PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND CRIME IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES: SIMILARITIES, SYNERGIES AND AMBIGUITIES

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I. Introduction

The issue of violent extremism has risen high on the global political agenda in recent years, and Europe is no exception. Since the mid 2000s, in particular, European countries have introduced diverse prevention strategies as part of their counterterrorism initiatives, while the European Union (EU) has aimed at creating uniformity and providing support for its member states in this regard.[1] The Nordic countries have also developed specific policies and capacities for preventing violent extremism (PVE).

Despite prominent political concerns, however, relatively little empirical research on the different preventive initiatives or methods, and especially their effectiveness, has been conducted in the field of PVE.[2] Furthermore, the concept of violent extremism lacks a clear common definition.[3] This conceptual ambiguity, the lack of evidence-based research and programme evaluations, and the complexity of the underlying causes of violent extremism hinder the prospects of PVE.[4] Nevertheless, recent research indicates that the policies and research on violent extremism could benefit from the long tradition of crime research.[5] Even though the frameworks for crime and violent extremism have usually been separated, the convergence of approaches could be constructive in terms of assessing PVE approaches—not least in the Nordic setting that has a history of effective mechanisms for violent crime prevention (CP), manifested in some of the lowest homicide rates

SUMMARY

● The issue of violent extremism has risen high on the global political agenda, and there is an increased need to understand its prevention. The long tradition of crime prevention (CP) research and policies is one area that could contribute to the understanding of prevention of violent extremism (PVE). This paper describes how and to what extent violent extremism and different forms of crime converge in Nordic PVE and CP strategies and action plans. Despite some significant differences regarding PVE and CP in the Nordic countries, analysis of the Nordic policy documents and some of the existing research demonstrates that the relationship between violent extremism and different forms of crime may actually be inextricable and more profoundly impacting than traditionally described. Considering the dynamic relation between violent extremism and criminality in theory and in practice, as well as understanding different approaches to it, could help in tackling new forms of threats or vulnerabilities and in designing more coherent policies and prevention measures.

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[1] Lowe, D., 'Prevent strategies: The problems associated in defining extremism. The Case of the United Kingdom', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 40, no. 11 (2017), pp. 918; and European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, Supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, 14 June 2016.

[2] See e.g. Mastroe, C., and Szmania, S., *Surveying CVE Metrics in Prevention, Disengagement and Deradicalization Programs*, Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security (START: College Park, MD, Mar. 2016).

[3] United Nations, General Assembly, 'Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism', 70th session, Agenda items 16 and 117, A/70/674, 24 Dec. 2015.

[4] See e.g. Ranstorp, M., 'The root causes of violent extremism', Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) issue paper, 4 Jan. 2016.

[5] See e.g. Decker, S. H. and Pyrooz, D. C., '"I'm down for a Jihad": How 100 years of gang research can inform the study of terrorism, radicalization and extremism', *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2015).

among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.[6] Furthermore, compared to the relatively new research field of PVE, the field of CP has been subject to systematic reviews for decades.[7]

Recent research suggests that there are not only theoretical lessons learned from CP which can be applied to the study of violent extremism, but that there are also significant empirical overlaps between violent extremism and different forms of crime.[8] Among other things, it has been argued that: individuals engaged in violent extremist ideologies also commit 'traditional' crimes at a higher rate than the general population; criminal and violent extremist groups can collaborate for mutual benefits; and criminal and violent extremist groups may recruit from the same pools of people.[9] However, the relationship between violent extremist and criminal environments is multidimensional, and significant differences have also been found between, for instance, gang members and domestic extremists.[10] Overall, there remains a lack of knowledge regarding the features and dynamics of the connections between violent extremism and crime.[11]

This SIPRI Insights Paper aims to describe how and to what extent violent extremism and different forms of crime converge in Nordic PVE and CP strategies and action plans. The Nordic countries included are Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden; Iceland is excluded because of a lack of extensive policy documents. Only the latest national action plans or strategies are covered. The relationship between violent extremism and different forms of crime in Nordic policy documents is analysed on three interacting levels: conceptual, strategic and operative programming. Instead of focusing on the individual phenomena of violent extremism and crime and their sporadic connections, this paper underlines the dynamic relationship between the two phenomena and the frameworks outlining their prevention by Nordic national governments.

Recent research suggests that there are significant empirical overlaps between violent extremism and different forms of crime

By analysing the relationship between violent extremism and different forms of crime presented in previous research and analysing its manifestation in Nordic policy documents, this paper provides an insight into academic and Nordic perceptions of the relationship and subsequently aims to accumulate knowledge on the conceivable connections between the two phenomena. Furthermore, even though the concept of violent extremism is political and highly context-dependent, by comparing the conceptualization

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[6] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), OECD Better Life Index, 'Safety'.

[7] See e.g. Weisburd, D., Farrington D. and Gill C., 'Introduction: What works in crime prevention?' eds D. Weisburd, D. Farrington and C. Gill, *What Works in Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation: Lessons from Systematic Reviews* (Springer: New York, 2016).

[8] Sturup, J. and Rostami, A., [Organized antagonism: Overlapping between violent extremism and organized crime], eds C. Edling and A. Rostami A., *Våldsbejakande extremism—En forskarantologi* (SOU 2017:67) (Elanders Sverige AB: Stockholm, 2017), pp. 99–121 (in Swedish).

[9] See e.g. Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention and Swedish Security Service, [Violent political extremism—Anti-democratic groupings at the outermost right and leftwing] (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention: Stockholm, 2009) (in Swedish); Makarenko, T. and Mesquita, M., 'Categorising the crime–terror nexus in the European Union', *Global Crime*, vol. 15, nos 3–4 (2014), pp. 259–274; and Basra, R., Neumann, P., and Brunner, C., *Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime–Terror Nexus* (ICSR: London, 2016).

[10] Pyrooz, D. et al., 'Cut from the same cloth? A comparative study of domestic extremists and gang members in the United States', *Justice Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 1 (2018), pp. 1–32.

[11] Sturup and Rostami (note 8), pp. 99–121.

of violent extremism in national Nordic action plans, this paper uncovers existing similarities, differences and ambiguities. In particular, it provides an assessment of the perceived overlaps between the concepts of violent extremism, radicalization, crime and hate crime. Establishing these overlaps, synergies and points of divergence between violent extremism and different forms of crime may: contribute to more resource-efficient programming; increase the possibility of designing more coherent prevention strategies that cover both violent crime and extremism; engender knowledge accumulation; and prompt the development of analytical models in the field of violent extremism. Furthermore, understanding these overlaps may increase the understanding of possible emerging security threats, for instance, due to skills transfers between different groups.

II. Violent extremism and crime

Conceptual ambiguities

Analysing the underlying processes and structures of the relationship between violent extremism and different forms of crime entails examining the concepts of violent extremism and crime. Typically, traditional forms of crime are linked to instrumentalism, whereas violent extremist crimes are considered to be ideologically or politically motivated. However, research on criminal organizing has also emphasized the social, psychological and cultural aspects of gang criminality, among others. Even though the concept of crime can be restricted to behaviour defined by the criminal law, there is a lack of consensus and consistency in criminology as well as criminal policies when it comes to defining and framing the different forms of crime. Furthermore, research on criminal phenomena often refers to vaguely defined but politically authoritative concepts of gangs, organized crime or petty crime that lack clear definitions. For instance, organized crime has arguably become an overarching concept based on an abstraction of underlying dimensions, such as gangs—with gangs being described, on the one hand, as highly organized groups and, on the other hand, as ineffective social mechanisms that lack key features of organizational structure.[12] Although the core difference between organized crime and petty crime is often the level of coordination, planning and continuity, the distinction between the two has become distorted as the concept of organized crime has allegedly become generic. Thus, the concept of 'serious organized crime' is one attempt to restore the distinctions between different forms of crime.

There is also a lack of common understanding of the concept of hate crime within Europe as well globally.[13] It may refer to acts of violence, hostility and intimidation directed towards people because of their identity or perceived difference, but there are significant differences in the ways that states conceive of hate crime.[14] Hate crime ties criminal conduct to negative group-based attitudes and, even though hate crime and extremist violence or hate speech

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[12] Rostami, A., *Criminal Organizing: Studies in the Sociology of Organized Crime* (Department of Sociology, Stockholm University: Stockholm, 2016); and Decker and Pyrooz (note 5).

[13] Garland, J. and Funnell, C., 'Defining hate crime internationally', eds J. Schweppe and M. A. Walters, *The Globalization of Hate: Internationalizing Hate Crime?* (Oxford Scholarship Online: Oxford, 2016).

[14] Garland and Funnell (note 13).

and extremism may be closely linked or used interchangeably, it has been argued that hate crime should not be limited to acts of extremist violence.[15] Furthermore, violent extremism, often referring to the willingness to use violence or to support the use of violence in order to advocate particular beliefs, is not necessarily problematic from the criminal law perspective.

Radicalization has been used to refer to the process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs and is, thus, closely linked to extremism.[16] However, even this approach is contested, as scholars have argued that not all radicalization processes lead to violent extremism.[17] Moreover, not all crimes committed in extremist environments are politically or ideologically motivated.[18] Overall, the perceptions of the lines and linkages between extremist ideologies, violent justifications, criminal actions and terrorism are profoundly context specific and lack clear conceptual frameworks. As illustrated in this paper, the dubious relationship between extremist ideologies, violent justifications and crimes is also part of the Nordic countries' approaches to violent extremism and different forms of crime.

The perceptions of the lines and linkages between extremist ideologies, violent justifications, criminal actions and terrorism are profoundly context specific and lack clear conceptual frameworks

Connections and overlaps

Previous research has identified several mechanisms that may explain the connection between violent extremism and criminality in Europe, but the existing approaches have clear shortcomings. Sturup and Rostami have reviewed the existing literature on the overlaps between violent extremism and criminality and argue that the limited knowledge available focuses on recruitment processes, the profiles of individuals, analyses of extremist behaviour and terror actions, and the funding aspects of extremism.[19] Although violent extremism and terrorism are generally considered as separate phenomena, analyses of the connections between violent extremism and crime are often linked to theoretical discussions of the 'crime–terror nexus'.[20] Research on the crime–terror nexus is included in this analysis, but the paper moves beyond the nexus-centred approach and focuses instead on the dynamic relationship between the phenomena at hand.

In terms of the recruitment and profiles of individuals expressing violent extremist ideologies, scholars have identified a merging of terrorist and criminal social networks and environments. Allegedly, criminal and terrorist groups in the European context recruit from the same pool of people, and analyses on violent crime and Islamist extremism, for instance, often point to similar types of geographical and socio-economic profiles.[21] On the one hand,

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[15] Brax, D., 'Hate crime concepts and their moral foundations', eds Schweppe and Walters (note 13).

[16] Borum, R., 'Radicalization into violent extremism I: A review of social science theories', *Journal of Strategic Security*, vol. 4, no. 4 (2012), pp. 7–36.

[17] See e.g. Subedi, D. B., 'Early warning and response for preventing radicalization and violent extremism', *Peace Review*, vol. 29, no. 2 (2017), pp. 135–43.

[18] See e.g. Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention and Swedish Security Service (note 9).

[19] Sturup and Rostami (note 8), p. 114.

[20] See e.g. Sturup and Rostami (note 8), p. 102.

[21] Basra, Neumann and Brunner (note 9); and Grip, L. and Anthony, I., [The polarization of violence in Swedish cities], eds Edling and Rostami (note 8), p. 136 (in Swedish).

it has been emphasized that the root causes, risk factors and paths to violent extremism are diverse and vary individually and, on the other hand, there is empirical evidence that in Europe an increasing number of individuals who have committed terrorist crimes have a criminal background.[22] More than half of the individuals who committed terrorist crimes in Europe between 2012 and 2016 have been found to have a criminal background.[23] It has even been argued that within Europe there is 'a growing trend of individual small-time criminals carrying out terrorist attacks'.[24]

It has been suggested that the transition from traditional crime, which in this case refers to a variety of crimes that are not ideologically motivated, to ideologically motivated crime may be part of an effort for some individuals to try to change the direction of their lives.[25] This is in line with some of the research on jihadism, according to which a jihadist narrative may be the linkage between criminal activities and joining a terrorist organization. Involvement in jihadism may offer a redemption from crime, while also satisfying the personal needs and desires that led the individuals to become involved in it.[26] This finding may highlight the difference in the dynamics of traditional criminality and violent extremist criminality.

Furthermore, the role of prisons has been highlighted when explaining the connection between violent extremism and criminality. In prisons, criminals may be a subject to recruitment and influence, as criminals and terrorists are brought together and opportunities for collaboration and skills transfers are created.[27] Discharged convicts may also be vulnerable to recruitment, as they face fewer opportunities than their fellow citizens when re-integrating into society after having served their sentences.[28] However, the risk of violent extremism in prison environments is not necessarily directly connected to criminality, but rather the general conditions have been found to affect radicalization, such as overcrowding, insufficient staffing and perceived discrimination or inequality.[29]

In addition to overlaps at the individual level, organized crime and violent extremist groups may cooperate, form alliances or seize and integrate tactics for mutual benefits.[30] Financing, in particular, has been highlighted as a linkage between organized crime and violent extremism.[31] While one of

[22] Ranstorp, M., Gustafsson, L. and Hyllengren, P., [Prevention of violent extremism at the local level: Examples and lessons learned from Sweden and Europe] (Försvarshögskolan, CATS: Stockholm, 2015) (in Swedish); Grip and Anthony (note 21), p. 135; and Bakker, E., *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in Which They Joined the Jihad. An Exploratory Study* (Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael: The Hague, 2006).

[23] Grip and Anthony (note 21), p. 135.

[24] Reitano, T., Clarke, C. and Adal, L., *Examining the Nexus between Organized Crime and Terrorism and its implications for the EU Programming*, CT Morse, Counter-Terrorism Monitoring, Reporting and Support Mechanism (ICCT: The Hague, 2017).

[25] Sarnecki, J., [From traditional to ideologically motivated crime], eds Edling and Rostami (note 8), p. 90 (in Swedish).

[26] Basra, Neumann and Brunner (note 9).

[27] Decker S. and Pyrooz, D., 'Gangs, Terrorism, and Radicalization', *Journal of Strategic Security*, no. 4 (2012), pp. 151–66.

[28] Basra, Neumann and Brunner (note 9).

[29] Yourstone, J., Cardell, D., Stroubouli Lanefelt L., and Westerberg, H., [Violent extremism in prisons—A knowledge review], Project number 2016:290 (The Swedish Prison and Probation Service: Norrköping, 2017) (in Swedish).

[30] See e.g. Makarenko and Mesquita (note 9), pp. 259–74.

[31] See e.g. Hutchinson, S. and O'Malley, P., 'A crime–terror nexus? Thinking on some of the links between terrorism and criminality', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 30, no. 12 (2007),

the main motivations of organized crime groups is financial gain, violent extremist organizations may use organized crime techniques and activities to fund their operations. However, it should be noted that there are few studies that have systematically assessed the funding of terrorism.[32] Nevertheless, for jihadi cells that plotted terrorist attacks in Western Europe between 1994 and 2014, legal income was found to be the most common type of funding, with 38 per cent of the cells involved in criminal activities to raise money.[33] Thus, it can be noted that 'European terrorists' financial activities are remarkably ordinary'.[34] This may undermine the argument that financial benefits are a key linkage between terrorism and crime, even though terrorists or violent extremists may seek contact with common criminals or organized crime groups to access other resources, such as weapons, transport means, specialist skills or a larger pool of potential recruits.[35] Furthermore, the financial aspect seems to have reduced in significance due to the nature of recent attacks in Europe: cheap, easy and organizationally simple attacks seem to have gained ground. Simultaneously, classifying violent extremist attacks has become increasingly complex, as not only sophisticated operations conducted by organized groups or terrorist cells are effective in wreaking havoc.

Although it has been argued that Europe has experienced a revival of violent right-wing extremist groups and incidents in recent years, different forms of violent extremism seem to attract different amounts of attention from the research community.[36] This development has become especially clear after the terrorist attacks on the United States of 11 September 2001.

Classifying violent extremist attacks has become increasingly complex, as not only sophisticated operations conducted by organized groups or terrorist cells are effective in wreaking havoc

Furthermore, previous research put an emphasis both on the move from traditional crime to ideologically or politically motivated crime, emphasizing the individual actor-based approach, and on the connections between extremist groups and criminal groups in order to gain benefits. However, different categories of crime are not always distinct and can emerge in the same environments.[37] By illustrating the relationship between violent extremism and crime in the Nordic action plans, this study aims to take a comprehensive and dynamic approach to the connection between violent extremism and crime.

III. The Nordic countries

The four Nordic countries covered in this paper, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, are affluent welfare states and share similar societal structures. Their public sectors are comprehensive, their tax rates are high and, traditionally, they follow a decentralized authority model with municipalities

pp. 1095–1107.

[32] Sturup and Rostami (note 8), p. 109.

[33] Oftedal, E., 'The financing of jihadi terrorist cells in Europe', FFI Report (Norwegian Defence Research Establishment: Kjeller, 2015).

[34] Oftedal (note 33), p. 3.

[35] Europol, *Changes in Modus Operandi of Islamic State Terrorist Attacks* (Europol: The Hague, 2016).

[36] Koehler, D., 'Right-wing extremism and terrorism in Europe: Current developments and issues for the future', *PRISM*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2016).

[37] See e.g. Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention and Swedish Security Service (note 9).

having relatively strong autonomy. The countries are also perceived as safe, have some of the lowest homicide rates among OECD countries, and are among the most peaceful countries in the world.[38] Throughout history, the Nordic countries have been interconnected in various ways and have had close regional cooperation. However, the countries also share entangled security challenges due to, among other things, their strong interlinkages between individuals and cultures.

These similar features of societal structures, challenges and threats facilitate Nordic collaboration and knowledge transfer. The cooperation also covers CP and criminal policies, including connections between Nordic criminologists, cooperation on crime statistics and joint efforts between the Nordic countries' CP councils.[39] It has been argued that practical cross-Nordic influences at the operational level have been especially fundamental, as various activities developed in one Nordic country have served as models for others.[40]

There is also cooperation between the Nordic countries when it comes to PVE, although only in its infancy compared to the work within CP. Systematic cooperation on violent extremism has been ongoing since January 2015, when the Nordic countries signed the Cooperation Agreement of the Nordic network to prevent extremism.[41] Moreover, Nordic municipalities cooperate through the Nordic Safe Cities programme, which is part of the Nordic Council of Ministers' programme for Democracy, Inclusion and Security aiming to promote security throughout the Nordic region by preventing radicalization and violent extremism.[42] In addition to cooperation at the local level, Nordic cooperation has been considered significant in the field of PVE in terms of research as well as, for example, youth activities.[43]

Throughout history, the Nordic countries have shared entangled security challenges due to, among other things, their strong interlinkages between individuals and cultures

In the following sections, this paper illustrates the overlaps and convergences between violent extremism and different forms of crime in the four Nordic countries' strategies and action plans on PVE and CP. For each country, key definitions and conceptual overlaps are presented first before moving to strategic-level intersections and operational connections. The focus is on analysing PVE documents, but criminal policy documents are also addressed at the end of each section.

Denmark

In Denmark, PVE is a focus area within the framework of existing CP structures and the core of the approach lies in multi-agency collaboration. The Danish approach has attracted international attention and in 2008 the EU

[38] OECD (note 6); and Institute for Economics and Peace, 'Global Peace Index 2017', p. 10.

[39] Takala, H., 'Nordic cooperation in criminal policy and crime prevention', *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2005), pp. 131–47.

[40] Takala (note 39), pp. 131–47.

[41] Finnish Ministry of the Interior, *National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalization and Extremism*, Ministry of the Interior Publications 17/2016, Internal security (Finnish Ministry of the Interior: Helsinki, 2016), p. 9.

[42] Norden, *Nordic Safe Cities* (Nordic Council of Ministers: Copenhagen, 2016).

[43] Finnish Ministry of the Interior, [The Nordic countries counter violent radicalization and extremist movements together], Tiedote, 18 Jan. 2017 (in Finnish).

Counter-Terrorism Coordinator appointed Denmark as the EU's 'lead country' on deradicalization and PVE.[44] Denmark's latest national action plan for 'Preventing and Countering Extremism and Radicalisation' was published in October 2016. The framework of this action plan is broad in comparison to the other Nordic countries, as it focuses on extremism as a whole, instead of assessing only violent extremism.

In the Danish action plan extremism refers to 'persons or groups that commit or seek to legitimise violence or other illegal acts, with reference to societal conditions that they disagree with', whereas radicalization is *The Danish prevention model can be characterized as a comprehensive inter-agency model, which emphasizes cooperation across a wide range of sectors and authorities addressing various target groups* 'a short- or long-term process where persons subscribe to extremist views or legitimise their actions on the basis of extremist ideologies'.[45] Preventing extremism and radicalization is considered as a way to deter terrorism but, according to the action plan, it also has wider welfare-related implications for society.[46] Accordingly, the Danish action plan and the measures described in it are linked to different public efforts, including not only the fight against terrorism, but also social efforts such as the Danish integration effort.[47]

Various overlaps between extremism and criminality are presented in the action plan. On the one hand, the risk of radicalization within criminal groups and communities in prisons is recognized in the plan and, on the other hand, radicalization is considered as a possible indicator of or precursor to criminal behaviour.[48] In addition to the overlaps in criminal and extremist environments, as well as individual-level connections, the action plan explicitly states that one of the new challenges in the field of PVE that has emerged in recent years is the close connection between criminal and extremist groups.[49]

In practice, since the middle of the 2000s, preventing extremism has been developed into a separate focus area within the framework of existing crime-preventive collaborations between authorities in Denmark.[50] The Danish prevention model can be characterized as a comprehensive inter-agency model, which emphasizes cooperation across a wide range of sectors and authorities addressing various target groups.[51] The interventions include direct interventions aimed at persons in extremist groups, anticipatory interventions focusing on persons vulnerable to radicalization, and preventive interventions that cover all children and young people.[52]

[44] Lindekilde, L., 'Refocusing Danish counter-radicalisation efforts: An analysis of the (problematic) logic and practice of individual de-radicalisation interventions', eds C. Baker-Beall, C. Heath-Kelly and L. Jarvis, *Counter-Radicalisation: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge: New York, 2015), pp. 223–41.

[45] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing, *Preventing and Countering Extremism and Radicalisation: National Action Plan* (The Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing: Copenhagen, 2016), p. 7.

[46] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45).

[47] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 6.

[48] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 7.

[49] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 17.

[50] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 12.

[51] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 12.

[52] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 16.

In the Danish model, radicalization is considered a risk behaviour along with other types of behaviour that may lead to criminality.[53] When it comes to the preventive work among children and young people, the initiatives are primarily undertaken in collaboration between municipalities and police districts, under the SSP partnership between schools, the social services and the police.[54] Other cooperation models are, for instance, the PSP partnership between the psychiatric services, the social authorities and the police, and the KSP partnership between the Danish Prison and Probation Service, the social authorities and the police.[55] These initiatives focus, in particular, on citizens who are in contact with institutions under the psychiatric services or the Prison and Probation Service.[56] As a part of the action plan, skills enhancement and advice about PVE is offered to the authorities experienced in working with CP, in order to integrate PVE into their work.

The Danish action plan also includes measures focusing specifically on the overlaps between crime and extremism. Denmark has introduced prevailing initiatives and areas of intervention that focus on extremism in relation to prisons and criminal groups, including a research project on the crossover between criminal and extremist groups, among others.[57] Additionally, the action plan presents new measures that include targeted intervention in criminal groups and stricter measures to stop radicalization in prisons. According to the plan, environments where radicalization thrives and people are recruited for terrorism are marked by different forms of criminal behaviour, such as organized gang crime, tax evasion, social fraud and other types of enrichment crime and, thus, a harder line must be taken against criminality in radicalized groups.[58] For example, improved methods for preventing crossover recruitment have been developed. Moreover, effective intervention against prisoners showing signs of radicalization have been implemented.[59] Overall, there has been a stronger emphasis on the merging of violent extremism and criminality since the terrorist attack in Copenhagen in 2015, which was committed by a Danish citizen with a criminal background.

Denmark has introduced prevailing initiatives and areas of intervention that focus on extremism in relation to prisons and criminal groups

While the Danish action plan takes into account the overlaps between different forms of crime and extremism at the strategic as well as operational levels, in criminal policy documents these connections are not addressed. Neither the Danish Government's recent 'Reform of Initiatives Against Youth Criminality' (Alle handlinger har konsekvenser—En reform af indsatsen mod ungdomskriminalitet) nor its 'Gangs Behind Bars' strategy (Bander bag tremmer—28 initiativer mod rocker- og bandekriminalitet) include violent extremism as a phenomenon connected to criminality. Thus, although signs of radicalization constitute a parameter for risk behaviour that may lead to criminality according to the Action Plan for Preventing and

[53] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 16.
[54] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 12.
[55] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 13.
[56] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 13.
[57] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 20.
[58] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 30.
[59] Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (note 45), p. 31.

Countering Extremism and Radicalisation, radicalization or extremism is not considered in national CP policies.

Finland

Finland's latest 'National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalization and Extremism' was published in 2016. In the Finnish action plan, the concept of radicalization and violent extremism are strongly linked. The definition of violent extremism is: 'violent extremism refers to using, threatening with, encouraging or justifying violence based on one's own view of the world or on ideological grounds.'[60] However, the definition of violent radicalization is: 'an individual process which may result in a person joining violent extremist groups or action.' At its most extreme, violent radicalization can result in terrorist acts.[61] According to the action plan, terrorism is always considered as violent extremism, but all extremist violence is not terrorism.[62] Compared to the Danish action plan, this conceptualization is relatively straightforward—in the Danish PVE document the phenomena are linked, but the relationship between terrorism and violent extremism is not explicitly defined. In short, in the Finnish action plan radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism seem to be presented as different phases of the same phenomenon.

The Finnish action plan focuses on the relationship between violent extremism and hate crime

When it comes to the connection between different forms of crime and violent extremism, the Finnish action plan focuses on the relationship between violent extremism and hate crime. Violent extremism is not a criminal law concept in Finland but, for instance, 'crimes motivated by hate or racism can also be categorised as extremist crimes'.[63] Furthermore, according to the plan, 'individuals and groups targeted by hate speech and hate crime run a high risk of becoming radicalized, especially when they feel that society and the authorities do not sufficiently intervene and protect their rights'.[64] According to the plan, hate speech may also encourage violent extremism.[65] In line with the argument about the relationship between hate crime victimization and violent extremism, it is also stated that since asylum seekers and reception centres are targeted by vandalism and crimes they may be at higher risk of radicalization.[66] In the action plan, this phenomenon is coupled with problems in integration as well as misgivings and discrimination on behalf of the majority.[67]

The apparent relationship between hate crime victimization and radicalization may be based on findings that perceived discrimination or inequality engender radicalization, but the underlying mechanism affecting the posited relationship is not addressed in the action plan. Thus, on the one hand, there are conceptual overlaps between hate crime and violent extremism in the Finnish action plan and, on the other hand, according to the Finnish

[60] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 9.
[61] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 9.
[62] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 12.
[63] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 12.
[64] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 24.
[65] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 24.
[66] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 25.
[67] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 25.

action plan, those who have been victims of hate crimes are at increased risk of radicalization. Furthermore, due to the suggested linkage between radicalization and violent extremism, hate crime victimization may also be connected to violent extremism. Overall, hate crime seems to be considered a cause as well as an outcome of radicalization, but clearly underlined in the action plan is the possibility of victims of hate crime being at risk of later engaging in violent extremism themselves. This may be considered controversial and seems to have received little attention in previous research.

As a part of the concrete measures to prevent violent radicalization and extremism, the Finnish action plan aims at promoting 'the expansion of the scope of activities of anti-violence organisations to include the prevention of ideologically motivated violence'.[68] Thus, at a programming level, the connections between violent radicalization and more general crime or violence prevention seem to have been recognized, and the existing prevention structures are also used in PVE. However, the possible connections between various forms of crime, violent extremism and different types of violence have not been clarified.

One concrete area highlighted as important for the prevention of violent radicalization and extremism is prisons. According to the action plan, 'prisoners are in many ways vulnerable and, hence, particularly susceptible to the propaganda and recruitment of violent extremist groups'.[69] For instance, 'developing risk assessment tools and tools to detect early signs of radicalisation' and 'offering inmates opportunities for learning and developing critical thinking skills in prison' are considered concrete measures to prevent radicalization in prisons.

Radicalization and violent extremism are not mentioned in the 2016 Finnish national CP programme, 'Working Together for Safer and More Secure Communities'. However, the CP programme and the national action plan do have an operational connection, a so-called Anchor Model. This multiprofessional, early intervention model was implemented in Finland in 2014 to provide preventive measures to young people and reduce recidivism.[70] In the national action plan, the model is applied to preventing violent radicalization and extremism.[71] Thus, to conclude, the overlaps between crime and violent extremism in the Finnish action plans seem to focus on operational-level synergies and on the connection between hate crime and violent radicalization—in particular, on the relationship between hate crime victimization and violent extremism. Emphasis is also put on the role of prisons as a space for radicalization and as a possible platform for preventive strategies.

Prisons have been highlighted as an important area for the prevention of violent radicalization and extremism

[68] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 23.

[69] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 22.

[70] Finnish Ministry of the Interior, [The Anchor model in multi-authority cooperation], Internal Security, Finnish Ministry of the Interior Publications 30/2013 (Finnish Ministry of the Interior: Helsinki, 2013) (in Finnish).

[71] Finnish Ministry of the Interior (note 41), p. 19.

Norway

Norway's second (and latest) 'Action plan against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism' was formulated in 2014. In it, violent extremism is defined as the 'activities of persons and groups that are willing to use violence in order to achieve their political, ideological or religious goals', while radicalization is defined as 'a process whereby a person increasingly accepts the use of violence to achieve political, ideological or religious goals'.[72] Thus, what separates radicalization from violent extremism in the Norwegian context is the move from accepting the use of violence to acting in a pro-violent manner. Terrorism is then defined in the action plan as the 'most extreme consequence of radicalisation and violent extremism', similar to the Finnish definition.[73]

The action plan is explicit about the relationship between PVE and CP, stating that 'it is important to base the efforts to combat radicalization and violent extremism on the same basic principles as the general prevention of crime'.[74] What are emphasized as valuable principles of CP are the knowledge-based approach, cooperation among different sectors of society and 'early efforts prompted by the ability to identify problems and follow them up with adequate measures'.[75] Local cooperative models for the prevention of crime are also highlighted, such as the SLT (samordning av lokale rus- og kriminalitetsforebyggande tiltak), which is a model for the coordination of local CP measures in municipalities (based on the Danish SSP model) and the Police Council, which is a formalized cooperation between local police and municipal authorities.[76]

Norway's action plan states that 'it is important to base the efforts to combat radicalization and violent extremism on the same basic principles as the general prevention of crime'

Furthermore, the action plan highlights the role of prisons as a connecting factor between violent extremism and crime. In terms of concrete measures to tackle the issue of violent extremism in prison environments, a mentoring scheme aimed at inmates believed to be vulnerable to recruitment to violent extremism will be developed and tried out and, additionally, an interfaith team in the Norwegian Correctional Services will be established.[77] These measures focus on reducing the recruitment and radicalization of individuals, putting less emphasis on the connections between organized crime and violent extremist groups.

According to the Norwegian action plan, 'violent extremism is the most extreme form of hate crime', which underlines the emphasis of the plan on the physical manifestations of violent extremism.[78] Many of its measures aim at preventing hate expressions and rhetoric. Furthermore, hate rhetoric, among other things, is considered a sign of concern when it comes to radicalization.[79] Thus, in Norwegian policies expressions of hate are regarded as precursors to individual radicalization, whereas the Finnish

[72] Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, *Action plan against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism* (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security: Oslo, 2014), p. 7.
[73] Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (note 72), p. 5.
[74] Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (note 72), p. 13.
[75] Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (note 72), p. 13.
[76] Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (note 72), p. 13.
[77] Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (note 72), pp. 21–22.
[78] Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (note 72), p. 7.
[79] Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (note 72).

action plan sees hate crime as possibly promoting the radicalization of other individuals.

Norway also has a 2013–16 action plan for preventing criminality (Handlingsplan for forebygging av kriminalitet), which presents the issues of radicalization and violent extremism as phenomena vital to CP. The overlaps between CP and PVE presented in this action plan correspond to the approaches outlined in the radicalization and violent extremism action plan. The focus is clearly on operational overlaps, namely coordination and cooperation among different sectors of society and local collaboration models.[80]

Sweden

In 2015 the Swedish Government published a communication entitled 'Actions to Make Society More Resilient to Violent Extremism', presenting measures that Sweden had implemented to tackle violent extremism. The measures aimed to 'improve the knowledge of violent extremism and develop preventive initiatives and methods'.[81] Additionally, the Swedish National Coordinator for Protecting Democracy against Violent Extremism, commissioned by the government in June 2014, formulated a 'National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism' that was published in 2016.

According to the government communication and the national strategy, the Swedish Government defines violent extremism as 'ideologies that accept and legitimise violence as a means of realising extreme ideological opinions and ideas'.[82] Furthermore, radicalization is a process in which an individual or a group is increasingly able to develop extreme attitudes and in the long run advocate illegal methods and the use of violence to further their ideas.[83] The Swedish definitions of violent extremism and radicalization encompass rather abstract concepts such as ideologies and attitudes, and the processes do not always include crimes, but the definition of terrorism is a more action-oriented one.[84] In Swedish policy documents, terrorism is considered to be 'a crime and a method used by violent extremist groupings and individuals'.[85]

According to the Swedish national strategy, promoting democracy creates resilience in the society and increases resistance to violent extremism

Mirroring the Swedish focus on the abstract characteristics of radicalization and violent extremism, the national strategy to counter violent extremism has an extensive democracy strengthening dimension. According to the strategy, promoting democracy, namely supporting the development of social skills, critical thinking and knowledge about democratic rights and responsibilities, creates resilience in the society and increases resistance to

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[80] Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, [Action plan for crime prevention] (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security: Oslo, 2013) (in Norwegian).

[81] Swedish Government, 'Actions to make society more resilient to violent extremism', Government Communication 2014/15:144, 13 Aug. 2015, p. 1.

[82] Swedish Government (note 81), p. 9.

[83] Swedish National Coordinator to Safeguard Democracy against Violent Extremism, [National strategy against violent extremism], 2016, p. 7 (in Swedish).

[84] Swedish National Coordinator to Safeguard Democracy against Violent Extremism (note 83), p. 6.

[85] Swedish National Coordinator to Safeguard Democracy against Violent Extremism (note 83), p. 7.

violent extremism.[86] Other dimensions of the strategy are prevention and pre-emption. The prevention dimension focuses on groups and individuals receptive to recruitment to violent extremism, while the pre-emptive dimension aims to help individuals leave the violent extremist environment that advocates violence.[87]

In the national strategy, the connection of violent extremism to different forms of crime or CP is not explicitly defined. However, operational connections are mentioned. The strategy addresses cooperation between different actors at a local level, and this cooperation is based on existing models used in CP. Cooperation between schools, the social services, the police and free time—the SSPF model—is based on the Danish SSP model and has been adopted into the Swedish approach to national and local CP.[88] The support for local cooperation and the overlaps between local efforts in CP and PVE are also presented in the government communication.[89] Furthermore, in the communication, there is a clear overlap between PVE and preventing hate crime, as it is stated that same preventive measures can be applied to both phenomena.[90]

In the government communication, the role of prisons as possible risk environments for the recruitment of individuals to violent extremist and terrorist groups and the important position of the Swedish Prison and

The same information regarding 'local problem overviews' could guide local CP and local efforts to counter violent extremism

Probation Service in terms of PVE are recognized. However, in the national strategy, prisons are not distinctly mentioned and in the context of the Prison and Probation Service it is stated that 'the clients judged to fall within the category of violent extremism are sentenced to short penalties and are handled within the probation system'.[91] This reflects the generally softer definition of or perspective on violent extremism prevalent in Sweden, and refers to the connection between violent extremism and petty crimes presented in recent studies in other contexts as well.

According to the communication, the same information regarding 'local problem overviews' could guide local CP and local efforts to counter violent extremism.[92] This indicates that the drivers of different forms of crime and violent extremism may be considered as similar, but no further elaboration about the relationship is presented. In the communication, there is also reference to the possible collaboration between radicalized individuals and criminals. According to the communication, a radicalized person can, for instance, support people who commit crimes by providing funding.[93] This is an interesting notion, as previous research has illustrated that the

[86] Swedish National Coordinator to Safeguard Democracy against Violent Extremism (note 83).

[87] Swedish National Coordinator to Safeguard Democracy against Violent Extremism (note 83), pp. 15–16.

[88] Söderberg, C., [Crime prevention cooperation targeted at the individual level—About SSPF and the willingness to cooperate], FiF dissertation no. 116, *Linköping Studies in Social Work and Welfare* vol. 2 (2016) (LiU: Norrköping, 2016) (in Swedish).

[89] Swedish Government (note 81), p. 21.

[90] Swedish Government (note 81), p. 10.

[91] Swedish National Coordinator to Safeguard Democracy against Violent Extremism (note 83), p. 31.

[92] Swedish Government (note 81), p. 36.

[93] Swedish Government (note 81), p. 16.

relationship may actually be reversed and violent extremist groups may cooperate with organized crime groups to finance their operations.[94]

While the connections between violent extremism and crime are relatively vague in Swedish national PVE strategies, in the recent national CP programme, 'Together against crime' (Tillsammans mot brott–Ett nationellt brottsförebyggande program), the supplementing roles of CP and PVE strategies and action plans are clearly expressed. However, the mechanisms connecting different forms of crime and violent extremism are not comprehensively explained.[95] In the CP programme, on the one hand, violent extremist crimes are considered as one of the existing forms of crime, and on the other hand, the multidimensionality of violent extremism is recognized. It states that ideologically motivated crimes committed by individuals in violent extremist environments pose special challenges for CP. According to the programme, violent extremism often includes different types of crime and the development of 'ideological crime' is hard to follow due to the lack of statistics for these crimes.[96] Similar to the national strategy to counter violent extremism, the programme also underlines the importance of democratic values when it comes to CP.

In the Swedish national CP programme the overlaps between violent extremist groups and criminal groups are discussed, especially in terms of the support that should be directed to individuals willing to leave these groups. According to the programme, the needs of these groups are often similar.[97] It also states, however, that the work with violent extremist groups in Sweden is not developed enough and is mainly focused on right-wing extremist groups.[98]

IV. Comparative analysis of the Nordic countries

Although the Nordic countries cooperate closely in the fields of PVE and CP, there seem to be significant differences at the strategic level in terms of the approaches to violent extremism and different forms of crime presented in their national action plans and strategies (see figure 1). Conceptual differences further underline these disparities. Research on violent extremism and crime has suggested several mechanisms that connect these phenomena, but the Nordic countries assess these connections to greatly varying extents and focus on different aspects of them. There are, however, also similarities between the countries, relating mainly to prevention structures and activities at the operational level.

Violent extremism, or extremism, is defined in diverse ways in the Nordic PVE action plans, and the Nordic policy documents highlight different elements of extremism

Violent extremism, or extremism, is defined in diverse ways in the Nordic PVE action plans, and the Nordic policy documents highlight different elements of extremism. For instance, while the Danish action plan refers only to extremism and focuses on illegal acts as the manifestations of extremism,

[94] See e.g. Makarenko and Mesquita (note 9), pp. 259–74.

[95] Swedish Government, [Together against crime—A national crime prevention programme], Government Communication 2016/17:126, 16 Mar. 2017 (in Swedish).

[96] Swedish Government (note 95), p. 8.

[97] Swedish Government (note 95), p. 36.

[98] Swedish Government (note 95), p. 36.
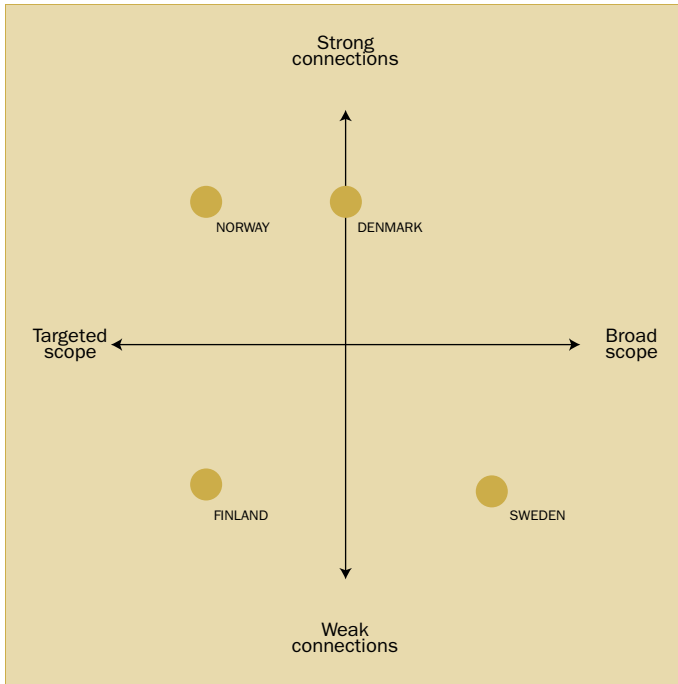
Figure 1. A categorization matrix depicting Nordic strategies for preventing violent extremism. Strategies are measured on the scope of their interventions (targeted or broad) and their expressed connections to crime prevention (strong or weak).

the Swedish definition of violent extremism emphasizes ideologies and the acceptation and legitimization of violence as the core of violent extremism. The divergence in the definitions affects the overall strategic approach to violent extremism and its prevention: PVE is integrated into CP frameworks in Denmark, reflecting the emphasis on illegal aspects of extremism, whereas PVE is a more distinct policy area in Sweden. There are also differences when it comes to the definitions of radicalization in the Nordic countries, but they all refer to radicalization as a process that is linked to extremism and accepting, legitimizing or using violence.

The PVE policy documents of all four countries address the connection between radicalization and hate crime. In the Danish action plan the pre-vention of hate crime is part of a broader range of PVE measures and in the Swedish Government communication it is stated that the same preventive measures can be applied to both phenomena. In the Norwegian action plan the connection is addressed more explicitly and, according to the action plan, violent extremism is the most extreme form of hate crime. Furthermore, many measures of the action plan aim at preventing hate expressions and rhetoric as a part of preventing violent extremism. In the Finnish action plan the connection is the most extensive and, according to the plan, hate crime can be categorized as extremist crime. The Finnish action plan underlines that victims of hate crime may be at risk of engaging in violent extremism, which may be con-sidered controversial when compared to the approaches in the other Nordic action plans.

When it comes to strategic overlaps between violent extremism and different forms of crime, which interact with the conceptual frameworks and operative prevention measures, there are rather extensive differences between the Nordic countries. In Norway, PVE is based on the same prin-ciples as general CP and, thus, the two fields of prevention correspond. This is clear in national PVE as well as CP policies. In Denmark, PVE is part of the existing CP models and, thus, also closely connects to CP. However, the CP programmes in Denmark do not include measures related to extremism, which implies that PVE is considered a part of CP but CP takes extremism into account to a lesser extent. In Finland and Sweden, the connections between violent extremism and crime are more ambiguous. There is no clear connection between violent extremism and general CP approaches in the Finnish PVE action plan or the Finnish national CP programme. Never-theless, there are some concrete operational overlaps. In the Swedish PVE documents the overlaps focus on operative connections, but in the CP pro-gramme the connections to PVE are more explicit.

Additionally, the PVE policy documents of all four countries, except the Swedish national strategy to counter violent extremism, underline prisons

as important environments for preventing radicalization and extremism.[99] This is in line with recent research highlighting the role of prisons in explaining the connection between violent extremism and criminality. The argument is that criminals may be subject to both influence and recruitment in prisons. However, the findings that highlight prisons as environments bringing together criminals and terrorists and creating opportunities for collaboration and skills transfers are not addressed. The broader Swedish PVE approach and exception regarding the roles of prisons may be explained by organizational differences: in Sweden the PVE strategy is formulated by Swedish National Coordinator for Protecting Democracy against Violent Extremism, while in the other Nordic countries the national action plans are published by ministries. Furthermore, while Sweden has a national strategy and a government communication, the other three countries have national action plans.

Generally, the overlaps in the action plans underline individual connections or 'common environments', putting less impact on pure group-level connections. One exception is in the Danish action plan, where the crossovers between criminal and extremist groups are mentioned, and another is in the Swedish national CP programme, where the overlaps between violent extremist groups and criminal groups are briefly discussed. However, the causes or the characteristics of group-level overlaps are not addressed and, for instance, the formation of alliances or the integration of tactics for mutual benefits between the groups (phenomena highlighted in the literature) is not examined.

Although financing and other common resources have been, according to previous research, identified as possible linkages between crime and violent extremism, they are not fully addressed in the Nordic national PVE and CP policy documents. Regarding violent extremism, the Swedish Government communication states that a radicalized person can, for instance, support people who commit crimes by providing funding. This is interesting considering that previous research has illustrated that the relationship may actually be reversed. Moreover, the Danish action plan for 'Preventing and Countering Extremism and Radicalisation' states that environments where radicalization thrives and people are recruited for terrorism are marked by different forms of criminal behaviour, including economic crimes. However, whether this connection is related to socio-economic factors, tactical connections or purely spatial aspects is not addressed.

The overlaps in the action plans underline individual connections or 'common environments', putting less impact on pure group-level connections

The strongest similarities between the Nordic countries are at the operational level. In fact, PVE and CP most evidently converge in the Nordic countries operationally. All four PVE action plans include connections between PVE and CP, as they emphasize inter-agency collaboration, especially at the local level. The Norwegian and Swedish cross-sectional or multiprofessional local cooperation model is based on the Danish CP partnership between schools, the social services and the police (SSP). The Finnish model is also similar to the Danish one.

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[99] In the Swedish National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service is mentioned, but only the role of the probation system—not the prison system—is addressed.

Comparing the effectiveness of individual countries' PVE and CP strategies is challenging. Among other things, there are different perceptions and categorizations of extremism and criminal offences, and the complexity of assessing whether a criminal event is a manifestation of extremism. However, if the general feeling of safety is compared between the Nordic countries, which can be considered a proxy indicator of the effectiveness of PVE and CP strategies, Norway scores the highest of all OECD countries according to the OECD Better Life Index, while Demark is ranked 6th and Finland 7th.[100] Sweden is ranked 12th, which is also higher than the OECD averaged.[101] In terms of terrorism statistics, the number of individuals in concluded court proceedings for terrorist offences was 8 for Denmark in 2016 according to Eurojust, and 4 for Sweden and Finland in the same year.[102] In 2015, the same numbers were 1 for Denmark, 2 for Sweden and 0 for Finland.[103] While terrorism may be related to extremism, the terrorism statistics do not fully reflect the occurrence of extremism. Thus, without more thorough analysis, comparing the concrete implications of the Nordic PVE and CP strategies is difficult. Nevertheless, an outline of the situation would be useful for further research on the prevention strategies.

V. Conclusions

This paper illustrates that there are differences in the approaches of the four Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, to the relationship between violent extremism and different forms of crime. This is manifested in the definitions of (violent) extremism as well as in the strategic interpretations. However, despite different definitions, frameworks and underlying assumptions, in all the four Nordic countries there are similar types of operative structures in the fields of CP and PVE as well as their hybrids. Moreover, the relationship between violent extremism and different forms of crime seems to be most strongly recognized at the operative level. The strength of the connection and overlap between PVE and CP varies in the countries due to strategic disparities, but the focus is on cross-sectional or multiprofessional local cooperation, which are used in both PVE and general CP. This is in line with the experience from sole criminal policies, with the Nordic cooperation on CP being especially fundamental in terms of operational-level, cross-Nordic influences, as activities developed in one Nordic country have served as models for others.[104]

The strategic, theory-related connections between violent extremism and different forms of crime presented in the Nordic policy documents are relatively weakly developed, and the underlying causes of the overlaps between the concrete prevention initiatives are not addressed. Of the Nordic policy documents analysed in this paper, the Danish 'Preventing and Countering Extremism and Radicalisation—National Action Plan' includes the most extensive analysis. The general lack of consideration of the features

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[100] OECD (note 6).

[101] OECD (note 6).

[102] Europol, EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) (Europol: The Hague, 2017), p. 51.

[103] Europol (note 102).

[104] Takala (note 39), pp. 131–47.

of the connections in the Nordic strategies may stem from the dynamic and intertwined relationship between the two phenomena: the relationship between violent extremism and different forms of crime may be difficult to outline and the two frameworks may be politically and strategically convenient to separate. However, the consistent operative convergence of the approaches on different forms of crime and violent extremism in the Nordic countries indicates that, in practice, the existing strategic separation may be unnecessary, or even counterproductive. Furthermore, while the operative synergies between CP and PVE may help to take advantage of existing resources, understanding and strategically addressing the varying dynamic aspects of different form of crime and extremism could, for instance, enable the tackling of new forms of threats, vulnerabilities or causes related to violent extremism and different forms of crime. This could also facilitate the creation of focused prevention measures and progress evaluation. Moreover, understanding the relationships between the phenomena could contribute to building holistic and broad approaches to terrorism, which are arguably needed in prevention policies.[105]

Despite different definitions, frameworks and underlying assumptions, in all the four Nordic countries there are similar types of operative structures in the fields of CP and PVE as well as their hybrids

In short, building consistency not only internationally but also nationally between the conceptual, strategic and operative levels of PVE and CP, as well as understanding the varying dynamic aspects of different forms of crime and extremism, is vital for developing effective prevention initiatives. The conceptual differences, subsequent variances in existing operative approaches and the general ambiguities in perceived connections between violent extremism and different forms of crime in the Nordic action plans presented in this paper further highlight that coherent transnational approaches in this field may be difficult even in contexts where there is a long history of collaboration and similar societal structures. Thus, in order to facilitate knowledge transfer, dialogue and engender cooperation, there needs to be conceptual as well as relational understanding when it comes to violent extremism and crime. Furthermore, the differences in cross-national and cross-actor approaches should be recognized.

This paper illustrates that previous research has primarily considered violent extremism and criminality as separate phenomena that overlap in certain spaces, individuals or for episodic benefit. However, some of the existing research as well as the analysis of the Nordic policy documents on PVE and CP demonstrate that the relationship between violent extremism and different forms of crime may be inextricable and more profoundly impacting than traditionally described. This indicates that instead of focusing on these individual phenomena and their sporadic connections, putting an emphasis on the dynamic relation between violent extremism and criminality could be useful for the policies as well as practices of PVE and CP.

[105] Bjørgo, T., 'Counter-terrorism as crime prevention: A holistic approach', *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2016), pp. 25–44.

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND CRIME IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES: SIMILARITIES, SYNERGIES AND AMBIGUITIES

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CONTENTS

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