance existing within the country for a long time, some problems regarding FoRB have occurred in the past and continues to exist. There are also some concerns that religious extremism in some of the closely located countries might, in the end become influential in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, some minor conflicts have occurred between religious communities regarding practical issues such as property, loud church bells or prayer calls. However, these problems have been settled before they developed into anything major (Bielefeldt, 2013a:9). In Sierra Leone, Bielefeldt spoke to a member of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) who explained peoples shared commitment to religious tolerance, he said that "*Our religious tolerance is not without*

*challenges, but we share the willingness to overcome them.*” (Bielefeldt, 2013a:9). What is considered to be a major human rights issue in Sierra Leone, is that many believe in witchcraft, which has led to cases of serious harm and even death to some women (Bielefeldt, 2013a:12). Furthermore, many early marriages and teenage pregnancies deprive girls from education (Bielefeldt, 2013:13). Despite this, Sierra Leone is widely seen as a country with a high level of religious tolerance, mainly because of conversions, welcoming to places of worship, bi-religious persons, inter-religious marriages *etc.* Sierra Leone presents characteristics of religious tolerance that is not to be seen normally in societies around the world. This is most likely the reason for Bielefeldt’s recommendation, that Sierra Leone could be identified as a place of best practice in many regards, as he recommends states, religious leaders and the international community to pay more attention to Sierra Leone and its culture of inter- and intra-religious open-heartedness (Bielefeldt, 2013a:2).

## **2.4 Freetown**

Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone is located in the west of the country, facing the Atlantic Ocean. Originally named Granville Town, the city became renamed in 1791. The following year the city started to receive freed slaves from across the Atlantic, which continued until 1816 (Fyle, 2006:xviii). Through colonisation, the city became religiously diverse, historian C. Magbaily Fyle claims that Sierra Leone and the area of Freetown were originally dominated by Muslims, while Christians entered through colonisation. Since then, Christians, Muslims and a small minority of people believing in African traditional religions have lived together (Fyle, 2006:73). Compared to the national demography, the population of Freetown is believed to be even more balanced between Christianity and Islam, while also having fewer persons of African traditional religions (Gaima, 2016:16).

The Special Rapporteur visited mostly Freetown, which gives you an indication that the situation of religious tolerance in Freetown, is similar to the one as described above. While having a high level of religious tolerance, Freetown as well has had some problems regarding religious intolerance. An example is the one of a Christian who wanted a mosque sponsored by Muammar Gaddafi to be destroyed and replaced with a church, because of a dream where Gaddafi suffered in hell. This attracted some publicity, although it was generally seen as a success, because Christian members reacted rapidly in rejecting the woman’s message and demand, thereby defending the state’s religious harmony and their good relations with the Muslim community. Members of the Muslim community

later praised the actions of the Christian community (Bielefeldt, 2013a:9). This displays the determination within the city to protect and keep its much beloved religious tolerance.

## 3 Religious Tolerance in a Human Rights Framework

### 3.1 Tolerance

#### 3.1.1 Importance, History and Definition of Tolerance

International Relations Professor Maxim Khomyakov claims, that since the beginning of modernity, many societies have tried to find the perfect mix between solidarity or social cohesion on the one hand and pluralism or difference on the other. Khomyakov adds that tolerance is seen as a key concept in order for societies to possibly reach this perfect mix (Khomyakov, 2013:223). Additionally, political theorist Michael Walzer describes the relationship between tolerance and difference as *“Toleration makes difference possible; difference makes toleration necessary.”* (Walzer, 1997:xii). Furthermore, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasises the importance of the concept for societies, as they claim that *“Without tolerance there can be no peace, and without peace there can be no development or democracy.”* (UNESCO, 1995:10). Khomyakov, Walzer and UNESCO certainly put tolerance among the most important concepts for societies all around the world to function and maintain a healthy posture. It is safe to say that the importance grows with ever increasing globalisation, as societies are becoming more diverse.

This study has come across countless different definitions and explanations of tolerance. The often-called father of liberal democracy, John Locke, is in general seen as the founder of the concept, as he was the first one to write about the term (Hastrup, 2002:74; Krishnaswami, 1960:3). In 1667, Locke published a text called *An Essay on Toleration*. Within it, Locke presented the basics for religious freedom. These were further discussed in another text by Locke called *Letter Concerning Toleration*, published in 1685. In these texts, tolerance is solely connected with religion, as Locke wrote about the equality of humans before God. Locke’s concept of toleration had less to do with tolerant freedom compared to equal subordination to what is mightier. Locke used a method of separating religion and politics, where he argued that religion was an inward persuasion of the mind, which had nothing to do with the outward forces of civil government (Hastrup, 2002:74).

Since Locke’s texts, a lot of attempts have been made to develop toleration into a broader concept. In short, political philosopher Anna E. Galeotti claims that *“Toleration in any versions means non-interference with someone’s liberty”* (Galeotti, 2015:96). In a more thorough definition, Professor in Religion Robert Erlewine explains that *“Philosophers often define ‘tolerance’ as a principle which claims that more good arises on a societal or even a moral level in not acting rather than acting on one’s moral disapproval regarding the actions, beliefs, and practices of the Other, so long as the*

*Other does not directly obstruct the wellbeing of oneself or other Others.*” (Erlewine, 2010:7). Within this quote, ‘Other’ represents the person who is being tolerated. The quote of Erlewine, according to the research conducted, displays the general philosophical definition of tolerance.

On a more international, universal and legal basis, UNESCO defines comprehensively their meaning of tolerance in Article 1 of the Declaration of Principle on Tolerance as:

*“1.1 Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty, it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.*

*1.2 Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. In no circumstance can it be used to justify infringements of these fundamental values. Tolerance is to be exercised by individuals, groups and States.*

*1.3 Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law. It involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments.*

*1.4 Consistent with respect for human rights, the practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one's own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are. It also means that one's views are not to be imposed on others.”* (UNESCO, 1995:9-10).

The general philosophical definition and the UNESCO definition of tolerance have similar characteristics. Both definitions could be interpreted as having a core, in which others allow individuals or groups, to be whom they are, for the better of society, even if the others do not agree with them. Both definitions have as well a limit of when the toleration ends or should stop, which is where the two take different paths. In the philosophical, it is when the tolerator believes that the tolerated crosses a line, by for example threatening the well-being of himself or other persons. In 1(2) and 1(3) of the UNESCO definition, the limit is identified as when the tolerated is breaching



fundamental human rights. This is a great difference between the two, as personal limits and human rights, might not always meet at the same point. The philosophical definition, although it is similar to the UNESCO definition, refers to the personal opinion of the tolerator and what is important for that single person. One could make the case that not all people automatically follow the human rights criteria, instead, they automatically act within their own personal criteria.

The UNESCO definition in 1(1) further mentions factors that foster tolerance, such as knowledge. The idea of knowledge supporting tolerance is agreed by several scholars and philosophers. One example is Hastrup, who claims that tolerance increases towards the other, the more a person knows about the other (Hastrup, 2002:83). Another is Bielefeldt, who explains that education has a positive effect on religious tolerance, as long as it is taught in a neutral and objective way (Bielefeldt, 2016b:17). So in theory, if neutral and objective education regarding people's different ways of living and behaving is increased, then tolerance as well should increase towards people's lifestyles and behaviours.

Additionally, the UNESCO definition compared to the philosophical definition, includes law since it is claiming that it is not only a moral but also a legal and political duty. Along with this, it mentions that it is to be exercised by individuals, groups and states. Since this study regards human rights and two very different societies, the study will depart from the definition of tolerance laid out by UNESCO, in order to analyse the different situations. This is because it is an international definition and both Sweden and Sierra Leone are member states of the UN and UNESCO.

### **3.1.2 Tolerance in today's society and its impact**

Khomyakov declares non-negotiable things such as race, ethnicity and homosexuality as the majority of problems in today's world regarding tolerance (Khomyakov, 2013:235). However, if carefully reading and interpreting Galeotti, intolerance towards religion is among the great contemporary problems. Galeotti writes about democracies with liberal rights, such as FoRB, inscribed in their constitutions, where veil wearing and places of worship often become subjects of discussions regarding tolerance. In addition, Galeotti explains that problems of tolerance today, mostly appears because of concerns from the majority. This usually regards control over the public space from a symbolic viewpoint, which includes dress codes, dietary customs, traditional collective celebrations as well as religious rituals. Galeotti claims that intolerance is growing because people today are focusing on the differences instead of the similarities between themselves and others. This often

results in problems between a majority and a minority, producing a horizontal problem among the population. Today this often develops simultaneously into a vertical problem, where politicians listen to the majority in order to gain or maintain power (Galeotti, 2015:98-100). These concerns that have arisen through phenomena such as globalisation, multiculturalism and forced migration are often difficult to solve. Regardless, there is evidentially a substantial need to reach sustainable levels of tolerance, including religious tolerance.

## **3.2 Religion**

### **3.2.1 What is Religion and what characterises it?**

As religion is today often causing problems of intolerance within societies, including within democracies with liberal constitutional rights, as mentioned above, it is important to gain knowledge about this phenomenon, and the causes leading to its controversial nature. Like tolerance, there have been numerous attempts made to find a definition for religion. Émile Durkheim claims that religion consists of certain beliefs and rites, resulting in a unified system of beliefs and practices that are related to sacred things, creating a moral community (Leiter, 2013:28-29). Timothy Macklem says that religion is distinguishing itself from other beliefs by being based on faith instead of reason (Leiter, 2013:31), and so on.

Since this study is focusing on two geographically, culturally and religiously different societies, it would be best if there exists a universal definition of religion. However, this seems close to impossible to find. The research will instead take the opinion of the Anthropologist E. Valentine Daniel. He claims that there is no universal definition of religion (Daniel, 2002:31). Daniel explains that none of the available definitions of religion are capable of defining the phenomenon. Even so, the phenomenon is found all over the world and for one reason or another the label religion is used as if it had a universal meaning. (Daniel, 2002:35). Evidence of this is General Comment No. 22 (GC22), which interprets Article 18 FoRB of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Within GC22 religion is clearly written as something that is known universally. Although, there is no clear definition. This shows that the international human rights community do not have a definition for religion. However, GC22, does provide a category which religion falls under. This category is very broad as it consists of thought, conscience, belief and religion, these four are mentioned throughout the document (HRC, 1993). Professor of Public International Law, Malcolm D. Evans, explains that throughout the GC22 the Human Rights Committee (HRC) “...*fails to*

*distinguish adequately between the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the question of discrimination on these grounds.*” (Evans, 1997:208). Evans claims that the HRC fails to point out differences between thought, conscience and religion, which indicates that there is no universal definition of religion separating it from the other two. The lack of a universal definition might present a problem. Since, this means that societies, groups and individuals all over the world use different definitions. Any definitions of religion in Sierra Leone and Sweden could not be found either.

This study will continue by focusing on what makes the two phenomena of religion and belief so important to people. In the preamble of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief from 1981, the UN General Assembly claims that “...*religion or belief, for anyone who professes either, is one of the fundamental elements in his conception of life*” (UN General Assembly, 1981:Preamble). The UN General Assembly in this declaration, clearly underlines the importance which religion or belief can have for a single person or group. The UN General Assembly gives the impression of seeing religion or belief as something that is central to how a person perceives life. Religion or belief is portrayed as having great control, as it functions as a guideline for individuals or groups in how to go through life. Therefore, things connected to religions may be of great importance for its followers. Bielefeldt together with International Human Rights Law Professor Nazila Ghanea and Michael Wiener who works at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), write that religious holidays, symbols and worshipping may cause problems because of their importance. Problems can occur regarding holidays in multi-religious societies, as only one religion’s holidays might be publicly acknowledged (Bielefeldt *et al.* 2016c:169). Additionally, some wishes to express their beliefs more than orally through symbols. In some places where certain symbols are prevented, conflicts may arise as a result, this is also possible in a reverse situation (Bielefeldt *et al.* 2016c:144-145). Lastly, believers have different methods of worship. This can become a problem since some societies might see certain methods as wrong, while others as understandable (Bielefeldt *et al.* 2016c:169). These three factors may be highly important for some, while less important to others. Resulting in that importance of religion might vary among societies, groups and individuals.

Furthermore, important to understand is that religion has the capacity to form and divide large groups of individuals, who possess the same or different religious beliefs. Harvard lecturer on the Practice of Peace, Jeffrey R. Seul, who has focused on religion and peacebuilding, argues that this often creates a feeling of ‘us vs. them’, between groups in religiously diverse societies. Seul uses the example of

former Yugoslavia as a case where religion divided otherwise culturally similar people, while mentioning India as a place where religion has united people from different religions, in this case, Islam and Hinduism (Seul, 1999:565). Additionally, Philosophy Professors Russell Powell and Steve Clarke propose that religion has two faces when it comes to social behaviour. One is producing a sense of compassion, brotherhood and concern for others, while the other is darker leading to intolerance, bigotry or even violence (Clarke. Powell, 2013:10). Therefore, the final view of religion for this study is that religion is a form of belief, core to a person's identity. What makes it special is that religion leads the person through life, as that person perceives this as the correct way of living. Along the way the person might unite with people, creating a feeling of 'us', or divide people, causing a feeling of 'them', which in turn can lead to harmony or violence.

### **3.2.2 Religion and Human Rights**

Human rights are often seen as a result of Western culture, where many believe that human rights are seen through the lens of the West, giving the impression of human rights ignoring other cultures. This is not strange, as documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) were written during the colonial era, resulting in the exclusion of many non-Western persons from participating (Hackett, 2005:10). Two political scientists with expertise in human rights, Adamantia Pollis and Peter Schwab agree as they claim that this is evident in the UDHR, as it reveals a strong Western bias (Pollis. Schwab, 1979:17). Moreover, the controversial political scientist Samuel P. Huntington wrote that human rights together with democracy, liberalism and political secularism belong solely to the West, and can only become universal if the others adapt to its culture (Huntington, 1996:70-72). Pollis, Schwab (left) and Huntington (right), even if they belong to completely different views of cultural relativism, they see universal human rights as impossible, because of this believed link between the West and human rights (Bielefeldt, 2000:91).

As much research suggests that human rights were primarily influenced and introduced by the West, Christianity is often believed to have contributed more than other religions. However, Christianity throughout its history, has struggled with what we today call human rights, including FoRB. Evans gives an early example of this, as he explains that before Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, there were various forms of worship within the Empire, and they all were seen as equally true, therefore a good level of religious tolerance existed. As Christianity developed, a difficult problem came with it. Like the Jews, the Christians believed in one God and the religion

claimed universal validity, which made Christians intolerant towards others. When Christianity became the established official religion of the Empire, other beliefs were still allowed. However, Evans writes that the Christian theologians who had before fought for the acceptance of their beliefs, started to focus on how the Empire could deny others the same freedom of belief (Evans, 2004:1-2). Since the Roman Empire, events and systems such as the Conquest of the New World and the Inquisition has taken place, where Christianity often had a central role. These are acts which today are considered violations of human rights and especially FoRB, and therefore proves the very historical complicated relationship between Christianity and human rights.

Even so, the violations of human rights that Christianity contributed to from its early establishment in Rome and onwards, likely contributed to the development of human rights as we know it today. Bielefeldt claims that human rights did not develop naturally from humanitarian ideas of Western culture and religion (Bielefeldt, 2000:96-97). Bielefeldt claims that human rights had its historic breakthrough at a time when Europe was in a deep crisis. During this time Christianity became divided during the reformation, and the European civil wars between religious and political blocs. The West's experiences with for example religious intolerance by acts of state oppression led slowly to a peaceful coexistence and cooperation in a modern pluralist society. A society where equal freedom and participation is a base, following the framework of human rights and democracy (Bielefeldt, 2000:101). Even if the West might be seen as the origin and inspiration of contemporary human rights, it is clear that a lot of human rights violations were committed (arguably had to be), before the concept developed. European history is proof that the people who fought for human rights, had a lot of resistance, not least from the state and the church (Bielefeldt, 2000:101). Many societies today seem to be following the same pattern, of human rights fighters facing resistance from both state and religion.

It is not uncommon that these places are Islamic states, where the view of human rights often differs with the views of the West. The Islamic religion and culture are often portrayed as the main obstacles to human rights in these states, especially within areas such as gender equality and religious liberty. Because of this, one has to agree with Bielefeldt that it is hard to deny the complicated and problematic relationship between Islam and human rights. Bielefeldt argues that Islam is not the main problem per se, it is rather Islamic Shariah, or traditional and fundamentalist interpretations of the Shariah that have become the political system and law in some countries (Bielefeldt, 2000:102-103). However, Bielefeldt points out that those Muslim countries where Shariah is not the law and the rules of punishment, the vast majority do not seem to complain (Bielefeldt, 2000:107). Which indicates

that not all Muslims agree with Shariah. Since 2000, this opinion of the majority having no problem living in Muslim societies without Shariah punishment has probably grown stronger. As events like the Arabic Spring has caused increased human rights and political awareness among these Muslim populations. This could be seen as a part of the Muslim world's struggle and fight for human rights, just like the struggle the West and Christianity went through earlier. Maybe gender equality and religious freedom are next in line. Moreover, a very interesting historic observation is made by Legal Studies Professor Ann Elizabeth Mayer. She claims that if analysed through contemporary human rights, history presents Islam as a greater tolerator and humanitarian towards religious minorities than Christianity (Mayer, 2007:147-150). An example of this, was during the Ottoman Empire, where the system of governance allowed religious tolerance to a considerable degree, as Christians were allowed to establish their own communities with considerable autonomy (Evans, 2004:7). This is interesting, as such a liberal freedom was more respected in societies that are today often portrayed as more conservative, while the liberal West obviously did not respect FoRB for a very long time. As the picture is often different today, this still displays that Islam historically has had respect for FoRB, now these contemporary states just need to find a way back.

Christianity and Islam clearly have complicated relationships with human rights, including FoRB. Legally protecting a personal freedom in the relationship between humans and God, are still today a strange and even atrocious idea amongst many religious people. This is because it is believed that this means that humans put themselves above God (Bielefeldt, 2016a:58). Bielefeldt claims, that fears such as this made the Catholic Church furiously dispute FoRB on principle for a long time. It was not until 1965 that the church completely changed its oppositional stance to FoRB. According to Bielefeldt, in practically all religious traditions, there exists traditionalist scepticism and rejection of FoRB, including Islamic or Islamist perspectives as well as ultraconservative Christian denominations (Bielefeldt, 2016a:58). Christianity and Islam's relation to FoRB and human rights, in general, prove that they both have similar and different complications with human rights. The contemporary differences in rights such as gender equality and religious liberty, implies that mixed Muslim and Christian societies often have difficulties of equal respect for human rights between the communities. Furthermore, Evans says that there is some truth in the argument that *"The idea that freedom of religion or belief should be seen as a technique for avoiding religious conflict may seem paradoxical since it often seems as if differences of religion generate more conflict than solve: Freedom of religion can be seen as part of the problem and not a part of the solution."* (Evans, 2004:17). Evans writes that therefore a common approach is today to seek a balance between

competing values, religious and non-religious, creating an environment acceptable to all parties (Evans, 2004:17). A method similar to this approach, which could help solve problems of equal respect for human rights, within religiously diverse societies, is an overlapping consensus, between religions and human rights. This will be explained in the next section.

### **3.2.3 Overlapping Consensus**

Bielefeldt argues that human rights always have been a political issue, not the result of a specific culture or religion (Bielefeldt, 2000:114). The West might have been first to introduce human rights and has clearly influenced documents such as the UDHR. Even so, this does not mean that religions such as Islam have no signs of human rights within them. Therefore, in increasingly multicultural and religiously diverse societies. Bielefeldt suggests that a cross-cultural overlapping consensus on basic normative standards with human rights in the centre is needed. (Bielefeldt, 2000:114). Overlapping consensus was developed by political philosopher John Rawls, as he wanted to clarify the complex relationship between a modern liberal society's ideas of political justice on the one hand, and the multiplicity of religious or philosophical beliefs of that society's members, on the other (Rawls, 1993:133 ff). Bielefeldt notices that Rawls does not consider international or multicultural issues within his concept. Still, he argues that some of Rawls insights can be applied to different religions and their relationship to human rights, as he replaces political justice with human rights (Bielefeldt, 2000:114). In short, overlapping consensus is a concept that can be used when you want to find common ground, for example between different cultures as the Christian West and Islam and their relationship to human rights. Bielefeldt applies three aspects of Rawls to the subject of human rights. The *first* is the genuinely normative and critical claims of political justice, in which a normative consensus is at stake. People of different beliefs should be enabled to agree on some basic principles of justice, and thereby lead to coexistence and cooperation on the basis of equality and freedom. This creates room for a plurality of different beliefs, ideologies and so on, while also defining limits of political tolerance in a liberal society. The *second* is the limited scope of political justice as compared to 'comprehensive' worldviews. Bielefeldt writes that human rights are just like political justice a basic structure of society, not a comprehensive doctrine explaining the meaning of life and so on. Human rights simply cannot compete with cultural and religious traditions in how to perceive life. The focus of human rights is on political and legal justice, therefore commitment on behalf of international human rights should not be seen as an expanding modern missionary work. Bielefeldt explains that the idea of an overlapping consensus on human rights is not to find one specific common

ground between all religions and ideologies, because all people should be allowed to have their own unique individual and communitarian identity, as long as they respect universal equality in human dignity and rights. The *third* is the possibility of appreciating political justice from different religious or philosophical perspectives. Bielefeldt argues that just as political justice, human rights can be meaningfully appreciated from the perspectives of various religious doctrines. Especially the idea of dignity can connect human rights with religious doctrines. Bielefeldt mentions that there are elements supporting peace, tolerance, freedom of conscience, dignity, equality and social justice in virtually all religious traditions (Bielefeldt, 2000:114-117). An overlapping consensus model like the one described above, could possibly help multicultural and religiously diverse societies, in finding a basic common ground to work with. At least it gives the societies a chance to increase religious tolerance, both horizontally and vertically.

### **3.3 Religious Tolerance**

#### **3.3.1 Religious Tolerance, why is it important?**

Locke originally wrote about tolerance in relation to religion. This show that the two concepts have been linked together since the concept of tolerance was introduced. Past and contemporary religiously diverse societies have been and are dependent on tolerance in order to create a society in harmony. By linking the definition of tolerance to what makes religion so important to groups or individuals, religious tolerance in this study is when others allow individuals or groups, to live their life following a religion core to their identity, even if the others do not agree with it. The individual or group are allowed to do this as long as they are not violating human rights towards themselves or others. Religious tolerance is to be exercised by individuals, groups and states. The opposite of religious tolerance is considered by the UN to be religious intolerance and discrimination. The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief defines religious intolerance and discrimination in Article 2(2) as “...*any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on religion or belief and having as its purpose or as its effect nullification or impairment of the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis.*” (UN General Assembly, 1981).

So why then is religious tolerance important? One reason is that religion has the capacity to divide people and create a feeling of ‘us vs. them’, which might even lead to violence. Former Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities



Arcot Krishnaswami gives an example of societies where feelings of ‘us vs. them’ usually are difficult to avoid. These are societies with new groups settling with an already established group or groups. Usually, religious tolerance is lower towards the new group because it might bring for example religious traditions which have not existed before. In the same way, there is a small risk of reverse religious intolerance as well. (Krishnaswami, 1960:22). Galeotti gives a similar claim that religion has been in societies all around the world for a long time, and it only became a problem when other religions arrived (Galeotti, 2015:100). Krishnaswami and Galeotti both indicate that increased religious tolerance is a greater need in recently increased religiously diverse societies.

Walzer argued in 1997, that Western states in general believed that religious tolerance was easy. The citizens and governments of Western states used to follow the news and information about religious wars such as in Yugoslavia, Ireland and in the Middle East. It was believed that the role of religion in these wars was one of extremism, nationalism, ethnicity or fanaticism. The West could not believe that others were not allowing FoRB to the same extent as themselves (Walzer, 1997:66). As religious tolerance in the contemporary West is decreasing, it is evident that religious tolerance is not as easy to achieve and maintain as the West once thought. Today when the West is probably more religiously diverse than ever, this claim by Walzer clearly proves the importance and complexity of religious tolerance. The West clearly should see this as a lesson as they should now understand why religious tolerance should be taken seriously at all times.

These are some examples of why religious tolerance is important. However, if following the footprints of the UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance and its vision of human rights, according to Article 1(1) the main reason why tolerance is important, is because it is the “...*virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.*” (UNESCO, 1995:9). In addition, in 1(3) it says that “*Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law*” (UNESCO, 1995:10). To sum up, tolerance, including religious tolerance, contributes to peace, human rights, democracy, pluralism and the rule of law. It supports everything necessary for a well-functioning democratic religiously diverse society.

### **3.3.2 Religious Tolerance and International Human Rights**

Through the lens of international human rights, it is obvious that FoRB is the right and freedom most closely linked to religious tolerance. To give an example of the link between religious tolerance and

FoRB, Bielefeldt writes that religious intolerance is one of the root causes for a lot of FoRB violations (Bielefeldt, 2016b:9). Therefore in theory, if religious tolerance is increased within a society, this should mean that FoRB is being strengthened and more respected as well. Sociologists Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, claim that the Holocaust had a great impact on human rights post-World War II. The UN Genocide Convention and the UDHR are two examples, which they argue were influenced greatly by the Holocaust (Levy. Sznaider, 2010:149-151). In addition, Krishnaswami claims that the horrible acts especially directed towards Jews made FoRB a priority among the allied states (Krishnaswami, 1960:12). As a result, FoRB today exists at Article 18 in both UDHR (UN General Assembly, 1948) and the ICCPR (UN General Assembly, 1966). Article 18 is an absolute right in the legally binding ICCPR, largely repeating Article 18 of the UDHR, while adding some extra information and description to the right. Article 18 of the ICCPR reads:

*1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.*

*2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.*

*3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.*

*4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.* (UN General Assembly, 1966).

Importantly, the right of FoRB is not only a privilege for religious people. This human right has a far wider scope as it applies to all humans, which is evident as the full title is freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (Bielefeldt, 2016a:61). Furthermore, Bielefeldt *et al.* provide a description of the right's wide scope: "*Freedom of religion or belief empowers human beings to freely find their ways in the broad sphere of religious or non-religious convictions, conscience-based personal positions and communitarian practices, the development of religious or belief identities, the*

*organization of religious community life and many other issues. It is a multifaceted right.*” (Bielefeldt *et al.* 2016c:21).

Additionally, Bielefeldt *et al.* mention how FoRB might mislead people. Since the title appears to promise protection of religious or belief-related traditions, practices and identities. It is very important to understand that FoRB always protects human beings, as they are the only rights holders within the human rights’ framework. Bielefeldt *et al.* sum this shortly by describing how FoRB protects believers rather than beliefs (Bielefeldt *et al.* 2016c:11). This is clear in paragraph three, where religious manifestations can be limited by laws protecting public safety and order, morals, health and human rights. This explains that states can limit the right as they see fit best for their society and, after how they prioritise FoRB within human rights.

### **3.3.3 Controversy of Freedom of Religion or Belief for States**

FoRB has from the beginning been a heated debate within the international human rights circle. As previously mentioned, one reason for this is the idea of having the relationship between humans and God legally protected as a personal freedom. However, Professor in Religious Education at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Manfred L. Pirner, writes that it also exists among national powers, not only among religious communities (Pirner, 2016:338). Bielefeldt explains this by claiming that today human rights have taken on such a powerful role that neglecting them may lead to isolation for a state. What some governments and religious communities are doing instead of neglecting freedom of religion, is that they use multiple tendencies in order to dilute FoRB, most often with a vague use of tolerance and thereby lessen its impact on the respective society. Religious communities often do this by only recognising what they believe to be normal religious practices or the divine religions already known. National powers sometimes do this by granting privileges to those religions that have contributed to the society (Bielefeldt, 2016a:58-59). According to Bielefeldt, secular societies have also started to appear on the side criticising freedom of religion, an example of this is the discussion over the ritual of circumcising boys. The main opponents of circumcision generally give little room for FoRB, they usually instead give an impression that they regard this human right as a right of pre-modern times, which has no right to exist in a secular modern society (Bielefeldt, 2016a:67). In addition, Professor in Religious Studies Rosalind I. J. Hackett, writes that governments may often be supportive of FoRB, yet, often this regards to religious beliefs and not manifestations and practices of religions (Hackett, 2005:13). One reason for this might be because

governments view some manifestations and practices of certain religions as violations of other human rights, another one might just be pure religious intolerance. Moreover, what is seen as controversial with FoRB, is how states implement it. Some governments focus narrowly on individualistic dimensions of FoRB, while not paying enough attention to community-related aspects of religious life. Other governments place all their efforts on collective religious identities, resulting in missing the crucial element of personal freedom (Bielefeldt, 2016b:16). All this clearly displays some of the complications between FoRB and societies as well as human rights.

## 4 Method

### 4.1 Research design

The research will seek to identify the main differences between the promotion and protection of religious tolerance in Malmö and Freetown. The initial presumption is that Freetown is an example of possible inspiration. In order to be able to find and develop the answers to the research questions, the study is qualitative and abductive. Two case studies will be compared to each other. The research departs from the recommendation of Bielefeldt, thereafter the data on the promotion and protection of religious tolerance in Malmö and Freetown will go through the theories and ideas regarding tolerance, religion and FoRB, which makes it an abductive study. Norman Blaikie describes an abductive study as when “...*data and theoretical ideas are played off against one another in a developmental and creative process.* (Blaikie, 2009:156). In addition, Blaikie describes the strategy as “*Research becomes a dialogue between data and theory mediated by the researcher.*” (Blaikie, 2009:156). Furthermore, since the research interprets collected data on the promotion and protection of religious tolerance specifically regarding Malmö and Freetown, it is also considered a qualitative case study. Jerome C. Glenn defines a qualitative method as trying to gain an in-depth understanding of human behaviour, as well as analysing the reasons behind that particular behaviour. The why and how of decision-making is what is primarily being investigated. In addition, Glenn claims that smaller and more specific samples are of great importance than larger random samples in qualitative research (Glenn, 2010:95).

Bård A. Andreassen advises the use of a comparative approach when discussing human rights performances across countries (Andreassen, 2017:222). As described in the objective section, the research will focus on four levels linked to each city. These levels include: international, state, municipality and civil society level. By taking this approach, the research will be able to fully grasp and compare the promotion and protection of religious tolerance in both cities. As it will be able to follow the work starting from the top of the international level, which both cities are connected to, all the way to the ground at the civil society level. This method will as well provide the research with knowledge regarding the causes of the current situation within respective city. This design should enable the research to identify the main differences and possible inspiration, which Malmö could draw from Freetown.

Since the thesis regards FoRB, a legal approach is needed. However, since the research aims to find how to possibly increase religious tolerance, a social science approach is necessary as well. Therefore

a mix of these two approaches is believed to be the most appropriate and compatible approach for this study. Fons Coomans *et al.* makes an interesting comparison between these two approaches in relation to human rights. They claim that:

*“Lawyers are system builders; they rely on logic to determine whether arguments are compatible with an existing normative framework. Human rights may be, but are not necessarily, part of this normative setting. Legal scholarship, therefore, has little to say regarding the impact of legal systems on the ground. It makes implicit assumptions in this regard and runs the risk of remaining disconnected from reality. Social scientists on the other hand, attempt to understand and explain social phenomena. Their findings can be empirically challenged and verified. However they risk ignoring or misinterpreting applicable legal standards.”* (Coomans *et al.* 2010:181).

As the study will examine four different levels, this quote admirably explains why a mix of a legal and social science approach is needed. The international level is clearly leaning towards a legal approach, whereas the other levels increasingly lean towards a social science approach.

## **4.2 Sample and Data Collection**

For the international and state levels, high quantities of secondary data are available, therefore this part is mainly a desk study. The secondary data used in this study (not only these two levels) varies from international documents, academic research, articles and papers, as well as surveys, media, interviews, Internet sources *etc.* This variety of sources which are either documentary, quantitative or qualitative data, will allow the study to get a wide overview since the data comes from different levels and angles of the research area.

There exists some secondary data on the municipality and civil society levels, which has been collected. However, this data is often not as informative as the material gathered from the two previous levels, especially regarding Freetown. In order to get a more complete picture of how these two levels promote and protect religious tolerance, primary data is required. Therefore, field trips to Malmö and Freetown were conducted. Here interviews with representatives of both municipality and the religious civil society were conducted. Each interviewee was chosen, because he or she were involved in inter-religious cooperation, with the exception of the municipality representative in Freetown. In Malmö, contact was first made with the inter-religious networks Coexist and Open Skåne, which then recommended the other interviewees for this research. In Freetown, I had a person

whom I had sent a letter describing the research, setting up interviews with Imams and Priests before I arrived. Imams and Priests were important to interview because of the Sierra Leonean culture of religious leaders promoting and protecting religious tolerance. Meanwhile, in Freetown I had to personally visit the municipality and the IRC SL before they allowed me to conduct any interviews. In both cities, one interview was conducted with municipality representatives. From the civil society of Malmö, seven persons were interviewed, including three Christians, one Jew, two Muslims and one self-proclaimed non-religious person. In Freetown, seven Christians and ten Muslims were interviewed. In Malmö, all but one Priest and the two Muslims were female, while in Freetown all of the interviewees were male. Information regarding each Interviewee is to be found in Annex 1.

As previously mentioned, the available data was collected before the field trips, in order to be as well informed as possible before the interviews. This also allowed the research to identify areas which needed more information. The method adopted was one of semi-structured interviews. This allowed me to add or remove questions, based on the answers of the interviewee. The reason for adopting this technique was because of its usefulness in getting specific information in order to get the desired result (Dalen, 2007:31). The questions can be seen in Annex 2. Depending on the answers of the interviewee, the questions were asked in different order, some not asked at all, while sometimes additional questions were made. The aim was to have personal interviews face-to-face since this would give me the chance to fully concentrate on one person at the time. Even so, one group interview was conducted in both cities, as it was requested by the interviewees. In addition, one interview was conducted by phone. All interviews were recorded, except five, as was the wish of the interviewees and because of one phone interview. They were later transcribed into a word document. The interviews did not only reveal information about the municipality and civil society level, they also presented excellent information regarding the state level.

### **4.3 Data Analysis**

At the initial stage, all the data for this research was reviewed several times in order to ensure it was correct. The secondary and primary data was ordered level by level and city by city in the *Empirical Data* chapter. Thereafter, in the *Comparative Analysis and Discussion* chapter, the promotion and protection of religious tolerance, was compared and analysed to each other within each level, where sometimes data from other levels might be applied and analysed through some of the other levels as well. By sorting the data this way, it became easier to analyse the data step-by-step, through the lens

of the theories, concepts and ideas presented in the framework. The research questions were at the centre of attention throughout the whole process. By starting the analysis from the international level and finishing at the civil society level, the analysis is able to point out, step-by-step where and why differences exist and where possible inspiration can be drawn from.

#### **4.4 Limitations and Delimitations**

The fact that not all religions and denominations within each city are represented in the interviews, is a limitation. Hence, the study will not be able to present all the perspectives of the promotion and protection of religious tolerance in Malmö and Freetown. This limitation was mainly due to time constraints and availability, which made it impossible to interview people from all religions and denominations. Furthermore, it is important to mention that persons of African traditional religions are very few in Freetown. Therefore, the religious tolerance is mostly between Christians and Muslims.

A delimitation is that the study did not conduct interviews with any person outside the municipality and civil society of each city. This would have given a more general description of both situations. However, due to time constraints in Freetown, the research chose to focus on persons of the municipality and the civil society sector of both cities.



## **5 Empirical Data**

### **5.1 International Level and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

#### **5.1.1 Introduction**

Since the Second World War, the UN and several others inter-governmental organisations (IGO) have attempted to promote and protect religious tolerance internationally. However, Walzer claims that actors within the international community such as the UN are very weak regimes. This is why they are usually considered very tolerant as a regime towards member states displaying intolerance (Walzer, 1997:19). Even though states are seen as the main actors of tolerance and human rights, Hastrup wrote already in 2002 that the international community has seen an increased role (Hastrup, 2002:85). Bielefeldt agrees as he points out that this is one of the significant progressive developments within the area of international human rights, including FoRB. While still maintaining that states are the primary actors, he explains that when states sign and ratify international human rights treaties, they confirm and understand the national duty and the international concern of human rights (Bielefeldt, 2016:19). This section will focus on how the UN works with FoRB and religious tolerance. It will also review the implementation and protection of FoRB in Sweden and Sierra Leone, through UN surveillance and implementation mechanisms. Lastly, the section will examine other IGOs which respective country is a member-state of, in order to identify any other measurements taken for FoRB.

#### **5.1.2 UN Instruments and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

Two of the main instruments of the UN concerning FoRB is Article 18 in both the UDHR and ICCPR, as mentioned earlier. There exists as well several other specialised instruments containing articles of FoRB. Some examples are Article 14 in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as Article 4 of the Geneva Refugee Convention (Walter, 2012:589-590). Law Professor Christian Walter claims that FoRB was in general easy to establish since most people would allow the right in general. However, many will differ on where they place their limit of tolerance when it comes to religious traditions such as wearing the hijab in schools, ritual slaughtering of animals *etc.* As a result, already in the 1960s, many wanted the UN to create a convention or a declaration, identifying the specific guarantees of FoRB (Walter, 2012:590). It turned out to be impossible to create a convention. The communist position claimed that protecting freedom of religion is discrimination towards non-religious persons, which was a flawed claim as Article 18 of the UDHR also protects belief and

freedom from religion. The main reason for it not becoming a convention was the problem with converting to other religions. Within the Muslim world, this was seen as non-acceptable and thereby no legally binding convention was made (Walter, 2012:591). Of the two earlier documents, the wording regarding change of religion or belief in the ICCPR is vaguer compared to the one of the UDHR, as it uses the word adopt instead of change. Because of this, the result became the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. This declaration does not even indirectly refer to change of religion, it only mentions in Article 8 that nothing in the declaration can be used in order to restrict the rights of the UDHR and the two international covenants on human rights of 1966 (Walter, 2012:591). The website of the OHCHR states that these three are the primary legal sources leading the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on FoRB (OHCHR, 2017a), which proves that these three instruments are the main ones regarding FoRB.

### **5.1.3 UN Mechanisms of Surveillance and Implementation**

In order to prevent, protect and fulfil FoRB as well as possible, with its limited power, the UN has three types of mechanisms for surveillance and implementation. These are the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the Special Rapporteur on FoRB, which is the only one solely focusing on FoRB. This section will examine these three mechanisms.

#### **5.1.3.1 UN Human Rights Committee**

HRC is one of the UN's treaty bodies, operating on the basis of the ICCPR with formalised procedures (Walter, 2012:593), which makes the HRC the most relevant treaty body concerning FoRB. HRC is composed of independent experts that monitor the implementation of the ICCPR by its state parties (OHCHR, 2017b). As a treaty body, the HRC undertakes its work through the use of three methods: state reports, inter-state complaints and individual complaints.

States who have ratified the ICCPR are obligated to submit state reports to the HRC on how the rights are being implemented (OHCHR, 2017c). States must report for the first time one year after ratifying the ICCPR and then whenever the HRC requests the state to do so, which is usually every four years (OHCHR, 2017b). The HRC may as well receive information on a state's human rights situation regarding ICCPR from international and domestic actors not representing the government. These

mechanisms appear very effective concerning the promotion and protection of human rights. Yet, as Walter claims, the dialogues and concluding observations related to the state reports are often cautious and diplomatic (Walter, 2012:594), indicating that the HRC is not pressuring enough the regarded state, displaying the weak power of the UN.

The ICCPR allows states to make claims of other state parties violating their obligations. Hence, a second method that HRC uses is inter-state complaints. However, Walter claims that this method has extremely limited value, as these inter-state complaints occur to say the least rarely. The reason for this is probably diplomatic considerations and the fear of future retaliation (Walter, 2012:594).

The final method of the HRC is individual complaints. This method can be used when a state has ratified the ICCPR and recognised the competence of the HRC to receive individual complaints, as well as when all domestic remedies have been exhausted. If this is the case, any individual who claims that any of her or his rights under the ICCPR have been violated by a state party which allows individual complaints, may bring a communication before the HRC (OHCHR, 2017c).

A different task of the HRC is the production of general comments, which is a method whereby they publish their interpretations of articles or content within the ICCPR and its additional protocols (OHCHR, 2017c). In the case of FoRB, the HRC published GC22 in 1993. In this General Comment, 11 points explain HRC's interpretation of this right. An example is that the right is for all beliefs not only religion (HRC, 1993).

### ***5.1.3.2 UN Human Rights Council***

In 2006, the UNHRC was established by the UN General Assembly, replacing the former Human Rights Commission (Walter, 2012:595). The UNHRC is an inter-governmental body of the UN, which is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights globally as well as addressing violations and making recommendations. The UNHRC consists of 47 UN member states elected by the UN General Assembly (OHCHR, 2017e). These 47 UN member states are the main disadvantage of the UNHRC according to Walter. Compared to other mechanisms of surveillance and implementation, such as HRC and Special Rapporteurs, these are non-independent experts. Consequently, the UNHRC has become politicised and the quality of its reports and recommendations are not up to par with the ones of independent experts (Walter, 2012:595). Anyhow,

a great advantage of the UNHRC is that it applies to all member states of the UN, no matter which human rights treaties they have chosen to be a part of or ratify (Walter, 2012:595).

When the UNHRC was introduced, so was also one of its main features, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The UPRs are state-driven processes, which are under the support of the UNHRC. The member states are allowed the opportunity to declare what they have done to fulfil their human rights obligations as well as what actions they have taken to improve their respective human rights situation. The UPR is also, formed in such a way that it treats all states equally when their human rights situations are under review. It is a cooperative process between the UNHRC and respective state. Its main function is to remind member states of their responsibility to respect and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms (OHCHR, 2017f).

#### ***5.1.3.3 UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief***

The UNHRC also works with UN Special Procedures, which were established by the former Human Rights Commission (OHCHR, 2017e). The Special Procedures consist of independent human rights experts, with mandates to report and give advice on human rights from either a thematic or a country specific perspective. (OHCHR, 2017g). As mentioned above, the Special Rapporteur on FoRB is the only UN instrument solely focusing on FoRB.

The former Human Rights Commission in 1986 introduced the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur was to examine incidents and governmental actions, which were violating the Declaration of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief. Thereafter, providing state parties with recommendations on how to avoid violations. In 2001, the title of the rapporteur changed to Special Rapporteur on FoRB. With this change, the mandate became broader as it no longer only regarded intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief, but instead focus on all issues concerning FoRB (Walter, 2012:595-596). As mentioned earlier, the primary legal sources for the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on FoRB are Article 18 in both the UDHR and the ICCPR, as well as the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. Moreover, relevant articles in other UN instruments are also guiding the mandate. In addition, relevant resolutions of the UNHRC, the UN General Assembly and other organs of the UN, together with the relevant jurisprudence of the treaty bodies and provisions of international humanitarian law, also guide the

mandate. Lastly, the Special Rapporteur on FoRB also acknowledges relevant human rights instruments and jurisprudence from regional levels (OHCHR, 2017a).

The mandate gives the Special Rapporteur on FoRB three working methods, namely communications, country visits and annual reports (OHCHR, 2017h). The Special Rapporteur on FoRB together with the UNHRC and the UN General Assembly, also encourage individual complaints as part of the collecting of information for violations of FoRB (OHCHR, 2017i).

Through communications the Special Rapporteur on FoRB can intervene directly with governments when there is a claim of violations of FoRB, this usually happens in the form of letters where the Special Rapporteur identifies the facts of the claims, his or hers concerns and questions as well as a request for follow-up action. The violations brought up might already have occurred, are ongoing or might have a high risk of occurring in the future. The communications might deal with individual cases, general patterns and trends of general FoRB violations or behaviour not compatible with international human rights standards. In some cases, communications may also be sent to IGOs or non-state actors (OHCHR, 2017j).

OHCHR considers country visits as one of the fundamental activities of the Special Rapporteurs. The Special Rapporteur on FoRB conducts field trips in order to get an in-depth understanding of the FoRB situation in a specific country, in order to be able to give constructive feedback including recommendations and give a country report to the UNHRC or the UN General Assembly. During country visits, meetings are conducted with representatives from relevant state organs, representatives from religious and belief communities, associations of religious groups, religious or non-religious Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as individuals who might be interested or affected by the mandate. During the visits, field trips are included in order to acquire a broad picture of the situation in the country. After the visit, the Special Rapporteur on FoRB usually sends follow-up letters in order to receive updated information about the implementation of the recommendations given in the national report (OHCHR, 2017k). Walter claims that country visits are soft mechanisms, although an advantage of them is that country visits include the collaboration of the host state. This usually means that they are open for cooperation with the UN, regarding FoRB (Walter, 2012:598). Lastly, every year the Special Rapporteur on FoRB submits an annual report to the UNHRC and the UN General Assembly, in which activities, trends of FoRB around the world and methods of work are described (OHCHR, 2017h).

## **5.1.4 Sweden and the UN concerning Freedom of Religion or Belief**

### ***5.1.4.1 Sweden and the UN Human Rights Committee***

Sweden ratified the ICCPR in 1971 (OHCHR, 2017). Its last state report was conducted in 2014, which was its seventh in total. Within it, Sweden claims that the country is protecting religious discrimination by force of law. This is in line with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (HRC, 2015:10). The Swedish delegation also guarantees the protection of FoRB through the constitution (HRC, 2015:21). In the concluding observations, the HRC only mentions a small fear of possible violation of FoRB once, urging Sweden to be careful with its counter-terrorism legislation so it does not violate the obligations of the ICCPR (HRC, 2016:5). When it comes to inter-state and individual complaints, this research could not find any regarding FoRB.

### ***5.1.4.2 Sweden and the UN Human Rights Council***

Sweden had its latest UPR in 2014. The Swedish delegation received the question how the state was working in order to ensure equal FoRB for everyone, given the increase in hate crimes. Another question was whether Sweden was going to address the chronically negative portrayal of the Muslim minority in the media (UNHRC, 2014a:9). In the national report, Sweden describes how the government had worked towards trying to decrease religious discrimination. The report states that the Swedish government regularly engages in dialogues with the different religious communities in order to keep themselves updated regarding possible challenges. Emphasis has been put on FoRB by the government, especially at work and school. The Government had conducted surveys regarding anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, not only regarding the members of the communities but also their premises. In 2012, the government had devoted four million Swedish Crowns and an additional two million in 2014, for increased protection for the Jewish minority. In 2014, the government implemented round-table discussions on Islamophobia in Europe. The purpose was to share experiences of challenges among the participating countries, as well as how to operate in order to combat Islamophobia (UNHRC, 2014b:6). Furthermore, Sweden pointed out that the country implemented a new compulsory for compulsory school in 2011, which put more emphasis on national minorities. In 2014, a web-based set of teaching material was introduced for school-years seven to nine, with a part of it emphasising specifically on religion (UNHRC, 2014b:8).

#### ***5.1.4.3 Sweden and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief***

Since 2001, Sweden has extended a standing invitation by the government to all thematic procedures, which includes the Special Rapporteur on FoRB. This means that Sweden will always accept requests of visits from Special Procedures. As of July 2017, 117 member states and one non-member observer state has extended standing invitations (OHCHR, 2017m). No country visits from the Special Rapporteur on FoRB to Sweden have yet been conducted. However, former Special Rapporteur on FoRB, Heiner Bielefeldt, made an informal visit to Sweden in 2013. In the annual report of 2013, Bielefeldt mentions that he had heard positive examples of how government agencies and municipalities keep regular contact with faith-based communities in Sweden, regarding issues of crisis preparedness and security. He heard as well, that they cooperate to help increase social trust and prevent incidents of religious violence (Bielefeldt, 2013b:13).

#### **5.1.5 Sierra Leone and the UN concerning Freedom of Religion or Belief**

##### ***5.1.5.1 Sierra Leone and the UN Human Rights Committee***

Sierra Leone ratified the ICCPR in 1996 (OHCHR, 2017n). The country submitted its latest state report in 2012. It states that religious tolerance might be the greatest social asset of the country, with Muslims and Christians living side by side in peace. It also mentions that inter-religious marriages are common and that FoRB is provided by the constitution (HRC, 2012:6). Nothing regarding FoRB is mentioned in the concluding observations. In addition, no inter-state or individual complaints regarding FoRB in Sierra Leone were found.

##### ***5.1.5.2 Sierra Leone and the UN Human Rights Council***

The latest UPR that Sierra Leone went through was in 2015. The concerns by the UNHRC regarding FoRB were about measures taken against traditional harmful practices, especially gender based, as reported by the Special Rapporteur in 2013. These practices often relate to traditional African spirituality. Therefore the UNHRC working group pointed out that measures should be done while still respecting the traditional African spirituality. It also encourages the government to keep supporting the IRC SL while letting them have an independent status and profile (UNHRC, 2015a:11). However, any answer to this cannot be found. In the national report, FoRB is only brought up in relation to the country visit of the Special Rapporteur on FoRB in 2013, where it is pointed out that the feedback from the country visit has been positive (UNHRC, 2015b:9).

### **5.1.5.3 Sierra Leone and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief**

Sierra Leone has an extended standing invitation since 2003 (OHCHR, 2017m), which the Special Rapporteur decided to utilise in 2013. As mentioned earlier, the Special Rapporteur was in general pleased with his country visit. The two main challenges he found was the situation of witchcraft and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. In spite of this, the Special Rapporteur on FoRB recommended that states, religious leaders and the international community should pay more attention to Sierra Leone and its culture of inter- and intra-religious open-heartedness (Bielefeldt, 2013a:2).

## **5.1.6 Other inter-governmental organisations concerning Freedom of Religion or Belief**

### **5.1.6.1 Sweden**

As a member of the Council of Europe (CoE), Sweden is a state party to the ECHR, which covers FoRB in Article 9. FoRB in the ECHR is more clear and detailed regarding conversion compared to Article 18 of the ICCPR, since it clearly mentions in paragraph (1) that every human has the right to change his or hers religion, belief and freedom (Council of Europe, 1950). The protector of human rights and fundamental freedoms within the CoE is the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). It applies the ECHR and its mandate is to make sure that member states respects and guarantees the rights as written in the ECHR (ECtHR, 2017a:3-4). Until the end of 2016, no case regarding FoRB violations by the state of Sweden has been conducted according to the ECtHR (ECtHR, 2017b).

### **5.1.6.2 Sierra Leone**

African Union (AU) of which the state of Sierra Leone is a member, is bound to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). FoRB is found in this Charter under Article 8, which states that "*Freedom of conscience, the profession and free practice of religion shall be guaranteed. No one may, subject to law and order, be submitted to measures restricting the exercise of these freedoms.*" (Organisation of African Unity, 1981). One can argue that FoRB in this Charter should just be FoR (Freedom of Religion), as the Article does not even mention the word belief. This Article seems to assume that all the individuals and states connected to it belong to some kind of religion. Moreover, the Court, which has the responsibility to promote and encourage the implementation of the ACHPR, is the African Court of Justice and Human Rights (African Union, 2008:4). However,



Sierra Leone has not yet ratified any treaty of accepting this Court as the protector of the ACHPR (African Union, 2017).

An interesting IGO, which Sierra Leone is a member state of, is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Even though it states in the preamble of its charter that it wants to “*contribute to international peace and security, understanding and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions and promote and encourage friendly relations and good neighbourliness, mutual respect and cooperation*” (UN, 2014). The OIC seems pretty one-sided in promoting and favouring Islam as the charter a couple of sentences later writes “*to foster noble Islamic values concerning moderation, tolerance, respect for diversity, preservation of Islamic symbols and common heritage and to defend the universality of Islamic religion*” (UN. 2014). As a secular state with a religiously diverse population, and with a Christian president (Freedom House, 2016a), the membership of such a one-religion oriented IGO may be perceived as peculiar. Still, this might as well be proof of how tolerant the non-Muslim population is in Sierra Leone.

## **5.2 Domestic State Level and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

### **5.2.1 Introduction**

Walzer argues that compared to the international society, there is less room for difference within nation-states, even in liberal nation-states. The reason for this is that there is more focus on individuals instead of groups within nation-states compared to the international society. Furthermore, this may force groups in societies to be more tolerant towards individuals (Walzer, 1997:27). This argument certainly is not encouraging for religious tolerance, especially when it comes to particular religious minority groups. This section will focus on how the two states protect and promote FoRB, including religious tolerance, at the governmental level.

### **5.2.2 The Swedish State and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

The Church of Sweden, which is Lutheran Christianity, was the established religion by law from 1526 to 2000. Since then Sweden has been a secular state (Demker, *et al.* 2014:11). Sweden established FoRB in 1951, the same year as Sweden made it legal to opt out of organised religion altogether (Demker, *et al.* 2014:12-13). Furthermore, FoRB is constitutionally guaranteed in Sweden (Freedom House, 2016b). In addition, Freedom House reports that hate-speech laws prohibit threats or

expressions of disdain towards race, colour, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientations and religion (Freedom House, 2016b). Freedom House further mentions that the government documents well the development of hate crimes based on religion, by having a Swedish hate crime register. It also has an established police unit specifically focusing on hate crime (Freedom House 2016b). Roald describes how the government, along with the media, tries to hide the identity of crime suspects until they are found guilty. Compared to its neighbouring countries, Sweden is far more protective of identity in the media. This regards especially ethnicity, name and religion. It is an approach to avoid increasing anti-immigration thoughts among the population (Roald, 2013: 123). This approach should stimulate religious tolerance as well. Although there is a clear majority of Lutheran Christians, all churches, synagogues and mosques still receive financial support (Freedom House 2016b). The government agency responsible for the financial support of different religious communities is the Commission for Government Support for Faith Communities (SST). Besides the financial support, the mandate of SST is also to help faith-based communities with general support, coordinating the role in contingency planning, encouraging cooperation between faith-based communities and the public sector, functioning as a forum at which issues relating to social values can be discussed, as well as consulting the government when proposals are made affecting religious communities. The government also distributes special assignments for SST. These are often projects regarding training for the leaders of local religious communities as well as inter-religious dialogue between leaders (SST, 2017).

A situation that became heavily debated in the media involving religious tolerance. Took place in 2016 when the former Minister of Housing, Yasri Khan, a Muslim, refused to shake hands with a female TV journalist. Following this event, numerous angry and critical outcries within media and the population, regarding the unequal treatment of women, began to spread. Because of the negative reactions and uproar, Khan left all his political responsibilities by himself, shortly after the incident. Afterwards, the Prime Minister, receiving a great extent public pressure, commented on the situation by saying that *“In Sweden you greet each other. You shake the hand of both women and men.”* (Svenska Dagbladet, 2016). This clearly illustrates the minimum level of gender equality the Prime Minister and most Swedes require. Yet, when it comes to religious tolerance towards Muslims, this is clearly an act of intolerance. The Prime Minister’s statement has not only faced complaints from the Muslim population, but also from the Christian community. During one of the interviews conducted in Malmö, Ida Wreland, a Priest of the Church of Sweden, commented that *“There we took several steps backwards. This debate has many different sides, but to say that in Sweden we*

*shake hands, when there are 1000 different ways to greet people, clearly does not help.*” (Annex 1: MA4). Fadi Barakat, a Muslim working for the Municipality of Malmö, describes his view on religion within the Swedish public sector as *“It is clear that other human rights are considered more important... Religion is not the most important thing to talk about. Right now it is popular to talk about equality and ethnic diversity, religion is not the priority... We have become so secular that religion has become so far away. Today they think that religion is something you do at home.”* (Annex 1: MA7). Fadi Barakat openly explained how as a religious person, he feels that Sweden focus on other human rights before FoRB, resulting in religious intolerance. The handshaking situation and the quote by Fadi Barakat displays that the secular state of Sweden sometimes prioritises other human rights, such as gender equality, in relation to some of the Islamic traditions and manifestations regarding females.

As mentioned previously, in 2014 Sweden introduced adjustments to the school system, increasing the focus on religion in middle school. Still, Fadi Barakat claims that the greatest problem in Sweden regarding religious tolerance derives from education. Based on a recent visit to a middle school he said that *“Education about religion in school is so shallow. It does not go into depth, so it is not strange that people do not know. You have to go in-depth if you want to understand religion. You can not only teach a shallow explanation of religious traditions, you have to explain why the traditions are like they are. I was visiting a middle school, and as I looked in their books about religion, there was a section about the fast. It said that Muslims fast because the Imam says that they should do it. That is not why we fast! You have to teach correctly so that people really understand.”* (Annex 1: MA7). Accordingly, the Swedish school system still has a long way to go according to Fadi Barakat, if it wants to do a sufficient job promoting and protecting religious tolerance.

Even so, the different methods that Sweden uses in order to promote and protect FoRB, displays that the government puts a large emphasis on guaranteeing FoRB. Although, in some cases, other rights such as gender equality are more in focus than FoRB. However, the government is not able to fulfil its obligation of promoting and protecting FoRB completely by itself. As from what could be interpreted from the Swedish Prime Minister in his speech in Malmö first of May 2017, he might be acknowledging this as he ended the speech with *“We only know two things about the future: It will be different. And nothing is decided. The future is ours to shape. You have the power to change it. And you are not alone! We do this together. When the society is threatened by political extremists and religious fundamentalists, every democrat has a duty to step forward. So step forward! With your ideas. Your power. Your will! Become one of them, that in the future can say: I was with and created*

*security in a new time!*” (Socialdemokraterna, 2017). One can assume that he is asking the population to help create and guarantee an environment of security and harmony, which clearly includes religious tolerance.

### **5.2.3 The Sierra Leonean State and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

In the secular state of Sierra Leone, FoRB is protected and guaranteed by the constitution and is generally respected in practice (Freedom House, 2016a). Within the constitution, change of religion or belief is clearly stated as a freedom in Article 24 (1) (Sierra Leone Const. 1991:16). Bielefeldt notes that the state has ratified or acceded to the majority of human rights instruments, including the ones covering FoRB (Bielefeldt, 2013a:4). Even so, when researching about the government’s efforts in protecting and promoting religious tolerance, the government seems to put a surprisingly small emphasis on it. A reason for this may be that the country of Sierra Leone has very few financial resources. Another reason might be, as Bielefeldt claims, that since the end of the Civil War, state institutions have been extremely fragile in conjunction with bad governance, as the country tries to rebuild (Bielefeldt, 2013:13). In addition, corruption is considered pervasive at every level of governance (Freedom House, 2016a). Because of this political situation and the still ongoing process of rebuilding the nation. Bielefeldt argues that religious communities have played a crucial role in order to promote and protect religious tolerance (Bielefeldt, 2013:14).

Nevertheless, six of the interviewees in Freetown, both Christian and Muslim, believe that the state is the most important actor for their religious tolerance. One of the reasons for this was because the government is mixed Muslim and Christian. Alfa Ali Sesay, Chairman of Allumunin Mosque in the slum of Kroo Bay, argued that the mix within the government is the primary reason for religious tolerance. He further explained *“Because if those who are up there would start to perform discrimination, by for example only letting a person of a certain religion be able to have a certain position, then the people would start to follow that discrimination.”* (Annex 1: FR6). Another reason is as explained by Pastor Mohammed Anthony Kamara, as he said *“I have witnessed the president once, he attended church service... and when it was Ramadan... he also went to the mosque and then prayed... It is very simple, if the people see the president as tolerant towards religion, the people should follow and also be tolerant to religion, as we do here.”* (Annex 1: FR9). Furthermore, in Sierra Leone, both Christian and Muslim holidays are celebrated as public holidays. Sesay claims that *“The holidays are not normally presented as for example a Muslim holiday and Christians have nothing to do with them that does not exist.”* (Annex 1: FR6). These acts of solidarity seem to have a great impact on the population and religious tolerance. Moreover, another reason which might be the most

important promotion and protection of religious tolerance by the state, is that the government recognises the well-functioning IRCSL, while keeping the organisation independent. Bishop Tom Barnett, former president and founder of the IRCSL, said that *“The recognition by the government of the IRCSL as an official organ of the society, has helped religious tolerance among the people very much. Because of that the government recognises the IRCSL instrument and organisation within the country, and with authority over its people, which helps to promote the tolerance.”* (Annex 1: FR11). Compared to Sweden, the state of Sierra Leone does little to promote and protect religious tolerance. However, the small efforts they do is enough for maintaining a high level.

## **5.3 City Level and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

### **5.3.1 Introduction**

This section will focus on the promotion and protection of religious tolerance at two different levels directly associated with each city. Firstly, it will target both cities’ municipality level, which is connected to the state. Secondly, it will look at the civil society level, which is the only level within this research that operates freely without connections to each cities respective government. In short, within this section, the study aims to reach closer to the populations that actually perform the religious tolerance within each society.

### **5.3.2 Municipality of Malmö and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

Contact between different religious communities and the Municipality of Malmö is not new. Even so, until 2012 most attempts of organised activities between the two sectors have come to a quick end, while never really establishing anything fruitful for religious tolerance. However, since 2012, there has been an established network known as Coexist. Within this network, 11 representatives of different religious communities representing Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism, meet regularly, together with a neutral coordinator from the Municipality of Malmö, Malin Martelius (SST, 2014:27). According to Martelius, Coexist was established after SST received a mission from the government to increase cooperation between the public sector and the civil religious communities. This already existed at the national level and they now wanted to implement it at the local level (Annex 1: MA1). It is a long-term venture between the religious communities and the public sector, where the participants have agreed upon and signed a memorandum of understanding. The memorandum consists of three points, which the participants agreed to work on. The points include:

actively striving to safeguard society's fundamental democratic values as well as human rights, working for a safer Malmö, and based on the special nature of his assembly/religious organisation, developing sustainable inter-religious interactions (SST, 2014:47). According to Martelius, what makes Coexist effective is the religious representatives. Coexist's dialogues and activities reaches tens of thousands of people within the city (SST, 2014:27). Martelius claims that this is a great way for the municipality to gain trust among the religious communities (Annex 1: MA1). However, when Rizwan Afzal the Imam of the Ahmadiyya community in Malmö, was asked about his opinion of the municipality's work and if his community is involved in Coexist, he appeared surprised and said *"No I do not know about that. We are very much active in relations to other religions but I do not know about Coexist."* (Annex 1: MA8). When told about the participants, he quickly said *"They have not reached out to us because maybe they think we are not Muslims"*. Then he showed a newspaper article with comments by one of the Imams participating in Coexist. In the article, Imam Salahuddin Barakat said regarding Ahmadiyya that they believe their founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, to be a prophet *"...but Muhammad was the last prophet. The major Muslim universities, both Sunni and Shia, has therefore declared the Ahmadiyya as not belonging to Islam"* (Sydsvenskan, 2014). Afzal further said *"This means that he sits there with Coexist, and if they may say that we should ask Ahmadiyya to come, he would say that we are not Muslims, which means that those in Coexist receive the wrong information. It means that information of us is spread wrong... The municipality must look deeply into what they are doing and who they work with and their agenda"* (Annex 1: MA8). Afzal added that since the name is Coexist, the aim of the network is probably coexistence, meaning that everyone should be able to live together. He argued that then they need to at least invite everyone (Annex 1: MA8). This displays an existing intra-religious problem in Malmö, which may be the cause to why one denomination of Islam is not welcome to work together with the municipality for increased religious tolerance.

According to Martelius, one of the greatest reasons for the existing resistance in Malmö of coexistence and religious tolerance is that *"...there is a fear of fusion if you work together. Because then we create a fair religion, for example, someone says that "I felt better doing that from your religion than in my religion, so I will do so". The important thing is to be able to develop what separates us and understand it in some way."* (Annex 1: MA1). What Martelius explains is that there is a general fear among the religious populations that inter-religious cooperation like Coexist, will end up creating one religion for all. However according to Martelius, that is not the idea of Coexist, differences are of most importance for the network. She argues that everyone should be allowed their

differences, while still being able to coexist and be a part of Malmö's population. Martelius explained that within Coexist, the diverse participants discuss and try to solve different national and local social dilemmas among them and the society. They let every participant express his or her view of certain dilemmas. This because, the participants receive knowledge to inform their respective communities, on certain communities behaviour within specific social situations. As an example, she brought up the earlier mentioned handshaking situation as an example, as she said that *"... we have to shake hands says Löfven. But here some shake hands, some put their hand where their heart is, some hug. We have solved all this in this network, this should be done in society as well, because it is just about talking and solving."* (Annex 1: MA1) Coexist has solved this among the participants and hopefully it has reached the communities. This quote proves that the handshaking situation clearly reached and affected the grassroots in Sweden. Martelius continued by saying *"I mean democracy is not problem-free, it is almost mentally violent. But we have to cope with this if we want to create coexistence. Without it, there is no coexistence just segregation, and if it is like today, with no 'we', then we construct a gap and we will not be able to pass this bridge maybe ever. Because this handshaking question is too important, which hinders tolerance."* (Annex 1: MA1).

The Municipality of Malmö through Coexist evidentially makes an effort to promote and protect religious tolerance. Nevertheless, there still is scepticism among the population about the work of the municipality. Fadi Barakat who works for the Municipality of Malmö and is the brother of Imam Salahuddin Barakat, who participates in Coexist, is one of them. He argues that the municipality is similar to a *"...castle made of air. They paint a picture, but it is only on the surface, what you hear does not happen in reality. Within the Municipality of Malmö it is popular to talk about diversity, but within religion nothing happens."* (Annex 1: MA7). As he is the brother of one of the religious representatives and working for the municipality, this quote describes a clear picture of great disappointment regarding the city's work and failure on religious tolerance. It demonstrates that even close linked persons do not really believe in the promotion and protection of religious tolerance. In spite of this, when it comes to the importance of the municipality and in general what they do regarding religious tolerance, Wreland mentions the municipality as one of the most influential actors. She believes that the right to be religious and still be able to be employed by the municipality is of great importance for religious tolerance, *"... because then, the municipality shows that it is open and everyone should know that you belong to Malmö, and religion should not cause you to not get any job, within certain limits."* (Annex 1: MA4).

Ilmar Reepalu who for many years until 2013 had an important position within the Municipality of Malmö, including chairman of the municipality board, was several times accused of being anti-Semitic. This is because he for example asked the Jews of Malmö to dissociate with the state of Israel, automatically connecting them with the state. He also said that the Sweden Democrats had been infiltrating the city's Jewish community. In 2012, Barack Obama's special envoy of anti-Semitism even accused his language of being anti-Semitic (Fjellman, 2012). Rebecca Lillian, a Jew who works for Open Skåne, argues that Ilmar Reepalu had much impact on the anti-Semitism movement in Malmö. She mentioned how she and even some Palestinians she knew before did not see it as a problem of anti-Semitism, but an 'Ilmar Reepalu problem'. Lillian said that *"... today when he is gone it seems to be less of a problem, which makes me think that the most important actor is the municipality together with the state. In a democracy like Sweden, I think the politicians set the tone of how issues are discussed... he said things that encouraged anti-Semitism."* (Annex 1: MA5). What this shows is the very influential role politicians at the governmental and municipality level have for religious tolerance. It is clear that they sometimes have to walk on a very thin line, like in the case of the handshaking situation, where gender equality faced FoRB, while sometimes their own language and attitude can cause hatred towards groups within their societies.

### **5.3.3 Municipality of Freetown and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

Deputy Chief Administrator of Freetown City Council, Mohammed AS. Koroma, when asked of what the municipality undertakes for religious tolerance, answered: *"Nothing, no we do not do that, we just believe in peace. I am not aware of any activities, programme or anything we in the municipality do for religious tolerance. But we are mixed together and work together without problem. You see, here religious tolerance came because everyone wanted peace, even before the war. We do not have to do any promotion or protection."* (Annex 1: FR16). It seems that these behaviours of, for example, working so naturally together is the only thing the municipality does for religious tolerance. It gives the impression that there is no need to conduct anything else. There is no discrimination between the religions within the municipality, instead there is a great and mutual respect. This is clearly pointed out by Tom Barnett, as he claims that *"Whenever there is something in the city council, a meeting or whatever, they always start with Christian and Muslim prayers, that is a given."* (Annex 1: FR11). This research could not identify anything further that the Municipality of Freetown conducts for maintaining its high level of religious tolerance.



#### **5.3.4 Civil Society of Malmö and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

The civil society of Malmö provides several networks, activities, organisations and other efforts, working directly or indirectly with promotion and protection of religious tolerance. One example is Tro och Tolerans (Faith and Tolerance), which was initiated during the war in the Balkans. It is one of the oldest networks in Sweden striving for increased tolerance, through inter-religious dialogue (Annex 1: MA3). Another one is Agora Malmö, which is an association working with promoting tolerance through interaction, as it wants to prove that culture and dialogue can unite people. According to Agora Malmö, it is a unique coalition of representatives from Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The association has no political or religious ties and everyone is welcomed to participate regardless of their background. Within the association, exists Agora Unga (Youth), where young people from different religions meets and have fun together while maintaining an inter-religious dialogue. Agora Unga brings these youths on different trips with the aim of teaching them anti-discrimination (Agora Malmö, 2017). Furthermore, there is Young People Against anti-Semitism and Xenophobia (UMAF), who work against anti-Semitism and Xenophobia among youth. Their methods include visits to schools, educational activities, trips to concentration camps and other activities. It started in Malmö by then teenager Siavosh Derakhti. UMAF has received international recognition, as even Barack Obama requested to visit Derakhti during a visit to Sweden. Before the name of UMAF was Young Muslims Against anti-Semitism (UMAF, 2017).

The results of this research indicate that the Abrahamic religions are well represented among most of the efforts of promoting and protecting religious tolerance within the civil society of Malmö, while the other religious communities participate in some. An example is Imam Salahuddin Barakat, who has faced a lot of criticism, due to his executions of controversial Muslim traditions. He refuses for example, to shake the hands with women. Even so, he is a profile within the inter-religious civil society, participating and publicly acknowledging the importance of religious tolerance. An example is his representation within Coexist (Annex 1: MA1). After the documentary in 2015, displaying the anti-Semitism occurring in Malmö, Salahuddin Barakat went public in the media together with Rabbi Shneur Kesselman. Here Salahuddin Barakat offered his support and will to cooperate with Kesselman regarding prevention of anti-Semitism. He also acknowledged young Muslims contribution to it. Moreover, Salahuddin Barakat, stated that Malmö would not be complete without its Jews (Carlson, 2015).

Additionally, this research has identified that the main method used by the different civil society efforts is education by inter-religious dialogues and interactions. These efforts are always planned

meetings, as inter-religious dialogue rarely happens naturally. A great example of this is Fråga Religionen (Ask the Religion), which developed within Coexist and today is organised mostly by the religious civil society alone. This project mainly aims at letting high school students meet with a group of different religious representatives while having a straight and honest dialogue. The students are allowed to ask whatever questions they want regarding the religious communities (SST, 2014:27). Wreland who is the Christian representative, claims that the students often use this project in order to compare the similarities and differences between the religions. A comparison that Wreland and the other representatives often faces, is the one regarding the faith in the same God among the Abrahamic religions. This question, Wreland argues, is quite tricky to work with regarding religious tolerance as she explains that “... all Muslims that I meet says that it is clear that we believe in the same God, for them it is obvious. However, from the Christian side, it is not as obvious for many, and this can have many reasons, and I think it can be due to that Christianity through history is missionary, and you are supposed to make everyone disciples... the goal is to make everyone Christian. However, a lot of my Christian friends think it is obvious that we believe in the same God.” (Annex 1: MA4). The difference in attitude among Christians and Muslims clearly is an issue, which Wreland sometimes believe is the cause of religious intolerance towards her. One reason for this is gay marriage within the Church of Sweden. Wreland says that it is “...often young Muslim boys that get upset because of this... but they probably see it as going against God... for them it is stronger that we believe in the same God... the interesting thing here is that we believe in the same God, but is it ok to think different?” (Annex 1: MA4). The differences among Christians’ belief in one God or not, as well as some Muslims attitude in respecting God differently is something that Fråga Religionen works with often. The project strongly believes that the understanding of different beliefs and traditions among the population is of much importance for religious tolerance and coexistence.

Moreover, the inter-religious network works with improving the public understanding and respect of religious differences. The fear of religious fusion through these types of efforts is noticeable among the population, including the religious communities. Wreland points out, that a great deal of the time she has to explain to people the true aim of inter-religious efforts such as Fråga Religionen. Wreland says that “...then many thinks, oh well now we are going to be one. Christlam is something that I hear, but then I think it is the complete opposite. I have been working with this for five years, and I have never met anyone in the inter-religious collaborations where anyone thinks that we should erase the things that differentiate us and become one. It is the opposite, we should be allowed to be with our differences, that is what enriches us, and it can be painful and hard. But if I will be able to stand

*for what I believe in, the other one also has to be able to stand for what he or she believes in.*” (Annex 1: MA4). This study finds that the general aim of the inter-religious civil society efforts in Malmö, is that it wants to make Malmö a city with a coexistence of harmony, most often with the differences used as the focus of the promotion and protection of religious tolerance.

*“As the largest religious community in Malmö and Sweden, we have a specific responsibility to counter intolerance in different ways. Church of Sweden as a unit does not see other religions as a threat or competition, and towards our brother and sister religions, the majority within Church of Sweden would feel that we serve the same God.”* (Annex 1: MA2). These are the words of Maria Bergius, Priest at the Church of Sweden in Malmö. She clearly explains that the Church of Sweden is not worried about other religions in Malmö. She claims that the issue of the same God, is not that great within the church, clearly pointing at other denominations as the holdback within Christianity in Malmö. Later, Bergius points out that the church is involved in several inter-religious networks, and it also stands up for tolerance during times of crisis. She mentions the role of the Church of Sweden during the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 as a clear example of when the church helped. Together with other religious communities, it arranged help for the refugees while also displaying tolerance between the different communities (Annex 1: MA2). Bergius as well claims that today there is *“...a will from the state and the municipality to let the churches do more and take on a greater role when it comes to religious tolerance, because then they do not have to.”* while her viewpoint is that *“it is their responsibility to protect the citizens’ rights, freedoms and duties, not the Church.”* (Annex 1: MA2). This statement clearly displays that Bergius believes that the church and the other religious communities should not have to do any more for FoRB. However, later she acknowledged the importance of the religious communities regarding FoRB, as she said that *“... we can have as many nice state projects as we want, but nothing will ever happen if it is not the two that sits down and talk with each other, this is as well the thing that erases the religious intolerance ugly sibling, racism.”* (Annex 1: MA2). This quote and the former summarises the general attitude in Malmö among the civil society participants for this study. While categorising the state and municipality as the clear primary actors, it still realises that the state cannot do it without them. In addition, the main way to do it is through inter-religious dialogue.

As described above, there are numerous civil society attempts relating to the promotion and protection of religious tolerance. Even so, these efforts are not sufficient enough according to Fadi Barakat. He explains that *“All these inter-religious projects are working on their own islands, there is no will to cooperate on a greater scale. There should be more cooperation between these organisations or*

*projects. Because there exists work within religious tolerance, but it does not reach the population. There is no impact, just a newspaper article every now and then, it does not lead to anything.*” (Annex 1: MA7). He adds that one of the main reasons for this is that “... religions are excluded from the society, because it becomes more and more atheistic, and this regards all of Sweden. People think that you are less competent if you are religious, because it is not good to believe in God. As I said before it is all about the non-existent knowledge.” (Annex 1: MA7). Fadi Barakat argues that the civil society working for religious tolerance should work more together before it will be able to reach the general population, especially those who do not respect religion as much. He argues that these individual projects will not have the same impact as one joint project. Afzal who has lived in Freetown for five years described his view of both Malmö and Freetown. He claims that the reason why there is not as much religious tolerance in Malmö in comparison to Freetown is because of openness. He said that Freetown’s “...kind of openness between religions, we cannot see in Malmö.” (Annex 1: MA8).

### **5.3.5 Civil Society of Freetown and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

In order to describe how the religious civil society of Freetown promotes and protects religious tolerance in general, the main attitude of Sierra Leoneans should be described first. Reverend Alimamy Kargbo who is the national youth coordinator for the IRCSL, explains that “*What primarily holds us together first, is that we are Sierra Leoneans first, religion comes second, we are Sierra Leoneans... We Sierra Leoneans come from the same mother and father, we take that as a key.*” (Annex 1: FR14). Furthermore, Reverend Dr Osman J. Fornah, who is the Secretary General of the IRCSL and the chairman of the Sierra Leone Human Rights Commission, describes Sierra Leoneans mentality as “...we believe in communal living, people live in a community, and within the community, there is no distinction between one family and the other. My children are also the children of the next brother, and that brothers children are my own children. So when I see them misbehaving, I have the responsibility to correct them. Not like in Europe or as in the United States were people say mind your own business, this is my child and I raise it” (Annex 1: FR13). This attitude perfectly mirrors how the civil society and the society as a whole promotes and protects religious tolerance. There is a clear focus on the togetherness and similarities between the religions in society, it is a part of their daily life. A proof of that could be that most religious leaders during the interviews used the examples that they invite people of the other religions to their house of worship and holidays as usual customs. Kamara said “... Pastors and Imams are welcome to each other’s places of worship, and to

*welcome a man of another religion sends a message of tolerance. So an Imam allows a Pastor to preach in his house, also a Pastor allows an Imam to preach in his house, so it really creates a sense of tolerance.*” (Annex 1: FR9). Sesay explained that during the holidays, many of the people and the religious leaders are mixed between the religions, celebrating the holidays together, because “... *we believe in being as one.*” (Annex 1: FR6).

Additionally, almost all interviewees, both Christians and Muslims, mentioned that they preach the similarities between the two religions to their communities. Sheikh Abu Bakarr Conteh, who is one of the founders as well as the president of the IRC SL, described that religious leaders preach peace since both the Quran and the Bible puts great importance on it (Annex 1: FR12). Both Muslims and Christians, with the exception of one Priest, told me that the belief in one God is one of the main pillars for religious tolerance. Barnett said that the teaching of one God helps to give everyone a “... *basic understanding of God, we worship differently, but we worship one God, that is the underlying thing.*” (Annex 1: FR11). The Sierra Leonean culture has greatly impacted the religious life within the country, resulting in great religious tolerance

The IRC SL, has already been mentioned several times. This organisation is seen by many as of great importance for the maintained religious tolerance within, not just Freetown, but the whole of Sierra Leone. Tom Barnett explained that they have branches all over the country, wherever there are Muslim and Christian communities, which gives them a great network (Annex 1: FR11). The IRC SL was established during the Civil War in 1997, as the participants of the World Conference for Religion and Peace decided to support religious groups in Sierra Leone and their strive for peace. A representative was sent to Sierra Leone with the mandate to form an inter-religious organisation, even if such organisations had existed well before the war started (Portaankorva, 2015:82).

The IRC SL acted as one of the mediators during the Civil War’s Lomé peace negotiations, which was a request by the Revolutionary United Front. This was possible due to the fact that fighters of both the Revolutionary United Front and the Army were religiously mixed. They also had great respect for their religious leaders (Graybill, 2017:21-22). Because of this, the IRC SL became an important actor for the peace agreement. Since then they have had a prominent and well-known status within the Sierra Leonean society. Barnett claims that “... *after the war people also started to use religious tolerance as an instrument for peace... now it had much more importance since it became an instrument for promoting peace and harmony you know.*” (Annex 1: FR11). Barnett points out how important peace is for Sierra Leoneans and religious tolerance. As the IRC SL played an

important role for the nation's peace, they are highly regarded by the population and the government. According to Chernor Alhaji Abu Bakarr, Imam at Rakman Mosque, the IRC SL “... *first of all, preach peace, then they make everybody feel as one*” (Annex 1: FR5). This description of the IRC SL's promotion and protection of religious tolerance spreads to the religious communities, which creates a great impact among society. The research suggests that even if not mentioned during the interviews, the Civil War was a landmark for the country, being a constant reminder of terrible times. Nobody wants to go back to those times and since religious tolerance factored into the peace, it is today more important than it was even before the war.

Furthermore, the IRC SL is an NGO which sometimes acts as a tool for the government, when it wants the opinion of the people or religious advice. “*The IRC SL plays a very important role as the government talk to them and the IRC SL talks to the people. The IRC SL plays a role for the people. So when the government goes through this channel, it promotes peace, because the people trust the IRC SL.*” (Annex 1: FR6). In addition, Fornah gave the example of the recent abortion bill that was originally passed by the Parliament, which would have made abortion legal. However, the government asked for the opinion of the IRC SL, and they gave their point of view to the government, as they described how God sees abortion as taking the life of a person. Because of this, there was no passing of the bill (Annex 1: FR13). Conteh expresses his view of IRC SL's importance for the government as he says that “...*the politicians are religious people as well. They go to Church and Mosque. So they need us, that's why they come to us.*” (Annex 1: FR12). This displays the power of the IRC SL and the religious civil society in Freetown and Sierra Leone. This might also explain why religious tolerance is so strong in the country, as the people see these religious leaders working together representing their own religions, while still being able to confront the government as the voice of the people.

## **6 Comparative Analysis and Discussion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This section will analyse the answers of the 24 interviewees and data collected through the ideas and theories presented in Religious Tolerance in a Human Rights Framework. This will be done through sections comparing each of the four levels connected to Malmö and Freetown presented in this study. Each level will be compared by the promotion and protection of religious tolerance. The main purpose is to identify and explain where the main differences and the possible inspiration could be found inside each level. This will be followed by a discussion regarding the overall analysis of the research.

### **6.2 International Level and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

Both states have signed and ratified the ICCPR, meaning that FoRB is protected by law in both countries. As Sweden has signed and ratified the ECHR, it proves that Sweden and Europe have committed themselves to FoRB further than the ICCPR. This since the ECHR states in Article 9(1) that everyone has the right to change his or her religion or belief (See section: 5.1.6.1). However for Sierra Leone, as previously presented in section 5.1.6.2, there is a lack of international treaties distinctly supporting change of religion or belief. In addition, Sierra Leone also is a member of the OIC, where several member states do not support change of religion or belief. However, section 5.2.3 identifies that Sierra Leone includes the freedom to change religion or belief in its constitution.

Sweden and Sierra Leone display a will to collaborate with the UN if problems with FoRB appears. This is shown by the extended standing invitation both states provide for all UN thematic special procedures (See section: 5.1.4.3 and 5.1.5.3). Even if section 5.1.3 identifies the impact of these mechanisms of surveillance and implementation as questionable, because they do not necessarily put much pressure and force on states to do anything in reality. The fact that they provide an extended standing invitation proves that both states are willing to collaborate and receive thoughts and recommendations on their promotion and protection of FoRB.

It is clear that the UN struggles to find political common ground on FoRB, as exemplified in section 5.1.2 with the of making the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief rather than a convention in 1981. Despite this, when it comes to religious tolerance, the UN has had an impact on both Sweden and Sierra Leone. The *International Level and Freedom of Religion or Belief* chapter, finds that both states clearly have

agreed to and been inspired by the international human rights standards regarding FoRB. Because of this, FoRB should have reached Malmö and Freetown, where an impact on respective population is expected, benefitting religious tolerance. The next sections will analyse the implementation on the domestic level, addressing the question: How has the respective implementation affected religious tolerance in Malmö and Freetown?

### **6.3 State Level and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

FoRB is guaranteed by Sweden's and Sierra Leone's constitution, however the focus on FoRB is different between the countries. Within both states, there are clear differences in the countries limitation of FoRB, which have an impact on religious tolerance. The two states have taken different approaches to limiting the right of FoRB, as allowed under Article 18(3) of the ICCPR. The handshaking situation, presented in section 5.2.2, where former Minister of Housing, Yasri Khan, refused to shake hands with a female reporter, demonstrates an example of how Galeotti claims that horizontal problems of tolerance from a majority towards a minority can become vertical (See section: 3.1.2). Furthermore, as this incident displayed how different human rights can collide, it proves that the majority in Sweden focuses more on gender equality than certain Muslim traditions and manifestations connected to FoRB. Because of this, religious minorities in Sweden manifesting their beliefs in a way that expresses gender inequality, such as refusing to shake hands with women, most likely will face complaints from the majority and thereby the state.

Even so, Sweden allowed itself to become multicultural and religiously diverse, by welcoming a large number of immigrants from other religious cultures to settle in the country. Therefore, the state should have been better prepared for cultural clashes like this. Sweden might have been one of the Western states who Walzer argues before saw religious tolerance as something easy to achieve, and could not believe that other states did not allow FoRB to the same magnitude as them (See section: 3.3.1). Still, former UN Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities Arcot Krishnaswami, already in 1960 said that problems of intolerance within societies often occurs towards a newly settled minority from the settled majority (See section: 3.3.1). This means that Sweden should have been aware of the challenge, which they maybe were, yet today Sweden is facing problems with religious intolerance, which homogeneous Sweden did not.

From a Western perspective compared to many Muslim perspectives, it is hard to deny that refusing to shake hands with women is gender discrimination (See section: 3.2.2). However, there are



numerous different ways of greeting people that does not require the shaking of hands. This situation might be difficult to solve through an overlapping consensus, where the state and the Muslim communities, finds common ground on religious traditions and manifestations in relation to gender equality (See section: 3.2.3). Still it is proof that the state and its religious communities need to work closer together, so that situations such as the handshaking situation does not lead to more religious intolerance. The closer to an overlapping consensus on FoRB the state and its religious communities would come, the easier it would be to agree on complicated incidents such as the handshaking situation, which would help support religious tolerance from the majority.

Additionally, as Khan was an appointed minister, this confirms that Sweden fits in with the argument by Hackett in section 3.3.3, that states often support the belief part of FoRB, while not supporting certain manifestations and traditions. Furthermore, it also fits with what Bielefeldt claims within the same section that secular societies have started to oppose FoRB and certain religious traditions, many of the critics within secular societies today regard FoRB as a right of pre-modern times. Because of this, members of the recently settled Muslim minority in which Khan belongs, are not welcome to politically represent Sweden. This presents a problem, since for many people these types of religious manifestations are of great importance (See section: 3.2.1). This means that Muslims who perform certain traditions and manifestations of gender inequality have to choose between religion and being able to politically represent the state. As the majority prioritise gender equality, this certainly does not increase religious tolerance. Presented in section 5.2.3, six of the interviewees in Freetown mentioned that the most important promotion and protection of religious tolerance is performed by the government, because they are mixed Muslim and Christian together. If the Swedish government would like to promote and protect religious tolerance by showing the people that Christians and Muslims work well together, as in Sierra Leone. Again, this requires an overlapping consensus, focusing on Muslim traditions and manifestations in relation to gender equality, where it is agreed which traditions and manifestations that are allowed for a person who politically represents Sweden.

Furthermore, this can lead to problems of morality among the majority in Sweden. Imagine unaccompanied refugee minors and all the horrible experiences these children often have been through. By demanding them to shake hands when they come to Sweden, as Stefan Löfven did, sets a clear limit for when religious tolerance end in Sweden. As presented in section 3.1.1, tolerance has different limits between the philosophical and the UNESCO definitions of tolerance. The philosophical limit is decided by the tolerator, while in UNESCO it is when human rights are violated. Still, when imagining the situation of unaccompanied refugee minors, when considering the moral

part of Article 18 (3) of the ICCPR, where should the tolerance limit be? Is gender equality so important that some Muslim children who have suffered unimaginably, should have to immediately change some of their religious manifestations and traditions? Which human right should be in focus? This illustrates once again how important it is to reach an overlapping consensus between the state and its Muslim population on the focus of FoRB in relation to gender equality. Sometimes, depending on the situation, Muslim manifestations and traditions of gender inequality might be personally allowed from a moral perspective.

Today, Sweden is in a complicated position balancing FoRB and other human rights. In Sierra Leone the population and the state have a different issues. Killing women because parts of the population believe in witchcraft (See section: 2.3), female genital mutilation (See section: 5.1.5.3) and the recently declined abortion bill (See section: 5.3.5) are examples of this. As previously mentioned in section 3.3.2, FoRB protects the believers not the belief, therefore acts of witch hunting and female genital mutilation are violations of FoRB. However, the view on abortion differentiates Sweden and Sierra Leone. According to Osman Fornah, the Secretary General of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) and the chairman of the Sierra Leone Human Rights Commission, the parliament voted to make abortion legal, yet due to the influence of the IRCSL, it was kept illegal (See section: 5.3.5). This illustrates the importance of religion within the legal system of the secular state of Sierra Leone. As the IRCSL believe that God sees abortion as taking the life of a person, they use FoRB to protect the foetus. However, as teenage pregnancy often leads to girls being deprived of their education in Sierra Leone (See section: 2.3), this proves that when it comes to abortion there is more focus on FoRB in relation to gender equality. When teenage girls get pregnant they are often not allowed the same educational opportunities as boys are, therefore it is an act of gender inequality. The handshaking situation and abortion are two different things regarding FoRB and gender equality, yet this still illustrates how different the two states focus on FoRB in relation to gender equality when it comes to the view of women within each society. Therefore, increasing religious tolerance in Sweden by focusing more on FoRB in relation to gender equality, is unrealistic. This would mean that Sweden would go against the will of the majority and its culture.

Religious holidays is an area Sweden, at state level, can draw inspiration from Sierra Leone. However, as the religious minorities are still small in relation to the Lutheran Christian majority (See Section: 2.1), this might not be perceived as urgent yet. Even so, Alfa Ali Sesay, who is a Mosque Chairman, and Pastor Mohammed Anthony Kamara in section 5.2.3, argues that having both Christian and Muslim holidays nationally recognised in Sierra Leone is proven to be important for religious

tolerance. Celebrating together has erased most of the notion that Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr is only for Muslims and Christmas is only for Christians. This means that everyone who wants to is welcome in Sierra Leone to participate in the other religions holidays and traditions. Sesay in section 5.3.5, says that during the holidays many religious leaders and people are mixed between religions, because they like the feeling of being as one. In addition, as presented in section 3.2.1, religious holidays can be of great importance for religious people. Therefore, greater recognition of non-Christian holidays from the Swedish state could lead to greater religious tolerance in the future. This does not mean that every religious holiday should be a public holiday. Instead, the inspiration derives from education and knowledge, which is not as needed in Sierra Leone, because of their culture (See section: 5.3.5). In Sierra Leone many learn about and participate in each other's holidays as a part of life. Fadi Barakat, who works for the Municipality of Malmö, claims that education about religion in Swedish schools is too shallow, he explains this by reference to a Swedish schoolbook he read, that states: Muslims fast because the Imam says so (See section: 5.2.2). Therefore, in Sweden if more efforts were made to educate in-depth about religious holidays, this could possibly result in a greater interest and understanding among the population. For example, many would learn that Christianity also has a fasting period. If the government would be serious about this, it could have a positive impact on religious tolerance in the future: the future which they themselves worry about (See section: 5.2.2). Still, this might be problematic to implement as more education about religion likely will irritate many of those who do not care much about religion. However, as Swedish society is changing, the need for education and knowledge about 'others' increases, which is important for tolerance overall according to UNESCO, Hastrup and Bielefeldt (See section: 3.1). In Sierra Leone they learned how to live together and celebrate each other's holidays a long time ago. Therefore more education regarding religious holidays might be a first small step for the Swedish state and its education about religion, to improve religious tolerance in society.

Analysing the different methods at state level, the data collected for the *Empirical Data* chapter presents that the Swedish state is dedicating more effort and resources on the promotion and protection of religious tolerance than Sierra Leone. This is likely explained by the financial situation of both countries as well as their respective past. The state of Sierra Leone has been replaced by the religious communities and especially IRCSL in the promotion and protection of religious tolerance, while the government contributes to tolerance by showing respect for both Muslims and Christians and recognising the work of IRCSL (See section: 5.2.3). In Sweden, the state has led much of the promotion and protection of religious tolerance through efforts such as Commission for Government

Support for Faith Communities (SST) and a special police unit. If the Swedish state would draw inspiration from this, by increasing the role of the religious civil society regarding religious tolerance, it may lead to greater religious tolerance. However, the civil society focused on religion in Sweden recognises the state as the primary actor, and from what this research can identify the religious civil society in Malmö prefers the roles as they are now, which is in accordance with international human rights (See section: 5.3.5). The government cannot use excuses of poverty or rebuilding the nation after a civil war as in Sierra Leone (See section: 5.2.3). Therefore, it is not realistic that this will happen in Sweden.

Generally, it is difficult to find inspiration from which the Swedish state can draw from Sierra Leone, with the exception of increased recognition of religious holidays, through education. History has shaped the countries differently, mostly benefitting Sweden, with an exception being religious tolerance. In Sierra Leone people have grown up together in a communitarian culture and learned each other's habits and religions (See sections: 2.3). In Sweden, many have not had the opportunity to grow up in communities with people of other religions. Furthermore, being religious in Sweden varies more than in Sierra Leone, because even if there is no data on it presented in this research, there is a large part of the population that does not consider themselves religious. Therefore, when people practice religion regularly in Sweden, they are often seen as peculiar or strange, with Khan as a clear example. Another example is Fadi Barakat in section 5.3.4, as he says that today in Sweden many see religious people as incompetent, because many argue that it is not good to believe in God. In Sierra Leone it is different, religion is normal and it exists in everyday life, there is in general no contradictions between passionate religious people and open-minded religious people (See section: 2.3). Furthermore, Imam Alimamy Kargbo, says that the greatest focus in Sierra Leone is not the religion, it is that they are Sierra Leonean (See section: 5.3.5), which may be helped by that 85 percent of the people feels attached to African spirituality (See section: 2.3). This has shaped religion into a sense of compassion, brotherhood and concern, which illustrates one of religion's two faces of social behaviour by Clarke and Powell in section 3.2.1. Compare this with that Sweden is one of the most individualised countries in the world (See section: 2.1) and has had a large recent in flow of immigrants, the nations are far apart in how people interact with each other among the population. It might explain why Imam Rizwan Afzal says that the greatest difference between the nations is their openness (See section: 5.3.4) Therefore, religion in Sweden is today illustrating more the dark face of social behaviour presented by Clarke and Powell. In the future when Sweden has had the chance to adapt to its multi-religious society the state may have increased its religious tolerance.

## **6.4 Municipality Level and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

From the data collected for this study, the Municipality of Malmö cannot draw a lot of inspiration from its counterpart in Freetown (See section: 5.3.3). The main difference among the municipalities according to this research is that Malmö is trying to promote and protect religious tolerance through establishing and managing the inter-religious network Coexist (See: section: 5.3.2). Meanwhile, in Freetown, Mohammed AS. Koroma, the Deputy Chief Administrator of Freetown City Council, argues that due to its culture and history, the Municipality of Freetown does not have the need to promote and protect religious tolerance (See section: 5.3.3). Since there are no municipal efforts to draw inspiration from Freetown, the work of Coexist, the Municipality of Malmö's primary tool, will be analysed and compared in the civil society level. As there exists efforts similar to Coexist at the civil society level in Freetown.

In section 5.3.3, Mohammed AS. Koroma, expresses that within the Municipality of Freetown religions work together in respect and harmony. This is the aim of the Municipality of Malmö also, as the municipality focuses on good coexistence. People of different religions are working together in the municipality, as evidenced by the Muslim Fadi Barakat's employment within the municipality. However, as he expresses a negative opinion concerning the municipality's inter-religious work not being what they present it to be, the Municipality of Malmö still has a long road to go, both within itself and in relation to the religious population. Fadi Barakat further claims that other matters such as gender equality receives more focus than FoRB within the Municipality of Malmö (See section: 5.3.2). If it was to follow the pattern of the Sierra Leonean state, the Municipality of Freetown most likely would interpret and weigh human rights differently. If the Municipality of Malmö was to change its focus, it would have to oppose the majority that weighs more towards human rights such as gender equality in relation to FoRB, similar to state level.

Furthermore an important point to make regarding the Municipality of Malmö, is that it can contribute to religious intolerance, but must ensure that it does not. According to Rebecca Lillian who is a Jew living in Malmö, the several comments towards Jews made by Ilmar Reepalu, made some believe, including herself, that the anti-Semitic problems were encouraged by the chairman of the municipality board(See section: 5.3.2). This shows how important the municipality is for the city's religious tolerance. Therefore, the Municipality of Malmö should make sure that the municipality does not threat religious tolerance.

## **6.5 Civil Society Level and Freedom of Religion or Belief**

Bielefeldt argues that in distinction from many other societies, religious diversity is seen as having united the nation of Sierra Leone (See section: 2.3). This makes it easy for the religious civil society to maintain its religious tolerance. In Malmö, the city still has to learn how to coexist with its religious diversity and cultural differences. Inter-religious work is an effort in Malmö, while in Freetown it is part of everyday life as much as it is an effort. Because of the communitarian culture, religious leaders in Sierra Leone grow up in mixed religious communities and even families. This has a great impact on tolerance since this means that the leaders clearly have more knowledge about other religions, thereby making it easier for them to tolerate and spread tolerance within their communities. In Malmö, this is not as normal, and several of the religious leaders are not from Sweden. The religious leaders in Malmö, therefore, do not have these experiences of growing up with the knowledge needed, to spread religious tolerance among their religious communities. As presented in section 3.1.1, both UNESCO, Hastrup and Bielefeldt claim that education and knowledge is of great importance for tolerance in general. Again, this makes the promotion and protection of religious tolerance for Freetown's religious civil society much easier than Malmö's. Another example displaying the different preconditions between the cities is shown by the fear of religious fusion within parts of Malmö. According to both Coexist coordinator Malin Martelius (Section: 5.3.2) and High School Priest Ida Wreland (Section: 5.3.4), fusion of religions is a fear among the population, especially the religious population. While, in Freetown practicing Islam and Christianity simultaneously is publicly accepted (See section: 2.3).

Another great difference between the two religious civil societies relates to the notion of power and the ability to impact religious tolerance positively. As previously mentioned in the *State Level* section of the analysis, this is a result of the historical and cultural background of both cities. The IRC SL has replaced the role of the state and the Municipality of Freetown in the promotion and protection of religious tolerance. This has made the organisation very powerful within the country. Furthermore, the fact that the organisation is led by well-known religious leaders, gives the IRC SL great power and the chance to control religious tolerance. This is because the majority of the population, including the government and the municipality, practises religion regularly (See sections: 2.3, 5.3.3 and 5.3.5). In Malmö the civil society regarding religious tolerance is weaker, as much more responsibility is put on the state and the municipality to fix problems of religious tolerance. Maria Bergius, a priest at Church of Sweden, argues that this is the responsibility of the state, although she believes that the religious communities play an important role. She further believes that the state and the municipality

wants to increase the role of the religious communities, because then they do not have to do as much (See section: 5.3.4). By analysing Bergius, it seems as if the religious civil society in Malmö want the roles to remain as they are between the state, municipality and civil society.

Sweden and Malmö are clearly in better shape to fulfil their human rights obligations compared to Sierra Leone and Freetown. Therefore if the Municipality of Malmö were to increase the role and responsibility of its religious civil society to the level of IRC SL in Freetown. The religious civil society would most likely complain and refuse this change because it believes that as long as Malmö and Sweden are well functioning, this does not need to happen. In addition, it would mean that the Municipality of Malmö would lose control on the situation of religious tolerance, and it is unlikely that they would want to do this. Additionally, another problem with increasing the responsibility of the civil society working on religious tolerance is how to reach people that are not very affiliated with religion. Having the secular Municipality of Malmö in the role of the IRC SL therefore makes more sense, since it reaches everybody. Even so, the municipality and the state has taken a step towards including the religious civil society more, with the establishing of Coexist, which promotes cooperation between the religious civil society, the Municipality of Malmö and the state (See section: 5.3.2). This is similar, yet not to the same level as how the government of Sierra Leone uses the IRC SL in order to reach the population (See section: 5.3.5). How much further this could increase before civil society says enough is unknown. Yet, if the state does not find itself in complete disarray, it is hard to imagine that the religious civil society will reach the level of power of IRC SL.

Since the municipalities and its civil societies are closest to the cities populations, this is mainly where local solutions for religious tolerance problems can be discovered. A substantial and important difference between Coexist and the IRC SL is that all the interviewees in Freetown knew about the organisation. There is no reason to believe that there are religious communities not aware of IRC SL, because of their historical importance for the establishment of peace (See section: 5.3.5). According to one of its founders, Tom Barnett, the IRC SL reaches every assembly representing Christianity and Islam (See section: 5.3.5). Coexist, on the other hand, is not even known by all Malmö's religious leaders, probably even less by the general population. This is exemplified in section 5.3.2, where Rizwan Afzal, the Imam of the Ahmadiyya community, did not know about the network. Since Coexist is a product of the Municipality of Malmö, and the organisation represents the city, it could be of great importance for religious tolerance, if at least one religious leader from each religious community were invited to participate. The current situation gives the impression that the Municipality of Malmö prioritises the religious denominations of the 11 representatives from four

religions above other religions and denominations (See section: 5.3.2). Religious communities left outside might see this as discrimination. As the goal is to create peaceful coexistence within the city, this represents a problem. Especially if you have representatives within the network as Salahuddin Barakat who is openly intolerant towards the Ahmadiyya community (See section: 5.3.2). This could have devastating impact on tolerance towards the Ahmadiyya community. A method of at least inviting representatives from all religious communities to participate is something Coexist and the Municipality of Malmö could draw inspiration from the IRC SL in Freetown. It would likely create some arguments, disputes and chaos among the participants, yet good coexistence among everybody in Malmö will be difficult to reach before all religions and denominations are allowed to participate in Coexist. The method used today, will certainly not make Malmö a ‘one’ anytime soon, the city will continue to be ‘us vs. them’ which Seul claims can lead to conflicts worse than what the situation currently is in Malmö (See section: 3.2.1).

Furthermore, as IRC SL touches all religious communities of Islam and Christianity, it also presents an ability to work for common goals and aims, including religious tolerance. The religious communities know the aim of the IRC SL and therefore each community can contribute. In Malmö, there is a greater need of developing an overlapping consensus for work on religious tolerance among the city and its religious communities, compared to Freetown. Fadi Barakat argues that the efforts for increased religious tolerance in Malmö all exists on their own islands (See section: 5.3.4), meaning that there is no will to cooperate for the same goal and aim between the networks. The civil society working to increase religious tolerance, could be inspired by the religious civil society in Freetown, by trying to find a common goal and method among the participants, since it would likely have more of an impact then. The IRC SL and the religious communities in Freetown focuses to a great extent on peace and the feeling of being one, which are two important concepts for the population since the civil war (See sections: 2.3 and 5.3.5). The data collected for this research suggests that the civil society efforts of Malmö also have many common aims among them, especially coexistence (See sections: 5.3.2 and 5.3.5). This is most likely because of the city’s increase in religious and cultural diversity since the 1980s, with for example the so-called refugee crisis still very present (See section: 2.2). Using the concept of coexistence and the memories of the refugee crisis could make Malmö more as one, if it is to be used in a good and consistent way agreed by both the city and the religious communities. Even if there were many people against Sweden’s acceptance of a high number of refugees in 2015, as demonstrated by the popularity of the anti-immigrant party the Sweden Democrats (See sections: 2.1 and 2.2). Still, as Maria Bergius says in section 5.3.4, this was a time



when the Swedish Church and many of the other religious communities came together and helped refugees. This is something that could bring many people from different backgrounds together. It proves that the religions can work together when they find an overlapping consensus as they did in 2015, regarding the treatment of refugees.

Furthermore, the civil societies of Malmö and Freetown use two opposing methods. The sections on *Civil Society and Freedom of Religion or Belief* identifies that in Freetown it is common to focus on the similarities between religions, while in Malmö the focus is on the differences. The reasons for this might be that Freetown's culture and history has made most of the population relatively similar to one another, while in Malmö the culture and history has throughout the last decades differentiated the population. Walzer and UNESCO talk about tolerance of most importance for people to be able to be different and still coexist in peace and harmony, as differences are simply dependent on tolerance (See section: 3.1.1). However, Galeotti claims that intolerance is increasing because people are today focusing on the differences instead of the similarities (See section: 3.1.2). Here the cities have chosen two separate paths. One of the cities has a high level of tolerance and the other is struggling. Focusing on the differences one can argue makes people forced to reach tolerance, while focusing on the similarities gives the impression that tolerance develops in a less resistant way. Also, focusing on the similarities likely creates more of an 'us' instead of 'them' feeling. This could be an inspiration for the civil society working for religious tolerance in Malmö. The method of focusing on similarities could lead to increased religious tolerance among the religious communities. While Malmö is more religiously diverse than Freetown, most religions still have similarities between them, which are often similar to the vision of human rights, as argued by Bielefeldt (See section: 3.2.3). Therefore, developing an overlapping consensus focusing on similarities between the city and the religious communities, could have a positive impact on religious tolerance in Malmö. A complicated first step could be to try and find an overlapping consensus on if Christianity and Islam worship the same God (See section: 5.3.4). Inviting persons not as connected to religion and talk about similarities would probably help as well, because religions often have similarities to human rights. Since focusing on the differences has clearly not had a great impact in Malmö, it appears useful to try focusing on the similarities as advised by Galeotti.

## 6.6 Discussion Regarding the Research

This research's data suggests that to increase religious tolerance in Malmö, Freetown is not a realistic model on the whole. The societies are simply too different. Yet, realistically there are some things from Freetown which could be used as inspiration for increasing religious tolerance in Malmö. Some of them have been presented previously, yet there is one inspiration that could work as the foundation for the promotion and protection of religious tolerance in Malmö. This inspiration reaches all four levels of the research and is therefore relevant for more societies than just Malmö. The inspiration regards the knowledge you receive from living, which makes you personally develop a religious tolerance towards others. The communitarian culture which exists in Sierra Leone and Freetown provides education supporting religious tolerance. An example of this is how naturally they celebrate Muslim and Christian holidays together. Since the majority of the population in Sweden and Malmö are adapted to an individualistic culture (See section: 2.1) where religions are not as mixed within communities and families, education supporting religious tolerance is not as easily available from just living. Therefore, Malmö should aim for a goal which will eventually provide this type of education supporting religious tolerance, which a person receives from just living.

The simplest way to do this would be by educating children, even before they start school, optimally from birth. There are several ways of how this can be done, for example through children's programmes on TV going more in-depth in to religious traditions such as holidays. Another example is to present different types of handshaking through television and charts of information at kinder garden. There are endless ways this can be done and the city itself and its religious communities are better suited for coming up with ideas together that would fit Malmö. However, the simplest and most likely the most efficient way would just be to let the small children play together, surrounded with adults of different religions and beliefs, as they would grow up similarly to Freetown, and thereby have an easier time tolerating others. Therefore, it is important that all institutions such as kindergardens, doctor, dentist, *etc.* where children frequently visit, allow and promote religious diversity. This does not mean that every kinder-garden needs people from every single religion and belief in Malmö, but it means that people from various religions and beliefs are not excluded from working there. The focus might seem very religious oriented, but the idea is that children growing up in stricter religious families should learn about the less strict life and vice versa. Efforts such as this would probably be as far Malmö could go in order to emulate how children develop a high level of religious tolerance in Freetown. By not starting to teach about religions before school, Malmö loses several years of education, years where in Freetown children are learning and increasing their religious

tolerance towards each other. If Malmö makes this a priority, chances are high that when today's children become adults, a higher level of religious tolerance will exist. This method as well is following the blueprint of how to increase tolerance according to several philosophers and scholars, as well as UNESCO, where knowledge is seen as a key contributor to tolerance in general (See section: 3.1.1).

However, in accordance with Article 18(4) of the ICCPR, parents and when applicable legal guardians from various backgrounds will probably be against their children being educated about religion, which would present a great obstacle for this method. For the method to be effective, it would require a lot of support from Malmö's population. Even so, not everybody need to be on board from the beginning, if this was to develop and actually increase religious tolerance, people would probably increasingly accept the method. In the end, it might create greater intolerance towards people displaying religious intolerance.

It is clear that this method would require major changes to the educational system in Sweden and Malmö outside of school. However, it is needed because Malmö is changing and will continue to change and because of this the city needs to develop a long with the change. Sweden might have been one of those states whom Walzer argues saw religious tolerance in the 1990's as something easy (See section: 3.3.1). Yet, today the state clearly knows that it is not, with the city of Malmö as an example. Because of the big demographic change the 1980's, there is a substantial need for a method of how to adapt in the best possible way to this change.

If Malmö were to draw inspiration from Freetown in order to increase religious tolerance, providing the education supporting religious tolerance by living should be the goal, and to start teaching children as described above is a good start to develop it. As previously mentioned, the greatest difference between Freetown and Malmö in the promotion and protection of religious tolerance at all four levels in this research is this type of education that exists within the Sierra Leonean culture. In Freetown religious tolerance is promoted and protected by the people being open to each other. Imam Rizwan Afzal who lives in Malmö but has lived in Freetown for five years, argues that it is the openness that differentiates Malmö and Freetown the most when it comes to religious tolerance (See section: 5.3.5). This might be the reason why in Malmö work for religious tolerance most of the time is an effort, either through school, planned meetings, activities *etc.* This inspiration from Freetown clearly would require a change of culture in Malmö, but it is possible, an example is that less than 100 years ago women were not allowed to vote in Sweden. This method could as well boost the work on coexistence

in Malmö, resulting in Malmö finding its own solution, as children would naturally discover their differences and similarities.

The existing high level of religious tolerance in Freetown and Sierra Leone makes the country an intriguing place to analyse for any society struggling with religious tolerance. Bielfeldt's recommendation to religious leaders, states and the international community, is by all means a justified recommendation, because it is likely that many societies and communities can actually draw inspiration. Depending on the preconditions and how much each society is willing to change, religious tolerance can happen faster or slower. Furthermore, having Freetown as the model which you compare a society with can help to reveal the peculiarities of both Freetown and that society. The peculiarities can then possibly identify methods and areas where that society might be able to increase religious tolerance. However, more similar societies may be able to draw more inspiration from Freetown than others.

The data analysed for this research presents that for a society such as Malmö, Freetown is not a realistic model on the whole. Even so, to some extent there definitely are methods which Malmö could use as inspiration, especially at the municipality and civil society levels. Yet, on the whole and especially at state level, the societies are simply too different, in order for it to be realistic. If Malmö and Sweden learn from Freetown and implement similar methods to increase religious tolerance, this would require a great change in Malmö's and Sweden's identity and culture, which is something that many religious and non-religious persons would oppose. The history, culture and demography gives the societies different preconditions and opportunities for religious tolerance as well as for other human rights.

## 7 Conclusion

Today, problems with religious tolerance and FoRB are seen around the world. Within societies, there is often a feeling of ‘us vs. them’ between people belonging to different religions or beliefs, which often supports religious intolerance. This is a problem for FoRB and human rights in general as tolerance is seen as the responsibility that upholds human rights. A city who is experiencing problems of religious intolerance today is Malmö. Within the city, religious intolerance is common among the city’s population, as it is becoming increasingly religiously diverse. Since issues of religious intolerance is today almost a normality in the Western world, it is difficult for Malmö to draw inspiration from Western societies in order to increase religious tolerance. Therefore, it is of great importance that cities such as Freetown, which possesses great religious tolerance, are recognised and understood why it specifically works for them. Even more important is to see if societies such as Malmö can learn from these societies. This becomes obvious when the UN Special Rapporteur on FoRB recommends states, religious leaders and the international community to observe how the country of Sierra Leone maintains its religious tolerance. It does not matter if Freetown is very different from Malmö, if the city of Freetown could provide some inspiration, it could be all Malmö needs to develop its own solution. If this is possible, Malmö could turn into a model for struggling societies in the Western developed world.

Therefore this study investigated if it was possible for Malmö to learn from Freetown in order to increase its religious tolerance. The research did this by identifying the main differences in the promotion and protection of religious tolerance at international, state, municipality and civil society level. Thereafter the study analysed the explanations for these differences. This allowed the study to investigate to what extent, despite these differences, Malmö could draw inspiration from Freetown, and thereby, see if it was possible for Malmö to actually learn something in order to increase religious tolerance.

By analysing the primary and secondary data collected, through a framework connecting religious tolerance to human rights. The research could identify several main differences on state, municipality and civil society level. On the state level, there is a difference in how the two states and their populations focus on FoRB in relation to other human rights. The research found that when it comes to human rights such as gender equality, the two nations focus on FoRB differently. If Sweden was to change this focus, it would likely cause public disorder since the country would attempt to change the focus of the majority. The research identified that an overlapping consensus, between the state

and its Muslim communities, on Islamic traditions and manifestations in relation to gender equality is needed for religious tolerance. Where it is more likely that the state could draw inspiration to increase religious tolerance, is through more in-depth education about religion, where more education and recognition of other than Christian religious holidays could be the first step.

Furthermore, a great difference between Malmö and Freetown at state, municipality and civil society level is the power and the role of the religious civil society. In Freetown due to its financial and historical situation, religious communities and especially the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone has replaced the state and the municipality in much of the work on the promotion and protection of religious tolerance. In Malmö, the religious civil society counts on the functioning state and the municipality to be the primary actors promoting and protecting human rights. Therefore, the religious civil society of Malmö receiving the same role and power as its counterpart in Freetown, is not realistic.

On both municipality and civil society level, Malmö could draw inspiration from the religious civil society in Freetown, by starting to focus on the similarities between religions and beliefs instead of focusing mainly on the differences. As the population feels more as one in Freetown while in Malmö it is more 'us vs. them', this difference could possibly increase religious tolerance. Furthermore, focusing on similarities could help with another difference as well, which is that in Freetown the civil society is more as a team and in Malmö it is spread out on different islands. The lack of no overlapping consensus on the work of religious tolerance between the city and all its religious communities, most likely makes it harder for the municipality and the religious civil society to increase religious tolerance. In Freetown, they all know the goal, which makes the population more united and aware of the aim of religious tolerance. Furthermore, all Christian and Muslim leaders know about Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone in Freetown, in Malmö this is not the case when it comes to Coexist. Therefore an inspiration is for the municipality to at least invite all religious leaders to their network.

The greatest difference in the promotion and protection of religious tolerance overall between Malmö and Freetown, is the knowledge supporting religious tolerance a person receives from a young age by just living. This is explained by the culture, demography and history of Sierra Leone. In Freetown, Christians and Muslims have been living together in communities and families for a long time, while in Malmö numerous religions have started to live with each other in the same city recently. Therefore, an inspiration from Freetown which would require a lot of the city of Malmö, yet could become the

foundation for increased religious tolerance, is to start making education about religion a part of children's life in Malmö. Since in Freetown they start receiving knowledge supporting religious tolerance from birth, it would be optimal if the method in Malmö would start before children reach school age. The next generation would likely become more open to each other and religiously tolerant, it could start spreading religious tolerance to the youth similar to how it is in Freetown today. This research identified this method, as the method that could resemble the education supporting religious tolerance the most in Freetown, and is most likely to increase religious tolerance in Malmö.

Future research regarding how Malmö could possibly increase religious tolerance by learning from Freetown, is recommended to focus more on this education supporting religious tolerance which people from Freetown receives from birth. The Sierra Leonean culture of religious tolerance within communities and families possibly could provide methods and inspiration which could be brought to Malmö. It would be recommended to focus on things you receive knowledge from by just living before you start school, such as communities, families, and media. It is recommended to focus on this because, as previously mentioned, if young children would become increasingly religiously tolerant, the society most likely will follow this development. This could help Malmö to find its own local solution.

This research identified that despite the differences between Malmö and Freetown, which makes it not realistic on the whole for Malmö to learn from Freetown, Malmö still could increase religious tolerance by drawing inspiration from Freetown. Therefore Malmö can learn from Freetown. Yet, to what extent it is realistic for Malmö to actually go through the change required for achieving this, is up to the state, municipality, civil society and especially the population. As it is today it is not realistic to a very great extent.

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## 9 Annex 1: Interviewees

Ref.	Name	Sex	Religion	Role	City	Date	Interview
FR1	Alimamy Toso Kargbo	Male	Muslim	Chief Imam, Twohil Central Mosque	Freetown	15-05-2017	Individual
FR2	Dauda Kamara	Male	Muslim	Chief Imam, Jamatu Mosque	Freetown	15-05-2017	Individual
FR3	Santigie Conteh	Male	Muslim	Chief Imam, Ahmadiyya Mosque	Freetown	15-05-2017	Individual
FR4	Max S. Kargbo	Male	Christian	Pastor, New Hope Revival Ministry	Freetown	16-05-2017	Individual
FR5	Chernor Alhaji Abu Bakarr	Male	Muslim	Chief Imam, Rakman Mosque	Freetown	15-05-2017	Individual
FR6	Alfa Ali Sesay	Male	Muslim	Chairman, Allumin Mosque	Freetown	15-05-2017	Individual
FR7	Francis Macauley	Male	Christian	Pastor, Temple of Faith Evangelical Ministry	Freetown	16-05-2017	Individual
FR8	Ibrahim Kargbo	Male	Muslim	Assistant Imam, Ahmadiyya Mosque	Freetown	15-05-2017	Individual
FR9	Mohammed Anthony Kamara	Male	Christian	Pastor, Salvation Deliverance Ministry	Freetown	16-05-2017	Individual
FR10	Lansana Samura	Male	Christian	Pastor, New Hope Revival Ministry	Freetown	16-05-2017	Individual
FR11	Tom Barnett	Male	Christian	Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church, founder of IRCSL	Freetown	18-05-2017	Individual
FR12	Abu Bakarr Conteh	Male	Muslim	President and founder of the IRCSL	Freetown	16-05-2017	Individual
FR13	Dr. Osman J. Fomah	Male	Christian	Reverend, Secretary General IRCSL, Chairman for SLHRC	Freetown	17-05-2017	Group
FR14	Alimamy Kargbo	Male	Christian	Reverend, National Coordinator of the IRCSL	Freetown	17-05-2017	Group
FR15	Alhassan Kargbo	Male	Muslim	Imam, National Youth Coordinator of the IRCSL	Freetown	17-05-2017	Group
FR16	Mohammed AS. Koroma	Male	Christian	Deputy Chief Administrator Freetown City Council	Freetown	19-05-2017	Individual
MA1	Malin Martelius	Female	Non-religious	Coordinator Coexist	Maln�	10-05-2017	Individual
MA2	Maria Bergius	Female	Christian	University Priest, University Church (Church of Sweden)	Maln�	10-05-2017	Individual
MA3	Per Kristiansson	Male	Christian	Priest, Church of Sweden	Maln�	24-05-2017	Individual
MA4	Ida Wreland	Female	Christian	High School Priest, Church of Sweden, Coexist & Fr�ga Religionen	Maln�	08-06-2017	Individual
MA5	Rebecca Lillian	Female	Jewish	Open Sk�ne	Maln�	08-06-2017	Group
MA6	Sarah Pritchett	Female	Non-religious	Intern Open Sk�ne	Maln�	08-06-2017	Group
MA7	Fadi Barakat	Male	Muslim	Maln� Stad, Brother of Imam Salahuddin Barakat	Maln�	22-06-2017	Phone
MA8	Rizwan Afzal	Male	Muslim	Imam Ahmadiyya Mosque Maln� Tro and Tolerance	Maln�	28-06-2017	Individual

## 10 Annex 2: Interview questions

- If I would not know about the situation regarding religious tolerance in Malmö/Freetown, how would you describe it?
- Why and how do you think the situation is like it is?
- What do you do in order to promote religious tolerance in Malmö/Freetown?
- Which actor do you believe plays the most important role when it comes to religious tolerance in Malmö/Freetown? Why?
- What do the state do? And do you believe that the state and municipality do enough in order to promote and protect religious tolerance? Why?
- What do the civil society do? And do you believe that the civil society do enough in order to promote and protect religious tolerance? Why?