Countering pro-violent extremism – compromising contentious political engagement

A critical discourse analysis of the Swedish counter extremism initiative and its impact upon local political practices and contentious left wing political engagement

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Abstract

This thesis, entitled Countering pro-violent extremism – compromising contentious political engagement, is authored by Rebecca Asmundsson Fristedt within the program Msc in Media and Communication studies at Lund University.

The thesis builds upon a critical discourse analysis and ethnographic methods such as interviews and participatory observation, in an effort to contribute with original research about how the Swedish counter radicalization project discursively constructs political engagement as "pro-violent" and "anti-democratic", and how these constructions impacts local political practices. The analysis reveals contradicting discourses within the core concepts used by the preventative project, and that these have various forms impacts within a variety of dimensions. Impacts mainly manifest themselves on the affective level, where the experience of the discursive construction raises profound questions regarding democracy, political legitimacy and democratic values.

The contradictory discourse also furthers a collapse in contextualization of contentious political engagement, resulting in a discrepancy between the preventative projects and its applicability within the lived experiences of political practices. Furthermore, the analysis reveals how the flawed contextualization within the preventative project impinges upon the affective dimensions of the contentious political identity, resulting in both a possibility of negative 'downward spirals of antagonism' as well as a possibility for re-ignited civic engagement in 'upward spirals of engagement'.

Keywords; CDA, Pro-violent extremism, Antagonism, Counter-democratic civic culture, Power

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Introduction

In the aftermath of 9/11 and the subsequent terrorist attack throughout Europe over the last decade, there was a surge in research and political discourse regarding how to prevent these attacks from occurring. Policy-driven research has since given birth to various policies on and implementations of counter terrorism or counter radicalization programmes (Sedgwick 2010, Lindekilde 2012a, Stampnitzky 2013).

In 2014, the Swedish government appointed a National coordinator for the countering of pro-violent extremism and the safeguarding of democracy, with a focus on preventing Radical Islamism, Right-wing extremism and as left-wing extremism. The preventative project mainly communicates through lectures, seminars and an educational website, called "Samtalskompassen" (the conversation compass), which serves the purpose of distributing information about the three targeted categories as well as a sample of discussion-exercises to be used in sessions with young people deemed to be at risk for radicalization (samtalskompassen 2016).

Critical voices have argued that the conflation of radical Islamism, right-wing extremism and left-wing extremism is dangerous for how we understand their violent manifestation, asserting that these groups are radically different phenomena and that such a conflation might lead to problematic comparisons between non-violent activism and terrorism (Sedgwick, Stampnitzky, Sörbom & Wennerhag 2016). Critique has also been raised regarding the core concepts used within this preventative program, as the lack of a clear definition of the terms extremism, violent and pro-violent risk including forms of contention that are not necessarily violent or pro-violent, for instance civil disobedience (Hertz 2016, Sörbom & Wennerhag 2016).

In spite of such relevant critique, the Swedish government has moved forward with concrete implementation of their preventative program, which warrants further analysis. The preventative project is guided by multiple government funded reports and policies, communicated within websites and lectures. Within the broad venture to prevent various forms of political violence the preventative project also explicitly name certain organizations or political groups within these policies. One such group within the category of "pro-violent autonomous left" is an organization called Everything for Everyone (Henceforth referred to as EFE), an ideologically diverse network with members adhering to both anarchist, syndicalist and Marxist-ideologies (Piotrovski & Wennerhag 2015).

The description of EFE as a "pro-violent extremist" group led to criticism, both from the network itself and from within academia , arguing that EFE is working towards their political goals with non-violent means and civil disobedience, and that the state definition of them as "pro-violent extremism" runs the risk of impacting young people's political engagement negatively. Seeing as EFE are presented as an extremist group within the preventative project and that this has generated some contestation and critique, they will function as the case from which this thesis seeks to understand the preventative project in relation to political engagement, meaning that the primary focus of the thesis will be that of left wing political engagement. In light of the criticism raised above, this thesis seeks to investigate the discursive constructions of the core concepts, as well as understand their local political implications and the way that they might impinge upon extra parliamentarian forms of political engagement.

Aims & Objectives

Drawing on perspectives on civic engagement and alternative forms of democracy (Dahlgren 2009, 2013, Rosanvallon 2010) as well as 'agonistics' and soft and systemic forms of power (Mouffe 2005,2013, Corner 2011), the aim in this thesis is to understand the discursive constructions of notions such as "pro- violent extremism" and " pro- violent and anti-democratic messages" in relation to contentious political engagement. The core focalpoint of such a framework resides within the forms of communication by which the discursive constructions are spread, the forms of power they engage, as well as how these mig impinge upon everyday practice within 'politics' as well as 'the political' (Corner 2011, Mouffe 2013).

Inspired by Faircloughs (1995) model for critical discourse analysis, the thesis will use a threefold approach, where the core concepts of the preventative project make out the dimension of **content** and the local understanding of the concepts and contentious political engagement make out the dimension of **communication**. The third dimension, which I will call **context**, comprises how the discursive constructions of political engagement and the definition of core concepts within the national and local preventative work might impact or impinge upon local and contentious political engagement. The threefold approach also makes out the structure of the research questions:

1) How does the preventative project discursively construct political engagement in relation to concepts such as "pro-violent extremism" and "pro-violent and antidemocratic messages", and with what implications for both its local implementation as well as local contentious political engagement of activists in networks such as EFE?

    a)   **Content**: in what ways does the preventative project discursively construct political engagement in relation to the notions of "pro-violent extremism" and "pro-violent and antidemocratic messages"?

    b)   **Communication**: how are the preventative projects discursive constructions of contentious political engagement interpreted within the local implementation of preventative work?

    c)   **Context**: In what ways might these discursive constructions and their local implementation impinge upon contentious political engagement?

A cacophony of perspectives

The phenomena of counter-radicalization and counter- extremism programs that have emerged throughout the European Union in the last decade are both complex and contradictory. Drawing on multiple discourses and fields of research, these preemptive measures have been heavily critiqued by academia, yet implemented by politicians all over Europe, eager to send a signal of strength and cohesion in the war on terrorism (Hassan 2010, Sedgwick 2010, Bossong 2008, 2014) Seeking to understand the Swedish preventative project in relation to contentious political engagement on the far left, the object of analysis for this thesis has its origins a multitude of academic fields, ranging from studies on terrorism and political violence and political science as well as studies of social movements and critical studies of media and political engagement. Such an intricate web of sometimes contesting approaches to the phenomena of extreme or contentious modes of political engagement yields a need for structural and conceptual clarity. Thus, the following literature review will start with a discussion of the research within some of these academic fields, situating them in relation to the different perspectives on the phenomena of extremism, radicalization, and, to some extent, terrorism. The discussion of core concepts will then be followed by a critical reflection which aims to bring forth the shortcomings of the research as well as elucidate the theoretical framework on which this thesis draws.

Fields of academic contention

Following the 9/11 attacks, research on terrorism and political violence witnessed an onset of both funding and research, intended to pave the way for a better understanding and prevention of such destructive phenomena (Silke & Schmidt-Petersen 2015, Goodwin 2012, Stampnitzky 2013). Issues of terrorism and political violence are present in various academic fields, ranging from political science, international relations and security studies to sociology and media studies (Schmid, 2011:1, 458), and has been tackled from various angles such as the "root causes" of terrorism and political violence, and the dynamics behind processes of "radicalization". However, the various fields studying these phenomena has not only provided an influx of new perspectives, but have also generated a certain amount of friction, both interdisciplinary and intra-disciplinary.

To begin with, the concept of terrorism is in itself highly contested with multiple definitions, and an ongoing debate regarding as to whether or not there is a general consensus

of definition (Bjørgo 2005:2, Korteweg et al. 2010:21, Schmid 2011:39, Stampnitzky 2013). Furthermore, each academic field engaged with research on these phenomena has their own specific focus, generating a broad academic discussion with many different angles and modes of research (Schmid, 2011:2).

In the influx on new research on the phenomenon, terrorism was constructed as a unique form of political violence, almost as a form of war, separated from its context and other forms and violent strategies (Schmid, 2011:459). Since the ignited interest of the 21'st century along with the bombings in Madrid 2004 and London 2005, the research has been growing, albeit with a focus on what is broadly categorized as radical Islamism (Bjørgo 2005, Korteweg et al. 2010, Schmid 2011)

Claimed to be in a "Golden age" (Silke & Schmidt-Petersen 2015), research on terrorism, political violence and counter terrorism has a broad focus that encompasses central concepts as well as causes, facilitative factors and counter-measures. Although the research field as such is argued to be viable and fecund, some of its focal point has generated more friction than others. Firstly, the concept of terrorism itself is subject to contestation both between and within varying academic fields and within political discourse (Stampnitzky 2013, Flyghed & Hörnqvist 2011, Shoultz 2011). Although there seems to be some form of consensus about the definition of terrorism as an act of planned violence against civilians for the purpose of instilling fear into a government and its' citizens and as "an extremism of means, not one of ends" (Silke 2004, Bjørgo 2005, Ranstorp 2010), there has been a tendency to extend the concept as to include other forms of political violence within this definition as well, furthering a collapse in the context of research (Bjørgo 2005:1, Sedgwick 2010).

The definition of terrorism as an act of planned violence against civilians for the purpose of instilling fear into a government and its' citizens and as "an extremism of means, not one of ends" (Silke 2004, Bjørgo 2005, Ranstorp 2010), is, furthermore, similar to the definition of radicalization as *"...the quest to drastically alter society, possibly through the use of unorthodox means, which can result in a threat to democratic structures and institutions"* (Korteweg et al. 2010:31), or "everything that happens before the bomb goes off" (Sedgwick, 2010:479, 483), which means that the concept of radical is, to some extent, conflated with that of terrorism, a concept conflation that originates from the inclusion of other forms of political violence illuminated above (Bjørgo, 2005:1).

Processes of radicalization are complex, and as the topic of violent radicalization has become increasingly pressing, both in research and in within security agendas, the understanding of this process and its factors is argued to be "embryonic" (Ranstorp 2010:2, Sedgwick 2010). Tracing the concept, Sedgwick argues that it became institutionalized after the 2005 bombing in London, thereafter used within "counter-radicalization" programs in various countries throughout Western Europe, following from the perception of radicalization as a threat (Sedgwick, 2010:490, 484). Usually understood in relation to Radical as defined as "representing or supporting an extreme section of a party" and usually equated with the term extremist, a central issue of concern with such a conceptualization of radicalization is deciding when a radical is too radical, and in opposition to what? (Sedgwick 2010:481, Sörbom & Wennerhag 2016). The answer to such a question depends heavily on the politics of the country defining the concept, as well as in which context the term is applied, be it security, foreign-policy or integration. For instance, Denmark and the Netherlands use definitions that include both violence and non-violence, where the latter is described as "undemocratic means" without further elaboration. The inclusion of "non-violent but undemocratic means" in the definition of radicalization is further extremely problematic, since it pushes the boundaries of what is, and what is not, considered a threat to democracy (Sedgwick 2010:484, Sörbom & Wennerhag 2016).

However, even though there is a distinction in research focus between the process of radicalization and the actual causes of terrorism, the two are merely different approaches to the study of the same phenomena, meaning that findings within these two separate approaches might overlap (Alimi, Demetriou & Bosi, 2015:7). In the debate about root causes, the only coherent consensus seems to be that researching root causes is extremely complex, since groups engaging in political violence and terrorism are diverse, and differ both in terms of origin and political context as well as the concrete manifestation of their violence (Bjørgo, 2005:1f).

Although root causes are a subject of research, there is a tendency within this research towards focusing instead on "triggering events", seeing as terrorism is the result of a complex process, where the root cause-focus might risk oversimplifying such processes, constructing terrorists as passive puppets (Bjørgo 2005:3, Ranstorp 2010, Schmidt 2011, Silke 2004) While it is concluded that supposed roots of terrorism such as poverty or modernization are too general for the understanding and countering of terrorism (Bjørgo, 2005:2), and that pinpointing specific or decisive causes and factors is almost an impossibility

(Ranstorp, 2010:4), the concept is still used try to understand the phenomena and its facilitators (e.g. Korteweg et al.2010, Gupta 2005).

The contemporary field of terrorism studies is a fragmented one, where the complexity of the topic is found at all levels of research as well as within political discourse (e.g. Stampnitzky 2013, Sedgwick 2010, Bossong 2014). However, the fragmentation and contestation over core concepts visible in the discussion above is not only a matter of concern for current and future research, but also has practical implications for the usage of such concepts within policies and socio-cultural practices.

Contested concepts within preemptive actions

In a case study of the Danish counter radicalization project, sketched out in 2009 and now in practice with more than 20 preventative initiatives, Kühle & Lindeklide argue that the concept of radicalization as applied within the project constricts the level of tolerance for illiberal ideas within society, which impacts negatively on the studied Muslim communities. They also conclude that the definition of the concept de-emphasizes circumstances upon which this "radicalization" is contingent, resulting in a paradox where the preventative measure is unable to fully comprehend that which it seeks to prevent (2012:1607, 1613). Furthermore, preventative measures within certain Danish Muslim communities has also yielded 'iatrogenic effects', where the labeling of people as radicals or extremists excluded them from the public debate surrounding radicalization, as well as generating a fear of repression and exclusion for not perfectly complying to the dominant norms of liberal democracy (Lindekilde 2012a).

Similar points of critique have also been raised regarding the Swedish counter radicalization project and policies, although these reside on a macro level regarding the use of concepts through textual analysis. In their discussion about the concept extremism, Sörbom & Wennerhag argue that the term is used for defining political deviations that at the same time are normative and taken for granted, which makes the term hard to apply within research (2016:17). Analyzing the application of the concept as well as delineating its origins they conclude that the concept, as applied within the Swedish counter radicalization policy, does not distinguish between the use of the term to describe groups of activists who use violent methods, and the use of the term to describe the ideological foundation of these political dissidents (Sörbom & Wennerhag, 2016:15). Furthermore, they argue that the concept of extremism best serves as an example of 'boundary work' performed by for example

politicians to stigmatize dissidents and draw a line between legitimate and illegitimate forms of political engagement (Sörbom & Wennerhag, 2016:33). The conceptual unclarity is also critiqued by Hertz who argues that, within the Swedish counter radicalization project, concepts such as pro-violent extremism and violence are poorly defined and understood which means that they become broad and sweeping and thereby hard to practically apply within the preventative measures (2016:10). Furthermore, concepts such as extremism/extremist and radical/radicalization are contrasted against the notion of democracy or the notion of democratic values without these being defined either (Hertz 2016, Sörbom & Wennerhag 2016). As these concepts will be dealt with in the analysis, I will refrain from deconstructing them further within this review. Suffice it to say however, that the conceptual confusion seen in the discussion so far impacts multiple levels, ranging from the field of academic research itself to the preventive policies and the complexities of the practical applicability of the concepts.

From a general perspective, preemptive measures such as the counter radicalization and counter terrorism initiatives that have developed within Europe over the past decade have been critiqued from a variety of angles. Firstly, these preemptive measures are argued to be the result of 'windows of opportunity' for political leaders to signal their strength (e.g Hassan 2010, Bossong 2008, Bossong 2014). Secondly, the concepts within these policies are highly context- dependent and value laden, which means that definitions vary in respect to what they are being defined in relation to, be that liberal democracy or totalitarian regimes (Stevens 2011, Githens-Mazer 2012, Lindekilde 2012b, Sörbom & Wennerhag 2016, Hertz 2016). Thirdly, counter radicalization and counter terrorism policies have been implemented despite the lack of solid and empirically grounded research (Breen Smyth 2007, Malkki 2007, de Goede & Simon 2013).

Conceptualizations of online media and communication

In relation to the quest to counter radicalization and extremism online, the contemporary research echoes the struggles and frictions outlined in the previous discussion. Regarding the process of radicalization and its manifestations online, there is a certain amount of empirical as well as conceptual unclarity (Holt et al. 2015). The approaches towards online radicalization varies from analysis of "propaganda" and "extremist content" to network analyses and influences of social media content and its impact on other media outlets as well

as how groups such as Al Qaeda uses the internet as a virtual training camp (Holt et al. 2015, Berger & Strathearn 2013, Gustafsson 2015, Stenersen 2008, Thompson 2011).

The core concepts of extremism and radicalization are used in coherence with the perspective drawn from the debates and fragile state of consensus within terrorism studies, albeit a bit more explicit, meaning that online radicalization shares the definition of offline radicalization as a process where exposure to content as well as networking and the establishing of a relationship with "extremist" networks radicalize the individual into adopting the "extremist" views of the network they enter or the content they view (Neumann, 2013:435, 454).

In relation to online radicalization, the internet is conceptualized as an arena of recruitment, communication and propaganda, a focus that tend toward a concentration on "radicalization" and "extremism" as the central issue rather than as stages or practices in contentious relations among various actors. This sort of conceptualization of online communication is also reverberated within the preemptive measures that seek to combat radicalization with communication in the form of "counter narratives" (Beutel et al 2016).

Research into online radicalization and counter measures is highly active within both state counter-radicalization programs, national and international security agencies as well as nonprofit institutions (e.g. RAND Corporation, Europol, ICSR). Furthermore, the dominant focus is directed at Radical Islamism and jihadism (e.g Holt et al. 2015, Gustafsson 2015, Stenersen 2008, Sageman 2008). The focus on radical Islamism within studies on terrorism & political violence and online radicalization begs the question as to whether the same approach to the process of radicalization is applicable to the other forms of extremisms targeted within the Swedish preventative project.

Although the conveyor-belt theory of activism as a slippery slope into extremism and terrorism has been refuted and the concepts separated (McCauley & Moskalenko 2009), the notions of extremism and activism are sometimes combined in an effort to understand more extreme forms of activism with another approach than that of the perspective on "extremism" emerging from counter-radicalization research and studies on terrorism & political violence earlier discussed. For instance, the internet use of right wing extremism have been approached through notions of identity building and mobilization (Caiani & Parenti 2009), echo chambers that reinforce and reproduce fascist ideology (Askanius & Mylonas 2015), as well as the use of YouTube for extreme right video activism (Ekman 2014).

Drawing on the notions of "extremism" and "radicalization" from the perspective of these phenomena as processes and strategies within contentious modes of political engagement, the differing approaches to these phenomena is further complicated by the relation between the notions of activism and extremism. When it comes to left wing extremism, some approaches seek to understand the use of online media as mean by which power imbalances are equalized in relation to media visibility and protest strategies (Owens & Palmer 2003) while others approach the online media use as facilitators of both political action as well as protest across distances and national borders (Uldam 2012, Cammaerts 2012). The widened approach towards contention and political dissent as seen in some of these examples add a nuance to the discussion of concepts such as "extremist" and radicalization", bringing forth the opportunity of a more contextualizing approach toward these phenomena.

(Re) situating extremism within the context of contentious political engagement

Drawing on the broadened notion of political violence as one form of many available manifestations of political contention, the social movement approach researches the "conflict situation", in which all actors are taken into account rather than singlehandedly focusing on specific actors or individuals (McAdams, Tilly & Tarrow 1996:17, Goodwin 2012, Alimi, Bosi & Dimetriou 2012, e.g. Seferiades & Johnston 2012:3,8, Fox Piven 2012:27, Tarrow 2015). So whereas the tendency within terrorism research consists of narrowing down the phenomena of research in order to avoid a too general approach (Bjørgo, 2005:2), the social movement approach is primarily based on the relationship between a context and its content, as opposed to only focusing on content.

As a consequence of the difference in approach, the concept of radicalization has a more specific definition. Alimi, Demetriou & Bosi define radicalization as *"the process through which a social movement or organization shifts from predominantly non violent tactics of contention to tactics that include violent means, as well as the subsequent process of contention maintaining and possibly intensifying the newly introduced violence"*. The main difference from the definition previously outlined is the framing of radicalization as a shift in "tactics of contention", whereas the previous definition emphasized the political goal of changing society as well as this possibly posing a threat to democratic structures (Korteweg et al. 2010:31).

The difference in definition stems from the researchers focus on the "emergence and persistence of political violence", as opposed to the focus on "intensification or escalation of political violence" which is the general approach within the research on terrorism (Alimi, Demetriou & Bosi, 2015:10).

Furthermore, such a context-based approach to the process and definition of radicalization originates from asking the questions of how and when the shift towards violence as a tactic occurs, rather than asking why: a distinction that in turn makes up the two and generally different approaches to the phenomena of political violence found within social movement studies and research on terrorism (Alimi, Demetriou & Bosi, 2015:7). By asking how and when this shift occurs, a relational and dynamic understanding of this process has emerged. Sketching a relational framework of certain mechanisms, Alimi, Demetriou & Bosi assert that there are certain characteristics in the process of radicalization that occur both in different types of movements and in different types of context. The relational mechanisms might have specific forms of influence within these different contexts and movements, which means that the shift towards violent tactics can occur with the same type of mechanisms in diverse context, and that the driving force for this shift towards violent tactics is dependent on the context-specific combination of certain mechanisms (2015:15). Researching these relational mechanisms in their context further means that they are understood as situated within "arenas of interaction", defined as spaces and frameworks for various forms of interaction and communication (Alimi, Demetriou & Bosi, 2015:14).

The context dependent approach taken in the relational perspective on radicalization briefly sketched above brings us closer to conceptual clarity, both regarding the core concepts as well as the difference in perspectives on, and definitions of them. Where the main approaches of studies on terrorism conflate the "extremist" with the terrorist as well as regard the perpetrators of political violence as the main "driving force of the radicalization process", the relational approach defines the concept of "radical" as "the actor who has adopted the use of political violence" as the consequence of practices and interactions by an between actors involved in contention (Alimi, Demetriou & Bosi, 2015: vii, 13). Although their understanding of the concept "radical" reverberate the earlier definition of "extremist", the fundamental difference lies within the broadened analytical scope, where the "extremist" is contextualized in relation to its counter-actors/parties. The re-contextualization and re-framing of "extremism" as a phenomena embedded in broader patterns of contention also facilitates a better understanding of the context in which counter-radicalization measures and

programs emerge, and the various actors involved in this process. Such a context based approach to contentious and sometimes violent political engagement also enable a better understanding of how discourses of counter radicalization engages with notions of democracy and legitimacy, as well as the lived and practical experiences of these discourses.

However, although much is to be gained in research on these phenomena by an exchange between studies on terrorism and the studies of social movements, there still remains a need for a deeper understanding of the practical experiences of these concepts. Analysis and case studies discussed above tend to either focus on the macro levels and implications of counter radicalization projects or micro dimensions of some of the communities targeted for prevention. As we have seen, though, the impact of preventative projects resides at macro, meso and micro levels, which calls for a multi-level analysis that seeks to explicate the lived and practical dimensions on all of these levels; a gap in the academic research about these preventative measures that this thesis to contribute to. Starting from the notion of communication as the fundamental starting point for the political, concepts such as "extremism" as well as the approach towards this as a form of contention among others draws upon the social movement approach of "conflict situation" and the focus upon the reciprocity between the content and its context (e.g. Goodwin 2012, Alimi, demetriou & Bosi 2012, Seferiades & Johnston 2012).

The recognition of content in relation to its context further echoes the assertion that neither online or offline political engagement exist in a vacuum, as well as the understanding that media, in a variety of forms, comprise communicative spaces where civic cultures and political engagement is facilitated as well as hampered (Dahlgren, 2013:33,24).

In relation to the discussion above, the reframing of "extremism" and "radicalization" as modes of contentions coupled with the notion of civic cultures and their practices as fundamental to the vitality of democracy facilitates a broader understanding of both the actors and their practices involved in the Swedish preventative project (Dahlgren, 2009:106,108). Allowing for an analysis of the topic of contention as well as how this relates to the opposing actors of the Swedish government and "the left wing extremists" it seeks to counter.

The notion of civic cultures serves as an analytical framework by which citizenship, civic agency and democratic participation and engagement is understood in relation to civic practices other than "the standard notions of deliberation" (Dahlgren, 2009:102).

Although such a notion couples well with understanding online political engagement, there is a certain amount of friction in relation to problematic forms of contention. Constituted by six dimensions: knowledge, values, trust, spaces, practices and identities, the dynamic circuit of civic cultures entails certain democratic values that is foundational for the task of resolving conflict without violence (Dahlgren, 2009:11). However, the task of evading violence is inherently tied to the contention over those same democratic values intrinsic to the pro-democratic struggle of some of the leftist ideologies, and as this thesis does not deal explicitly with the topic of political violence, this will only be briefly touched upon in the analysis.

Furthermore, the dimensions of values and identities resonate with the core task of the Swedish preventative project, seeing as the "extremist" is considered a threat to democracy, which, in this thesis, will be conceptualized as an antagonistic relationship. Arguing that we are in a post-political stage where the strive for a world "beyond antagonism" is directly harmful to the constitution of political identity, and thereby political engagement, Mouffe asserts that contemporary politics construct political confrontations between opposing actors as either good or evil, where whatever falls in the category of evil should be considered an enemy to be destroyed (2005:2, 4).

Such a dichotomous perspective on political conflict forecloses an analysis of its complexities and patterns, and a viable solution to the problem of the post-political haze is the notion of agonism, where the political conflict is played out between adversaries instead of antagonists, adversaries who respect and see the legitimacy in the political claim of the opposing actor (Mouffe, 2013:7,138). Conceptualizing the political engagement of the group categorized as "left-wing extremists" with the notions of antagonism and agonistics further elucidates the broader political context, seeing as the antagonistic dimension of conflict is also understood as 'the political' as it emerges in social relations, opposed to that of 'politics, which refers to the discourses, practices and institutions that always seek to structure and order society (Mouffe, 2013:3).

In his quest to comprehend the status of contemporary democracy, Rosanvallon expands his analysis so as to encompass the various forms of reactions, both political and social, to the inherent shortcomings and dysfunctions of "the representative regime" (2010:22), an analytical perspective that touches upon the inability of 'politics' to handle the antagonisms of 'the political'. Asserting that contemporary modes of political engagement take on the shape of what he refers to as counter democracy, Rosanvallon argues that both the

direct and indirect forms of power that constitute this counter democracy serve as vital political forms and forums, and that these should be understood as one form of democracy dialectically tied to another, thereby carrying the potential to strengthen democracy (2010:25).

Combining the notion of counter democracy with that of civic cultures facilitates an analysis that encompasses the contention and antagonism of some forms of political engagement in relation to the values of both democracy and counter democracy, furthering an explication of the sometimes contradictory and fluid roles that both antagonists and adversaries might take in relation to what values and identities are under contestation.

At the core of this dissertation lies the quest to understand the communication, from both the government and the politically engaged, from which the political emerges (Dahlgren, 2013:19). Embedded in relations of power, both the politically engaged actors and the government participate in as well as via the media, meaning that the object of analysis lies within the making of media content as well as drawing upon that content to guide our actions and modes of engagement (Dahlgren, 2013:22). This further calls for a perspective of power that can comprehend the multifaceted ways in which the participation both in and via the media by the opposing actors impact the antagonistic and agonistic dimensions of the Swedish preventative project.

Asserting that "the necessity of power itself is an implicit premise of any political and social order", Corner's notion of media power as a system of connections between media and political or economical sources of power that holds the power over information, "systemic power", illuminates the various practices of participation both in and via the media (Corner 2011:14,19, Dahlgren 2013:22). Although Corner uses the notion of power in relation to media such as press and broadcasting (2011:17), extending his notion so as to include government documents and policies allows for an analysis to capture the ways in which these documents and policies might engage in forms of "soft power", which refers to how the power over which information is provided plays a vital part in constructing the social world in which we live, and on which we constantly draw upon to guide our actions (2011:2,86). Furthermore, the notion of media power as manifested in both soft and systemic forms relate to the institutions and practices that characterize 'politics' as well as the social and subjective dimensions of 'the political'(Mouffe, 2005:9).

In conclusion, the theoretical framework outlined here opposes the perspectives on "extremism" and "radicalization" as found within the fragmented research field of studies on

terrorism & political violence, instead relying on the context based approach to these phenomena as one form of contentious political engagement among others common within social movement studies. The importance of context for the understanding of contentious on and offline political engagement further means that the context based approach will guide the analysis of communication and media power within the Swedish preventative project as well.

Methodology

As this thesis seeks to understand the discursive constructions and power dynamics at play in the Swedish counter radicalization project, its foundational methodology needs to be equipped with perspectives that are broad enough to encompass the complexities of power, yet explicit enough to bring forth an understanding of these complexities.

Drawing on Flyvbjergs rendition of and elaboration on Aristotelian phronesis, the methodological framework for this thesis seeks to be reflexive and analytical, as well as adherent to the importance of the interaction between that which is concrete and that which is general (2001:3,57). At the core of phronesis lies the notion of "practical common sense", which is related to the interaction between the general and the concrete by the focus on praxis and that which cannot encompassed by universal rules. As such, the phronetic approach has its core in the realm of value judgement, rather than the aim of "producing things" (Flyvbjerg, 2001:56f). Furthermore, with an emphasis on value judgment, consideration and choice, a phronesis- inspired methodological framework builds on the value-rational questions of: 1) "where are we going?" 2) "Is it desirable?" and 3) "what should be done?" In his quest to develop the social sciences through the application of phronesis within research, Flyvbjerg elaborates on the concept and its relation to power. Central to his approach is an additional fourth question: 'who gains and who loses, and by which mechanisms of power?' (2001:60). As one of the explicit aims of this thesis regards the power dynamics embedded in discursive practices, the question of who gains and who loses will be a driving methodological point of departure.

Seeking to explicate the power dynamics of the Swedish counter radicalization project, this methodological framework also builds on social constructionism. Perceiving our knowledge of the world in which we live as relative to the contemporary social and economic systems, social constructionism approaches knowledge as an artifact of these systems (Burr, 2003:4).

Central to social constructionism is the notion of language as the determining structure by which we organize and structure our experiences and our consciousness, placing such an emphasis on language further means that the self is seen as a product of social and communicative interactions (Burr, 2003:47f, 53). As such, and in line with the phronetic approach, it emphasizes the importance of the interaction between the concrete and the

general in the sense that it adheres to the notion of language as constitutive as well as derived from social and material structures (Burr, 2003:22). Furthermore, the construction and communicative practice of knowledge is seen as working in the favor of some interests favored over others (Burr, 2003:6), which emphasizes the question of 'who gains and who loses, and by which mechanisms of power?' (Flyvbjerg, 2001:60).

Critical reflection on methodology

Departing from the interpretation of the world in which we live and the actions we take as constructed and constituted by language has certain implications for the quest to understand the power dynamic within the Swedish counter radicalization project. At the ontological level, the perception of reality, the social constructionist approach is relativistic in the sense that although it acknowledges the existence of a material reality, it argues that this is only accessible to us through the language which we use to represent it (Burr, 2003:23, 90, 92). For the epistemological outlook of this thesis, the relativistic ontology means that what we know and how we have come to know it is but one perspective among others, and as social constructionism rejects the notion of grand narratives and an absolute truth this means that each perspective can only be judged in relation to others, and not contrasted towards such grand narratives or absolute truths.

For the quest of challenging power inequalities this has the implications of rendering the phronetic aspect of value judgment, choice and considerations prominent, seeing as the acknowledgement of certain forms of knowledge as one perspective among many and the refutation of one narrative to rule them all leaves us with the hardships of deciding which perspective on the world to favor over others (Burr, 2003:81). Although social constructionism has been critiqued for the relativism that leads us to a point where no claim or construction is more "true" or better than any other, there is a point to be made in the fact that this opens up for a multiplicity of perspectives and a furthering of debates (Burr, 2003:93f).

Furthermore, the risk of landing in a relativist stance where "anything goes" can be partly evaded by regarding social constructionism as a dialectical approach where the construction of the world in which we live is seen as generated by material conditions rather than determined by them. This opens up the possibility of understanding the ways in which our actions changes or facilitates the material conditions, thereby resituating or re-producing our constructions (Burr, 2003: 94, 100).

The critique raised regarding a stalemate between perspectives also includes the argument that relativism renders social constructionism incapable of the challenging and changing of inequalities that lie at its foundation (Burr 2003:88, Hacking 1999:4). However, the phronetic approach taken within this thesis refutes both the foundationalism stating that certain values are central and can be both universally and rationally grounded, as well as the relativist stalemate of some conclusion or values being just as good as any. Instead, context is the grounding methodological mechanism where the practices under analysis are constantly related to the social and historical context in which they reside (Flyvbjerg, 2001:130). For an extended critical reflection, see appendix 1.

Multiple arenas – multiple methods

The Swedish counter radicalization project is organized as an implementation committee, which means that the project spreads across multiple arenas of communication and interaction. Consisting of such various actors and modalities, the quest to understand the discursive practices and power dynamics of the Swedish preventative project needs to be equipped with a multi-method approach that facilitates an encompassing analysis.

In order to grapple the discursive practices played out on multiple arenas, as well as the power dynamics in each specific arena, this thesis uses a mixed methods approach that combines an ethnographic approach to content and context with a critical discourse analysis. The ethnographic approach comprises participant observation and qualitative key informant interviews; whereas the critical discourse analysis deals with the communicative elements of the empirical material.

Ethnographic content analysis (ECA) & Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

As a method, ECA blends an ethnographic approach with the more traditional form of objective content analysis, aiming to place the symbolic meaning of content in its social and cultural context (Altheide, 1996:12). The purpose of applying an ethnographic perspective when analyzing content is to facilitate an understanding of human action in relation to the practical production and consumption of content. This further means that an understanding

and an awareness of the settings and situations in which content is produced will help aid the sampling of relevant material as well as guide the analysis (Altheide, 1996:32f).

Furthermore, ECA draws on a reflexive process that gives equal weight to the social and cultural surrounding in which a document is produced, the practical process of its actual production as well as how the meanings and narratives both of and in the document emerge (Altheide, 1996:10). These key focal points are referred to as context, process and emergence, which further ties back to the specific research questions posed in this thesis; the specific questions asked at the levels of content, communication and context.

Drawing on the notion of emergence, Altheide defines this key focal point as the stage of analysis where emergent meanings and patterns are investigated as they appear in light of comparison and interpretation (1996:10, 16), as in the case of this thesis; the implementation and communication of the counter radicalization project nationally as well as locally. The meanings of the content emerge in the interpretation made by its recipients, and much like the approach of discourse analysis, ECA serves to analyze the implications of these meanings and the way they guide the recipients definition of the situation (Altheide, 1996:12).

As ECA draws a wider span of attention to the circumstances and settings in which content is produced and consumed, it will for this thesis be mixed with critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis is a method that comes in various forms and directions, each with its own specific focus. Central and common to most of the different versions of CDA is the commitment to social critique and"the obligation to intervene in social processes characterized by unequal Power relations and mystifying ideologies". This obligation to intervene corresponds to the three levels of analysis of what is referred to as communicative events; the text, the discursive practices and the sociocultural practices. At the level of the text, the focus lies upon discovering ambiguities and inconsistencies, related to the discursive practices, the ambiguities of the text are explicated in order to understand their ideological implications. Lastly, the third level of intervention serves to apply the insights of the other two levels, in order to strive for a change of the"oppressive discursive practices" (Schröder 2012:116, Fairclough 1995:57).

For the analysis applied within this thesis discourse is understood as the use of language to represent and construct certain aspects of reality from a certain perspective (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999:36). Central to the analysis of discourse apart from the communicative event described above is the order of discourse, here defined as genres and

discourses drawn upon within the communicative event and which are socially ordered and situated (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999:58).

In the analysis of discourse, attention is given to both communicative events and orders of discourses, as they are constitutive of each other (Fairclough, 1995:56). However, the merging of ECA and CDA means that, when analytically applied, this method takes its interest mainly in the discursive practices and its relation to the sociocultural practices. As such, the analysis is not one of linguistics but one of relationships between discourses and practices and the power inherent in these. Furthermore, the dimension of text will here be analyzed with a main focus on its recontextualization and representations of certain forms of social practices, enabling an analysis of the discursive powers embedded in these representations and re-contexualizations (Fariclough, 1995:58).

Participatory observation

In the method of participatory observation, the researcher, to some extent, becomes the method. Usually applied in an effort to arrive at 'thick description', participatory observation is conducted over longer periods of time, documenting with a wide range of tools such as film, photography and notes (Jensen, 2012:273). For this thesis, however, the participatory observation was used as a method by which the communication of the content of the counter radicalization project can be analyzed not only as content, but as a concrete action and practice of communication. The participatory observation conducted within this thesis is, however, an inherent part of the overall ethnographic methods approach, and as such it draws more upon the overall methods framework than the structures followed in more traditional participatory observations. The participatory observation was conducted during a lecture given on the topic of preventing pro-violent extremism, by the head secretary and committee secretary of the national coordinator, in the city of Lund on the 1st of March 2016. The lecture was recorded and later transcribed for analysis and notes were taken during the lecture to aid later analysis.

Key informant interviews

Drawing on social movement studies, the qualitative interviews conducted for this thesis focus on the respondents as key informants, where the respondents' own interpretations and reflections on the topic of the interview are the focal point (della Porta, 2014:229

The interviews are semi-structured, focusing on central themes where both introductionary, direct and specific questions are applied (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:151). Regarding the issue of leading questions, the interviews conducted have a specific aim of tapping in to the information and experience of the respondent. As the respondents interviewed in this thesis all have first hand experiences with various parts of the counter radicalization project, they have been chosen for the purpose of acting as key informants, contextualizing and explicating the various dimensions of the discourses communicated by and within the preventative project. Certain leading questions might thus be both necessary and valid when used as structuring the conversation according to the central themes of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:188).

For each interview a scheme was constructed specifying the order of themes, paying specific attention to the kind of experience of and relationship to the preventative project each respondent had, whether the respondent was working within the project directly or experienced it at the level of a politically engaged citizen. The interviews began with an introduction to the overall research project, with the aim of establishing a topic specific conversation with the respondents that allowed for questions as well as for setting a casual tone for the conversation to come. To ensure the casual tone of conversation and the comfort of the respondents, difficult or delicate themes were thus ordered as second or third themes in the interview scheme (della Porta, 2014:237f). To ensure that the themes were formulated to guide the conversations as intended, the interview schemes were piloted with an external party. Given that the external party could not act as a key informant and thus take part in a "mock" interview securing the validity of the themes, the piloting instead consisted of the external party being introduced to the interview themes and then asked to explain them, thereby illuminating problematic formulations to be redrafted (della Porta 214:238).

Sampling

Ranging from an ethnographically informed content analysis, to participatory observation and qualitative key informant interviews, the empirical material has been sampled through a

process intended to capture both the meaning of the content and the experience of that content from the respondents. Sampling has thus been as ethnographic as the overall approach, being conducted throughout the research process (Altheide, 1996:33).

The decisions made of what materials to look for and which people to interview have, however, been driven by the theories applied in this thesis as well as by the intention to seek out and capture the situations in which the preventative project is enacted, implemented and experienced (Blee & Taylor, 2002:100). Furthermore, I have applied what Altheide refers to as 'progressive theoretical sampling', which refers to a selection of materials based on the developing understanding of their context during the research process (1996:33). The sampling procedure has also been of a purposive kind, where the first step has consisted of identifying the context relevant to this thesis, and thereafter defining and choosing certain members or practices within these contexts, with the aim of grounding the discourse analysis within its contexts of production and consumption as well as adhering to the phronetic approach where context dependency is a key focal point (Jensen 2012:268, Flyvbjerg 2001:136).

Although the aim of this thesis, and the sampling procedures applied within it, has not been one of arriving at a final answer or end of debate regarding the topic at hand, saturation of sampling has been sought in relation to the themes of content, communication and context and the specific interest aimed at the discursive construction of the terms "extremism", "pro-violent extremism" and "pro-violent and antidemocratic messages". Saturation was thus defined as reached when the respondents started reiterating their statements in the interviews, and the interviews generated similar narratives (Blee & Taylor, 2002:100). The same procedure was applied to the material gathered for content analysis, where saturation was defined as reached when the different forms of materials generated the same narratives and discursive constructions. Mindful of the critique lifted at CDA for fitting the empirical material to the interventionist purpose of the method (Schröder, 2012:119), empirical material sampled have not been discarded for expressing ambiguities or contradictions in relation to the topic analyzed, but rather analyzed and emphasized in relation to their context.

The empirical material gathered for ECA and CDA consists of two government funded reports, the content on a website owned and edited by the National Coordinator as well as the local plan to prevent pro-violent extremism in the city of Lund. The government

funded reports stand in different relationships to the greater preventative project, the initial report called När vi bryr oss – *förslag om samverkan och utbildning för att effektivare förebygga våldsbejakande extremism*, published in 2013 (henceforth referred to as SOU 2013:81), draws the framework for the preventative project and includes definition of core concepts such as "extremism", "radicalization" and "pro-violent extremism". The second report analyzed was tasked to the Swedish Media Council by the Swedish government, and contains an overview of the occurrence of "pro-violent and antidemocratic messages" online, tracing the online engagement of the forms of "extremism" defined in the SOU 2013:81, as regards their modes of propaganda and online forms of recruitment. The report is called Pro Violence and anti-democratic messages on the internet.

The content derived from the website, called Samtalskompassen (which translates to the conversation compass) regards an introduction to the history of left wing pro-violent extremism as well as definitions, depictions and descriptions of the autonomous environment as a whole and the specific groups identified as included in this environment.

Furthermore, the empirical material other than content consists of seven interviews. Five of the interviews were primarily conducted for this research project during the spring of 2016, but I also draw on and analyze a previous interview conducted for another research project in 2014, as well as an interview with Mona Sahlin conducted in 2014/2015 by students of journalism for their examination project on the topic of The National coordinator and pro-violent extremism (Utpekade 2016). For a short summary of respondents, see appendix 3.

A feature within the thesis that warrants a special ethical reflection is the choice made to have the names of the respondents published along with quotes. This choice was based on the fact that these respondents hold both official and important critical positions in relation to the preventative project and its local implementation, such as academic researchers, politicians and a respondent working from within the preventative project. Prior to conducting the interviews, respondents were informed of the intention to use their name in the thesis and gave their consent.

During the mid stage of research, one respondent withdrew his consent to be named officially, and while the respondent was still willing to participate, asked to do so anonymously. The request to be anonymous within the thesis has had implications for the analysis, seeing as parts of the interview that could identify the respondent had to be taken out of the analysis. These were, however, minor quotes that did not affect the overall analytical

themes. As for the politically active respondents, they too chose to be anonymous within this thesis. Consent was also obtained for the recording of the lecture held in March 2016 prior to my participation. The analysis of, and quotes used from, the lecture within this thesis could be ethically problematic in the sense that not all of the audience participants were aware of the recording. However, the lecture was a public event open to first line professionals as well as journalists and citizens, and as such it is treated as a public communicative event. The ethical process during each research stage of this thesis has sought to protect the integrity of the respondents while tapping in to their personal as well as professional experiences of the Swedish counter radicalization project, ethical reflections have been guided by the Lund University ethical guidelines (Lund University, 2005).

The construction of content, practice of implementation, and the struggles of context

Discursive constructions frame situations and definitions of them, and thus comprise a soft form of power in which the discursive constructions favor some perceptions of reality over others (Corner, 2011:14). In the following analysis, forms of soft power within the preventative project will be elucidated in the relation between the discursive constructions and the contesting reflections upon them, as well as how this discursive struggle lies at the heart of a conflict of values, practices, contentious political engagement and legitimacy.

The analysis will be structured according to the three main levels of inquiry; the level of content, communication and context. Although these are intimately related to each other, the three tiers of the overarching research question serves as foundation for structural clarity.

Content; Preemptive action and the conceptual confusion

As the purpose of analyzing these representations lies within explicating the ways in which they construct a certain version of reality, as well as what forms of power might be embedded in these (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999:36, Schrøder 2012:116, Fairclough 1995), the representations and discursive constructions made by the national coordinator are important for understanding the power structures dictating the relationship between 'politics' and 'the political'; between political structures of order and, sometimes contentious, political engagement (Mouffe 2005,2013). This chapter will start with an analysis of the discursive

representations made within the two government funded reports and the educational website. As a central description of the preventative project the SOU 2031:81 states that:

> The emphasis is on *violent* extremism, in other words violence that is committed by extremists for political/ideological reasons. Although the Inquiry's proposals focus on crime prevention work to combat violent extremism, we also emphasize that this is ultimately about how we in society lay the foundations of confidence and build up faith in democracy and human rights. In other words, preventive work can never just be about measures to prevent young people from being drawn into crime with political/ideological motives – we must have a broader perspective than this. (SOU 2013:81, 15)

It is a core definition that seeks to distinguish radical opinions and violence driven by ideological extremists, drawing a sharp line between the practices of thought and action. In the effort to educate about that which is referred to as left-wing extremism, also called the "autonomous left", the SOU 2013: draws on the following representation:

> The autonomous groups highlight issues that many people sympathize with. They are working against racism, Nazism, sexism, homophobia and work for the rights of immigrants […] They claim to be fighting for a socialist society built upon justice and equality. This is why left wing extremists, periodically, can count on support for their efforts far beyond their own ranks, among people who do not really sympathize with the political violence, but who do not realize that the efforts are mainly driven by such purposes**.** The activities that autonomous left wing groups engage in are usually legal […] but the illegal activity is there to a natural and given part for the activists who think that Swedish laws and rules are not legitimate. (SOU 2013:81,50)

There is, however, a reflexive discussion regarding this core concept of "pro-violent extremism", situating it in relation to what it means to be a radical as opposed to being extreme:

> To be radical in politics means according to the national encyclopedia, to want to change society drastically. The definition means that it is of course possible to be radical without being a devotee of pro-violent extremism. Pervasive societal change can be implemented with reforms and do not require violence. There are always other methods – moral protest, civil resistance and well planned coordinated and financial and political campaigns – that are highly effective in order to reach pervasive political change entirely without violence. (SOU 2013:81, 35)

Extremism is, on the other hand, described in terms of fundamentalism, where the extremist has intolerance for the differing opinions of others, claims to stand for what is good and draws on generalized conclusions and dichotomous and simplistic solutions to their perceived problem (SOU 2013:81,35f). Although it is stated that those who hold extremist views are not always violent, and that there is no certainty that the path towards pro-violent extremism is a natural progression from having radical opinions, the emphasis of this brief reflection lies within the statement that "those who embrace violence are usually prone to violence from the beginning" (SOU 2013:81,36). The conclusion drawn from this emphasis is that the extreme view or opinion might not be the most important sign of pro- violent extremism but rather, emphasis and attention should be brought to the inherent violent behavior, and especially

when this is tied to some form of political frustration or critique of the society (ibid). Views that are extreme, defined as views residing at the far end of a spectrum and as "exaggerated", but which are not tied to violent acts, should be met with argumentation instead of prohibition (SOU 2013:81,33).

Furthermore, the extremist envisioned as a fundamentalist entails a description of the practice of legitimizing their actions through "referring to ideological theses instead of controllable fact when they are to prove that they are right" (SOU 2013:81,36).

However, the preventative project does not differentiate between ideologies, because the ideologies that are lie at the core of that which is to be prevented reside under broad notion of "refuting the constitutional state and the democratic government of rule, considering politically motivated crime to be legitimate method to influence society" (SOU 2013:81, 33). This discursive construction becomes problematic in relation to the practice of "referring to ideological theses instead of facts" (SOU 2013:36), because in order to meet the extreme opinions with arguments, one must know what ideological theses drive the "extremist" opinion.

From a critical discourse perspective, the absence of information regarding how certain ideologies relate to both the production of "controllable fact" and the opinions regarding these, serves as a critical example of how negative ideology impacts positive ideology, rendering any "controllable fact" stemming from the latter invalid. This draws upon a twofold understanding; firstly, ideological discursive practices is here understood as "meaning in the service of power" where ideology consists of implicit assumption in text whereby unequal relations of power are produced and re-produced (Fairclough, 1995:14), what I above referred to as negative ideology. Secondly, ideology is also perceived of as positive, where ideology consists of an "abstract system of values" that binds people together and thus secures cohesion and social order (Jörgensen & Phillips 2000:79, Dahlgren 2009:117).

Applying this twofold understanding of ideology here means that although the positive form of ideology might be "negative" in the sense that it holds anti democratic or destructive values, it none the less serves as a basis for cohesion as well as a inherent structure for how the world is interpreted and perceived. In direct opposition to this stands the negative ideology, in this discursive construction enacted by the SOU 2013:81, because discursively opposing "ideological theses" to "controllable fact" implies that the latter is somehow

immune to the former. This explicates an ideological function within the preventative project itself, seeing as this discursive construction holds the power to define what is "controllable fact" and what is not, which from a perspective of positive ideology becomes problematic as it directly yields an unequal power relation as to who gets to define meaning and fact.

In relation to discursive constructions of democracy embedded within the preventative project, the problem of not addressing or actively disregarding ideology as an important factor to understand and engage with becomes pervasive as it negates multiple understandings of "pro-violent" extremism in relation to the notion of democracy.

Drawing on the resort to argumentation as the proper counter measure for non violent but extreme opinions implies that the phenomenon should be handled with deliberative practice, foundational for a democratic society. In relation to the notion of democracy, what sort of democracy that is being referred to is never made explicit within the SOU 231:81, but rather represented as something commonsensical. The only characteristic provided for what the invoked notion of democracy entails is an emphasis on the importance of allowing for engagement and critique:

> Democracy development is to a great extent about granting space for people's engagement and people's willingness to criticize, influence and change. That places demands on the established society's humility before protests, active will to listen and readiness to act when the demands for involvement and influence are increasing. Arrogance and disregard by those who represent the established society's system raze the feeling of belonging and reduces trust. That in itself can nurture pro-violent extremist movements and make them grow. (SOU 2013:81,24f)

As exemplified in this quote, engagement and involvement, as well as the importance of inclusion and feeling of belonging, extends the representation of the problem of "pro-violent extremism" to comprise not only its relationship and perceived threat to democracy, but also how it permeates the social and cultural contexts of a democratic society. Drawing on the importance of a perspective that includes democracy as vital to the preventative project, the notion of democracy functions as the organizational centerpiece around which the core concepts of the project are situated, and as an order of discourse by which the discursive constructions and practices within the project are connected (Couliaraki & Fairclough 1999:58, Fairclough 1995:55).

Furthermore, the representations draw heavily on notions of inclusion and exclusion, although careful to state that measures taken to prevent socioeconomic injustice and exclusion should not be incorporated into the preemptive actions against "pro-violent extremism", because "it might be counterproductive to take action that implies that people who are subject

to unemployment, discrimination or financial inequality automatically and generally are at risk of turning into pro-violent extremists" (SOU 2013:81,34).

Although the SOU 2013:81 specifically points towards the importance of using typologies for "identifying real or presumptive extremists" critically and viewing each case as unique, the representations presented above point towards a broad and sweeping description of intricate complexities (2013:38). As information and awareness lies at the base of the preventative project, sweeping descriptions become problematic in relation to what actions they enable in the attempt at preventing "pro-violent extremism", however, these discursive constructions and representations are fraught with contradictions and ambiguities as well as subject to internal discrepancies.

Concept confusion and context collapse

In the core document that states the guidelines and proposals for the preventative project, the Swedish word våldsbejakande extremist is in the reports original English summary translated to violent extremism (SOU 2013:81p15). The Swedish word bejaka/bejakande translates into affirm/affirming, which means that the core concept of the Swedish preventative project actually extends the notion of violent extremism, a concept that refers to the violent manifestation of extremism, so as to include a dimension of affirmation. This is a vital distinction, because it explicates that violent extremism is conceptually extended to include not only the act of violence as a political means in itself but also the thought of violence as an appropriate political means.

For the preventative project, this conceptual extension means that the counter measures applied within it are targeting not only violent action, but also value-laden thoughts and opinions, contrary to the statement made within the report saying that "the core in the preventative work is about preventing acts constituting crimes and not about preventing people from having certain opinions" (SOU 2013:81,21). As the concept of violent extremism is extended so as to include an affirmative dimension, and ultimately process of thought and emotion, the concept is conflating the opinion that violence is a legitimate political means with the act of violence itself. This constitutes an example of how discursive constructions are embedded with soft power; the power to encourage certain perceptions of reality and its circumstances. Although power is a foundational element to all forms of social and political order, it comes in various forms and might yield both good and bad outcomes (Corner,

2011:14). Related to the emphasized constitutional right to have extreme opinions as separated from being a "pro-violent extremist", the conceptual extension that blurs this distinction becomes problematic for how these concepts work to guide actual preemptive action, ultimately generating the risk of targeting constitutionally protected opinions rather than facilitating a hindrance of criminal and violent action.

As the ambiguous concept of "pro-violent extremism" is applied to the left wing groups targeted by the preventative project yet another ambiguity is revealed, with central implications for the discursive construction of these groups as "pro-violent extremists". In a brief historical summary about extremism and politically motivated violence in Sweden given in the SOU 2013:81, 41, the relationship between the "autonomous groups" and the wider public is described. In this text, the label "left wing extremists" is used interchangeably with the label of "activists" (SOU 2013:81, 50). Stating that "The activities that autonomous left wing groups engage in are usually legal […] but the illegal activity is thereto a natural and given part for the activists who think that Swedish laws and rules are not legitimate" (ibid) discursively constructs the use of violence as inherent to being an activist as well as to having extreme opinions. This representation is problematic because it contradicts the statement that extreme opinions should not be seen as "pro-violent extremism" (SOU 2013:81, 33), and as such, it also has implications for the preemptive measures that are taken with these descriptions and representations as their guidelines. Ultimately, the conflation between affirmation of violence and the real life action of using it, coupled with the contradiction as to whether the activist and/or extremist is inherently violent and thereby a "pro-violent extremist" yields a deeply problematic concept confusion.

Although the SOU 2013:81 to a certain extent points out that typologies need to be carefully applied and that it is important to allow for dissent, critique and engagement, as well as offering a brief description about the historical and present features of the Swedish "left wing extremism", there is a lack of discussion on the ideological underpinnings of left wing contentious engagement. Drawing on the perception of the constitutional state and the democratic order of rule as illegitimate and as violence as a legitimate means to overturn this structure of order, the SOU 2013:81 sees this as the common denominator to pro-violent right wing extremism, leftwing extremism and radical Islamism. Discursively constructing left wing contentious engagement as acting upon the same visionary framework and driven by the same goal as Nazism is not only antithetical, but furthermore a collapse of the political contexts in which theses ideologically anchored groups reside.

As the soft power of discourse acts as a context for actions, it is also intimately tied to the dimension of knowledge. Knowledge, Dahlgren asserts, is not something that just is, or simply just happens. Rather, knowledge is an appropriation of information to the pre-existing experiences and knowledge of the recipient (Dahlgren, 2009:109). As the preventative project seeks to raise awareness about "pro-violent extremism" within the professions of social workers, teachers and police, the dimension of knowledge comes to be of crucial importance as regards to the discursive constructions and representations within the information disseminated. As noted above the core concepts suffer from a conflation of two different yet related phenomena, thoughts or affirmations of violence as a political means and the actual use of violence as a political means, which means that the appropriation of the information regarding the definition of concepts into knowledge that will drive preemptive action is compromised. This discursive dilution of the core concepts explicated here also serve as an example of the negative function of ideology, where the conflation of affirmation and action runs the risk of arbitrary targeting within both the national preventative project and its local equivalents.

The ambiguities and contradictions found within the discursive constructions and representations raised above, correlating to the tier of Content and the critical discourse analysis-dimension of text, make out the core content driving the preemptive action of the Swedish preventative project. Although embedded with problematic soft power, these concepts and definitions do not stand uncontested. In its introductory definitions, the SMC report start with defining the violence that is of interest for the preventative project:

> In its most basic sense, violence can be understood as a physical attack with intent to harm another person. However, to limit the analysis to only relate to direct encouragement to use physical violence is to disregard central parts of the anti-democratic message that is disseminated via the Internet. A large part of the propaganda studied here legitimizes a view that certain groups of people are less valuable, or that the democratic system is a dysfunctional system. These messages do not directly encourage violence for political or religious purposes, but their function is to legitimize direct encouragement of violence. (SMC 2014:36)

Developing the definitions further, the SMC report draws on Galtungs typology of violence (1990), concluding that the cultural form of violence is the most applicable one to the objective of the inquiry as this is intimately connected to ideology (Galtung, 1990:291). The report also contextualizes this in relation to structural forms of violence, as well as the state monopoly on violence. However, the structural violence embedded in parts of the democratic system, such as the state monopoly on violence, is differentiated from the pro-violent

extremism with the theoretically anchored motivation that "[this] concept is clearly limited to extreme points of view, outside the political centre ground" (SMC 2014:36f).

Drawing on Galtungs typology, the report then defines the concept of pro-violence in relation to the definition made by the Swedish Security service:

> Using Galtung's concept of violence as the starting point, "pro-violence" can be defined as follows: when the use of violence (direct violence) is accepted or promoted for ideological or religious reasons, or when it is accepted or promoted for the same reasons that groups of persons are exposed to discriminatory treatment or refused citizen rights (cultural violence). The Security Service use the same definition, but with a different wording: "The Security Service use the adjective pro-violence to differentiate actions and operations that may be a threat to security – such as supporting or taking part in ideologically motivated acts of violence – from those that are not pro-violence but may be problematic from other perspectives. The latter category includes anti-democratic actions, for example, such as not acknowledging the equal value of all persons, but without using or supporting violence. (Säkerhetspolisen 2010:26, SMC 2014:37)

With regards to the discursive construction of the main concepts within the SOU 2013:81, the SMC report draws directly on the definitions of "pro-violence" and "extremism" made by the swedish security service, which also defines them as separate from each other:

> The concept of "extremism" is used "to describe movements, ideologies or persons who do not accept a democratic social order", and "proviolence" to point out that certain extremist movements are prepared to use physical violence to achieve their ends. The mandate of the Security Service only covers the pro-violence parts of extremist movements. It is thus not illegal to give voice to opinions that are against democracy, on condition that they do not fall under the various limitations to free speech that exist in Swedish law.

Furthermore, the SMC report also differentiates between antidemocratic means and goals, facilitating a deeper understanding for how messages are constructed and to be understood (ibid). Using anti democratic means is thereby understood as

> promoting violence, threats or other methods of action aimed at preventing people from exercising their democratic rights, while the *anti-democratic goals* are understood as expressions that either promote the abolition of the constitution and the introduction of a totalitarian/theocratic government (anti-constitutional goal) or that promote the abolition of the citizen rights of certain population groups (anti-egalitarian goal). (SMC 214:41f)

This distinction becomes important for how the three extremist groups are understood, and thus represented, and in relation to this distinction, the "left wing autonomous groups" are discursively constructed as using antidemocratic means, but rather than pursuing antidemocratic goals seeking to expand democracy (ibid). As such, this discursive representation of left wing "pro-violent extremism" draws, to a certain extent, upon a broader understanding and definition of the ideological underpinnings of the form of political engagement under inquiry than the SOU 2013:81.

As a direct consequence of this, the three different "extremist milieu" are subject to a more clear differentiation, and although it is concluded that they share some similar traits in the way they communicate their ideologies online, the concept of "anti- democratic" separated in two different modes points towards how the "anti democratic" action is not necessarily an expression of the underlying ideology:

> In contrast to groups that are opponents of democratic values and practice on principle (both these values find expression in existing systems and as fundamental governance), the form of the radical left which the autonomist groups can be said to be part of is critical of a liberal/constitutional praxis in democracy, but is not anti-democratic on principle. They do not distance themselves from democratic values in general terms of fundamental civil rights. (Andersson 2014:133)

The theoretical anchoring thus prevents, to a certain extent, the broad and sweeping descriptions like "Extremism can be described as intolerance against opinions and interests that do not mach one's own, and as the very foundations for acts of violence" as found within SOU 2013:81, 35. Another implication of this theoretical anchoring is that the division between antidemocratic goals and antidemocratic means results in a definition of the left wing "pro violent extremism" as antidemocratic in the sense that there is a cultural form of violence exerted, but not "extremist" in the sense that they denounce egalitarian goals and the core values and principles of democracy. This distinction also stands at odds with the over concept definition within the SOU 2013:81. In fact, although the headline reads "The concepts of Radical, Extremist, and Pro-violent extremism", the part describing and critically reflecting upon the core concepts never actually defines the concept of "Pro-violent extremism" (SOU 2013:81, 35ff).

As shown above, these two reports draw on the same concepts, yet there seems to be variations and discrepancies in how these concepts and definitions are contextualized and applied to left- wing extremism. If the SOU 2013:81 yields a concept extension and a context collapse that is to some extent counteracted by the theoretical anchoring in the report by the SMC and Linus Andersson, the educational website seems to draw on the genre of education in its clearly stated definitions and examples. On the website, the core concept is clearly stated:

> Pro-violent extremism is about affirming and using violence as a means to actualize extreme ideological opinions and ideas. Common to the three milieus that are presented in this material is the hate and the violence. What separate them are the ideologies. It is also those that separate the milieus from other types of violent groups in society. The thought is free in the democratic society, [regardless of] how extreme it may be. But violence [used] as a means to actualize extreme ideological thoughts is criminal. (Samtalskompassen 2016)

In relation to the SOU 2013:81 and the SMC report, the website not only states a clear definition, but it also relates the three extremist environments through the notion of hate and violence. Although stating that their ideologies are what separate them, the use of "hate" and "violence" as the common denominator becomes problematic in relation to the theoretical point made within the SMC report regarding various forms of violence and their respective manifestations within the three different online milieus (2014). Furthermore, the section on ideology within the website draws on simplistic representations of complex theoretical traditions, such as Marxism and anarchism, without explaining these further or defining how theoretical and ideological currents such as these might inform the relationship between the "extremists" and democracy as well as the use of violence (Samtalskompassen 2016).

Discursively constructing antagonists

As the discourse analysis of this chapter reveals, the SOU 2013:81 yields little conceptual clarity, and opposed to the concept use and definition within the SMC report, the concept confusion and collapse of political contextualization within the SOU 2013:81 becomes even more contradictory. Related to the educational website, this concept confusing and context collapse seem to be evaded, to some extent, through the educational genre and clearly defined concepts. However, as the ideological currents are not made more explicit than, for example, a few portraits of political insurgents like Ulrike Meinhof, the website also leaves the definition of that which drives the targeted groups open for arbitrary interpretation. As these documents discursively construct "pro violent extremism" in different ways, they also seem to draw upon different discourses in doing so. At the centerpiece of the order of discourse lies a notion of democracy, and the discourses revolving around this draw on upon antagonism, values, moral and identities.

Apart from functioning as a system of governance, democracy comprises two sets of values that combined make out "the rules of the game". Values come in both substantial and procedural form, where the former regards equality, justice, liberty and tolerance, and the latter refers to responsibility, reciprocity, and discussion. As these values are foundational for a functioning democracy they must be regarded as universal, especially when it comes to resolving conflict without resorting to violence (Dahlgren, 2009:110f).

At the most fundamental level of contemporary Swedish deliberative democracy, these values function as taken-for-granted horizons against which we understand the society

we live in, at the same time, they are both fluid and contested (Dahlgren, 2009:124). When the SOU 2013:81 discursively conflates the concept of "extremism" with that of "pro-violent extremism", this implies that both the substantial and procedural values of democracy are perceived of as being disregarded.

In relation to Mouffes agonistic model, this points to how the liberal perception of politics as rational and neutral that is embedded in the 'politics' from which the preventative project originates, yields a we/they distinction between the ones who uphold the substantial and procedural values, and those who seek to alter or critically engage with them (2013:4). As the "safeguarding democracy" part of the national coordinators full title implies, the "pro-violent" extremism is discursively constructed as a threat to democracy, furthering a perception of those who seek to alter the current democracy not only as different, but as enemies, as antagonists (Mouffe, 2013:5).

Furthermore, the perception of "pro-violent" extremism as antagonistic becomes discursively embedded throughout the order of discourse, as the representation of activists is constructed as inherently violent (SOU 2013:81,50), connecting the notion of extremism and violence to that of identities. In discussing the dimension of identity as foundational for civic agency, Dahlgren points to the importance of perceiving citizenship as one out of many identities that people in society enact and use to engage, as a way to evade the construction of one idealistic and unrealistic way of enacting citizenship (2009:119). The ways in which we engage in our society evolves in a reciprocal manner with the milieus we engage in, and by viewing citizenship as one among plural identities, this means that the civic identity is subject to multiple arenas of both impact and affect (ibid).

In relation to the antagonistic dimension that arises as one part of the order of discourse, the impact of the discursive constructions in the preventative project on the civic identity of those involved in contentious political engagements warrants a deeper analysis. In the second chapter, we follow the discursive constructions as they are enacted as discursive practices, analyzing the way the order of discourse sketched above shifts and evolves in various practices of interpretation.

Communication; discursive practices, reiterations and dilutions

As discourses and representations are constructed, they are in a reciprocal manner influenced by the discursive practices of production and consumption (Fariclough 1995). The preventative project consists of multiple documents, inquiries and reports that each in their own way contextualizes and constructs discursive representations. In an interview with Linus Andersson, the author of the part of the SMC report that analyses left wing pro-violent messages on the internet, he offered a profoundly philosophical reflection on the practice of conducting assigned research:

> When I went into [this project] I was probably naïve … In a way naïve before its ... kind of… political explosive force that […] this report had in a way. Or … not just this report but the entire project of which it is a part …and what sort of debate there has been every time a new report has been issued, both from SÄPO and BRÅ. And also this action plan…. That there has been a lot of discussion about what the…like what motives there are for defining, on the one hand defining democracy in a certain way, and on the other define certain parts, or certain groups or positions […] within this concept of democracy.[…] I started thinking about it thereafter, and more and more towards the end maybe. And as you saw [...] how it was received … and maybe especially […] when you were approaching the publication [of the report], that it then became important to write this in a way that it is not misunderstood, or write it in a manner where I can stand for each formulation, even if it […] is taken out of its context. That was the biggest challenge there in the end … when I realized that I would no longer be the master of my text in public – Linus Andersson

The reflection touches upon a variety of aspects of what it means to produce assigned research, but most importantly, it ties in to both soft and systemic forms of power as well as situates the preventative project in relation to the definition of ideology as language in the service of power (Corner 2011, Fairclough 1995:14).

If the notion of soft power comprises the ways in which that which is written or said has an effect on the way we perceive our reality, the notion of systemic power comprises who gets to say what, how, and where (Corner 2011). Applied to the preventative project, and the assigned research upon which parts of it are resting, the notion of systemic power explicates how the actual assigned research is governed by the assignment, as well as produce, to a certain extent, the discursive representations that in turn are examples of soft power. The reflection on the discussion of motives that might underlie a certain definition of democracy further implies an ideological dimension of the assigned research, where the systematic power embedded in the assignment yields a text that carries unequal power as to who gets to define what (Fairclough, 1995:14). The systemic form of power elucidated here seems to echo throughout various instances of discursive practices:

> we have the definitions that the government has decided upon, and we've also said that if you want you can lean on [the definitions] and then you don't have to take the debate […] you can [say] 'no

In a conversation about the exchange of knowledge and cooperation between the national coordinator and the municipalities starting preventative projects of their own, the quote above draws upon the definition of "pro-violent extremism" made by the government, and it is emphasized that this may be used as way to deflect critical debate and discussion. Just as the soft form of power impinges upon the dimension of knowledge, so does systemic power.

In a sense, systemic power works as a narrator connecting the concepts and their definitions to municipal projects, further embedding the ideological dimension of unequal power as regards definitions and their soft power.

Although the discourses become embedded and connected through the systemic aspect of power, the discursive constructions are not immune to the discursive practices of interpretation and active appropriation that takes place within the dimension of knowledge (Dahlgren, 2009:109). In a conversation about the empirical findings for his study, Linus Andersson noted that it was a joint discussion among the researchers writing in the report on how to define "anti-democratic". The problem of this concept was the difficulty in applying it to the empirical material, seeing as the research into the other environments yielded clear examples of anti-democratic messages, whereas the empirical material for the "pro violent" left wing extremists yielded no such clarity. As a consequence, the concept of "pro-violence" was extended to include instances where violence was instigated, as well as instances where violence was not renounced (Andersson 2016). This was however critically reflected upon in relation to the research context that studies on left wing contentious political engagement usually reside in:

> But [..] I know that it is problematic [as well], because .. if you consider what the research on social movements and things like has been about, there has been instances of violence even in democratic movements, that afterwards [have been] described as democratic movements […] Linus Andersson

Although this concept extension was a part of a discussion and critically reflected upon, it still serves to dilute the concept of "pro violent", whether this is used in regards to contentious left wing communication on the internet, or to violent political acts. The same type of concept extension used to operationally define "pro violent and anti-democratic messages" is, however, not an isolated event.

As a response to a question as to why the national coordinator have chosen to lump together three inherently different sets of ideological currents within the preventative project, Mona Sahlin, former[1] National coordinator stated that:

> No, I do not clump them together. I just see that there is three value-extremist ways of thinking that do not renounce violence but many times also encourage it […] so that is not the point, to compare the people, but to talk about what values that are underlying. That 'we and our opinion are that much more important than yours so that that is why I am taking myself the right to use violence to keep you silent'. That is what they have in common […] [the] value thinking - Mona Sahlin (utpekade 2016)

The same type of concept extension occurs in this quote as well, only this time it is related to values, where this "value extremism" is both that which the three ideological currents have in common as well as a discursive construction of antagonism explicated in the preceding chapter (Mouffe, 2013:5). As for the relation of values, this is further tied to a moral aspect of disregarding both substantial and procedural ones by "taking myself the right", implying a wrongdoing.

When speaking of this definition of the concept of "pro-violent" extremism with Daniel Norlander, he emphasized intensely that out of all of the 230 municipalities he's been to he has never had a single instance where the definition of "pro-violent" extremism has been a problem in the practical context (Norlander 2016). In relation to the systemic and soft forms of power embedded within the preventative project and the discursive practices of some of its core actors, this statement becomes interesting seeing as some of the concept confusion and extension is reiterated on the municipal level of preemptive action. In the interview with an anonymous city employee the core concepts of "pro-violent extremism", violence and radical were discussed revealing further tensions between soft and systemic power.

> The leftist party never approved the action plan the second time it came up in the city council just because of definitions, the fact that it kind of lumped everyone together. And they specifically mentioned EFE… that [the action plan] was lumping them together with killers from IS. But I can't answer that [what a pro-violent extremist is]. But there is a definition, I don't know the exact wording […] [but it is when] undemocratic means are used, violent methods, to try and change society to move in the direction you want. It is that you do not accept the usual democratic ways. At the same time… if you [add] soccer hooligans, en they don't, or maybe they do have, a political agenda, I don't know. It's like [what] Daniel and Amir said, that it is the violence that unites, it is the main purpose in itself - Anonymous

Referring to political tension about the definitions within the action plan, the respondent also touches upon the definition given from the secretaries of the national coordinator, rather than giving a personal definition. Within the dimension of knowledge, this reveals how the core definition when drawn upon as a way to deflect criticism works to prevents critical reflection.

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[1] In 2016 Mona Sahlin left her seat as National Coordinator

Although the definition given in the interview as well as in the local action plan reverberate definition by the Swedish security services and thus do not extend the concept (Lund 2016:1), the respondent critically reflected upon the broader context when asked about how one is to distinguish between activism, extremism and pro-violent extremism in the local context.

> We don't really have any extreme expressions [in the municipality]. What is that?.. well… it is… if you are to compare it with blowing yourself up in a full departure hall for your [goal].. then we´re not really there… neither on the right[wing] or the left[wing] side…[we have] nobody who is willing to do this […] And most normal people have some form of… are not willing to die for their cause in that way either. I mean, there is a world of difference in that way. So from that point of view it is wrong to put it all together in one concept. – Anonymous

Furthermore, the respondent critically reflected upon violence and the various forms it comes in, drawing upon the difference between destroying property and hurting people, concluding that this is also inherently different, but that it remains important to "find these people who might destroy [property] before they start destroying anything else" (Anonymous 2016). Emerging from this interview is a sense of friction regarding who can be defined as what, and what forms of violence are of main interest for prevention.

In referring to the process of politics that occurs as political decisions are dealt with in the city council, the respondent above touches upon the main criticisms coming from the leftist party in the city. In an interview, Mats Olsson, leftist politician and Dean of the department of economic history at Lund University, did not hold back on his criticism:

> In defining this as pro violent extremism… pro violent is a very imprecise expression. I would say that six out of eight parties in government in Sweden were extremely pro-violent when they decided that Sweden would partake in the civil war in Afghanistan, or when it was decided […] that [Sweden] would partake with war action in Libya […] And of course we are all pro violent in a sense, when we think that the state should have a monopoly on violence. That is why we are pro-violent in relation to the state. So it is a very imprecise concept […] and it is also concluded in the [local]action plan that has been developed, and which we voted against, it is stated clearly … that the national coordinator has pointed out the need for further research. That among other things, there is a lack of evidence based knowledge about pro-violent extremism. Well thank fuck [sic!][2] for that. I mean… everyone who is doing research within this area is saying that the concept is [impossible] to operationally define. It is completely useless as an operational concept. And then they make this bold move of conflating three completely different types of movements, […] the right wing extreme white-power milieu, the left wing extreme autonomous milieu, and the pro violent Islamic extremist milieu. And those are three movements that are entirely… essentially different. – Mats Olsson

When the city employee talked about the lack of evidence based research mentioned in the local action plan, this emerged as problematic:

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[2] The original Swedish transcription reads; "ja men tacka fan för det", which is a common Swedish expression for frustration. Although "fuck" is a very strong word to use, there is no semantic equivalent that fully captures the emphasis and affect that was expressed in the interview.

> Well it is really hard […] there is not really anything… it is [produced] little by little. It's like …
> we'll just have to see … what is there and what can be used at all. There is the Radical Awareness
> Network that the EU has […] but there is not a lot… and so we've said that … if you can compare
> [these three] on [the basis] of prerequisites [such as] exclusion… what is a criminal lifestyle or
> Islamic radicalization or some other weird sect… that is the problem so to speak.. [well] then we
> have assumed a lot of things… that is probably how it is. But there is nothing.. [and] maybe we
> will be proven wrong by next week or something. - Anonymous

During the lecture given on the topic of pro-violent extremism, the national coordinators assignment and the cooperation with the city of Lund, the lecturers discussed the lack of evidence based knowledge and research as pertaining to the Islamic pro-violent extremism, stating that there is plenty of research on the other two groups, especially the right wing extremists (Lecture, Lund 2016). In light of this it becomes clear that the discursive practices of consumption of information and interpretation thereof, dilutes and at times confuses meanings and information that is of central importance to what underpins and guides preemptive action.

Furthermore, the systemic power embedded in the national coordinator has its own equivalence on the local municipal level. The preventative project developed locally in Lund is a product of politics in the sense that it was originally initiated by politicians. The anonymous respondent described how the action plan went under referral and was rejected by city council politicians, as they argued it was too vague (Anonymous 2016). Reflecting upon the different problems of clearly defining an action plan that at the same time needs to be applicable to a broad spectrum of problems, the respondent also offered an insight into what working inside of a politically governed organization means at the level of affect:

> The old plans that were written back in the old days were like pure instructions that says 'do this
> and do that', they are more of a hindrance than a help... because… if the reality does not match the
> map you['re just] left there…[…] It feels a little bit … I get the feeling that this is not really about
> helping these individuals who are killing themselves going down there …[to join IS and] to
> fight[…] But by now I am used to working in a politically governed organization, and sometimes
> … it's… to score political point can sometimes be [prioritized] above the real purpose. –
> Anonymous 2016

The respondent further explicates a contradiction between the interests at the national level of the project in relation to the local realities:

> […] it has never been that way in Lund either... that we've had any problems that you we have
> worked actively with this, neither left nor right […]more than just that the [political climate in the
> city] has been leftist […] But that has not meant any big issues ... and it's not a threat to the
> national security or anything. – Anonymous 2016

Coupled with the earlier quote which reveals a feeling of the preventative local action plan is more of signal politics, the fact that the left wing contentious political engagement is not seen

as problem of a democracy threatening magnitude certainly brings the projects contradictory nature to the fore.

Furthermore, a member of the audience for the lecture asked with a pressing anxiety: "How imminent is the apocalypse, really", in relation to all three of the targeted groups, to which the lecturers responded explicitly that "there is nothing that says that our democracy … that our democratic systems are in danger" (Lecture 2016). What is illustrative here is the deeply contradictory nature of the very foundations of the preventative project, where the threat against democracy is judged non-existent yet comprehensive measures of counter radicalization education is disseminated. It is a very profound manifestation of the power of discursive constructions and soft forms of power, and it is indeed, an example of ideology in the service of power (Fairclough 1995, Corner 2011).

In light of the concept confusion and context collapse explicated in chapter one, this further dilutes the core objective of the national coordinator, impacting on both knowledge and values. As the discursive constructions within both the local and national preventative project are enacted in discursive practices in various contexts, the moral aspect of "pro-violent extremism" becomes highlighted as the most important feature of antagonism. Values become saturated with affect, and the contestation over how far the notion of "pro-violent" should be extended permeates both discussions on ideological motives for defining democracy as well as the context of power in which political decisions are delegated for enactment. However, the tier of communication and discursive practices among the key actors involved in this project are governed by systemic forms of power (Corner 2011). Although the concepts still remain contested, they remain in place by the systemic power that governs the discursive constructions, and thus the soft forms of power. Systemic power thus works as a governing mechanism within 'politics', discursively constructing and exerting soft as well as ideological forms of power over the antagonistic dimension of 'the political' (Corner 2011, Mouffe 2013:2).

Contentious political engagement envisioned as counter democratic civic cultures

> It feels like [the preventative project] is trying to force all [forms of] politics into [the mold of] party politics, [so] that everything that does not happen in parliament and the city[s political system] will be prohibited. Sort of like 'you shall not be allowed to form opinion in other ways then those we have approved, you shall not be allowed to organize in other ways than those we have approved […]'… everybody should be [fitted] in this very narrow system where very little can be done to change society. And where the power does not really lie, I think. (Respondent A, 2016)

As seen in this quote, one of the respondents offers a comprehensive reflection of the multiple ways in which the preventative project relate to the socio-cultural embodiment of the political identity. Seen as pivotal for the formation of civic cultures, and thus important for a viable democracy, the dimension of identity comprises the foundation for agency as well as the experience of democratic and societal membership (Dahlgren, 2009:118). The respondent touches upon the lived experience of political engagement, and reveals an affective response where the lived experience of political struggle for social change is experienced as compromised by the discursive constructions within the preventative project.

In the same way as the preventative project and its local implementation centers certain liberal democratic procedures, the respondents touch upon these as a site of contention that hinders, rather than facilitates, political participation. Their notion of the procedural process is a counter- democratic (Rosanvallon, 2010:25) one, where the shortcomings of the liberal democracy are a continuing arena of struggle:

> Many of us advocate direct democracy for example, instead of parliamentarian democracy. That those who are impacted by a decision should be the ones making it, and that this [power] should not be transferred to politicians and ombudsmän. - Respondent B 2016

> Above all we're talking about structure … the structural racism, the structural sexism.. class society… it is a notion of democracy that is much broader than ' one man one vote' ..[that is] what we're talking about. […] each according to ability to each according to his needs, which is what we see all the time. - Respondent A 2016

This conceptualization of democracy as based on direct forms both accept and contest the values echoed within the preventative project, where the values such as equality, liberty and solidarity are brought forth at the same time as the procedural values of openness and reciprocity are seen as questioned by the explication of inequality within their interpretation the current construction of democracy. As foundational elements of democracy, these two sets of values are to be pereceived of as universal (Dahlgren, 2009:111), and in this sense they are not refuted, but merely defined by a different ideology than the liberal one.

This is also an example of how values, not least democratic values, are far from agreed upon (Dahlgren, 2009:110).

The discrepancy in the definition of values is intimately related to ideology in its positive sense, where the principles and values of the ideology serve as a "connecting tissue" within the civic culture (Dahlgren, 2009:117). In light of the lack of clear definition of ideologies discursively constructed within the preventative project, an understanding for the foundations of political agency and practice becomes fleeting. Thus undermining the central objective within the preventative project, which is the dissemination of knowledge in order to prevent "pro-violent extremism" (ref). In discussing the concepts of "extremism" and "pro-violence" the respondents contextualize the use of these as both an understandable aspect and something inherently repressive:

> Pro-violence, as if this is the definition of… like… as if we are part of some pro-violence… the only thing we have said officially, that I know of, is that 'no but we cannot rule out violence'. But that we're supposed to be pro-violent… that makes it out as if it this is always what we are. [Like] ' no we use violence first, and then if that does not work we'll try something else'. - Respondent A 2016

> I can understand that there is a fear among the political elite, like 'shit, here we have a lot of people who join movements that want to change our society, and some use violence'. And it's clear that they are wondering 'what the hell [sic!] are we going to do' ... but it's a little scary … I think it's quite bizarre that we're there like EFE [compared] with … SMR[3] and Jihadists. - Respondent B 2016

The collapse of political context and lack ideological differentiation is experienced as offensive, and as an effort to put a "criminalizing label on civil resistance and disobedience" (EFE 2016). The concepts and definitions within the preventative project thus also have a negative impact on the dimension of knowledge and it's relation to the political identity. Knowledge, acquired by the appropriation of information into ones existing frames of reference, is a central part of any political participation (Dahlgren, 2009:108). And the systemic and soft forms of power exerted in the discursive constructions and information dissemination within the preventative project do not only deny the frame of reference that the respondents use to conceptualize their subjective reality, but further, refuses their political identities any political legitimacy.

The respondents, in return, contest the very conceptual framework upon which the definition of political legitimacy rests, a discursive struggle that is also evident within their concrete spaces of action, both off and online:

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[3] SMR (Swedish resistance movement) is a Nazi terror organization who seek to overthrow democracy by violence.

> I've been … on their Facebook page and discussed with them too, but after a while they just began to delete my comments… The first post he responded very well to […] And then when I pointed out that this is an ideological error and that's an ideological error [...] and criticized him, then […] he wrote ... short comments ... one-liners, answered a part in what I wrote instead of everything and then he stopped completely and just removed stuff. - Respondent B, 2016

Referring to a conversation with Daniel Norlander on the Facebookpage of the preventative project, the respondent reveals how, in his view, the effort to discuss ideology and legitimacy is effectively shut down.

The foreclosing of communicative spaces is also an example of systemic forms of power, without responsibility, seeing as Norlander expresses that the discussions over core concepts does little to help the implementation of the local preventions, and that he feels that a Facebook page is of little relevance to the preventative project (Norlander 2016).

This further explicates how an important communicative space and arena for contestation is being governed; refusing the respondent a chance to express his views and defend himself against the claims that his political identity is both inherently violent and anti-democratic. Claims that, for both of the respondents, stand in stark contrast to their experiences of everyday political engagement and participation:

> Also that they call it anti ... sometimes pro-violent sometimes antidemocratic ... we are more democratic than the prevailing society I would say […] People know we have the same material interests, and then it is all about finding certain struggles in which you can unite. And then you really don't need to talk about much else […] we're more of a resource in people's struggles rather than their leader… I imagine us functioning like a union for city districts. - Respondent B, 2016

Practices, defined as 'embodied agency and skill' (Dahlgren, 2009:117), are enacted in various spaces of communication, both in forms of concrete efforts at discussion as well as in everyday mobilization over common material interest. In relation to ideology, the respondent's notion of functioning as a resource further implies that the ideology as uniting principles and values also serve as strategies for mobilization within everyday life. This further complicates the discursive construction within the preventative project of ideology as less important, or of ideology as something few of the targeted "extremists" are knowledgeable about (Lecture 2016). In opposition to the simplistic understandings, the respondents offers a much more reflexive view on ideology, and how this functions within a political organization that consists of various ideological currents:

> We try not to have these ideological discussions based on isms …but rather [based] on practices [like] ... the [local] park, we have shared [material] interests, and we try to gather people in the area we try to [make a change]... And that gave results […] not so long ago when we celebrated that we had won, and there were all [sorts of] people in the area, [like] active social democrats. Respondent A 2016

Ideology is here seen as something that permeates the concrete practices of political agency as well as identity, and as something that guides the political action towards societal impact and change. When referring to the local park, the respondent is talking about how their effort to hinder a private company from building a retirement home on the grounds of their local park and school through everyday mobilization, protest and interaction with the local politicians. This also touches upon the ways in which interaction occurs with the 'politics', even though parliamentary politics are seen as slow and unable (EFE 2016). This inevitably broadens the conceptualization and realization of ideology and its positive function within the political engagement, which further means that the discursive construction of EFE as "pro-violent extremists" runs the risk of eclipsing their local democratic participation thereby compromising the democratic participation within civic society.

The affective consequence of being compared to extremists with fascist ideological frameworks, as well as being discursively constructed as a threat to democracy is opposed by the respondents, who draw on notions of democratic inclusion as well as point toward the inherent contradiction of defining violence as either good or bad:

> Democracy does not just happen every fourth year, which is what people always say… democracy happens every day. It is a constant struggle in discussions, with your neighbors, with your colleagues. That is where you can impact every day. And I think that that is why [people] might also engage in groups like EFE, because they don't want to be politicians but they want to be engaged citizens. Respondent A 2016

> I think it's hard to talk about violence in general, because I don't think Violence is something you can be either for or against, but that we are all for certain [types of] violence and against [other types] of violence […] I mean, there is no contradiction… there is no societal conflict about violence or no violence, but [it is either] this violence or that violence. Respondent B 2016

In the reflection of the everyday practice of democracy trough discussion, the respondent touches upon the substantial as well as the procedural values related to civic agency (Dahlgren, 2009:111). As opposed to participating in general elections or engaging in 'politics' for the search of reform, the values are embedded within the political practice of the socio-cultural dimension, extending the implied yet undefined notion of democracy as given within the SOU 2013:81 (Dahlgren, 2009:116). And although practices, both discursive and embodied, always hold the potential to be destructive, these are extensively reflected upon and situated in the wider political context. In discussion violence as a tactic, this was reflected upon in relation to the state monopoly on violence:

> The police have a monopoly on violence […] and if we are planning to have a demonstration, for example against Nazis, we know the police will be there, and when they won't be able to stop us in any other way the will use violence. [So] we've used […] confrontational non-violence. [Which means] that we move forward but we never strike back. - Respondent A 2016

What emerges in the social and affective dimension of socio-cultural practices is a reflexive process contradictory to the simplistic discursive constructions found in chapter one. As for the notion of democracy evoked within the interview, it contrasts the 'political' definition implicit within the preventative project and instead offers a contentious version anchored within the everyday struggles of 'the political'. The practices and ideological foundation which the emergent representations draw upon are thus not antidemocratic but rather counter-democratic, in the sense that they constitute an indirect form of power, running parallel to that of 'politics' (Rosanvallon 2010:25, Mouffe 2005).

Towards a downward spiral of antagonism or an upward spiral of engagement?

At both of the levels of content and communication, the concept of "pro-violent" has been subject to contradiction, critical reflection and contestation. As we saw in chapter two, the definition of the concept underwent a pivotal change, moving from the acceptance and promotion of violence as a political means, to the affirmation and though of violence as an appropriate means, and finally landing in the definition of "pro-violent" as not renouncing the use of violence. As the discursive construction of this phenomena passed through the dimension of knowledge in various contexts of discursive practice the concept was diluted and thus extended in a way that impinges upon the political engagement of the respondents as a form of soft power (Corner, 2011:14f):

> The only [reason] we're in here, as I have understood, is because we have not renounced violence. And that's… this fucking [sic!] renouncement that everybody keeps talking about… - Respondent A 2016

> And it does not mean that you're [automatically] for [the use of violence] just because you don't renounce it. It's not like they ask the local soccer club what they think about it … or the [local] sewing circle – Respondent B 2016

As seen earlier, the respondents offer a broader analysis on core concepts, ideology and violence, but not least, democracy and its values and procedures. This analysis runs through all the dimensions foundational for their political identity and agency, impacting values, spaces, practices an knowledge. However, throughout the entire analysis, focus has been within the soft forms of power exerted by discursive constructions and counter discourses, which mostly relate to impact on the symbolic dimensions. Regarding the concrete impact of the preventative project upon contentious political engagement, this is understood as both an invitation to engage and a possible radicalizing mechanism:

I think the only thing we can respond with is more openness and less sectarianism. Because that's the most dangerous thing there is, for us to walk around and be afraid of this [preventative project], and isolate ourselves. And that's what they want… because if we isolate… then we won't grow … and especially, our message won't grow [...] And in that case you could [definitely] talk about radicalization. – Respondent B 2016

In light of the inherently contradictory nature of the preventative project, the respondents affective reflection illuminates the way that the stigmatizing and simplistic discursive constructions impinge upon the concrete communicative practice of openness, and the possibility engage within this communicative space. The perception of stigma and isolation as forwarded within the preventative project also reflect the very antagonistic nature that resides in the discursive discrepancy between 'politcs' and 'the political' (Mouffe, 2005).

As we have seen within the dimension of concept, the discursive constructions of the members of EFE as "anti-democratic" and "pro-violent extremists" invokes the notion of enemy, rather than that of adversary. Furthermore, this means that the possibility of democratic engagement and participation, both within and outside the structures that condition the liberal democracy, is foreclosed by the refusal of granting antagonists political legitimacy. As such, the discursive constructions by which the preventative project and its local implementation understand contentious political engagement further compromises some of the values that the preventative project itself seeks to safeguard.

In chapter one and two, we saw how engagement and political dissent were discursively constructed as one of many foundational elements of democracy, but at the level of contentious political engagement these same opportunities seem, to some extent, inapplicable. This explicates the soft and systemic forms of power at play, and how these work to uphold narratives of threat, illegitimacy combined with a rudimentary understanding for the manifold ways in which democratic engagement and participation manifest. In light of the analysis in this last chapter, the preventative project might result in what might be envisioned as either a downward spiral of antagonism where the negative affect yielded by the discursive constructions furthers radicalization within contentious political engagement, or; an upward spiral of political engagement where the counter democratic civic culture that entails EFE invigorates everyday life in its democratic practices and dimensions.

Conclusion

Within the dimension of content, the Swedish counter radicalization project raises both questions and cause for concern. We've followed the discursive constructions of core concepts, watched as they've expanded notions pro-violent and antidemocratic so as to include some of the everyday practices of political engagement that, at times, radically oppose the procedural feature of the liberal form of democracy, but not necessarily its substantive ones. Simplistic representations of a multifaceted and ideologically diverse organization such as EFE furthers negates an understanding of their counter democratic political engagement, which also means that the possibility to differentiate between substantial threats to democratic values and political dissent as part of 'the political' is foreclosed.

The contradiction within the discursive construction of the concepts further impacts the people who engage with them on the level of content, ranging from partly anxious experiences of assigned research to the practice of deflecting criticism by soft and systemic forms of power. Some of the respondents' experiences are more explicitly profound than others, but it certainly leaves no one unaffected.

In relation to the question of *where we are going and whether or not this is desirable*, this both a philosophical and an ideological question that depends on which discourses one chooses to adhere to. From the perspective of democracy as a relationship of contestation between 'politics' and 'the political', and where counter democratic practices are foundational for the development of democracy, it is safe to say that the discursive constructions within the preventative project are highly problematic.

At the level of communication, we've also seen the affective dimensions within the preventative projects local manifestations, as the concepts and scope of the preventative measures impacts both on the experience of working within a politically governed organization as well as how the concept confusion and contestation manifest themselves in the inability to integrate both the core definitions of the preventative project. Within the local implementation of the preventative project, it also becomes evident that the counter measures as proposed by the national coordinator seem discordant with the local realities. Furthermore, the fact that the current democratic system is safe from any viable threat also puts the question of what should be done in an interesting light. If democracy is unthreatened by the "pro-violent extremists", should anything really be done at all?

Drawing upon the contradiction inherent in the quest to "safeguard democracy" when said democracy is deemed not at risk, the question of who loses and who gains, and by which mechanisms of power becomes urgently pressing. The discourses within the project impinge upon contentious political engagement in different dimensions, illuminating the complexity of 'the political' in communicative arenas governed by liberal grand narratives of democracy. The discursive construction of members of EFE as "pro-violent" and "anti-democratic" yield affective responses manifested in the fear of criminalization of the political identity, impacting on various dimensions of their counter-democratic civic culture.

Although the analysis illuminates discourses and soft forms of power, these still remain the core dimensions of knowledge, upon which we draw to define the situation and act accordingly, and in relation to the democratic values of openness, reciprocity and solidarity, one might say we all lose. In regards as to who gains, that is a question beyond the scope of this analysis, but it is evident that whoever gains does so by the mechanisms of power embedded within the communicative power to discursively construct and define what is and what is not legitimate political engagement.

This thesis has sought to trace the discursive constructions within the Swedish counter radicalization project, in an effort to understand how these are experienced both at the level of the local politics and the level of contentious political engagement. Within this effort, we have seen some of the core disputes within the literature review reverberate though the discursive constructions and their impact, but we have also been offered a glimpse into the everyday practices of the people who, in various ways, are connected to the preventative project. The analysis has taken us trough the discursive construction of content, the discursive practices and struggles of interpretation, as well as through a part of the context in which these discursive constructions and practices relate to the social and the cultural. In an effort to achieve a unique contribution to the knowledge about how the counter radicalization program impacts or impinges upon contentious political engagement, a diverse and complex set of dimensions have surfaced. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to encompass them all, but future research that ventures deeper into the lived experience of the discourses at play is, in light of the analysis, urgently needed.

In conclusion, this thesis touches upon certain elements of the preventative project that are undesirable in relation understanding contentious political action and contesting definitions of core democratic values, and that these elements impact and impinge upon local parliamentarian politics as well as local contentious political engagement.

The discursive constructions are politically volatile and arbitrary, and that, in relation to the civil right to hold radical opinions and organize according to these, challenges the very values of liberal democracy that the Swedish counter radicalization project seeks to protect. It is an example of power without responsibility, one that hopefully ignites the upward spiral of engagement rather than trigger the downward spiral of antagonism.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Extended critical reflection on methodology and methods

Critical awareness

As in all research, a critical and self reflexive stance must lie at the heart of the venture. In the critical discussion on the methodology of this thesis, issues regarding relativism were raised and then countered with arguments of contextualism. As the phronetic approach focuses on attaining a balance between instrumental rationality and value- rationality, which means that the core both the methodology and the methods in this thesis lies in the realm of value judgments (Flyvbjerg 2001). Such a realm is fraught with contention and deep philosophical debates, from which the only part this thesis will touch upon is the notion of whether or not validity is possible. Circling back to the earlier notion of contextualism, its inherent practicality from which this thesis draws lies within the starting point that the only normative value judgments made are the ones drawing upon those which are expressed by the groups in the context studied (Flyvbjerg, 2001:130). As this thesis seeks to understand the discursive constructions of certain forms of political engagement as "extremism" in relation to a broader conception of contentious political engagement, the value judgments answering the questions of where we are going, what should be done, and whether or not this is desirable will be driven by the theories applied as well as the perspectives and discourses emerging from within the studied context. In relation to validity, this is within the phronetic approach driven by the venture to establish a better alternative, as opposed to presenting just another interpretation, which means that the ultimate goal of prhonetic research as well as of this thesis is to contribute to a dialogue about the society in which we live and what sort of social praxis to be applied within it (Flyvbjerg, 2001:130, 139).

Furthermore, the requirement of reliability and repeatability of research is problematic in light of the methodology and methods applied in this thesis. Seeing as social constructionism refutes the existence of a final description of the reality and world in which we live, reliability becomes unattainable in its traditional sense (Burr, 2003:158). Instead, this thesis is legitimated by the recognition that the only solid foundations we can rest upon are the socially and historically situated accounts of this world, and as such, it is important to deconstruct and critically analyze these; especially when asking the value-rational questions

posed by Flyvbjerg (2001:130, Burr 2003:158).

As reliability and validity remain fleeting with a social constructionist phronetic methodology, this thesis seeks to offer transparency and reflexivity in its stead. Reflexivity occurs at multiple levels and is practiced throughout each step of the research project. According to Burr, the notion of reflexivity pertains to the fact that respondents accounts are simultaneously constituted by and constitutive of the events they describe, the fact that social constructionist research is as much of a social construction as the very construction it seeks to deconstruct, and finally; the fact that there is a need to elucidate the personal as well as the political values that the researcher bring in to the project (2003:156f). As for transparency, this is a practice applied to invite the readers of the research to follow the process and decide for themselves, whether or not and to which extent the personal motives of the researcher informs the research (Burr, 2003:159). For this thesis, transparency is provided by critical reflections on methods and methodology as well as examples of the coding process.

Seeing as this thesis not only draws upon text as content but also interviews and contexts with human interaction, a brief ethical discussion is also warranted. The topic of this thesis is a contested one, and some of the people interviewed stand in a direct relationship to either the content produced within the preventative project, or the practice of communicating and implementing that content, which means that the analysis in this thesis contains a risk of causing friction between people related to the project.

In order to prevent such situations and to counter the risk of friction, the respondents interviewed within this thesis were well informed of the project and its research agenda prior to engaging in the interviews. All participants were presented with an information letter containing information and a request for consent, which was obtained prior to all of the primary and secondary interviews. Furthermore, respondents were informed that the interviews would be recorded and transcribed for analysis, and as a gesture of good faith, respondents were also sent transcribed material to verify. Although the process of verification has been time-consuming, it has served as a way to minimize misinterpretation as well as granting the respondents a chance to withdraw statements that could possibly enhance the risk of conflict. Respondents were also well informed that they, during any stage of the research process, could withdraw their participation without any negative consequences.

Appendix 2. Example - Interview guide

This guide is an example of a semi structured interview grid. It was used during the interview with Linus Andersson and focuses on the experience of working with assigned research for the preventative project.

Interview grid adapted from della Porta 2014:14,49	Themes	What I wish to learn	Questions	Ideal focus/purpose of question
Interesting	Working with assigned research	- what has it been like working with assigned research? - have you been able to change/ add research questions within the assignment? - How have you expereinced flexibility in terms of feedback and criticism?	1.1 Could you tell me about what it is like working within assigned research for the preventative project?	1.1 What was the scope of your assigment?
			1.2 How did you expereience your chances of being flexiblie?	1.2 Where you able to make changes/be flexible?
Difficult	Researching autonomous groups	- How have you experienced working with concepts such as anti-democratic and pro-violent? -Have there been any difficulties?	2.1 Were there any challenges in working with concepts such as anti-democratic and pro-violent messages?	2.1 Definitions and concrete concepts - Practical experience and affective dimension
Less interesting		Summing up, formalities etc.	- Is there anything you would like to add on or off-record?	

Appendix 3. Summary of respondents

The five primary interviews were held with respondents that cover a wider range of positions and experiences in relation to the preventative project. For this thesis I have interviewed a researcher, Linus Andersson, involved in the SMC report, the head secretary of the National Coordinator Daniel Norlander, a local politician involved in the political contexts of the local preventative plan, Mats Olsson, a local official with insight into the project (anonymous), as well as activist who are members of the local chapter of the organization Allt åt Alla (anonymous).

As for the external empirical material, this is included because it presents an opportunity to analyze the discourses of the then National Coordinator herself, Mona Sahlin, one that was not possible during my own sampling due to monetary limitations and geographical distances. All of the respondents participating in this research project were contacted personally, either via e-mail, or, as in the case of the local members of EFE, through their Facebook page.

Appendix 4. Analysis Guide

Analysis Guide

This guide for analysis has been drafted according to the described method of ECA and CDA within the thesis. It serves as a practical guide in the analysis of both content and practice, as well as a means towards transparency in the process of analysis.

ECA

Purpose: Symbolic/discursive meaning of content to be placed in social and cultural context (Altheide 1996:14, 32, 33).

Q1 *Content* – what are the emerging narratives and discourses within the content?

Q2 *Content* – in what social and cultural context is the content situated?

Q1 *Practice* – what are the interpretations of the symbolic/discursive content made by the respondents?

CDA

Purpose: to deconstruct language that is used to represent and construct certain aspects of reality from certain perspectives, in order to illuminate the dynamics of power embedded in that language (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999:36, Schrøder 2012:116, Fairclough 1995). Key points of focus for the analysis of discourse:

- Communicative events; Text, discursive practice, socio-cultural practice. Here, focus within the dimension of text lies on re-contextualization and representation of certain forms of social practices.
- Orders of discourse; which discourses and forms of organization (genre) the communicative event entails.

Q1 *Text* – how does the text represent, contextualize or re-contextualize the topic at hand?

Q1 *Discursive practice* – how has the text been produced/constructed?

Q2 *Discursive practice* – how has the text been consumed/ interpreted?

Q *Sociocultural practice* – is the sociocultural practice related to any political (related to ideology and power) or cultural issues (related to values and identity) (Fairclough 1995:62)