A collaborative approach between street-level bureaucrats in the preventive work against violent extremism - a successful way of working

- A comparative case study of the preventive work against violent extremism conducted in five Swedish municipalities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore preventive work against violent extremism on a local scale in Sweden. By comparing the work in five successful municipalities, similarities in strategies could be found, which plausibly could be helpful for municipalities struggling with their work. The empirical material was collected through five semi-structured interviews with local coordinators in each municipality. The interviews were complemented with document analyses of each of the municipalities' local plan of action. The result was analyzed through a model of multi-agency working, drawing on Michael Lipsky's theory on street-level bureaucracy.

The study has concluded that there are many similarities in how the explored municipalities conduct their work. To counter collaborative issues such as cooperation between municipal administrations, the importance of including the preventive work within already established collaborative models was stressed. Including civil society organizations was also highlighted as important and to succeed with that, they have to be included early in the work. As for the future of preventive work against violent extremism, the local coordinators saw a potential of regional collaborations as well as regional coordinators, which potentially could make the workload lighter.

Key words: violent extremism, radicalization, polarization, street-level bureaucracy, multi-agency working, local coordinator

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1 Introduction

Violent extremism exists in various shapes such as harassing, threatening or harming others into either support, plan or even conduct ideologically motivated violent actions. Such actions do, in the worst-case scenario, result in acts of terrorism (Department of Culture, 2015), which only this year tragically has been shown in for instance New Zealand (BBC, 2019) and Sri Lanka (Tuazon et. al., 2019). How to prevent and counter such attacks is a topic on every political agenda across the globe. Countering violent extremism, as opposed to countering terrorism, is a rather new concept, which has emerged as a softer approach in the countering work. Initially, both countering violent extremism and countering terrorism consisted of top-down approaches favoring hard punitive measures such as military power to solve the issues. Eventually, it was argued that the countering work would benefit from focusing more on soft power; meaning measures that tackle the root causes of terrorism at a societal level. A reconceptualization of countering violent terrorism was needed so that soft measures could include for instance civil society organizations and grassroots-driven initiatives, which resulted in a wider, more comprehensive approach in the countering of these issues (Aly, et.al, 2015:3-4). This shift has made room for more actors in the preventive work, which means that it now reaches from a global scale down to local initiatives on a grass-root level, tackling the very root causes of terrorism and violent extremism.

The role of grass-root workers, or street-level bureaucrats, is a topic in which the political scientist Michael Lipsky has conducted comprehensive research. Lipsky claims that it is street-level bureaucrats in their role as public service workers, and the work that they do, that actually shape the work, as opposed to initiatives taken on a national scale. He claims that street-level bureaucrats have the power of implementing national initiatives in a suitable way for them, which is why he claims that they are the ones actually creating the policies (Lipsky, 2010). In the context of violent extremism, this means that street-level bureaucrats on a

municipal level have the ability of framing the preventive work in ways that suit them, while drawing upon national policy documents. Those municipal workers are the ones actually deciding what the preventive work should look like.

The work of street-level bureaucrats can be explored through models of multi-agency working (MAW). MAW is a rather new approach within preventive work against violent extremism but has shown to be a fruitful model when used within other fields of working. MAW focuses on collaboration between relevant actors in the preventive work in order to make it as efficient and effective as possible (Sarma, 2018). These relevant actors are the same individuals that are pointed out as street-level bureaucrats by Lipsky: law enforcement, social services, school staff and representatives from civil society organizations. Street-level bureaucrats and the way in which they have implemented national policies in the preventive work against violent extremism is the focal point of this study and their work is explored through a model of MAW, focusing on the collaborative approach.

1.2 Research problem and purpose of the study

In 2017, it was estimated that 3000 individuals in Sweden somehow were connected to violent extremism, which is a number that has increased from a few hundred to 3000 in a few years (The Swedish Security Police, 2018:34). This increase in activities has resulted in two rather comprehensive preventive efforts from the Swedish government (Department of Justice, 2012 & Department of Culture, 2015). Due to the fact that Sweden has what is called local self-government, municipalities have the ability of structuring their own work by drawing upon national policy documents. In the governmental efforts it has been highlighted as important to have a collaborative approach in the work and that civil society organizations are vital actors to include (Department of Justice, 2012 & Department of Culture, 2015). Although, previous research has shown that some municipalities experience the collaborative approach as challenging and that they find it difficult to include civil society organizations, mainly depending on the fact that it is an easily stigmatized topic (Kramers, et.al, 2018).

Based on these problems that previous research has shown, this study undertakes the following purpose: to explore preventive work against violent extremism on a local scale in Sweden. By comparing the work of five successful municipalities, the aim is to identity similarities and differences in how they have chosen to implement national policies, where similarities in strategies might be of help to other municipalities that are struggling with their preventive work. The analysis focuses especially on the collaborative approach between different municipal administrations as well as how to involve civil society organizations.

1.2 Research questions

In order to meet the purpose of the study, it proceeds from the following questions:

- How have street-level bureaucrats on a local scale in Sweden implemented national policies in their preventive work against violent extremism?
- What similar features are there in the implementation of such policies?

1.3 Limitations of the study

Due to the timeframe and scope of this study, some limitations had to be made. Firstly, the comparative analysis consists of five municipalities and it is exclusively the work within these five municipalities that is explored. Therefore, the conclusions are only about how those five municipalities frame and conduct their work.

Secondly, since this study explores preventive work in Sweden, some of the sources in chapter two to four are in Swedish (marked by my translation in parentheses), as well as all of the collected empirical material presented in chapter five.

1.4 Conceptual definitions

In order to clarify the purpose of the study and what it aims to explore, some definitions of key concepts are necessary:

Violent extremism[1]

Violent extremism is a collective name for actions, ideologies or individuals that support, encourage or participate in ideologically motivated violence to promote a certain cause. Such actions, ideologies or individuals do not accept a democratic social order where political goals and societal changes can be affected and achieved through democratic processes (Department of Justice, 2014, my translation).

Radicalization

Radicalization is the process, which results in that an individual, or a group supporting, encouraging or participating in ideologically motivated violence to promote a certain cause (The Swedish Security Police, 2010:9, my translation).

Polarization

Polarization can be seen as a thought construct based on assumptions of identities of "us" and "them". What "us" and "them" might have in common is neglected and the focal point is the perceived (and often exaggerated) differences in simplistic narratives about the others (Lenos, et. al, 2017:2).

Street-level bureaucrats

Street-level bureaucrats are public service workers such as social workers, school staff and police officers, who all have regular contact with the citizens (Lipsky, 2010:3-4).

Local coordinator

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[1] The direct translation of violent extremism from Swedish is violent *affirming* extremism. Due to

The local coordinator is the logical street-level bureaucrat to contact within each municipality in the preventive work against violent extremism. The role of the local coordinator was initiated based on a request through a governmental effort as a way of making the preventive work more efficient and collected (Norlander [a], 2016, my translation).

2 Violent extremism

This section of the study presents an overview of violent extremism and its presence, both within a global and Swedish context. This is done to contextualize violent extremism in a broader setting. Thereafter, a short description of polarization and radicalization is outlined as they serve as gateways into violent extremism and therefore are important concepts in the preventive work. Lastly, previous research on violent extremism and evaluations of the preventive work in Sweden is presented.

2.1 Violent extremism in a global context

"A polarized Europe, in which strong, hateful us and them feelings are rife, is the swamp in which extremist recruiters thrive, and where self-radicalizers turn to violence" (Lenos, et.al, 2017:5). The quote points to the complexity of what causes violent extremism and, in the worst-case scenario, terrorist acts. Even though this study does not address terrorism per se, it is important to include a brief overview of the concept in order to frame the global issue as well as pointing out the close connection between terrorism and violent extremism. A global definition of terrorism is "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economical, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation" (Institution for Economics and Peace, 2018:6, my translation), whereas violent extremism is an even wider, more inclusive concept. However, the terms are often used synonymously (Glazzard & Zeuthen, 2016:1). The global terrorism index annually provides information on global trends and patterns of terrorism, in which they also measure in what

countries the impact of terrorism, is the highest. In 2018, Sweden ranked 51 out of 138 countries (Institution for Economics and Peace 2018:9). Such a position shows that the problem does exist in Sweden, but that it needs to be viewed from a wider perspective. Terrorism is a global issue where Sweden is far from being the most exposed country. However, it is arguably still important that each country work in the best way possible in order to decrease the number of individuals joining extreme movements.

Research has also shown that individuals with a criminal background possess a higher tendency of being drawn to extremist beliefs, radicalization and extreme movements (Institution for Economics and Peace, 2018:3). Such a connection between terrorism, violent extremism and other criminal activities, combined with an increased polarization across the globe highlights the complexity of the problem as well as the importance of a wide preventive work in order to minimize the risk of individuals joining extreme movements.

2.2 Violent extremism in Sweden

In 2017, the Swedish Security Police estimated that there were approximately 3000 individuals that somehow were connected to violent extremism in Sweden. That is a number that has risen from a few hundred to 3000 in a few years (The Swedish Security Police, 2017:34, my translation). Within violent extremism, there are three different orientations: right-wing extremism (or white power), left-wing extremism (or autonomous left), and Islamic extremism (The Swedish Security Police, 2018:60, my translation). Each of the orientations is shortly presented below.

Right-wing extremism
Right-wing extremism expresses discontent towards immigrants and the ideology portraits the goal as an ethnically homogeneous society, free from the mixture of other cultures (Department of Justice, 2014:33, my translation).
Left-wing extremism

The basis of left-wing extremism is to strive for a classless society without ruling of an authority. Supporters claim that capitalistic incentives are too prominent in society and that such hinders the achievement of the classless society where all individuals can live on equal terms (Department of Justice, 2014:30, my translation).

Islamic extremism

Islamic extremism is an ideology where the predecessors claim to act on the basis of Islam. The more prominent influence within this orientation in Sweden is al-Qaida, which in the global context motivate individuals or groups to conduct acts of terrorism towards civilians. This is done to protest against the occupation of Muslim countries and as a response to experienced insults of Islam (Department of Justice, 2014:35, my translation).

Out of the 3000 individuals connected to violent extremism, it was estimated that 2000 of them could be connected to the Islamic extremism. The remaining 1000 individuals were equally divided between right-wing and left-wing extremism. Although, it is important to state that only because these 3000 individuals are of interest for the Security Police, it does not necessarily mean that they are potential terrorists (The Swedish Security Police, 2017:34, my translation). It should also be added that there is a fourth category, consisting of so-called lone wolves. This is not spoken of as one of the orientations, but is still a form of violent extremism. Lone wolves draw inspiration from violent ideologies, but do not experience the belonging of a certain orientation (The Swedish Security Police, 2018:63, my translation).

These three (or four) orientations of violent extremism possess both similarities and difference and could arguably all three alone be the topic of a research. However, what distinguishes the orientations is not the focal point in this study but this section served simply as an explanation of what violent extremism is and in what shape it can come. The focal point of the study is instead what joins the

different orientations, which is what makes it an overarching societal problem, namely that all the orientations legitimizes violence to reach a change in political or ideological purpose (The Swedish Security Police, 2018:60, my translation).

2.3 Polarization and radicalization

The different orientations presented above highly affect each other and are nourished by an increased polarization (Norlander [b], 2016:8, my translation). This next section will therefore briefly explain the concept of polarization, leading in to a section on radicalization in order to highlight why the preventive work is of such importance.

"Us-them thinking exist in society at a micro, meso and macro level, and the media demonstrate this to us every day" (Brandsma, 2017:14). Shortly, the creation of "us" versus "them" is what polarization is about. Polarization is often described as a conflict that has "spun out of control", but is arguably more complicated than that (Brandsma, 2017:14). A key difference between a conflict and polarization is that it is easier to find the key players and point out responsibilities within conflicts. Within polarization, the players are more intangible, which means that actors can always take one step back, avoid the personal role and deny responsibility (Brandsma, 2017:16). There are three important aspects to take into consideration when discussing how to counter and prevent polarization (Brandsma, 2017:19-23):
- Polarization is a thought construct. This means that polarization is an abstract idea, which creates "us" versus "them"-thinking and the construction of such concepts.
- Polarization needs fuel. "Us" versus "them"-thinking is fed when one part is constructing an assumption about the identity of the other.
- Polarization is a dynamic of gut feeling. This simply means that when people put their mind into one assumption of a phenomenon, it is difficult to change their opinion even with facts or evidence.

Preventing and decreasing polarization creates conditions that contribute to minimize the risk of individuals being drawn into "us" versus "them"-thinking (Lenos, et.al, 2017:5). Even though countering polarization rarely is stated as the key focus when working to counter and prevent violent extremism, it is an important aspect to take into consideration given the close connection to violent extremism but also the close connection to radicalization. Polarization and radicalization intercept with and affect each other, even though it is important to state that they do not always correlate: "Polarization does not necessarily lead to radicalization and radicalization does not have to result in growing polarization" (Lenos, 2016:3). However, the concepts do correlate when looking at factors that make people vulnerable to extremist propaganda and recruitment (Lenos et. al, 2017:5). International research emanates from a set of nine risk factors that potentially could cause individuals to be drawn into extreme movements and violent extremism (Ranstorp, 2016):

- Individual socio-psychological factors, for instance feelings of alienation and exclusion.
- Social factors, for instance marginalization, discrimination (either real or perceived), and limited social mobility.
- Political factors. This surrounds grievances against Western foreign policies and military interventions where the most famous example is "the West is at war with Islam".
- Ideological and religious factors, which mainly revolves around an extreme interpretation of Islam where the conception is that the religion is threatened and in need of protection.
- Culture and identity crisis. This is based on a cultural alienation where individuals feel like they do not belong to either their current country's culture or their originating country's culture.
- Trauma and other trigger mechanisms, for instance post traumatic stress disorder.
- Group dynamics, which involves for instance charismatic leadership and a certain groupthink.

- Radicalizers and groomers. These factors are about recruiting to violent extremism through manipulation, pressure and persuasion.
- Social media, and the Internet, which accelerates the process of radicalization by reaching greater distances than what could be done otherwise.

By pointing out and categorizing these risk factors, research has agreed upon so called protective and promoting factors, which are factors that can help frame the preventive work. Protective factors strengthen individual and group resilience towards the aforementioned risk factors and include factors such as family support, religious knowledge and participation in social activities. An explicit example of this is if an individual has a positive social network and family support that can prevent experienced feelings of grievance and alienation, which in turn are connected to several risk factors. Promoting factors strengthen the societal resilience by strengthening the protective factors and mitigating the risk factors. Promoting factors include vigilance, care, inclusion and dialogue for instance. To refer back to the aforementioned example of family support as a protective factor, promoting factors such as vigilance and care represent the overarching societal work that strengthens that protective factor. For example: being watchful over youths, investigating in cooperation between police and citizens, tailor youth care and prioritizing individuals' mental health could all in the long-run mitigate the risk of feeling alienated. The overall aim of working around these factors is to *reduce* the risk factors, by *enhancing* the protective and promoting factors (Sieckelinck & Gielen, 2018). These factors and how they all correlate can be summarized and shown in the so called prevention pyramid, which is often used in the preventive work against violent extremism (Department of Culture, 2017, my translation).

Figure 1. The prevention pyramid
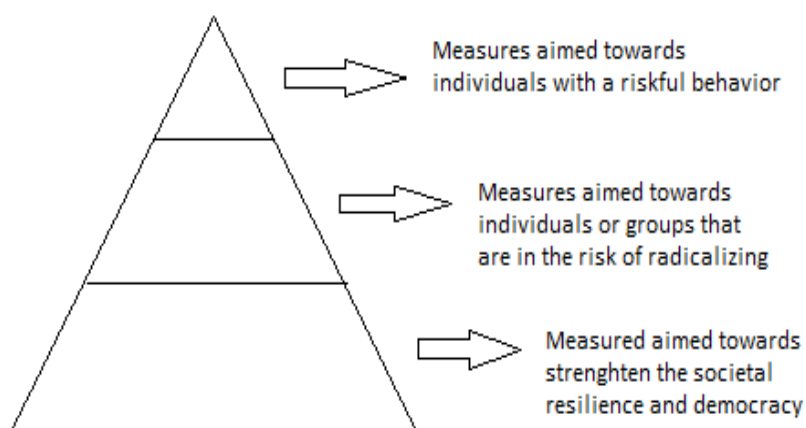
The promotive factors such as vigilance and care represent the bottom of the pyramid, in which the measures taken in the preventive work aim to strengthen the societal resilience. The protective factors represent the middle part of the pyramid, in which factors such as family support are highlighted. The top of the pyramid represents the risk factors, where individuals could plan to join extreme movements. The top of the pyramid also includes the work of providing support to individuals that want to exit from such movements. The presented risk factors as well as the protective and promotive factors all highlight the importance of an early preventive work in order to tackle radicalization at its roots. The local level of a society is the place in which there is room for this type of individual care, which is why the preventive work on a local level is the focal point in this study.

2.4 Reports on and evaluations of violent extremism, initiated by the Swedish government

In Sweden, the preventive aspect in the work against violent extremism was introduced in the 1990s. Before that, the police had exclusively dealt with such problems. During the 1990s, there was a political momentum to carry out different action programs in order to both counter and prevent violent extremism. This included forming committees to lead the work as well as beginning to

evaluate the work. Besides the political focus, dropout programs, such as EXIT, for individuals that wanted to leave either criminal or extreme environments were introduced. Different types of school efforts were also introduced, focusing on starting the preventive work early. Civil society organizations also started to get involved in the preventive work and there was an increased municipal engagement. It was clear that violent extremism no longer was a problem exclusively for the police to tackle, but for the society as a whole (Lööw, 2017:32-33, my translation).

Over the course of 2009 and 2010, the Swedish Security Police and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention compiled and presented two reports on the occurrence and development of violent extremism in Sweden: 'Violent political extremism – anti-democratic groupings on the far-right and far-left wing' (Korsell et. al, 2009, my translation) and 'Violent Islamic extremism in Sweden' (The Swedish Security Police, 2010, my translation). The government commissioned both reports and the aim was to create a knowledge base to use when framing the preventive work against violent extremism. Both of the reports focus on early preventive work as the way to tackle such issues. For instance, the report on political extremism stressed the importance of dialogue. By having a sincere dialogue with political groupings and youth groups, the recruitment base for extreme movements can decrease. The same report also stressed the importance of separating an ideology from actual violent actions because if that space increases, it would be easier to define which individuals that devote themselves to the violent parts. Extreme movements establish themselves on a local scale and the recruitment to such movements is often done within the school environment, which is why the local scale of the preventive work also was highlighted. In addition to this, it was stated that there was a need for an increased knowledge on violent extremism, which would help all the involved actors to actually act on individuals at risk. The collaborative approach was highlighted and this report was the first one that mentioned initiating coordinators on a local scale as a

suitable start to get the collaboration going (Korsell et. al, 2009:10-20, my translation).

The second report, on violent Islamic extremism, focused more on the radicalization process as opposed to the actual extreme movements. This was done to highlight the importance of the preventive work. It pointed out a shift within global extreme movements – previously, most extreme movements had been working on a local scale when recruiting, but now they had turned global. That expanded the risk of extreme propaganda reaching Swedish citizens, which hypothetically could result in them travelling abroad to join these extreme movements. The report also mentioned an increased societal polarization, which also was pointed out as a risk factor for individuals to join extreme movements. Also this report concluded that the most important aspect in countering violent extremism is that the preventive work is done on all levels, and that actors, including civil society organizations, are collaborating in that work (The Swedish Security Police, 2010:9-15, my translation).

The two reports on violent extremism were compiled and updated into one in 2014: 'Violent extremism in Sweden – the situation now and upcoming trends'. The largest change between the reports was that the predicted risk of the increased polarization had happened: an increasing number of individuals had joined extreme movements abroad. There were also indications that Sweden posed as a potential risk for violent attacks because of the increased amount of experienced Islamic infringements. Local preventive work and a collaborative approach in the work were still highlighted as the key ways to go (Department of Justice, 2014:9-11, my translation).

During the last few years, Sweden has had a strong governmental focus on how to prevent and counter violent extremism. Two rather comprehensive governmental efforts have been initiated, which are more thoroughly explained in section 5.1. Both these efforts had a clear focus on local preventive work and had the

municipalities as their focal point. Both efforts were evaluated by the Swedish Agency for Public Management. The first report: 'Protect the democracy against violent extremism – an evaluation of an action plan', was finalized in 2015 and concluded that there was a need for additional actors to be involved in the preventive work and that the government needed to expand their measures taken. Most of the governmental efforts were directed towards a national level even though it previously had been stated that the preventive work needed to be done on a local scale (Department of Culture 2013:81, my translation), which is why the government was encouraged to expand their local efforts. The report also pointed to inadequacies regarding the collaborative aspects in the preventive work and highlighted the importance of strengthening that in order to succeed (Uhrwing & Sorensson, 2015, my translation).

The second report: 'An evaluation of the governmental measures taken against violent extremism 2014-2017' was published in 2018. That report stated that during those three years, municipalities experienced that they had increased their knowledge on violent extremism because of the governmental effort, and that they had developed their preventive work. It was also stated that the majority of the municipalities had initiated a local coordinator to lead the preventive work, which had been mentioned as a suitable approach for the first time in 2009. Municipalities stated that they had established networks and platforms for collaboration as well as educated concerned personnel on the topic of violent extremism. Even though the municipalities experienced that they had made progress in their work, they also stated that they had some challenges. For instance, municipalities wished for more support in terms of concrete tools, instruments or strategies to help frame the preventive work. It was also evident that there were some challenges in the collaborative approach. The majority of the municipalities experienced improvement in terms of collaborating within their own administration or other municipal administrations, but found it particularly challenging to collaborate with civil society organizations. This was because of the stigmatization surrounding the concept of violent extremism, which made

some civil society organizations reluctant of being associated with the preventive work, especially faith communities because of the connection to Islam (Kramers et. al, 2018, my translation).

2.5 Previous research on preventive work against violent extremism

In 2015, the Swedish Defense University released a report on local preventive work in Sweden. The report highlighted the importance of collaboration and also addressed the ways in which that could be achieved. It concluded by suggesting in what ways the preventive work could be development in terms of both overall structure as well as the practical work. The report stated that collaboration between national and local institutions needed improvement, for instance by developing and supporting regional collaboration instead of exclusively local collaborations. This suggestion came from a perspective of cost-efficiency: smaller municipalities might not be able to cope with the costs that the preventive work could result in and therefore, it would be more suitable to conduct the work on a regional scale. The report also stated that more actors needed to be involved in the preventive work in order to establish more accurate documentation of local awareness (Ranstorp et. al, 2015:63, my translation). In addition to this, the report also referred to other research, conducted by the National Board of Health and Welfare, in which it was stated that one way of succeeding with the collaborative approach was to include the new approach; i.e. preventive work against violent extremism; in already established collaborative structures (2015:30). Given that this study focuses on municipalities that actually have established a collaborative approach (more on the selection of municipalities in section 4.2.2), it would be interesting to explore whether those municipalities in fact have included the preventive work within existing models of collaboration, or if they have created new platforms for it.

The second governmental effort initiated a national coordinator to lead the preventive work where one of the measures taken was to form so-called "houses of knowledge". They were four specific knowledge and resource platforms that served as the foundation and central point of information in the preventive work for a few years, until the role of the national coordinator was ended. The effort was evaluated by Dalarna University in 2017. One of the explored municipalities in this study served as one of these knowledge centers, which is why this research is mentioned. The "houses of knowledge" were created from similar international efforts in Denmark and the Netherlands but the Swedish effort had an even wider approach, focusing on promoting democratic aspects in the work. The evaluation stated that the "houses of knowledge" had resulted in solid initiatives within the municipalities but the concept of "houses of knowledge" had proven to be confusing. The preventive work on a local scale was highlighted but it was stated that it should be conducted through a different way than through these "houses of knowledge". The report also stated that there had to be a clearer distinction between what was an extreme opinion and what was ideologically motived violence, and that such knowledge needed to be spread. The evaluation also highlighted the importance of collaboration between actors in the preventive work as well as the importance for them to work on challenges with confidentiality and information sharing between different public administrations, so that they could exchange relevant information with each other to a larger extent (Frisk et.al, 2017, my translation).

2.6 Contribution of this study

Most of the previous research on preventive work on a local scale has been conducted through surveys including the majority of, if not all, the municipalities in Sweden. This has resulted in a solid overview of the experienced problems as well as general effects of the governmental efforts. In depth research of local preventive work has remained fairly unexplored, which is why it is the focal point for this study. Previous research has pointed to both the importance of the preventive work to be conducted on a local scale as well as the importance of

collaboration amongst a wide range of different actors in order for the work to succeed. Therefore, this study explores the preventive work on a local scale and how collaboration between different actors has been established. Previous research has also shown that municipalities request more concrete tools or strategies in how to frame their preventive work, which is why this study will focus on municipalities that actually have succeeded in their work and with their collaborative approach. By comparing strategies in a few, successful municipalities, similarities in how they have succeeded might be found and that could be a contributing material for the municipalities requesting more support on how to frame their work. As civil society organizations have proven to be the most difficult actor to include in the preventive work, it will be of special interest to explore how municipalities have succeeded in involving such organizations.

3 Street-level bureaucracy as the theoretical framework

This section presents the theoretical framework of the study, as well as the operationalization of it. The theoretical framework starts off with implementation theory and more precise: Michael Lipsky's theory on street-level bureaucracy. Street-level bureaucracy is then connected to the concept of multi-agency working, which is later operationalized in the form of a template. The template will later guide and frame the comparative analysis of this study.

3.1 Implementation theory and the shift from government to governance, making room for more actors

One common definition of implementation is "the study of how policy is put into action and practice" (Parsons 1995:461, referred to in Hill & Hupe, 2002), which is what this study focuses on. More explicitly, it will explore how municipalities

in Sweden have developed their preventive work against violent extremism drawing upon both national and local policy documents. A general distinction within implementation theories is between the so-called top-down or bottom-up approaches. Top-down approaches tend to focus on command and control, starting from the government downwards to different projects in a hierarchical model. Bottom-up approaches on the other hand tend to focus on local bureaucrats since they are the actual implementers of policies. It is argued that lack of discretion for local bureaucrats in the implementation process will more likely lead to a failed policy (Matland, 1995:146-149).

From previously having the top down perspective as the more common approach within implementation studies, the so-called "missing link" was found in the 1970's, which meant that efforts to develop government interventions to various societal problems often showed ineffective when not taking the entire process into consideration. The administrative process between the formation of a policy and the output of it was treated as a black hole (Hill & Hupe, 2002:41). Once this missing link was found, bottom-up approaches for implementation started being introduced. One of the prominent theorists within the bottom-up approach is Michael Lipsky and his theory of street-level bureaucracy (Hill & Hupe, 2002:51), which is explained further down. Implementation processes are continuously under scrutiny and are being evaluated, and the process takes different forms in different cultures or within different institutional settings. A lot of this has to do with the shift from "government" to "governance". More explicitly, this means that more actors are now involved in the decision-making process and the previously hierarchical models are being challenged (Hill & Hupe, 2002:1). Millard and Provan's definition of governance highlights the key essence of this rather new approach to implementation policies: "Governance…is concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rules and collective action, often including agents in the private and non-profit sectors, as well as within the public sector. The essence of governance is its focus on governing mechanisms - grants, contracts and agreements - that do not rest solely on the authority and

sanctions of government." (1999:3, referred to in Hill & Hupe, 2002:14). Such a conceptualization of governance was designed to fully grasp the different levels of actions and actors that influence the decision-making (Hill & Hupe, 2002:15). The discovery of the missing link and the shift from government to governance both pointed to the importance of broadening the conceptualization and understanding of the implementation process. The recognition that more actors could be involved in the decision-making processes and the implementation of policies resulted in different levels of what is called "loci". This means that different levels of administrative systems can play different parts in the decision-making and the implementation of policies. Previously mentioned street-level bureaucracy, where civil servants on a local scale are the main focus, is one of the theories highlighting this (Hill & Hupe, 2002:15).

Since this thesis aims to explore the role of local actors in the preventive work against violent extremism and how they have framed their work based on policy documents, I find it suitable to draw upon Lipsky's theory on street-level bureaucracy. The focal point within street-level bureaucracy is civil servants on a local scale, which presumably are the same actors involved in shaping the preventive work against violent extremism on a local scale in Sweden.

3.2 Bottom-up approach: street-level bureaucracy

Michael Lipsky's theory on street-level bureaucracy was first published in 1980 and has since then been highly influential within implementation studies (Hill & Hupe, 2002:51). A new edition, containing an additional chapter adapted to today, was published in 2010. Lipsky's book is divided into four different sections: the role of street-level bureaucrats as policy makers, the conditions of their work, the patterns of practice and the future of street-level bureaucracy. This study will mainly draw upon Lipsky's view on street-level bureaucrats as policy-makers.

Lipsky claims that one of the fundamental basics of the theory is that decision-makings and implementation processes are more complicated than just seeing it as

a decision on a higher political level that is being implemented on a lower level. Instead, he argues that policies are created in the act of street-level bureaucrats (2010:xiii). Street-level bureaucrats are public service workers such as social workers, school staff and police officers, who all have regular contact with the citizens. Street-level bureaucrats also have a substantial discretion in the execution of their work (2010:3-4). Lipsky argues that the decisions *they* make and the routines *they* establish in their everyday interaction with citizens are in fact the policies that are being carried out. He equals policy with the actual work being done (2010:xiii). It could be argued that street-level bureaucrats, with their direct contact with the citizens, are in a suitable position when working to prevent individuals from being drawn into radicalization and violent extremism: "People experience deprivation and oppression within a concrete setting, not the end product of large and abstract processes, and it is the concrete experience that molds their discontent into specific grievances against specific targets...In other words, it is the daily experience of people that shapes their grievances, establishes the measure of their demands, and points out the targets if their anger" (Piven & Cloward, referred to in Lipsky, 2010:10). Education, dialogue, inclusion, care and safety are some of the protective factors to minimize the risk of individuals experiencing such discontent and anger, which in turn in the long run are factors that could result in radicalization (Sieckelinck & Gielen, 2018:5). Civil servants on a local scale are the ones witnessing this and the ones in contact with individuals experiencing this, which is why their work is of such importance.

It should also be added that there are in general two criticisms towards the bottom-up approaches, including the street-level bureaucracy. The first critique claims "that policy control should be exercised by actors whose power derives from their account-ability to sovereign voters through their elected representatives", which is a power that local actors do not possess (Matland, 1995:149). Secondly, the bottom-up approaches have been criticized for overemphasizing the level of local authority, meaning that central policy designers are the ones actually structuring future actions (Matland, 1995:150).

The complexity of the implementation process is shown in the concept of street-level bureaucracy. The concept hints at a paradox: the term bureaucracy implies that there is a set of rules and a structure of authority, whilst street-level implies a distance from the center where the authority is located (Lipsky, 2010:xii). This paradox could be argued to highlight the distance between the government and the street-level bureaucrats, which give the street-level bureaucrats freedom in shaping their work in a way that is suitable for them. How street-level bureaucrats, i.e. local actors have done this in the preventive work against violent extremism will be explored in this study. Even though the work of street-level bureaucrats differ, such as the work of a guidance counselor compared to a police officer or a social worker, and sometimes could be argued to be somewhat unrelated, Lipsky claims that their work to a certain degree is structurally similar, which means that the work settings can be compared to each other (Lipsky, 2010:xii). The work settings within a municipality, in terms of collaborative structures and which street-level bureaucrats that are involved in the work, is explored in this study.

In Sweden, there is something called local self-government, which means that municipalities in Sweden have the authority of regulating the activities conducted within their jurisdiction (Sweden's Municipality and County Council, 2018), which include the preventive work against violent extremism. In reality, this means that, given the freedom of the municipalities combined with the fact that street-level bureaucrats have different roles within the context of local communities, by drawing upon the same national policy documents, each municipality can constitute their own local plan of action, which means that the preventive work hypothetically could look completely different between municipalities. Different implementations of national policy documents might have resulted in different preventive measures taken. This study will therefore compare the preventive work of the municipalities in order to highlight similarities and differences in such strategies.

3.3 Multi-agency working and its connection to street-level bureaucracy

In order to better understand the preventive work on a local scale and the role of each actor in collaborative constellations, this study uses multi-agency working (MAW) as the explanatory model. MAW can be connected to the theory on street-level bureaucracy. The role of civil servants within a local community highlighted by Lipsky are the same actors involved in MAW, which is a growing model used in the preventive work against violent extremism. Governmental policies regarding the preventive work against violent extremism state that the work needs to be done not only on national level, but on local scale as well. Local actors are needed in the preventive work and there is a need for local actors to collaborate between administrations to make the work successful. The same policies also stress the importance of involving civil society organizations in such work, and not just the public sector of local communities (Department of Culture, 2015[2]). Drawing upon Lipsky's theory on street-level bureaucracy and the bureaucrats' ability to actually shape policies, and then explore this through MAW is how the preventive work of municipalities is analyzed in this study.

Shortly, the conceptualization of MAW is to "work in collaboration across organizations to enhance services in order to meet complex needs" (Sarma, 2018:3). MAW focuses on creating infrastructures to counter and prevent violent extremism. These infrastructures consist of actors from different spheres across the public and private sectors, both at a local and a national level. Important actors include law enforcement such as police officers, youth workers such as teachers, social workers, healthcare professionals and civil society actors such as representatives from faith communities (RAN, 2018:3-4). The aims of using a multi-agency approach include early identifications of at-risk individuals, develop

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[2] The role of local actors and civil society organizations are also highlighted in Skr. 2011/12:14, Skr. 2014/15:146, Skr. 2011/12:73, and Skr. 2007/08:64.

appropriate and effective interventions or support packages to protect such individuals from being drawn into violent extremism, and foster early-stage information sharing between actors through coordination of efforts (RAN, 2018:3). If using a MAW approach in the preventive work against violent extremism it is important to clarify two aspects whilst working. It is important to precise the exact form of terrorism or violent extremism being addressed and equally important to precise the stage in the life of an individual at which MAW will be used to intervene (Sarma, 2018:5). Common divisions of the different stages an individual can be in are either to become involved, to be involved or to disengage from extreme movements (Horgan, 2008:80). In relation to these three stages, different ways of working can be mapped out: preventive work, redirecting work and supported exit work (Sarma, 2018:5). These stages can also be connected to the prevention pyramid outlined in section 2.3. When viewing municipalities' preventive work from a perspective of MAW, I wish to explore whether they are taking these risk specifications into consideration and which way of working that is their focal point.

Although progress is notable within MAW, this way of working also comes with some challenges. For instance, there can be difficulties striking a balance between information that is a private matter and what could be distributed between actors (Rosand, 2018:74). Another challenge is to sustain the level of coordination that is required to make the work successful, which can be puzzling when different actors from different administrations are involved. Their capacities and incentives for participation may vary significantly. It can also be difficult to establish trust for the local actors amongst the citizens, especially if they have previous negative experience of it. Additionally, it is important to ensure that the workers have enough knowledge of the topic, which requires personnel and education (Rosand, 2018:74). These challenges of MAW will be interesting to explore further when comparing the work of the municipalities in order to see how they have countered such.

3.4 Multi-agency working as an analytical tool

MAW is a rather new approach to use in the preventive work against violent extremism. It originated as a collaborative model for professionals to work in an integrated way to promote positive outcomes for children and young people (Atkinsson et. al, 2007:1), but has for the past few years also been applied on the preventive work against violent extremism (Sarma, 2018:2). MAW has is general been criticized as a too broad model but, when previously used in areas outside of violent extremism, it has shown to be a fruitful way of working. The good results of MAW within other sectors could be used as an indication that such a model of working might be transferable and applicable to other areas; i.e. violent extremism.

MAW has been argued to be the new way of going in the preventive work against violent extremism and that the focus now should be on facilitating such work on a broader scale (Sarma, 2018:4). On a European scale, there is a network called Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), initiated by the European Commission, that brings practitioners from around Europe to jointly discuss how to counter and prevent violent extremism (European Commission 2019). In recent years, RAN has initiated MAW as a model for the preventive work, which has increased the legitimacy of the model. As just stated, MAW has shown to be a fruitful model outside the area of violent extremism. Even within the area of violent extremism, there are successful examples of established MAW-models. Two of the more prominent examples are the UK's "Channel Programme" and the Danish "SSP model" (Rosand, 2018), which both have been surveyed by RAN. RAN has also previously mapped out preventive work in other European countries such as Belgium, Finland and France, using MAW (RAN, 2018). Whilst doing this, RAN has used a template in order to make comparisons between the countries possible. A similar template has been used in this study in order to compare the work of the municipalities.

3.5 Multi-agency working as a way of comparing municipalities in the preventive work against violent extremism

The use of a template to map and explore the preventive work makes the result comparable. It will also be easier to extract similarities and differences in the way in which the municipalities have implemented the national policies and how they have framed their preventive work. Concrete methodological support in designing the preventive work is something that has been requested by municipalities in Sweden (Kramers et.al, 2018:89) and this way of mapping out municipalities' work and extract similarities could plausibly be a small contribution in designing future strategies on how to prevent and counter violent extremism, starting on a local level with the work of street-level bureaucrats. To make the result even more fruitful, I have chosen to explore municipalities in which the preventive work is said to be successful. This will be further developed and explained in section 4.2.2. The template used in this study consists of ten categories. Dividing the preventive work into categories is done to make the collection of empirical data easier. These categories were the basis in the shaping of the interview guide used in this study, where the questions were framed in a way so that they corresponded with the categories in the template. The template is introduced below where the categories are on the left side and suitable questions for the interviews are presented in the column to the right. In the same box, there is also a short explanation of the relevance of the category and why the information is needed.

Figure 2. Overall template for comparing preventive work

Start of the practice and the role of the local coordinator	**Relevance**: Interesting to know whether the preventive work was established at the same time in different municipalities and if the same person has had the role as the local coordinator or if those things differ. When comparing municipalities with each other, these are important aspects to take into consideration. **Questions**: How much time do you spend on the preventive work? For how long have you been local coordinator?

Status report	**Relevance**: The workload of a municipality could arguably differ depending on how big of a problem they are experiencing violent extremism to be. **Questions**: Do you experience violent extremism to be a problem within the municipality? How has the prevalence of violent extremism changed during the last few years?
Description	**Relevance**: This category provides the reader with an overview of each municipality's preventive work. **Questions**: A general overview created through the answers from other questions
Organizational structure	**Relevance**: Since collaboration has been stated as important in order for the preventive work to succeed, it is relevant to know which actors that are involved and how the municipalities have established the collaboration. **Questions**: Which actors are involved? How do you communicate? Are there civil society organizations involved? If so, how did you get them to participate?
Approach	**Relevance**: Some approaches in the work might be more common than others and perhaps work better. Although it is important to keep in mind that what works in one municipality does not automatically work in another. **Questions**: What is the overarching goal with the preventive work? Does the work differ depending on the extreme orientation? Is the work against violent extremism embedded in other preventive work?
Target audience	**Relevance**: Some target audiences might be more common than others and perhaps work better. It has also been stated as important to clarify which stage (becoming involved, being involved or disengaging from) the measure is aimed at for the work to be successful. **Questions**: Towards whom are the measures directed? Does the work differ depending of where in the process of radicalization/violent extremism individuals are?
Deliverables	**Relevance**: Some deliverables might be more common than others and some might be easier to establish. Some material, such as school material or presentations could arguably also be transferable between municipalities. **Questions**: What has the preventive work resulted in? What effects have you seen?

Challenges	**Relevance**: Challenges and the ways in which they are countered could arguably be seen as the most helpful information for municipalities that are struggling. **Questions**: What challenges are there in the preventive work? How have you countered such challenges?
Evidence and evaluation	**Relevance**: Without evaluations or documented effects, it is arguably important to motivate the preventive work, for instance in terms of financing it. **Questions**: Is the work being evaluated? How?
Sustainability and transferability	**Relevance**: If municipalities believe that their work, or parts of it, is transferable to other municipalities that could be helpful for those who struggle with the preventive work. From a sustainable point of view, it is also important to know how the work is financed. **Questions**: How is the work financed? Do you think that your work, or parts of it, would be applicable in other municipalities?

RAN developed the majority of the categories, but I have added some additional ones. Firstly, I added the category on challenges in the work because I wish to explore what type of difficulties the municipalities experienced in developing the preventive work and how they countered such difficulties. That information can be of help to municipalities that experience the same challenges. Secondly, I also added a category on status report to get a grip of how big of a problem each municipality experiences with violent extremism. It is important to know since experienced issues arguably could be an important aspect in deciding the intensity comprehensiveness of the work. It is plausible to assume that municipalities that experience large problems with violent extremism put more effort into the actual preventive work than municipalities that do not experience big problems.

4 Methodological outline of the study

This section of the study presents the methodological approach, the research design and the selection of empirical material. Thereafter the used methods are explained as well as thoughts on ethical considerations.

4.1 Research design

This study has been conducted through a qualitative methodological approach and is of descriptive character. When using a descriptive approach, it is important to motivate both what the description should be used for and what the description is aimed at finding out (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2014:46-47, my translation). For this study, the description consisted of mapping out the work of municipalities in order to extract peculiar aspects of the work, which later have been used to identify similarities and differences in the strategies between the municipalities.

The study undertakes a design of a comparative case study, which is a distinct form of multiple case studies (Yin, 2003:14). Significant for multiple-case studies, and therefore also comparative case studies, is that the researcher study more than one specific case, the benefit being that it often leads to a more comprehensive result. The downside is that such a design in general is more time-consuming than a single-case study (Yin, 2003:53). When conducting multiple-case studies, it is vital to choose each individual case carefully according to a replication, which in this case has been a literal one (Yin, 2003:53). This means that the municipalities were selected on the basis of them being successful in their preventive work against violent extremism. This implies that they all have reached similar results and therefore arguably are interesting to compare in how they got there. The comparative approach in this study consists of exploring whether the strategies within the municipalities differ or not. Further on, a holistic multiple-case approach was used (Yin, 2003:52) meaning that one particular case within each municipality has been studied. More explicitly this means that the empirical material used in this study is collected from one interview (one street-level bureaucrat) within each municipality as opposed to doing several interviews within one municipality. Although, the interviews have been complemented with local policy documents in order to substantiate the empirical material.

4.2 Empirical material

This section presents the way in which the empirical material for the study was selected. Firstly, there is an explanation why Sweden was chosen as the explored country, which is followed by explanations on the selection of municipalities and who to interview within each municipality. The section ends with descriptions of which documents that have been used as a supplement to the material from the interviews.

4.2.1 Why Sweden?

Sweden was selected because of the rather comprehensive efforts that have been initiated against violent extremism on a national level in the last few years. Since 2011, two national plans of action[3] have been introduced and they both included a wide range of actors collaborating in framing how to counter and prevent violent extremism. Sweden was also selected due to my previous internship term at the Swedish Agency for Public Management where I assisted a project evaluating one of the two governmental efforts taken. Practical factors such as geographical closeness and shared language also played a part in selecting which country to explore.

4.2.2 Which municipalities?

It is common to use the principle of maximal variation or random sampling when deciding how to collect the empirical material (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2014:260, my translation), but such a collection would not have resulted in the desired effect given the purpose of this study. If I would have used a random selection when deciding on which municipalities to explore, I would have risked getting in contact with municipalities where the preventive work has not succeeded at all, or where the collaborative approach does not work. A random sampling could also have resulted in a mixture of municipalities more and less successful in their preventive work. Both these cases would be interesting results per se and could be ideas to develop further. However, such a result would not

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[3] Department of Justice (2012) and Department of Culture (2015)

correlate with the purpose of this study. Given that the purpose of this study is to compare how preventive work against violent extremism have been implemented in municipalities, it is suitable to actually explore municipalities where it has been documented that the preventive work is established. It is logical to assume that municipalities that experience little or no issues with violent extremism tend to work less with such questions. Therefore, exploring and comparing municipalities that in fact have established models of preventive work and have succeeded in the collaborative approach results in a more fruitful analysis. Therefore, the selection of municipalities has been strategic.

In 2014, a national coordinator was initiated by the government to form and lead to preventive measures taken against violent extremism. The coordinator was appointed for an approximately three-year period and the main purpose was to establish and elaborate preventive measures by cooperating with selected authorities, municipalities and representatives from civil society organizations (Department of Culture, 2015, my translation). The work of the national coordinator was summarized and concluded in a final report. In that, the importance of using a collaborative approach and involving civil society organizations in the preventive work were highlighted. Social services, law enforcement and schools together with representatives from civil society organizations play a crucial part in order for the preventative work to succeed (Department of Culture, 2017:93, my translation). In the report, nine municipalities were mentioned as particularly successful in their preventive work as well as in their collaborative approach, including involving representatives from civil society organizations. The nine municipalities mentioned as successful were Malmö, Borlänge, Örebro, Linköping, Eskilstuna, Borås, Skellefteå, Göteborg and Stockholm (Department of Culture, 2017:94, my translation). Exploring nine municipalities would have been too comprehensive given the time frame of this study. Therefore, delimitations had to be made. As a first step, I chose not to explore Stockholm further in this study. This decision was made based on the fact that Stockholm consists of 14 districts within one municipality

(Stockholm stad, 2019, my translation), which has resulted in divisions in the preventive work that make the tracking of it too comprehensive.

To make the collection of the empirical material even more feasible, an additional delimitation was made. In the national coordinator's final report, it was also stated that the collaborative approach in preventive work is especially important in areas exposed to organized crime activity (Department of Culture, 2017:93, my translation). In 2014, the National Criminal Investigation Department (NCID, now called the National Operational Unit) published a report on areas in Sweden where the local communities were especially affected by organized crime. The report highlighted 55 geographical areas spread over 22 municipalities in Sweden (2014:9, my translation). Six of the 22 municipalities correlated with municipalities mentioned by the national coordinator as successful: Örebro, Eskilstuna, Linköping, Borås, Göteborg and Malmö. These six municipalities constituted the first selection of municipalities to focus this study on and were all contacted by email where four of them (Linköping, Borås, Eskilstuna and Malmö) agreed to participate in this study. In order to eke out the number of municipalities, Borlänge and Skellefteå were also contacted – both mentioned as successful in their work by the national coordinator but were not on the list over areas exposed to organized crime activity. Borlänge agreed to participate whereas Skellefteå did not, which made the total number of municipalities explored in this study five: Malmö, Borlänge, Linköping, Eskilstuna and Borås. By exploring the work of these successful municipalities, there is a chance of contributing with information on how to make the work successful and how to succeed in the collaboration between different actors and administrations that could plausibly be of help for municipalities that are struggling in developing their preventive work.

4.2.3 Who to interview within each municipality?

When selecting which individuals to interview within each municipality, the principle of centrality was used. Centrality of interviewee is about reaching out to the sources that have a central role within the investigated area, who possess

knowledge and experience on it (Esaiasson et.al, 2015:258, my translation). For this study, that was the local coordinator. The local coordinator was initiated by the national coordinator and is the logical person of contact within each municipality. The assumed role of the local coordinators is that they lead the preventive work within the municipality and that they are the persons of contact for other involved actors such as social workers, law enforcement, schools and civil society organizations, and therefore are the suitable individuals to interview for this study.

4.2.4 Which documents to look at?

The interviews have been complemented with a document analysis to make the result more extensive. For such an analysis, local policy documents from each of the selected municipalities have been used. All the municipalities have their own local plan of action in which it is stated how the preventive work within the municipality should be framed and conducted.

4.3 Interviews and document analysis

The way in which the empirical material was collected for this research was two-fold. Semi-structured interviews with the local coordinators within the selected municipalities were conducted, as well as a document analysis of the municipalities' local plans of action. By doing both the interviews and the document analysis, the collection of empirical material for each municipality was more comprehensive.

4.3.1 Interviews

Conducting interviews is a suitable choice of methods when the aim is to highlight how a certain phenomenon manifests (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2014:252, my translation), which in this study was to explore how municipalities in Sweden work preventively against violent extremism. A benefit of using interviews, as opposed to questionnaires, is that interviews possess the opportunity of asking follow up questions, which can make the exploration of the investigated area more thorough (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2014:251, my

translation). For this study, a semi-structured interview guide was created, which meant that questions could be added and/or adjusted while the interview was ongoing. The interviewees were treated as informants rather than respondents. The aim of using informant interviews is for the researcher to provide the best possible depiction of a phenomenon (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2014:227, my translation), which is why the interviewees were selected based on their presumptive knowledge on local work against violent extremism.

Given several aspects such as the time frame and expenses for travelling, the way in which the interviews were conducted has differed. Two out of the five interviews was conducted face to face. The remaining three was conducted by phone. Phone interviews possess some challenges that have to be taken into consideration whilst doing them. First of all, you miss facial expressions of the interviewee, which can reveal critical information per se. Further on, there is the risk of technical difficulties, which could result in either the telephone line breaking, or poor sound quality, which in turn makes transcribing and interpreting the data more difficult, or even impossible. I managed to avoid these issues and found that telephone interviews worked nearly as good as meeting the interviewee face to face. Although, I did experience, during some brief moments when doing the phone interviews, that there was silence where one part waited for the other to speak, which is something I did not experience during the interviews conducted face to face. Another downside of doing phone interviews is that questions that could be seen as either complicated or sensitive are more suitable to ask face to face (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2014:105, my translation). Violent extremism could rather easily be described as a sensitive topic, which is why I had to be careful in deciding what questions to ask. Although, given that the purpose of this study is not to critically reflect on shortcomings of the municipalities but rather focus on what works and how they have made it work, the interviews were not of a sensitive character. If my focal point would have been different, there could have been more suitable to conduct more of the interviews face to face.

All five interviews have been recorded and transcribed, which means that the way in which I have dealt with the empirical material is the same regardless the form of the interview. Although, I have kept the risks or disadvantages of doing phone interviews in mind whilst doing them and whilst handling the data for the analysis.

4.3.2 Developing the interview guide

When doing interviews of an informative character, it is not necessary to use the same interview guide for all the interviews, but instead it can be changed depending on the interviewee (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2014:227, my translation). However, in this study the interviews were to be compared to each other, which is why it was suitable to use the same interview guide for all the interviews. I have used a semi-structured interview guide, which opened the possibility of adjusting the follow up questions, depending on the answer given and which coordinator that was being interviewed. When constructing an interview guide it is important to take both the content of the guide and the shape of it into consideration. Rather obvious, the importance with the content correlates to the actual research problem: the questions should in the long-run help the researcher answer the main question, whereas the shape is about creating a dynamic environment where the aim is to reach a lively and open conversation. This is done by keeping the questions easy to understand, rather short and written without academic lingo (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2014:264, my translation).

The aim with the interviews was also to ask as descriptive questions as possible, so that the interviewee could tell their story without affection from me as the interviewer. Therefore, questions starting with "why" were avoided for instance, since those types of questions sound negative and can result in protective answers rather than a real explanation of something (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2014:265, my translation). The interview guide was divided into different sections, (see appendix 1). Firstly, there were a few warming up questions in order to create a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere. These were the questions that

provided more basic and general answers without focusing on the actual work of the municipality. Secondly, the grand tour questions were asked where the aim was to have as little influence of the interviewee as possible. Therefore, those questions were of an open and descriptive character. Each of the grand tour questions were complemented with follow up questions, which are questions I hoped to gain answer to through the open ones but that I asked if I did not get them.

4.3.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations is an important aspect given any research, but arguably even more important to take into consideration when conducting interviews. It is vital that the interviewee is aware that he or she is a part of a scientific study and the premises on which the study is conducted, so-called informed consent (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2014:257, my translation). Therefore, before conducting the interviews, the interviewees were given information about the study and how the material later would be used. They were also offered to sign a letter of informed consent. I also promised the interviewees to send the finished report before handing it in. This was done in order for them to point out possible misinterpretations that I could have done. To offer anonymity is also a common ethical consideration but that is something I did not want to do for this study. I wanted to state which municipalities explored and in doing so, it is easy to find out who the local coordinator is, given that there is only one person with that function within each municipality. Although, since it not the individual itself, but rather their knowledge, that is of interest for this study, I did not see the point of using their names in the analysis. Instead I have simply referred to them as the local coordinator.

4.3.4 Document analysis

It is common that informant interviews often are combined with some sort of document analyses (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2014:228, my translation) in the same way as document analyses often are combined with other methods (Bowen, 2009:28). Such triangulation of data aims to reach a more credible result,

which is why the interviews in this study have been complemented with a document analysis. In addition to the interviews with the local coordinators, the local plans of action within the selected municipalities have been studied. Using document analysis as a method comes with both advantages and limitations. Some of the advantages have to do with efficiency; documents are often publicly available and it is a cost-effective method. Documents also possess exactness in terms of names and dates, which would be more difficult to extract through interviews for instance.

Potential problematic aspects when using document analysis consists of the risk of low retrievability and insufficient details since documents might have been produced in other purposes than research, which means that one document rarely gives the researcher all the information he or she wants (Bowen, 2009:31-32). Both the material from the documents and the material from the interviews have been analyzed through a thematic document analysis. This means that the content of the documents as well as the content of the transcriptions from the interviews have been analyzed through different themes or categories. When using thematic document analysis, it is more common to let the material make out the themes or categories. However, predefined themes or categories can be used, especially when the document analysis is a supplement to some other research method (Bowen, 2009:32), which is the case in this study. Therefore, predefined categories were used. The categories used in this study were previously presented and explained in the shape of a template, see section 3.5.

5 Analysis of the empirical material

This section presents the empirical findings of the study as well as a comparison of the findings within each municipality. The theoretical outset of street-level bureaucracy, previously outlined in section 3.2, carries the assumption that street-level bureaucrats such as law enforcement, social services and school personnel have the ability to implement national policies in a way that suits their work.

Therefore, it is plausible to assume that the preventive work against violent extremism might have been implemented differently depending on the municipality, even though their work is framed by drawing on the same national policy documents. Potential similarities and differences in the implementation will be explored through the analysis. As previously outlined in section 1.3, all sources in this section of the study were in Swedish. Throughout the chapter, I have translated all the empirical material into English.

5.1 The two national policy documents

Before starting the analysis, it is important to present the national policy documents that the municipalities' work emanates from. Therefore, the two governmental efforts initiated since 2011 are outlined in the up-coming section and thereafter, the actual analysis is presented.

5.1.1 "Plan of action to protect the democracy from violent extremism"

The first governmental effort was initiated in 2012 and the measures presented were set over a three-year period (Department of Justice, 2012:1). The document was based on empirical material collected through the two reports on violent political extremism and Islamic extremism (2012:6), which were previously presented in section 2.4. The overall aim with the effort was to protect and strengthen the democracy by strengthening the societal resilience against violent extremism. The initiative stated that "authorities, and relevant actors, especially local ones, need tools and resources for the preventive work and that the work needs to be wider rooted in society" (2012:6). Throughout the document, the importance of local actors such as social services, law enforcements, schools and civil society organizations is highlighted. They are mentioned as key actors in developing the preventive work and making it as efficient and successful as possible. The policy document constituted six different areas in which the preventive work should be developed and widened, all in which the measures taken highly affected local actors (2012:35-45):

- Strengthen the awareness of democratic values
- Increase the general knowledge on violent extremism
- Strengthening the structures for collaboration
- Prevent individuals from joining extreme movements and support exit from such movements
- Counteract the breeding grounds for the ideologically motivated violence
- Deepen the international cooperation

5.1.2 "Measures to make society more resilient against violent extremism"

The second effort was presented in 2015 and was more comprehensive than the first one. More actors were involved and even more focus was put on the local level of the preventive work. The aim was that "authorities, municipalities and civil society organizations, including faith communities, in a more collaborative and efficient way, contribute to protecting the democracy from violent extremism" (Department of Culture, 2015:1). This effort put emphasis on the prevention pyramid, previously outlined in section 2.3, highlighting the importance of every step of the pyramid to be included in the preventive work (2015:24). The effort included similar measures to be taken as the first policy did, focusing on an increased knowledge but with some modifications and supplements; there were more measures taken as well as a greater focus on gender within the preventive work. One of the measures taken by the government that was particularly noticed was the so called national coordinator, who was initiated with the aim of working to include relevant actors on a local level, such as social services, law enforcement, schools and civil society organizations, in the preventive work (2015:25). The national coordinator worked closely with the municipalities for a three-year period during which it was stated that the municipalities should establish local coordinators. When the role of the national coordinator was ended, a permanent center was introduced called the Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism, which now has the function of supporting municipalities in their work. They provide needs-based support to

local actors and are constantly working to create a greater effectiveness and coordination for the preventive measures taken against violent extremism. The center is also seen as an alternative solution to the previously mentioned "houses of knowledge" (CVE, 2018).

5.2 The work of the municipalities

The analysis of this study is constructed to thematically correlate with the categories presented in the template (see section 3.5), where each of the categories is followed by a comparative description and analysis of each of the explored municipalities. By describing and comparing the municipalities one section at the time, the analysis will be more fruitful in terms of identifying similarities and differences as well as it limits the risk of reiteration. The analysis is later followed by a concluding discussion where an overall assessment of similarities and differences will be made. The concluding discussion also connects the analysis to street-level bureaucracy and multi-agency working. The first two categories of the analysis have descriptive purpose, where the aim is to portray a picture of the municipalities in terms of situational awareness and explore the role of the local coordinator. Potential differences in experienced problems as well as who possess the role as the local coordinator could both arguably be important aspects to bare in mind when comparing the municipalities.

5.2.1 Start of the practice and the role of the local coordinator

Figure 3. Start of the practice and the role of the local coordinator

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- 2014/15 - New coordinator in 2018 - Local coordinator does not work full-time	- 2014/15 - Same coordinator since the beginning - Local coordinator works full-time	- 2014/15 - Same coordinator since the beginning - Local coordinator works full-time	- 2013 - Same coordinator since the beginning - Local coordinator does not work full-time	- 2017 - New coordinator in 2018 - Local coordinator works full-time

The majority of the interviewees stated that their municipality actively had been working preventively against violent extremism since 2014/2015, which is the same time as when the second governmental effort was introduced. Municipalities and local actors were highlighted as key players in the preventive work and most of the measures taken by the government were aimed to somehow support or guide the municipalities in their work. Therefore, municipalities increased their workload around violent extremism and as a result of this, the interviewees stated that their local plans of action as well as the role of the local coordinators were introduced around that time. It is safe to say that neither of the municipalities had a pronounced focus on violent extremism before 2014 but increased their work once the national coordinator was introduced. Worth commenting here is that neither of the municipalities addressed the first governmental effort from 2011 as something that had affected their work. Eskilstuna was the only municipality that stated that their preventive work was not actively started until 2017. They had a local coordinator before that, but only a very limited time was spent on the actual work against violent extremism. Since 2017, they have a clearer structure and the local coordinator works full-time with the preventive work. Borås and Borlänge also stated that the work of the local coordinator was equivalent to a full-time employment. Malmö stated that the preventive work against violent extremism was one amongst several areas in which the coordinator worked, which was why her workload could differ depending on the current situational awareness. Linköping was the municipality in which the local coordinator spent the least of his working hours on the preventive work against violent extremism, approximately 10-20 percent of the time.

One of the measures taken by the national coordinator was to initiate the "houses of knowledge" where Borlänge was one of the four municipalities in which such houses were located. "When we were establishing the municipal work, there were only four municipalities that dedicatedly worked with this question. We got questions from all around Sweden." (Local coordinator in Borlänge). This caused Borlänge to experience a rather heavy workload during the first year, which could

arguably have given them a head start in terms of increased knowledge and awareness surrounding the issue of violent extremism. In Borlänge, Borås and Malmö, the same person has had the role as the local coordinator since the beginning, whereas in Linköping and Eskilstuna the current coordinators have held their positions for approximately six months or a year. All coordinators have a history of employment within the public sector reaching over several administrations. One coordinator had a police background, another had a military background, whilst one was a psychologist, the fourth one had a history of general crime prevention work and the fifth one had an academic degree in comparative religion. The different workloads of the coordinators and their previous experience could plausibly affect the way in which they address the problem. For instance, the coordinator in Linköping stated that "there are some coordinators that in my opinion have the wrong focal point in their work, they do not see the actual role of the coordinator but instead look at it as a matter of the police." Given his background as a police officer, he emphasized the difficulties of adjusting to the wider preventive work in the role as local coordinator, as opposed to the more operative work within the police.

5.2.2 Status report

Figure 4. Status report

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- Experiences Islamic extremism to be the largest issue - No increase in extreme activity, but predict it could change in the near future	- Experiences far-right extremism to be the largest issue - An increase in extreme activity	- Experiences Islamic extremism to be the largest issue - No increase in extreme activity, but far-right and far-left extremism is growing stronger	- Experiences Islamic extremism to be the largest issue - No increase in extreme activities, but an increased polarization	- Experiences far-right extremism to be the largest issue - No increase in extreme activities, but an increased polarization

How big of a problem the municipalities experience violent extremism to be will arguably affect the amount of time put on the preventive work as well as the comprehensiveness of the efforts. Linköping was the municipality that experienced violent extremism to be the least problem out of the explored municipalities, even though the coordinator pointed to a troubled past including house occupation and political bombings by individuals associated with either far-right och far-left extremism. Although he stated that violent Islamic extremism was the only prevalent orientation within the municipality today. Borlänge and Eskilstuna both experienced far-right extremism to be the largest issue. For Borlänge, the activities are particularly prevalent given that the neighboring municipality constitute the national headquarter for one of the far-right movements in Sweden. Although, Borlänge did not experience demonstrations from such movements to the same extent that Eskilstuna did. "We had that a couple of months ago; the Nordic Resistance Movement (NMR) illicitly demonstrated on the main square… and we had Alternative for Sweden (AFS) here last week doing the same thing" (Local coordinator in Eskilstuna). Malmö and Borås both experienced violent Islamic extremism to be the largest issue, partly because of the individuals that have gone abroad to join extreme movements, and partly because they have now begun to return back to Sweden.

When the national coordinator presented the initiative that all the municipalities should assign a local coordinator, it was stated that such a coordinator should be the hub around which the preventive work should surround. That was the case in all the explored municipalities, but the way in which they received information on what was happening within the municipality differed. They all stated that they participated in different forms of networks and meetings, which held them up to date in terms of what was happening within the municipality and in the rest of Sweden. Such networking groups will be further explored in section 5.2.4. Borlänge was the only municipality in which citizens called the coordinator directly. By constantly being available he gathered information and stayed up to date on local events. As mentioned before, he initially also received calls from all

around Sweden given their "house of knowledge", which resulted in a busy first year as a coordinator. Malmö created a support line to which worried individuals could call to either inform on something that they had seen or ask questions that they had. This was partly done to ease the burden of the coordinator so that she would not be bound to answer all the calls.

One important aspect in the second governmental effort was to increase the knowledge on violent extremism, both on a national, regional and local level. A plausible consequence of this could have been that municipalities would experience the issues of violent extremism to be larger because of this increased knowledge and awareness. Although, out of the five municipalities, Borlänge was the only one that stated that activities from violent extreme movements had increased during the last few years. Linköping and Borås claimed that, even though the national coordinator put the topic on the local agenda and people now were more aware of the issue, they had not experienced an increase in activities connected to violent extremism. However, Linköping saw a potential increase in activities within a near future given a specific group of individuals that had been drawing attention from different municipal administrations as well as from the police for a few months. Both Malmö and Eskilstuna said that they did not experience an increase in violent activities, but stated that there had been an increased polarization. An increased polarization increases the risk of radicalization, which in the long run could result in violent extremism. They both believed that the increased polarization could cause changes to their situational awareness. As stated in section 5.2.1, the coordinator in Linköping was the one who spent the least of his working hours on the preventive work against violent extremism. Given the fact that their experienced issues also were very limited, while all the other coordinators stated that violent extremism was more prevalent within their municipality, it is reasonable that the coordinator of Linköping does not invest as much time on the work as the rest of the coordinators do.

5.2.3 Description

For this section, the empirical material is mainly collected from the written documents. The local plans of action all constituted a more lucid collection of how the municipalities have framed their work in terms of providing an overview. The explicit parts of the work within each municipality will later be compared and analyzed in greater detail in the following sections.

Figure 5. Description

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- The work is divided into eight sections, where violent extremism mainly is embedded within one of them; social risks	- The work explicitly surrounds the prevention pyramid and is divided into four sections, where violent extremism is embedded within all of them	- The work is divided into twelve sections, all of which heavily rely on the work of the national coordinator	- The work explicitly surrounds the prevention pyramid and differ depending what part of the pyramid that is the focal point	- The work explicitly surround the prevention pyramid and differ depending what part of the pyramid that is the focal point

Borlänge, Malmö and Eskilstuna had framed their preventative work to surround the prevention pyramid where the majority of the work constituted the bottom of the pyramid; the wider, strengthening work; as opposed to the more proactive parts higher up in the pyramid. Their work was divided into different sections, each of them corresponding to different parts of the pyramid. In Linköping, the preventive work against violent extremism was embedded within other preventive work. Their local plan of action constituted the general preventive work and was divided into eight sections, where the work against violent extremism was included in one of them: social risks. When Borås framed their work, they heavily relied on the directions given by the national coordinator. Their work was divided into twelve sections, all of which were developed to correlate with the work of the national coordinator. This was done to attach the work to something; "...to give the politicians something to lean on. It gave them some sort of security knowing

that the work of Borås was also a part of Sweden's work" (Local coordinator in Borås). This was something that pretty much everyone stressed - the importance of having the work decided and acknowledged on a political level. If the politicians within a municipality pay attention to the preventive work, the incentive to do your part is greater on all the municipal administrations.

5.2.4 Organizational structure

Figure 6. Organizational structure

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- Part of networks on a local and national level - Already had models for collaborating with civil society organizations from previous work, no difference for the preventative work against violent extremism	- Part of networks on a local, regional and national level - Established collaboration with civil society organizations by including them at the start of the work	- Part of networks on a local, regional, national and international level - Used the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities to involve local faith communities in the preventative work	- Part of networks on a local, regional, national and international level - Used the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities to involve local faith communities in the preventative work	- Part of networks on a local, regional, national and international level - Established collaboration with civil society organizations by including them at the start of the work

Previous research has concluded that the collaborative approach in the preventive work is a necessity in order for it to work. All the interviewed municipalities claimed to be successful in their collaborative approaches but as for the organizational structure of the collaborations, it sometimes differed between the municipalities, although similar features could also be found between them.

"We are trying to be perceptive and open so that we are not creating a local structure that does exist some place else… We are trying to mix the local work with a solid external environment monitoring in order to see what happens" (Local coordinator in Borås). All the interviewees highlighted the importance of including preventive work against violent extremism within already existing collaborative models. They all stated that the work was either fully or partly embedded within the general crime prevention work, given that such models of work were established years before the national coordinator was initiated and the preventive work against violent extremism was intensified. All municipalities also participated in local, regional, national or international networks, in which they met other relevant actors and discussed how to further develop the work. While networking was considered an important aspect amongst all the coordinators, the ways they thought it should be conducted differed. One of the municipalities claimed that constantly expanding the networks was the key to success in order to learn from each other, while others pointed to a potential problem of continuously expanding the networks: "What we also have talked about with the Center for Preventing Violent Extremism is that, since there are so many networks, if affected cities maybe could be part of a network each. Otherwise, we could be outside of our municipalities all the time, which is something that you do not want." (Local coordinator in Malmö). The majority of the municipalities suggested regional collaboration as an ulterior way to go. By coordinating and developing the preventive work on a regional scale, there could be a division amongst the coordinators of who should attend which networking meeting. At the same time it would be easier for smaller municipalities, that otherwise might not have the resources, to cope with the work better.

As stated by Lipsky, grass-root bureaucrats such as social workers, law enforcements, school staff and civil society organizations are the ones around which the work is surrounding on a local level, which was also the same actors that were included in the preventive work against violent extremism within the municipalities. In addition to that, the interviewees added that they collaborated

with a wide range of different actors on top of that, such as real estate companies, emergency services and hospitals. Almost the same actors were involved in the preventive work within all the municipalities, but it differed in what constellations they met and how often it happened. They all stated that they had regular contact either by meeting face to face or via phone and how often that happened depended on which network that was the forum for the meeting. Most of the municipalities stated that the local coordinator was in contact with at least the social service and the police each or every other week. Within other forums, they met once a month or every six weeks, while the national networking meetings usually were set to approximately four times a year. Since the preventive work against violent extremism usually was embedded within already established working models, the municipalities did not find it challenging getting the work started.

Previous research has shown that civil society organizations have proven to be the most difficult collaborative partner in the preventive work, and especially faith communities. Therefore, the collaborative approach towards civil society organizations was the focal point within the collaborative questions during the interviews. "From a perspective of emergency preparedness, you always want to collaborate with faith communities, but it is usually done too much on your own terms; that the municipality wants help from the communities in some way, as opposed to asking what you can do for them." (Local coordinator in Malmö). All municipalities highlighted the importance of including civil society organizations at an early stage and as for faith communities, Malmö and Borås especially pointed out the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities as a key actor when involving such communities. Both municipalities established an early contact with the authority in order "to reach all the faith communities and to do it in the right way." (Local coordinator Borås). Eskilstuna also stated that they had a rather comprehensive collaboration with faith communities. "The problem is that it (collaboration with faith communities) requires that you have knowledge and a pre-understanding of the topic… You have to be aware of the fact that violent extremism is a stigmatized concept for many… and that they think it is scary and

uncomfortable". Although, in establishing collaboration with faith communities, the local coordinator in Eskilstuna stated that they did not experience problems. He thought that was because of the fact that he had good knowledge given his degree in comparative religion.

An important aspect when collaborating with civil society organizations, not specifically faith communities, that the municipalities agreed upon was that it was important to value the views and perspectives of such organizations: "...you can not come in at quarter past and say that certain things are happening and that you have spoken to the police and social services and now we would like to hear your opinion… No, instead you have to show up with a blank piece of paper and let them know what is in the pipeline and ask if they would like to be a part of it." (Local coordinator in Borlänge). What was also highlighted by Eskilstuna was to see the dedication that is out there in society and to make the most of that. "If civil society organizations reach out, you have to make the most of it and act fast… It requires so little from us. These people work for free because they are dedicated, which is why you, who get paid, have to see the value of that" (Local coordinator Eskilstuna). In order for such collaboration to work, the local coordinator in Eskilstuna highlighted the importance of unconventional working hours. Since civil society organizations do the work in their free time, the person in the role of local coordinator has to be prepared to sometimes work on the weekends.

5.2.5 Approach

Figure 7. Approach

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- Wide perspective, where the preventive work against violent extremism is	- Wide approach where the overall aim is to create a socially sustainable	- The preventive work expands over more administrations than the general crime prevention	- Wide preventive approach, expanding over several administrations - Educational	- Wide preventive work placed within the local council - Educational

included in other crime prevention work - Educational approach	society - Educational approach	work - Educational approach - Focus on increasing the sense of security	approach - CTC	approach - Particular focus of involving civil society organizations

All of the municipalities stated that they had a wide approach in their preventative work but because of spread in the media and the stigmatization of the concepts of radicalization and violent extremism, the way in which the municipalities had approached the work differed. Borlänge stated that they had avoided talking in terms of radicalization for instance: "The concept of radicalization can be rather difficult to manage. It is not a concept that is common at a municipal level, but more common within the police or at a national level. Therefore, we have avoided using such a concept because of its complexity" (Local coordinator in Borlänge). As opposed to preventive work against radicalization, they called it a wide, preventive work. The same went for Eskilstuna, where the local coordinator stated: "There is extensive research on the concept of radicalization and its complexity. I have tried to avoid that and spoken in other terms to explore why some individuals are more vulnerable to end up in those contexts". Linköping on the other hand did not see any reason to muffle surrounding the concept. "It is a pretty straightforward concept that everyone can understand" (Local coordinator in Linköping). Once again, it is important to point out the differences in both experienced issues and working hours of the local coordinator between the municipalities. Linköping was the only municipality that hardly experienced any problems and where the local coordinator spent the least of his working hours on explicit work against violent extremism. In municipalities experiencing larger issues, it can be argued as more important to nuance the problems and to defuse the concepts.

The overall goal stated in the national efforts was to strengthen the democracy by strengthening the societal resilience against violent extremism as well as

protecting the democracy against violent extremism, which was the same goals that all the coordinators stated as the goal for their municipality. It could be argued as reasonable that the overall goals correlate with the national ones even if municipalities have the freedom of deciding in what way to frame and conduct their work. It proves that every involved part works towards a common goal, even though the ways in which this is done can differ.

Besides having a wide approach in the preventive work, all five municipalities also stressed the importance of an educational approach. They all claimed to continuously be working to create and develop new knowledge and to spread it across the municipality. Outwards this was done by educating personnel that in their profession could come in contact with individuals either engaged in an extreme movement, or in the risk of becoming involved. "Initially we started by educating the politicians in order for them to get a grasp of what the problem actually looked like. After that, we moved on to administration executives and then to first line practitioners. That includes school staff as well as local sports movements" (Local coordinator in Borås). Overall, it was stated that a strategy for whom to educate and in what order was important to figure out in order to make it as efficient as possible. An equally important part in terms of knowledge sharing that was stressed was for the local coordinator to collect information from different levels of administration: "The thing is that there is always someone within the municipality that knows these things, but it is important that such information is collected so that it can reach the politicians and the administration executives. They are the ones that make the decisions and have the financial resources" (Local coordinator in Borlänge).

Malmö stated that they were the only ones in Sweden that worked according to an international system called "Communities That Care" (CTC). The basis of the program was that they measure what happened within a certain district of Malmö and later compared those activities to the average of Malmö. In short, it is a way of measuring where the social risks are the largest within the municipality.

Plausibly CTC is a system, which will be adapted and used by other municipalities in the future. Borlänge did not work according to CTC but as for awareness of social risks, the local coordinator stated that a part of their preventive work was included in their urban planning. By taking social risks into consideration in the urban planning, certain areas can be more observed than others. Although, both Malmö and Borlänge stressed the importance of not exclusively focusing on areas where the social risks are large, but to spread the work equally across the municipality: "We said early in the discussion that we cannot put all the focus on one specific area…. When we are discussing social sustainability, we cannot discuss it for one area, but have to discuss Borlänge as a whole" (Local coordinator Borlänge).

5.2.6 Target audience

Figure 8. Target audience

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- Their focal point is on children and youths but do offer support to other age groups as well - Same work for all of the extreme orientations	- Had children and youths as the focal point at first, but expanded to look to needs instead - Same work for all of the extreme orientations	- Ranging from 0-100, the focal point being the "need for help" - Gender is a part of the work and the role of women in the preventative work is highlighted - Same work for all of the extreme orientations	- Mainly working towards youths and children, but do offer support to other age groups as well - Gender is a part of the work and the role of women in the preventative work is highlighted - Same work for all of the extreme orientations	- Their focal point is on children and youths as well as including civil society organizations - Same work for all of the extreme orientations

As presented in section 2.3, the prevention pyramid is a common model to draw upon when developing the preventive work against violent extremism. All five municipalities stated that they worked according to the pyramid and that all parts of it was covered, but that the focal point consisted of the bottom part of the pyramid; the wider preventive work. The wide preventive work looked the same regardless of extreme orientation within all of the municipalities, which they stated was because of the fact that it was difficult to know which individuals that risked being drawn into what extreme orientation: "The thing is, it does not matter if it is far-right, far-left or religious extremism, but what matter is that all three are built with the same building blocks… They polarize in order to lure people into a specific group. They create an "us" versus "them" perspective" (Local coordinator in Borås). Even though youths and children were stated to be a priority within all the municipalities, Malmö, Linköping and Eskilstuna were the ones that explicitly framed their work around individuals below 18. Borås and Borlänge on the other hand emphasized the work being focused on specific needs, since "violent extremism if not a problem specific to youths" (Local coordinator Borlänge). Here it is worth noticing that work such as to look to needs might plausibly be more complicated than working towards youths and children. What this means is that work towards children can be incorporated early in school, or within sports associations, whilst it could be argued to be more difficult to establish the same type of work for adults. As soon as an individual is over 18, all the work is based on a voluntary participation unless a crime has been committed.

The second governmental effort included a gender perspective in the preventive work, which the first one was lacking. Violent extremism is mostly connected to men and boys but the effort stated that women needed to be incorporated to a larger extent in the preventive work to make it more efficient. Borås and Malmö were the only municipalities that explicitly stated to have gender incorporated in the local plan of action against violent extremism. In Malmö, there was an effort called "power of mothers", which was about collecting women in group-conversations to get their perspective and so that they could learn from each other.

During such meetings, the police and social services paid visits and informed the mothers about their work. The local coordinator stated that the same effort was introduced to men as well, but that did not work as good as with the women. The initiative was driven by civil society organizations and to get the effort started, the municipality contacted organizations in which women and children already were the focal point. As civil society organizations have proven to be somewhat reluctant to be associated with violent extremism, Malmö chose to put the focus on the wider preventive work within "power of mothers": "That work is not exclusively preventive work against violent extremism, but the bigger picture, mainly strengthening work" (Local coordinator in Malmö). The broader focus is thought to minimize the risk of the stigmatizing effect, which easily can happen when using concepts such as violent extremism. In recent years, there has been an increasing number of individuals returning to Sweden from having participated in extreme movements in either Iraq or Syria, and the Swedish Security Police has compiled a list of municipalities that most probably will be affected by this (Thomsen, 2019). Both Malmö and Borås are on that list and both the coordinators stated that the gender aspect within such work is of importance, given the fact that it is the women that the travelers want to return home to.

5.2.7 Deliverables

Figure 9. Deliverables

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- General crime prevention work has continued, nothing new since 2014 - Religious council in the making - Considering establishing a new working model	- "House of knowledge" - Religious council - Anti-discrimination work - A plan for competence development	- Educational packages - Religious council in the making	- "Power of mothers" - "Platform Malmö" - "Safe Space" - Constant dialogue with faith communities	- Close collaboration with Islamic faith communities - Educational packages - Support various projects founded by civil society organizations

As for concrete deliverables of the preventive work, there were a lot of similarities between the explored municipalities. As previously outlined, all the municipalities had to create an increased knowledge base as the first and foremost measure. By increasing the knowledge base within professions in direct contact with individuals at risk, as well as among the general citizens, they stated that a sense of security or safety rooted itself within the community. Linköping stated that they had well-functioning collaborative forms and educational networks before 2014. This meant that they had not presented any new efforts explicitly focusing on violent extremism but instead incorporated such work within other preventive work, which it is plausible to assume that municipalities that do not experiences large issues with violent extremism have done.

As a result of the second governmental effort, Borås initiated a working group they called "Center for Knowledge and Security" (CKS), which is divided into two parts. One part explicitly stated that it aimed to "strategically prevent, stop and discover organized crime, gang crimes, violent extremism, domestic violence and honor violence" (Local coordinator in Borås). One effort introduced by CKS was a rather comprehensive educational package on violent Islamic extremism; since that was the extreme orientation they experienced as the largest issue. Malmö and Borlänge had initiated more concrete efforts in the preventive work than the others had. Both Malmö and Borlänge had initiated several projects that either offered support to individuals at risk, or educated personnel that potentially could come in contact with individuals at risk. The fact that the comprehensiveness in efforts differed between the municipalities and that Malmö and Borlänge had more concrete deliverables from the preventive work could arguably depend on the situational awareness. Both Malmö and Borlänge experienced violent extremism to be a larger issue than Borås and Linköping did, which is why it is reasonable for the preventive work to vary between them. Eskilstuna also experienced issues and it was clear during the interview that the municipality worked extensively against violent extremism. The difference between Malmö and Borlänge compared to Eskilstuna was that Eskilstuna instead

of initiating projects themselves supported other local communities that took initiatives, which is why the coordinator did not point out concrete efforts introduced by the municipality.

Even though Borlänge was the only municipality stating an increased activity in terms of individuals connected to any of the extreme orientations, Malmö and Eskilstuna stated that there had been an increased polarization during the last few years, which is why their work was extensive. What all the municipalities had in common, and stressed the value of, was so called "religious councils". Such councils aimed to form a working collaboration with faith communities by creating a platform in which representatives from different faith communities could meet and share their activities as well as exchange knowledge with each other. Either the municipalities had already established a religious council or it was stated to be in the pipeline, with the exception of Eskilstuna. They had a religious council earlier, but it was removed for political reasons. Even without a religious council, Eskilstuna stated that they had established a close collaboration with faith communities, especially Islamic communities. Although, the local coordinator stated that he wanted the religious council to be reinstated but pointed to a debate on whether it should be the municipality or civil society organizations that should carry out the effort. This could plausibly be connected to "power of mothers" in Malmö, which was also driven by civil society organizations. By having such organizations lead the work, there is a slight chance of individuals feeling more at ease than if municipal personnel would conduct the work.

As stated earlier, the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities was highlighted as a crucial partner in order to make the collaboration with faith communities successful. Borlänge pointed to the fact that their religious council was not initiated with the explicit purpose of preventing extremism: "...that effort was not about religious extremism but rather about establishing a dialogue with the faith communities. The dialogue was there before, but it was divided… There was no joint forum for where they could all meet" (Local coordinator in

Borlänge). The broad focus once again helped avoid a potential stigmatization surrounding violent extremism. The religious councils and the dialogue with the faith communities were highly appreciated by the municipalities since work surrounding especially Islamic extremism often was considered to be a very sensitive topic: "There is an insecurity when it comes to religion, given that we (Sweden) probably are the most secular and individualistic country in the world… It has been incredibly valuable being able to get a "quick and dirty" answer on a complex, global question" (Local coordinator in Malmö).

5.2.8 Challenges

Figure 10. Challenges

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- Experienced people to have different interpretations of the same task - Difficult to establish collaboration with the schools - Difficult to assess what is radicalization and what is not	- Flag for the challenge of collaborating with civil society organizations within violent extremism if platforms are not already established from before. - Experienced the psychiatry to be a difficult collaborative partner	- Difficult to separate what is religion and what is tradition - Difficult to know where the focal point should be	- Experienced the work to be more difficult at the start - Fear of religion - Some difficulties in information sharing and confidentiality	- Some difficulties in the collaboration of different municipal administrations - The risk of the preconception that violent extremism is equivalent to Islam

Challenges was added as a category by me when developing the template because of the fact that potential challenges and the way in which the municipalities have countered such could plausibly be of help to other municipalities experiencing the same types of challenges. Before conducting the interviews, I reckoned that challenges in the work would be the most difficult questions to get answers to. It was plausible to assume that the local coordinators would not be as eager to tell me about potential challenges as opposed to telling me about their successful

strategies. Even so, I experienced that challenges often were incorporated within the answers of other questions, which made the category possible to analyze.

Some of the municipalities stated that the work was complicated in the beginning, meaning that it was difficult to get started. Since they claimed that there had not been that much information or focus on violent extremism before 2014, neither through governmental efforts nor talk of the concept, they experienced it to be an indigestible concept at first: "Initially, there was an insecurity in that there was no common language for this particular challenge… When you start to work with new questions there is a lack in the understanding of it, you do not share the meaning of the words" (Local coordinator in Malmö). Borlänge and Linköping agreed with this and stated that it was difficult to understand each other and to know what role that should be attributed with which actor. Borås stated that the labeling of violent extremism in 2014 increased their experienced issues, given that the concept did not exist within the municipality before that. At the same time, the local coordinator valued the labeling of it and pointed to the clarity that came out of it: "In one way, it is a benefit because it is a rather simple term in the sense that everyone know what it is about". Although some initiating challenges in how to frame the language surrounding violent extremism, all municipalities stated that they now had a functioning and shared language by thoroughly having communicated and by continuously working to increase the knowledge of the topic.

Linköping, Borlänge and Eskilstuna experienced some parts of the municipal administration to be more difficult to include than others in the collaborative approach. Borlänge stated the psychiatry as a complicated collaborative partner but could not really expand on that or give any examples of how they had worked around it. Eskilstuna also pointed to a specific part of the administration as particularly challenging without mentioning which one. Although, those challenges were not exclusively connected to violent extremism but rather general issues with organizational structure and collaboration, which is why it was not

further developed during the interview. Linköping on the other hand experienced schools to be a difficult collaborative partner: "They (the schools) state that they do not have the time. They have not prioritized that work… It might be wrong to say that they do not want to be a part of the work, but it is difficult to get them onboard" (Local coordinator in Linköping). However, the local coordinator claimed that such a problem could be a general one since everyone constantly wants to collaborate with the schools. Eventually, it gets too much and the schools have to decline some of the collaborative suggestions. This causes a dilemma: a lot of the preventive work against violent extremism is aimed towards youths and children but schools do not always have the ability of adapting to that focus. Given that Linköping experienced less of a problem with violent extremism than other municipalities, they might not have "pushed" the schools to be part of the work in the same way than others have who did not experience the schools as a difficult collaborative partner.

One challenge that all municipalities experienced was dividing activities such as what is legal and what is illegal (Borlänge), what is tradition or too extreme within religion (Borås) or what is peaceful or harmful radicalization (Linköping). Given that Borlänge's neighboring municipality constituted the national center for one of the extreme far-right movements in Sweden, they experienced such extremism to be the most prevalent. Therefore, they also found it particularly challenging to figure out how to work against such issues: "The majority of what they do is legal. They dedicate themselves to activities that are protected in the constitutional laws" (Local coordinator in Borlänge). The freedom of speech allows individuals to have extreme opinions, which can make it complicated to form counteracts. The local coordinator in Borlänge also pointed out that such problems were not for them to solve, but rather a national challenge to tackle. Linköping on the other hand experienced the challenge of dividing what was a peaceful radicalization and what was a destructive sort. An individual can get engaged deeply into a religion without getting violent or extreme, whilst some deep associations with religion can result in that. Both Eskilstuna and Borås also

pointed to that challenge: "It easily happens that you stigmatize because you see the wrong things or thing that you are seeing things that in fact are something else" (Local coordinator in Borås). Eskilstuna experienced it to be a challenge to separate people from the rather common preconception of violent extremism to be equivalent to Islam. To solve such an issue, the local coordinators stressed the importance of an increased knowledge, which calm people and nuance the debate on religion versus extremism. Also, by educating relevant actors, they were now more equipped to tackle potential challenges in their everyday job than they were before.

Previous research has shown that confidentiality and information sharing between different administrations can possess a challenge in the work within the municipalities, which also was addressed by some of the municipalities. Malmö did, rather extensively, narrate and discuss on such problems in their local plan of action and it was also evident during the interview that Malmö has worked comprehensively in solving such issues and to establish a well-functioning information sharing. If challenges with confidentiality and information sharing are not addressed and worked on, there is a risk that "we hide behind it" (Local coordinator in Malmö). Linköping on the other hand did not experience confidentiality to be an issue: "... In that way I do not see it as a problem, or of course it could be a problem, but is a rule we have to adjust to. You could choose to see it as a problem, but if you ignore the rules of football it is quite easy to score" (Local coordinator in Linköping). These differences in reasoning can, once again, plausibly be connected to the amount of issues with violent extremism that the municipalities are experiencing. Given that Malmö experienced more problems than Linköping, it is plausible to believe that Malmö has worked more comprehensively with how to navigate around the problematic aspects of confidentiality and information sharing.

5.2.9 Evidence and evaluation

Figure 11. Evidence and evaluation

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- The preventive work has not been evaluated	- "House of knowledge" has been evaluated - Internal evaluation of parts of the local plan of action	- The preventive work is continuously evaluated	- The preventive work has not been evaluated - Might apply for funding to evaluate parts of the work	- The preventive work has not been evaluated

Evaluations of the work could arguably be seen as an important aspect in the preventive work, partly to keep track of what is done within the municipality, and partly to understand which parts of the work that has proven successful and which has not. Furthermore, if municipalities' preventive work to some extent is state-funded, evaluations could plausibly be one way of measuring the results in order to see the effects of the funding. Even if the municipalities are not state-funded but cope with the work within the municipal budget, evaluating the work could be seen as an important aspect for developing and improving the work.

Three out of the five municipalities stated that their work, or parts of it, had been evaluated. Borlänge's work with the "house of knowledge" was evaluated by Dalarna University, which was previously outlined in section 2.5. Their local plan of action has also been evaluated, but only parts of it given the fact that a lot of their activities are still in action. Borås stated that their work continuously was being evaluated, which further on will be made public. Malmö stated that they followed up the work in order to see what had worked and what had not, even though they did not explicitly do evaluations. The local coordinator also stated that the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention would initiate funding for evaluations that municipalities can apply for, which was something Malmö was considering of doing. Linköping and Eskilstuna were the only municipalities that

stated that their work was not evaluated. Linköping had not introduced new efforts since 2014 and Eskilstuna had only been working actively for approximately two years, which meant that neither of the municipalities experienced that they had anything to evaluate.

5.2.10 Sustainability and transferability

Figure 12. Sustainability and transferability

Linköping	Borlänge	Borås	Malmö	Eskilstuna
- Self-funded - Do not experience a large enough problem to feel that some activities might be transferable	- Self-funded - Believe in religious councils - Dialogue with civil society organizations - Stress the importance of analyzing social sustainability	- Self-funded - Expand existing networks - Believe in regional collaboration in the future - Stresses the importance of knowledge	- Partly self-funded, partly state-funded - Believe that "power of mothers" is applicable in other municipalities	- Self-funded - Stresses the importance of making the most of civil society organizations' commitment

The section on sustainability and transferability is partly about how the preventive work within the municipalities is financed, and partly about if the local coordinators believe that the work, or parts of it, might be transferable and applicable in other municipalities. If that is the case, their structures or models of working could plausibly be used in other municipalities that are struggling with coordinating the efforts against violent extremism.

All five municipalities stated that they were either fully self-funded or that the majority of the work was self-funded. Malmö was the only municipality that got state aid for parts of their preventive work, which was for a resource center called "Safe Space". Malmö also stated that they were considering finding a permanent funding for their project "power of mothers". They believe in the project and want

to "raise the incentives for civil society organizations to keep operating the project and to collaborate with us" (Local coordinator in Malmö). It could plausibly be argued that state funding is both an asset and a disfavor in the preventive work. State funding presumably requires a lot of resources to make the application for it, which could be argued to give larger municipalities an advantage over smaller municipalities, even though smaller municipalities also experience issues with violent extremism. A benefit of getting state aid is that the project gets a solid chance of succeeding. Although, if a municipality manages to establish a working model within their own budget, that could be argued as the most sustainable result. As that is the case in most of the explored municipalities, their projects can go on without the worries of not being able to afford them the following year.

Most of the municipalities stated that they believed that their work, or parts of it, would be transferable and could be applicable in other municipalities, with the exception of Linköping. The local coordinator explained that, given their pretty much non-existing problems with violent extremism, they did not have any specific working methods towards explicitly those problems and therefore, he felt that he could not recommend something to other municipalities that might experience greater issues. Although, he stressed the importance of collaboration and to continuously update each other within different administrations, regardless of which topic that is on the municipal agenda. Eskilstuna once again pointed to the importance of involving civil society organizations; to make the most of their commitment and to be very flexible in that collaboration given that they do the work in their spare time. Borlänge highlighted religious councils as a suitable way to connect with faith communities and believed that such a forum would be applicable in other municipalities. In general, the local coordinator in Borlänge stressed the importance of establishing and maintaining the dialogue with civil society organizations and would suggest for other municipalities to involve them as early as possible in the preventive work as opposed to reaching out to them when the work is already halfway done. He also believed that every municipality would benefit from doing an analysis of social sustainability. It is important to

collect the information that individuals within different administrations have and distribute it to the right person in order for it to actually make a difference. Every municipality could do such an analysis, regardless if it is on violent extremism or some other issue. Malmö believed that their project "power of mothers" would be transferable to other municipalities and that the project also could be applicable on other issues than violent extremism: "That is a project I think could be adjusted to local challenges that are not even about violent extremism, but problems you have with alcohol or drugs for instance" (Local coordinator in Malmö). As outlined earlier, Malmö stated that there was a need for a reconstruction for the participation in all of the networks; for instance by dividing the participation between the municipalities and take turns in attending meetings. Both Malmö and Borås also suggested additional adjustments in the collaborative approaches. They both claimed that the future might hold regional coordinators instead of local ones, and that the preventive work would be conducted on a wider basis so that knowledge and experiences would be exchanged in an even bigger scope. Malmö, Borås and Borlänge also highlighted the Center for Preventing Violent Extremism as a solid successor of the national coordinator and believed that their activities will be truly helpful in the future. Their specific needs-based support will put the focus on municipalities in actual need of help, and will ensure that relevant actors stay in touch.

6 Concluding discussion

By drawing upon Michael Lipsky's theory on street-level bureaucracy and its close connection to multi-agency working, this study has been conducted through a comparative case study analysis in which the preventive work of five municipalities in Sweden have been explored and compared. Given Sweden's local self-government, municipalities have the ability to frame and conduct their work in a way that is suitable for them. The individuals framing the work on a local level are the same individuals that Lipsky points out as street-level bureaucrats: social services, law enforcement and school personnel. Within the

explored municipalities these street-level bureaucrats, together with the local coordinator, frame and conduct the preventive work against violent extremism. Even though bottom-up approaches have been criticized for overemphasizing the local autonomy (Matland, 1995:150), the level of involvement from various actors combined with Sweden's local self-government implicates the importance of the bottom-up approaches within implementation theory. In Sweden, it is the local bureaucrats that are "the actual implementers of policies" (Matland, 1995:146-149), and therefore it could be argued that bottom-up approaches, as Lipsky's street-level bureaucracy, are needed.

The rather extensive number of actors involved in the preventive work combined with the local self-government could also hypothetically mean that the municipalities frame their work differently depending on their local situation of violent extremism, even though they are drawing upon the same national documents. However, the result of the compared municipalities in this study shows that there are more similarities than differences in how the municipalities work. Given the fact that I have explored municipalities that have been claimed as successful in their preventive work, such similarities could plausibly indicate that there are some approaches in the work that are more commonly used than others.

The same actors pointed out by Lipsky as the street-level bureaucrats are also highlighted within multi-agency working, which is about creating infrastructures for the preventive work. The overall purpose of multi-agency working is for different professions to "work in collaboration across organizations to meet complex needs" (Sarma, 2018:3) but given the rather extensive number of actors involved in the preventive work, the collaborative approach could arguably be easier said than done. The collaborative approach was something that the municipalities stated as the most important aspect in the preventive work and they all stated that a lot of their time and effort was put on making the collaboration between different municipal administrations work. As a result of the governmental efforts, models of collaboration had been established in the form of

networks, in which all the municipalities participated on both a local, regional, national and international level. By continuously communicating with each other, they learn from each other and can exchange experiences and strategies. Such exchanges by the same street-level bureaucrats but from different municipalities could arguably be one of the reasons for the similarities when comparing the work of the municipalities.

In the collaborative approach it is pointed out that civil society organizations are important actors to include, both within multi-agency working and in the governmental efforts. However, previous research has shown that municipalities experience a somewhat reluctance from such organizations, especially faith communities, to be associated with the easily stigmatized topic of violent extremism. In order to work around this type of issue, the explored municipalities all highlighted the importance of including civil society organizations in the work from the beginning, and not contact them once the work is already established. Some of the municipalities also opted for a solution to be to talk about a wide preventive work instead of explicitly labeling it as preventive work against violent extremism. Models of multi-agency working also state that, within the collaborative approach, it is important to "foster early-stage information sharing between actors" (RAN, 2018:3). Information sharing between municipal administrations was something that more than one municipality experienced as a challenge and they stated that such issues actively needed to be worked on in order for them to be solved. The intensity in working on how to counter these challenges differed between the municipalities, which arguably could depend on the experienced problems with violent extremism. Some of the explored municipalities stated that violent extremism was more prevalent in their municipality than others did, which is why it is logical that some efforts to counter issues with information sharing were more comprehensive than others.

Multi-agency working addresses two important aspects to take into consideration in order to make the preventive work clear and efficient, which are to be precise

with which form of extremism that is being addressed and to be precise towards what stage (becoming involved, being involved or disengaging from) of radicalization or extremism the work is aimed (Sarma, 2018 & Hogan, 2008). However, in this study the municipalities did not state that their work differed depending on which extreme orientation that was being addressed. The local coordinators claimed that there was no way of knowing which individual that possess the risk of being drawn into which extreme orientation. Instead, they had all chosen to have a wide focus in the preventive work, including all three extreme orientations. The coordinators did however state that they all work according to the prevention pyramid, which is one way of dividing what stage the work is aimed towards.

Multi-agency working is a broad, collaborative model used in different fields and has, rather recently, been introduced within the preventive work against violent extremism. Given the previous fruitful results of the model, both when used within the preventive work against violent extremism and within other areas, and the fact that it in recent years has been approved and used by RAN, multi-agency working could plausibly be a future model to apply on a wider scale when working to prevent violent extremism.

Previous research has stated that municipalities request more concrete support in how to frame the preventive work and how to make the collaborative approach work, which is why this study has explored the work of municipalities that have succeeded with both. Given the challenges in the preventive work that previous research has shown, some aspects were of particular interest when comparing the municipalities, in the sense that they might be helpful for other municipalities that are struggling in how to frame their work and how to collaborate within it:

- The local coordinators agreed that new areas of work, which violent extremism was in 2014, need to be included within already established collaborative models. New structures cannot be presented every time a

new focal point of work is introduced. This is something that previous research already has shown, but that has been strengthened by this study.

- The local coordinators also agreed that it is a necessity to reach out to civil society organizations as early as possible in the preventive work for it to succeed. It is important to not show up when the work is halfway done. In addition to this, several of the local coordinators stated that they do not address violent extremism per se, but rather speak of a wide preventive work to avoid a potential stigmatization of the concept.

- To succeed with the collaborative approach with faith communities, the coordinators pointed out religious councils as one way to go, where representatives from different communities can meet and exchange experiences. Similar to above, there is no need for such councils to address violent extremism explicitly, but can rather have a wide approach.

- Most of the coordinators also believed that parts of their preventive work would be applicable in other municipalities. Other then the religious councils just mentioned, Malmö mentioned their project "power of mothers" as a transferable project. Borlänge pointed to their "social sustainability analysis" as something that could be conducted within every municipality.

The same street-level bureaucrats were involved in the preventive work within all the explored municipalities, which could plausibly be an indication that the same street-level bureaucrats also are involved in the preventive work within other municipalities. Therefore, it is plausible to believe that successful projects such as "power of mothers" and "social sustainability analysis" could be used in other municipalities and spread, for instance, through the rather extensive amount of networks that the municipalities participate in.

It should also be added that, besides the abovementioned similarities, the majority of the local coordinators believed that the future would hold more regional collaborations. Because of the extensive amount of networks there are, they

believed in the possibility of taking turns in attending such meetings. In that way, the same street-level bureaucrats would be involved in the work, the same collaborative approach would be used, but the workload would be lighter. Given that violent extremism not is considered as a large issue within all municipalities, the local coordinators also believed that regional coordinators could be introduced. Exploring opportunities or disadvantages of regional coordinators have not been addressed in this study, but is something that future studies can focus on.

In concluding comment, the complexity of violent extremism should be addressed once again. Violent extremism, and further on terrorism, is a global issue, which continuously needs work on how to be countered and prevented. The importance of early preventive work starting on a local scale is agreed upon, but how this should be done in the most efficient way constantly needs developing. This study has aimed to contribute with such, partly by highlighting the importance of local actors in the preventive work, and partly by extracting similarities in successful strategies that plausibly could be helpful for municipalities struggling with how to conduct their work.

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Appendix 1. Interview guide

All the interviews were in Swedish and so was the interview guide. It has been translated into English for the appendix.

- • = *questions that are explicitly asked during the interview (all the interviewees were asked these questions)*
    - o = *questions that are asked depending on the given answer*
- *(...) = examples that could be used in order to clarify the question*

Warming up and background-questions (equivalent to the role of the local coordinator in the template)

- • Tell me about your role as the local coordinator
    - o How much of your working time do you spend on questions relating to violent extremism?
    - o For how long have you had the role as the local coordinator?
    - o Background: What is your education? What other assignments do you have? What makes you relevant to be the local coordinator?
- • Tell me about your views on radicalization and violent extremism
    - o How do the problems occur?
    - o How should you work in order to prevent or avoid the issue?

About the municipality (equivalent to status report in the template)

- • Do you experience violent extremism to be a problem within the municipality?
    - o Are there certain areas that are problematic?
- • How do the problems manifest? (graffiti, stickers, demonstrations)
- • How do you get the information on problems that arise?
- • Which of the three orientations (far-right, far-left and religious Islamic) within violent extremism is the largest problem within the municipality?
    - o If you were to estimate the number of people associated with one of the three orientations within the municipality, how many do you think it would be? What are you basing that number on?

- How has the prevalence of violent extremism changed during the last few years? (increased, decreased or stayed the same)
  - o Why do you think that is? (Increased awareness of the problems, increased knowledge)

Direction of the work (equivalent to target audience and approach in the template)
- Tell me about the preventive work within the municipality
  - o What is the overarching goal with the work?
  - o What is the focal point in the work?
  - o Who is the target audience in the work?
  - o Does the work differ depending of where in the process of radicalization/violent extremism and individual is? (becoming involved, being involved, disengaging from) How?
  - o Does the work differ depending on orientation of extremism? How?
  - o Is the preventive work against violent extremism merged with the general crime prevention work?

Collaboration with other actors (equivalent to organizational structure in the template)
- What does the collaboration between different actors look like in the preventative work?
  - o Is there a model for collaboration?
  - o Which actors are involved?
  - o What is the role of each actor?
- How do you develop your local plan of action?
  - o Which actors are involved in that?
  - o How often is it updated?
- What does the communication between actors look like in the preventative work?

- o How do you stay in touch?
- o How often do you meet?
- Are you collaborating with representatives from civil society organizations?
  - o Who?
  - o How does that collaboration work?
  - o Are there any challenges in that collaboration? If yes, what are the challenges?

Potential difficulties in the preventative work (equivalent to challenges in the template)
- What challenges are there in the preventative work against violent extremism?
  - o Challenges in the collaboration?
  - o Challenges in the actual work? (sharing of information, which individuals to work towards)
- How have you countered these challenges?

Results and effects of the work (equivalent to start of the practice, deliverables and evidence & evaluation in the template)
- What has the preventative work resulted in?
- What effects have you seen from the preventative work?
- How is the work being evaluated?
- How long would you say that the municipality has worked actively against violent extremism?

Forward-thinking in the preventative work against violent extremism (equivalent to sustainability and transferability in the template)
- How is your work financed?
- Do you think that the preventative work of the municipality, or parts of it, would be transferable to other municipalities? If yes, how?

Appendix 2. Material document analysis & interviews

Table 1. Document analysis

Municipality	Document	Year
Borlänge	Lokal handlingsplan för att värna demokratin mot våldsbejakande miljöer i Borlänge	2016
Borås	Motverka våldsbejakande extremism i Borås stad	2016
Eskilstuna	Plan mot våldsbejakande extremism	2018
Linköping	Handlingsplan för trygghet, säkerhet och brottsförebyggande åtgärder	2017
Malmö	Riktlinje: Malmös arbete med att värna demokratin mot våldsbejakande extremism – en del av arbetet med normbrottsprevention bland unga	2015

All the documents are in Swedish. I translated the material used in this study into English.

Table 2. Interviews

Municipality	Local coordinator	Type of interview and duration
Linköping	Håkan Carlberg	Face to face / 39:39
Borlänge	Marcus Hjelm	Telephone / 53:25
Borås	Anders Lindstam	Telephone / 1:14:07
Malmö	Malin Martelius	Face to face / 49:56
Eskilstuna	Björn Almroth	Telephone / 60:17

All the interviews were conducted and transcribed in Swedish. I translated the material used in this study into English. The transcriptions are available upon request.