

# Managing the tension between trust and security

A qualitative study of Norwegian social workers' experience with preventing radicalisation and violent extremism

by

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## Summary

In Norway, social workers play a formalised part in the national strategy to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. This part is played out by engaging with other services and organisations, such as the schools, health services, police and the police security service (PST), in a multi-agency cooperation. In addition, social workers engage directly with individuals who have been deemed at risk of further radicalisation and are tasked with providing prevention and follow-up services. Norwegian social workers' experiences from the work to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism (PVE) have not yet been specifically explored. Thus, this study asks the following main research question: How do Norwegian social workers experience and reflect upon their engagement in preventive work against radicalization and violent extremism?

To answer this, an explorative qualitative study was devised utilizing data from 17 in-depth interviews and two focus-group interviews, analysed through an eclectic theoretical framework to reveal new knowledge. Furthermore, the study seeks to contribute to a theoretical development of social work in a new knowledge and practice field, alongside police and PST. The study finds that Norwegian social workers performing PVE experience tension from conflict expectations. First, Norwegian social workers frame and approach the task of PVE as a social issue and lean on common social worker strategies, and trust-building, in particular. This is labelled internal expectations. Next, through cooperation with police and PST, they are expected to

participate in a more 'secretive' practices, where sensitive information flows more smoothly, without clients' necessarily being aware of this. Analysis of this cooperation indicates that several types of jurisdictional settlements between social workers and the police, and PST in particular, exists. Of these, subordination to PST raise the most apparent ethical dilemmas for social workers. This practice influence and expectations from policy documents are labelled as external expectations. The conflict occurring between these two expectations create tension in the form of emotional dissonance and person role/conflicts. To cope with these, social workers apply emotion management strategies (internal management) as well as social support from peers and support staff (external management). As an extension of social support, where social workers may become aware of how policy and other professional logics influence their practice field, this thesis suggests that social workers may communicate these challenges to managers and policymakers through an offensive policy directed practice. These findings contribute to the development of the role of the social worker itself, influenced by security logics and policy, and suggests how this can be dealt with through a clearer demarcation between what is and what is not included in the tasks and responsibilities of social workers in PVE.

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Summary.....	v
Part I - Foundation.....	xi
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 The Norwegian approach to preventing radicalization and violent extremism.....	2
1.2 Context: The multi-disciplinary landscape of radicalization and violent extremism.....	5
1.2.1 Social work in a multi-disciplinary field.....	5
1.2.2 Radicalization and violent extremism.....	8
1.2.3 Ideology and emotions.....	11
1.3 Scope.....	13
1.4 Summary of context.....	14
1.5 Main research question.....	17
1.6 Aim and contribution of the thesis.....	18
1.7 Structure of the thesis.....	19
2 Theory.....	21
2.1 Policy and professional practice.....	22
2.2 The professional role.....	27
2.2.1 Trust.....	30
2.2.2 Time, self-disclosure and perspective-taking.....	31
2.3 Emotional impact.....	33
2.3.1 Emotion management.....	36
2.4 Social and organizational support.....	38
2.5 Theoretical concept model of PVE in social work.....	41
3 Methodology.....	43
3.1 Research design.....	43
3.2 Generic qualitative research.....	45
3.3 Philosophy of science.....	46
3.4 Recruitment process.....	48
3.5 Sampling.....	49

3.6	Data collection .....	51
3.6.1	Pilot interviews.....	51
3.6.2	In-depth interviews.....	52
3.6.3	Focus-group interviews .....	53
3.7	Analysis .....	55
3.7.1	Thematic analysis.....	56
3.8	Researching ones' own profession.....	57
3.9	Validity and reliability .....	59
3.9.1	Quotations .....	60
3.9.2	Appropriate participants.....	60
3.9.3	Triangulation.....	61
3.9.4	Member checking.....	61
3.10	Research ethics.....	63
3.11	Limitations .....	64
4	Results.....	67
4.1	Article I:.....	67
4.2	Article II:.....	68
4.3	Article III: .....	69
4.4	Article IV: .....	71
5	Discussion .....	75
5.1	Discussion: Tensions between expectations .....	79
5.1.1	Expectations from policy.....	80
5.1.2	Expectations from professional logics.....	81
5.1.3	Professional and personal relational expectations .....	82
5.2	Discussion: Management .....	84
5.2.1	Emotion management.....	85
5.2.2	Social support.....	87
5.3	Pulling the strands together.....	88
5.3.1	Jurisdiction, policy influence and social support in social work PVE..	88
5.3.2	Trust in relationships when doing PVE.....	91
5.3.3	Emotion management in social work PVE.....	93
5.4	Implications: Development of the social worker role .....	95
5.5	Implications for clients.....	98
5.6	Contribution of this thesis .....	99
5.7	Concluding remarks .....	100

5.8	Future research.....	101
6	References .....	105
	Part II – Articles & Appendices.....	135
	Article I.....	136
	Article II.....	137
	Article III .....	138
	Article IV .....	139
	Appendices .....	140

## List of Figures

FIGURE 1	LEVELS IN PVE SOCIAL WORK.....	16
FIGURE 2	RESEARCH DIMENSIONS .....	42
FIGURE 3	DYNAMICS OF EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT OF TENSIONS IN PVE .....	77

## List of Tables

TABLE 1	MAIN FOCUS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHOD, DATA AND PROGRESS OF ARTICLES .....	44
TABLE 2	PARTICIPANT INFORMATION.....	50
TABLE 3	RESEARCHER POSITION.....	58



## **Part I - Foundation**



## **1 Introduction**

Growing up in the suburbs in the Eastern parts of Oslo in the 1980s and 1990s, at some point, we became accustomed to hearing about neo-nazis and occasionally witnessed them ourselves. Along with media reports of conflicts between anti-racists and neo-nazis, our awareness regarding this part of society increased with the dawn of the next millennium. Looking back, I had a difficult time relating to individuals in these groups ideologically, and they were people I assumed would be in contact with the police. As both far-right groups in the eastern and southern parts of Norway faded away from the public's eye slowly (Carlsson & Haaland, 2004; Svalastog, 2007), so did my own interest in and attention towards this topic. This quickly changed when a right-wing terrorist, Anders Behring Breivik, detonated a bomb in Oslo and massacred youth at Utøya island on 22 July 2011, killing 77 people (Leonard et al., 2014). I was working as a social outreach worker in the city centre of Oslo at that time and had passed the area where Breivik's car bomb detonated earlier that same day. When I witnessed how Oslo changed physically that evening and how the public generally responded with love, not hate, to the aftermath, my curiosity for this phenomenon was renewed. At that time, my interest was grounded in professional curiosity, and I was trying to grasp how something like this could happen. This interest was later fuelled by the revelations of Breivik's troublesome childhood (Melle, 2013; Olsen, 2016). In hindsight, could the actions of Anders Behring Breivik have been prevented if he and his

mother had received more and better tailored help during the early periods of Anders Behring Breivik's life? This question is obviously impossible to answer in retrospect. However, it fuses two different perspectives: the logic and aim associated with helping vulnerable individuals, and the perspective of protecting society and its citizens from the threat of terror attacks. This nexus was the starting point of this research project.

Radicalisation and violent extremism are, for most people, associated with terrorism, intelligence and security work and policing. However, this thesis investigates the experience of Norwegian social workers involved in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism (PVE). Continuing from this short introduction, I will briefly present the Norwegian multi-agency approach to PVE. This is followed by an introduction to social work within PVE, as well as the multi-disciplinarity of both practicing and researching violent extremism and a presentation of some tentative challenges faced by social workers. The chapter ends with the scope and contribution of the thesis and presents the research questions that will guide this project.

### ***1.1 The Norwegian approach to preventing radicalization and violent extremism***

Since Norway experienced the terror attacks in 2011, the question of how future attacks can be prevented has been raised and discussed on numerous occasions (Hultgreen & Karlsen, 2017; Sarwar & Jahren,

2014; Thomassen, 2020). In addition, approximately one hundred Norwegian nationals travelled to Syria and Iraq to participate in armed conflicts in the Middle East (Svendsen, 2019), engaging with groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Sandrup et al., 2018). In response, Norway, like several other European countries, established a broad approach to prevent the process towards developing extreme ideologies or violent extremism (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2014). The process of developing ideology associated with and getting involved in violent extremism is often labelled as radicalization (Neumann, 2013; Sedgwick, 2010) or radicalisation to violent extremism (Harris-Hogan & Barrelle, 2016). Notwithstanding the debate on the actual causality between developing radical ideas and actually carrying out acts of ideological motivated violence (Bjørgero & Horgan, 2009), radicalisation, as a term, is adopted in this thesis along with violent extremism. Violent extremism is understood as an acceptance of, or commitment to, acts of violence that aim to elevate or influence the status of one group or a cause, while excluding or reducing others, based on characteristics such as religion, ethnicity or cultural markers (Bak et al., 2019; Cragin, 2014). Although the process towards a potential point of carrying out an act of violent extremism is interesting, this thesis will explore the experience of one group of professional workers who aim to stagger such processes; social workers.

When the Norwegian Government launched its updated action plan and guidelines to prevent radicalization and violent extremism in 2014, the child protection services and the social welfare administration (NAV)

became an explicit part of the approach (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2014, 2015). Here, social workers are tasked with preventing further radicalization among individuals and providing follow-up and re-integration services. Later in 2020, the revised version of the national action plan further emphasized the role of NAV in this prevention work and presented a national support service for professionals at NAV involved in cases that concerned radicalisation (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2020). These policy documents have given the municipalities and the local police both tasks and responsibilities for issues related to security, often through multi-agency approaches like the model for Coordination of local drug and crime prevention measures (SLT-model) in Norway (Carlsson, 2017; Lid et al., 2016). In Norway, SLT is a local cooperation that includes teachers, social workers, health workers and police officers. This coordination aims to prevent drug abuse and crime in general since the late 1990s (Gundhus et al., 2008). However, in relation to radicalisation and violent extremism, the cooperation can now also include the police security service (PST) in some cases, and the Norwegian Correction Service (Orban, 2019), to perform re-integration after prison sentences.

Experiences of people performing multi-agency work in the UK have increased the concern for what some authors call a securitization of social work (McKendrick & Finch, 2017; Ragazzi, 2017), targeting young Muslims in particular (Coppock & McGovern, 2014; Harper, 2018; Stanley et al., 2017). In Norway, front-line workers have faced some uncertainty regarding this prevention work (Lid et al., 2016). In

addition, Norwegian educators have been found to resist the security aspect and its inherent distrust towards Muslims caused by the radicalization discourse (Sjøen, 2019). The potential of social workers to support individuals is often based on a trusting relationship that is allowed to develop over time (Askeland & Strauss, 2014, p. 245). Being one of the key actors in the welfare state (Jönsson, 2019), the issues of mistrust, role confusion and scepticism towards social workers from clients can undermine their position towards vulnerable individuals and groups in society. In this respect, “soft policing” represents some potentially troublesome aspects for the professional social work role.

## ***1.2 Context: The multi-disciplinary landscape of radicalization and violent extremism***

While the theoretical frameworks used in this thesis are presented later, some minor parts will be presented here to illustrate the multi-disciplinarity in all parts of the field. Resultingly, this chapter presents the context of this study—the multi-disciplinary landscape of preventing radicalisation and violent extremism on which the research is based and conducted. Hence, the chapter presents both the empirical context, some research and theoretical aspects.

### ***1.2.1 Social work in a multi-disciplinary field***

Both the research and practice field of radicalisation and violent extremism can be characterised as multi-disciplinary. The research field can be considered multi-disciplinary because no theoretical discipline or

approach has established a dominant position in understanding or identifying the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism. In contrast, several social science disciplines such as political science, criminology (Bötticher, 2017), psychology and sociology (Borum, 2011a, 2011b) have contributed to this field. The concepts of radicalization and violent extremism will be elaborated later. The practice field of preventing violent extremism comprises logics, strategies and actors from various fields such as intelligence, policing, social work and health care (Agastia et al., 2020; Ponsot et al., 2017). Taking place alongside, or at least connected to, the work of the police and PST, social workers are potentially influenced by other professionals' logics of how PVE is understood and should be consequently managed in casework. As social workers in Norway have over 25 years of experience with multi-agency cooperation, possibly influenced by security logics, their understanding of radicalization and how they aim at approaching it and play out their role through the preventive strategies is of interest.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, networks for crime and drug prevention at local governments that have already been established include prevention work against radicalization and violent extremism, which now also involve staff from PST occasionally (Carlsson, 2017). Similar set-ups can be found in Denmark, Sweden and Finland (Finch et al., 2019; Hemmingsen, 2015; Kotajoki, 2018) and, to some degree, in France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands (Madriaza et al., 2017). Social work aims to promote human and community well-being, enhance

quality of life, promote social and economic justice and eliminate poverty (Hepworth et al., 2017). Targeting these issues, social work practice is directed at individuals, groups and communities (Zastrow, 2017). Social work may include strategies for counselling and therapy (Drisko & Grady, 2019; Hall & White, 2005), community outreach (Cook et al., 2002) or policy aimed initiatives (Pawar, 2019). The preventive work of social workers is traditionally defined based on three categories derived from public health literature—universal, selective and indicated prevention (Gordon, 1983). Universal prevention is a broad and general strategy performed to prevent something from happening, essentially directed at everyone. In contrast, selective strategies are directed towards those sub-groups that may have been found to be more at risk of a problem (Gordon, 1983). However, this thesis addresses mainly indicated preventive work, in which a specific concern is already raised at the individual level, and prevention strategies seek to reduce risk factors (Bjørgero & Gjelsvik, 2015; Gordon, 1983). This choice of scope is based on the fact that the other two levels of prevention work, in particular universal prevention work, entail less specific radicalisation work because they indiscriminately target a broad population, and are not necessarily carried out through multi-agency cooperation.

Historically, the origin of social work is closely linked with charity and humanitarian work. This connection might explain the core values of professional social work today which include compassion and support of those in need (Dahle, 2010). Contrary to its origin in charity organizations and private initiatives, the overwhelming number of social

work services and providers in contemporary Norway is organized within the welfare state as a part of the Norwegian government. For social workers, this involves balancing between support and control (Levin, 2007; Wiklund, 2006). Regarding radicalisation and violent extremism, this balance may create tensions for social workers because they engage in face-to-face meetings with clients and discuss and share information in cooperative meetings, possibly with the police and PST. Because there are different legislations regarding confidentiality within the professions and services involved, especially for health and social workers (Gundhus et al., 2008), the multi-agency approach is not without obstacles. These obstacles include the possibility of blurred or unclear roles among social workers and security workers, who have been found to have different and, to some degree, contradicting, aims, strategies and grounds for attention (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020). Another aspect of this approach is the outward ‘image’ and the concern for being viewed as informants for the police or PST (Carlsson, 2017), possibly creating more distance from the target groups (Herz, 2016). Being able to manage such role conflicts is important because these conflicts are one of several causes of serious stress leading to work withdrawal for social workers (Lloyd et al., 2002; Travis et al., 2016).

### *1.2.2 Radicalization and violent extremism*

Since the terror attacks on the east coast of the US on 11 September, 2001, there has been a steady increase in research on terrorism (Sandler, 2014). Broadly speaking, this research field aims to understand the root

## *Introduction*

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causes of terrorism (Bjørge, 2005), the contexts in which terrorism occurs (LaFree et al., 2015), how different terrorists and ideologies select targets for their actions (Ahmed, 2018) and how terrorism can be countered or prevented (Koehler, 2019a; Malet, 2021). The current study is a part of the latter and is concerned with how one specific actor within the prevention apparatus experiences such work.

In the historic context, the term radicalization is new in the research field of terrorism and counter-terrorism and was adopted in the mid-2000s (Richards, 2015, p. 372). The term radical itself has no meaning without context or application (Sedgwick, 2010), and use of the term triggers the question ‘radical in relation to what?’ (Neumann, 2013, p. 876). To date, no consensus has been reached regarding the definition of the term radicalization, and it is still under debate. One problem with the term is that it is used in the context of security, integration and foreign policy, with various meanings and implications (Sedgwick, 2010). This diverse utilization of the term is relevant because different logics naturally facilitate different approaches to prevent radicalisation, as highlighted by Sivenbring & Malmros (2020), and possibly lead to confusion or uncertainty.

Neumann (2013) and Christmann (2012) presented and compared several models of radicalization and identified the common ground of many models: (1) a cognitive movement from moderate to extreme beliefs and values and (2) something that happens at one point in the process, making the followers more inclined to carry out violence or take

part in violent organizations (Christmann, 2012; Neumann, 2013). To date, no ‘profile’ of individuals at risk of developing an ideology that promotes violence to facilitate change or engaging in extremists groups has been identified (Sandrup et al., 2018). In contrast, various socioeconomic and personal factors have been identified as factors that must be focussed on, such as grievances and loss of significance (Jasko et al., 2017; Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020; Webber et al., 2018). Furthermore, both push and pull factors play a role in the potential movement from cognitive to violent behavioural radicalization. Radicalisation and terrorism are recognized as examples of wicked problems (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Haugstvedt, 2020; Fischbacher-Smith, 2016), in which both the origin to and solution of a problem is uncertain. While I recognise the discussion concerning wicked problems themselves (Noordegraaf et al., 2019; Termeer et al., 2019), the concept offers a useful understanding of the experience of practitioners and policy makers regarding prevention work against radicalisation and violent extremism—uncertainty and confusion.

The strategies of social workers and other professionals to prevent or counter radicalization and violent extremism are often referred to as PVE or CVE in scholarly literature (Fraser & Nünlist, 2015; Koehler, 2019a). These are, to some degree, used interchangeably and refer to the non-coercive strategies used to reduce involvement in terrorism (Harris-Hogan et al., 2016). As such, they represent the ‘soft’ approaches within the broad counter-terrorism spectrum by addressing factors that drive individuals to engage in political, ideological or religiously motivated

violence (Fraser & Nünlist, 2015; Hoeft, 2015). In this thesis, for the sake of consistency, PVE is used as a general term describing the preventive work performed by social workers against radicalization and violent extremism.

However, PVE and CVE can be distinguished by being inside (CVE) or outside (PVE) the security driven agenda which connects educators and health care and social workers with police and security workers (Sjøen, 2019; Stanley et al., 2017; Stephens et al., 2019). While the CVE and PVE distinction is possibly more identifiable in theory than in practice, I argue, nonetheless, that PVE possibly moves social workers closer to security perspectives and discourses than traditional social work.

### *1.2.3 Ideology and emotions*

A combination of concerns regarding an individual's need for support and the society's need for protection has the potential to create tension between control and support. This is a part of social work in general (Levin, 2007), but possibly even more in PVE than in traditional social work. Adding to this tension, media discourse on radicalisation during the last 50 years has shifted from political and socio economic differences as root causes to overwhelmingly focus on Islam (Silva, 2017), possibly creating more fear and suspicion towards Muslims (Haner et al., 2019; Qurashi, 2018). Regardless of this wrongfully skewed attention, the public and media shift towards Muslims might be associated with the uncertainty regarding the root cause of radicalization

and violent extremism—which are yet to be fully uncovered and understood (Bjørge & Silke, 2018; Vergani et al., 2018).

For social workers, the interplay between providing support for an individual and protecting society against the risks of potential violent extremists indicates a complex picture of tasks and responsibilities that appear to be colliding. This tension is a part of social work in general. However, the novel aspect of this task in the Norwegian context, and due to the closeness to police and security services, with its inherent role conflicts and ambiguities, may create challenges for social workers. Also, the uncertainties surrounding radicalisation itself, and what may come up during dialogue about ideology, can possibly affect practitioners emotionally and can lead to professional uncertainty. This is marginally observed in Norwegian research already (Lid et al., 2016) and more among UK prevention workers (Chisholm & Coulter, 2017; Dryden, 2017). As such, both the context in which this work is performed, alongside PST to some extent, and what actually might come up during client meetings has the potential to create tension and challenges for social workers.

Professionals manage their emotional responses inside and outside client meetings by themselves or through the support of colleagues or other support staff, such as supervisors or external consultants (Beddoe et al., 2014; Kim & Lee, 2009). Being able to manage emotions and remain compassionate and resilient in the face of the clients' ideology might be even more important for social workers that prevent violent extremism

than those performing other tasks because of the novelty and role ambiguity in PVE.

### **1.3 Scope**

This PhD research project aims at shedding light on one single piece in the radicalisation puzzle—the role and experience of social workers doing PVE. The experiences of social workers in Norway performing this prevention work have, before this project, not been specifically targeted in research. Hence, to describe and understand the experiences and reflections of social workers being involved in the efforts to prevent radicalization and violent extremism are of high value both for social workers as a profession and for society in general.

There are numerous actors and perspectives that are not explored in this research. In addition to social workers, teachers, health care workers, police officers and security workers are involved in multi-agency prevention work. The perspectives of these professionals are of interest but have, to some extent, already been explored in Norway (Gjelsvik & Bjørge, 2019; Sjøen & Mattsson, 2020). Furthermore, the perspectives of those deemed at risk of radicalisation might be of interest to possibly understand how prevention and intervention strategies are experienced by those at the receiving end. This has been marginally explored in contemporary research in the Nordic context, in Norway in a MA thesis by Kruse (2019) and in Sweden by Jämte & Ellefsen (2020). Further research on these individuals or groups might help policymakers and

practitioners organize and develop more fine-tuned and better tailored responses.

Several theoretical approaches were considered in this research. In particular, institutional logics was a logical possibility. Institutional logics constitute the socially constructed patterns of assumptions, values, beliefs and rules which provide meaning and identity and influence behaviour in a social reality (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, 2008). Institutional logics has been criticized, however, for being too simplistic and generalized, and that we lack knowledge of how actors interpret these (Johansen & Waldorff, 2017). Following this, rather than utilizing institutional logics as the theoretical framework, which has already been done (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020), this research steps into the practice field which includes two conflicting institutional logics and explores how this work is experienced inside and outside of client meetings. Theoretically, this research project has its point of departure in mainly sociological theories within social constructionism and focusses on how Norwegian social workers experience their roles, responsibilities and tasks within the multi-disciplinary working field of PVE. A narrow clinical approach focusing on the actual interaction and dialogue of client meetings was also considered but was rejected due to the lack of access to actual conversations.

#### **1.4 Summary of context**

As shown earlier, the terms, radicalization and violent extremism, are contested and can be used with different meanings (Neumann, 2013),

and there exists no clear-cut answer to what works in terms of prevention (Malet, 2021). This unclarity may explain why prevention workers and coordinators in both Norway and the UK have revealed that they are uncertain regarding how to handle cases of radicalisation (Chisholm & Coulter, 2017; Lid et al., 2016). This unclarity occurs within the context of multi-disciplinary work, where social workers engage with both clients, teachers, police officers and, to some extent, personnel from PST. These professionals have previously been found to have different aims, grounds for attention and strategies (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020) and legislations regarding confidentiality (Gundhus et al., 2008). As such, there exists a potential for tension in the forms of different professionals cooperating closely, where roles and responsibilities are unclear, when professionals must both support and, to some degree, participate in control measures of clients. This tension must be handled, as role conflicts such as these are found to lead to stress in social workers and contribute to work withdrawal and exit-seeking (Travis et al., 2016). Next, these aspect of social work in PVE are presented visually in Figure 1.

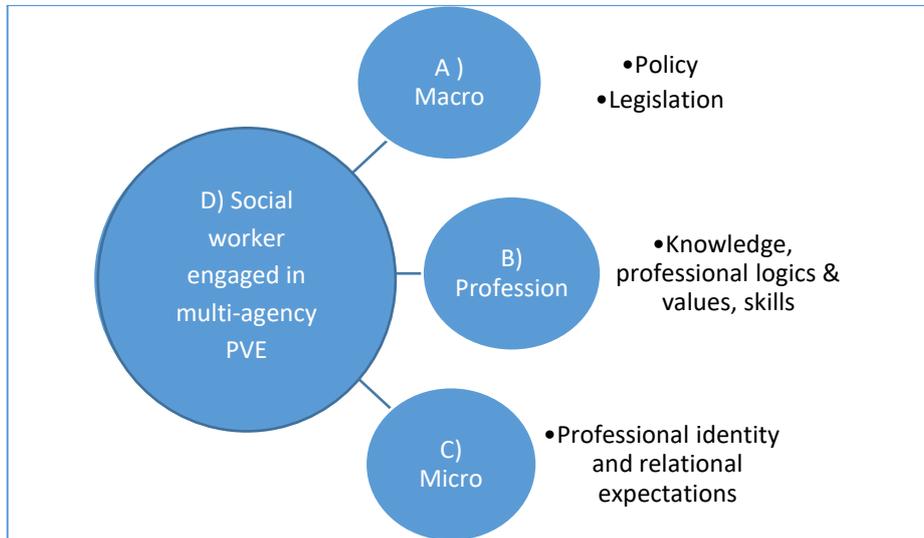


Figure 1 Levels in PVE social work

The levels (A, B, C + D) will be built on further through the research questions and theoretical frameworks presented in the next chapter. Research question 1 is related to level A, research question 2 is related to level B, and research question 3 to level C. Lastly, research question 4 is related to the personal level of the social worker, labelled level D in Figure 1. As a social worker, this level is related to levels A, B and C through how social support may respond to social workers' needs and capability to manage their own challenges, inside and outside of client encounters.

## **1.5 Main research question**

The main research question of this thesis is: How do Norwegian social workers experience and reflect upon their engagement in preventive work against radicalization and violent extremism?

Research question 1:

How do Norwegian social workers perceive and reflect upon their role and responsibilities in cooperation with police and security services to prevent violent extremism?

Research question 2:

How do social workers view and handle cases of radicalization?

Research question 3:

How do social workers experience and manage emotions and role expectations when working with PVE?

Research question 4:

How do social workers involved in preventing radicalization and violent extremism experience and perceive their own needs for organizational support?

The research purpose is thus to broadly explore the experience of social workers involved in PVE, and each article explores a different dimension of this experience. These dimensions will be elaborated in chapter 2, where both the theoretical frameworks and literature review is presented.

## **1.6 Aim and contribution of the thesis**

Because the experiences of Norwegian social workers doing PVE are yet to be explored, the research might provide valuable insights into how one of the key professions in the Norwegian effort to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism experience their part in this work. This contributes beyond a mere empirical description of social workers' experience. The research's eclectic theoretical approach contributes to a novel theoretical development and a way to explore how the social worker role itself might be developing.

The closeness to police and PST is of particular interest in this aspect because cooperation with these possibly influences how the work is understood, organized and carried out. How this closeness is experienced in the Norwegian context is yet to be explored from the perspectives of social workers, and this study will provide such knowledge. As a novel part of social work, insights and knowledge provided in this thesis might shed light on a topic that is not yet common knowledge to this profession and to others involved around the profession. Based on the above, this research aims to explore and analyse the experiences of Norwegian social workers performing selective and indicated prevention work against radicalization and violent extremism.

This contributes to establishing a clearer understanding of social work within complex working relationships with different professions, and possibly how tension within these may be managed, for the professionals, and the profession itself. As social work has been dealt a

hand to play in PVE, this research might also reveal how the social worker's role develops when stepping into this new field.

### **1.7 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis will next move on to presenting the theoretical framework, and following each section is a relevant review of literature. Further, in chapter 3, the methodology is presented, followed by results in chapter 4 where a summary of each article's findings is presented. Based on these, a conceptual model of social work PVE is presented in chapter 5, along with a discussion of theoretical developments, implications for the social work role and future research dimensions.



## **2 Theory**

The theoretical perspectives required to analyse the findings in this thesis were gathered from different scholars and utilized through an abductive approach. They are, to a large extent, related and share commonalities as theories emerged from social constructionism. Following each theoretical section is a relevant review of literature. The theoretical perspectives will contribute to understand the findings, but also to develop and expand the theories themselves.

This theoretical position was chosen as the phenomena of radicalisation and violent extremism are debated (Neumann, 2013; Sedgwick, 2010) and are the objects of construction (Lynch, 2013). This is related to reflection, which according to Fook (2015), is a way of identifying thoughts and assumptions underlying practice. In practice, this can be performed through various means, such as Fook & Gardner's (2007) model for critical reflection, or through in-depth interviews with a reflective researcher (Brounéus et al., 2010). Moreover, how radicalisation and violent extremism are understood subsequently contributes to how social workers and others aim to prevent them. As will be clarified later, the theoretical framework of this thesis is more of a theoretical model with several dimensions than a single theory.

Abductive analysis demands that the researcher is well-versed with specific areas of research and relevant theories and recognises the need for multiple angles of approach to find missing aspects in a research area or to stimulate new insights (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 173). The

various theoretical elements are eclectically used in conjunction with the scope of the different research questions in this thesis. As such, they are used separately and in combination and contribute to understanding and developing new knowledge on the research topic as well as theoretical development.

## **2.1 Policy and professional practice**

The first level (A) outlined in Figure 1 comprised the macrolevel. The relevance of the theoretical perspectives in this part is to describe the organisational boundary disputes faced by social workers in PVE.

As presented earlier, there is no clear formal demarcation between where the work of the municipalities' professionals (such as social workers) ends and where the work of police officers starts with regard to PVE. Obviously, investigating acts of crime and stopping acts of terror are outside the scope of the tasks of social workers. However, when engaging in various preventive efforts, the lines separating these professionals may become unclear. This unclarity may be additionally fuelled by the fact that there is no hard evidence of what works in terms of deradicalization and disengagement interventions (Malet, 2021; Pistone et al., 2019) and that different logics are found among 'soft' and 'hard' professionals (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020). As such, strategies of prevention work have been found to depend on the perspectives and theories of the involved professionals. Social workers and counsellors may therefore perceive a radicalization process as a social or psychological problem, whereas a police officer may view it as a matter

of crime and manage it accordingly (Madriaza et al., 2017; Ponsot et al., 2017).

This complexity of different professional logics and the blurred lines between care and control paves the way for developing a theoretical perspective on how such work is carried out and who might be in charge for providing guidance and advice to others. To gain control over one or more areas of professional tasks is what Abbott (1988) calls gaining jurisdiction. According to Abbott (1988), professions are developed when jurisdictions become vacant. Vacancy in this case may be due to a newly created jurisdiction or because what he calls a tenant has either left or lost its grip on them. In this process, the profession that claims jurisdiction may, at the same time, lose jurisdiction over a former area (Abbott, 1988, p. 12). This claim has, according to Abbott (1988, p. 34), three parts: classification (diagnosis), inference (the reasoning about the problem) and treatment (the action taken to solve the problem). Essentially, inference is the professional task that connects diagnosis and treatment by utilizing the knowledge from diagnosis to predict the outcome of various treatments to solve the problem. A typical example of these three elements is how a medical doctor performs various diagnostic tests (diagnosis), while having several explanatory theories in mind (inference), to develop a suitable solution for the patient (treatment).

The run for jurisdiction is, however, not necessarily straight forward. The results may very well be a case of disputed settlements and not full and

final jurisdiction. Settlements are, according to Abbott, likely to be arranged in the following manner: one profession is subordinate to the other. Alternatively, professions can split the jurisdiction into two interdependent parts, such as the division of labour between city engineers and architects in a construction process (Meilvang, 2019). A third option is that one profession assumes the position as advisory to another, holding intellectual superiority. Lastly, the professions may divide the work according to the nature of the clients (Abbott, 1988, p. 52). A good example of the latter is the differentiation in US psychotherapy, with psychiatrists treating the high end of the socioeconomic scale, psychologists the middle and social workers focussing on the remaining population (Abbott, 1988, p. 57). The above example is not directly transferrable to the Norwegian context, but serves as a good example of that particular settlement. This differentiation is, as the example tells, based on the demand and resources available, regulated implicitly by hidden mechanisms, such as pricing for the service.

Jurisdictional settlements, like those presented above, are particularly interesting in terms of PVE because neither social workers nor police officers possess the intellectual authority of classical dominant professions (Brante, 2013), such as medicine or law (Atkinson, 2013). As semi-professions (Lumsden, 2017; Weiss-Gal & Welbourne, 2008), it is not clear which profession is a subordinate to the other, or how jurisdictional unclarities are settled in-between them. In particular, when

social workers are expected to become subordinates to police and security workers, with all dilemmas that arise from such settlements—possibly crossing over to control and surveillance work and loosing track of professional ethics—it becomes troublesome to the professional social work role.

Additionally, pairing such professionals might create difficult working relationships and tensions based on contradictory logics and strategies (Stokken & Hunnes, 2019; Webb, 2015). The dual role of support and control is far from new in social work, where the demands of both the clients and political authorities must be balanced (Lauvås & Lauvås, 2004; Lipsky, 1980). Social work is, at least by some, still considered a semi-profession, although a review of international social work have revealed considerable variation in professionalisation (Weiss-Gal & Welbourne, 2008). However, semi-profession is not a concept all researchers of professions agree on. Some argue that the distinction between the classical and newer professions are less clear now, and that the earlier semi-professions have strengthened their educational level (Christoffersen, 2011). In regards to social work, others argue that social work has asserted itself as a global full profession, through initiatives to develop and strengthen its value, theory and knowledge base (Welbourne, 2009).

However, in this thesis, semi-profession is of use to describe professional groups having some of the conventional profession characteristics while, in a weaker form, for instance, having less autonomy compared to, for

instance, doctors. Social workers have various degrees of autonomy, often associated with how the organisations social workers are employed in are structured and managed. Traditionally, semi-professions lack the authority and autonomy to regulate and govern their own areas of practice (Fauske, 2008; Stichweh, 2008), and this might, to some degree, explain why social workers experience conflicting expectations, and role ambiguity (Yürür & Sarikaya, 2012).

Cooperating with other professions and services, such as in multi-agency working can be utilized to bridge silos and solve complex tasks (Atkinson et al., 2007), and research has uncovered factors that both hinder and facilitate collaboration. Among the hindering factors are territorial disputes, confidentiality issues and different working cultures and ideologies (Buchbinder & Eisikovits, 2008; Cooper et al., 2008; Greco et al., 2005; Sloper, 2004; Westwood, 2012). To bridge the gaps between ideology and practice, mutual training, discussions on strategies and informal networks have been suggested as affordable and valuable management strategies (Atkinson et al., 2007; Cooper et al., 2016; Noga et al., 2016). Furthermore, good cooperation requires planning and organizing so that resources are shared and practices agreed upon and understood by those involved (Atkinson et al., 2007; Shorrock et al., 2019).

The first dimension (level A in Figure 1) of this research is to explore how taking part in the multi-agency approach, alongside police security workers, is experienced and reflected upon by Norwegian social

workers, especially in relation to various settlements of jurisdiction and division of tasks and responsibilities. Abbott's theories contribute to conceptualizing how challenges in the multi-agency approach can lead to tensions and demanding negotiations between different and contradicting sets of logics. Abbott's theory of jurisdiction and settlements has been applied to the study of nurses prescribing medicines (Kroezen et al., 2012, 2013) and the cooperation between teachers and social workers in schools in terms of the well-being of pupils (Isaksson & Larsson, 2017). It has also been applied to research on the claim of new age religious groups of jurisdiction over mental health (Kent & Manca, 2014) and on psychiatry in general (Takabayashi, 2017). Based on the above, I argue that Abbott's theory is useful to explore and understand the division of labour within a complex system of professions, to use his own terminology. The theory is applied in the analysis, in particular, with regards to the first research question (see part 1.5) about social workers experiences and reflections on their cooperation in particular with the police. In the following, how social workers understand and act out their professional role is presented.

## **2.2 *The professional role***

In this section, I present relevant theoretical perspectives related to level B in Figure 1.

How professionals, such as social workers, handle their tasks relies on how they understand or interpret their jurisdiction and mandate. These logics are belief systems and practices in an organizational field (Scott,

2014). Social workers represent a ‘social care’ perspective, while police and security workers represent a ‘societal security’ perspective (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020). How this perspective transforms into professional practice is again related to interpretation and reasoning about the tasks at hand.

Goffman used the term framing to explain how we make sense of what we experience (Goffman, 1974). Framing can be seen in connection to Abbott’s term ‘inference’, which he referred to as the reasoning about a problem or task (Abbott, 1988). According to Goffman, framing is a cognitive, often unconscious, process of identifying what is happening in a specific situation. This process is based on primary social frameworks within a culture (Goffman, 1974) and influence how we act. Role and impression management (Goffman, 1956) is important here as it is relevant to theorize and explain how social workers may adapt their presented self in the ambiguous field of preventing radicalisation and violent extremism. Through “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,” Goffman uses the context of a theatre as a metaphor for human interactions. Goffman (1956) argues that, when a person interacts with another, he/she will attempt to control or guide the impression others have of him/her by adjusting his/her appearance or manner.

The act of impression management revolves around overcommunicating gestures and aspects of one’s performance that reinforce the desired self and, similarly, under-communicate the opposite (Lewin & Reeves, 2011). The actor’s main goal is to maintain a coherent role and adjust to

the setting. This may be played out either with sincerity or with cynicism, with the first referring to an act that the actor believes to be an expression of his/her own self and, thus, authentic and the latter referring to acting out for the means to an end (Goffman, 1956). These theoretical contributions by Goffman (Goffman, 1956, 1974) are relevant to this thesis because they may help us understand why Norwegian social workers' understand their tasks and responsibilities as they do as well as how they enact their roles while interacting with their clients.

Regarding professional role and interaction with clients, few studies have explored how social workers understand and target the issues of radicalization and violent extremism, and none have researched this in the Norwegian context. In addition, there is little evidence of how these prevention efforts are carried out in direct client work, and descriptions of practice are often vague and general, like 'counselling' or 'psychotherapy', or come under the banner of conflict prevention or resilience training (Madriaza et al., 2017).

Previous research has shown that involvement of social workers in preventing radicalization and violent extremism has created uncertainty among social workers in the UK (Chisholm & Coulter, 2017; Dryden, 2017). In addition, in a multi-country study involving several professions, prevention workers felt unequipped to prevent violent extremism and wanted more training, support and dissemination of practice (Ponsot et al., 2017). While not having been tested in controlled studies, several approaches from social work have been suggested to be

useful in PVE, such as family interventions, strength-based approaches (Stanley et al., 2018), Socratic questioning (Bertelsen, 2018) and motivational interviewing (Clark, 2019). These strategies depend on trust between the professional providing the services and the client receiving such services (Barth et al., 2013), and they lead us into research on trust—how it may be constructed and its relevance to this thesis.

### *2.2.1 Trust*

Trust is recognized as an essential part of social work (Behnia, 2008; Smith, 2001), and the key for practitioners to understand service users, and vice versa, engaged in a common pursuit (Butler & Drakeford, 2005, p. 650). Trust is also important between workers in an organization (MacDuffie, 2011) and between organizations (Liu, 2015, p. 41), such as the agencies that aim to cooperate in multi-disciplinary PVE work.

A previous study by trust researchers Weber and Carter's (1998) led to an understanding of trust as something constructed between two people, relying on the premise that the other will take one's perspective into account when making decisions (Weber & Carter, 2003, p. 19). As such, trust is a social phenomenon which exists between two individuals at least. Behnia (2008) found that research on trust in social worker–client relationships tends to either focus on the client's trusting attitude, the professional's trusting characteristics or the characteristics of the relationship that exists between the client and the professional. Based on this, Behnia (2008, p. 1438) argued that “a symbolic interactionist approach to trust development allows us to go beyond the initial trust and

to better explain the processes in which the client defines the professional as a competent and benevolent person with a positive attitude towards him/her". This resonates well with what Weber and Carter (2003) did, who also presented the actual key 'components' in establishing trust. They argue that building a relationship and creating trust are simultaneous processes and that the construction of trust allows for the establishment of interpersonal relationships between individuals (Weber & Carter, 2003, p. 27). This process goes on within a social and power structure, where certain roles have trust embedded within them, such as parents to a child or police officers in some communities (Mourtgos et al., 2019). Social workers represent gatekeepers in the welfare system and can function as discussion partners for clients regarding their ideology. This, however, demands a certain degree of trust to accomplish. As such, the steps involved in the construction of trust, according to Weber and Carter (2003), are presented.

### *2.2.2 Time, self-disclosure and perspective-taking*

According to Weber and Carter, the element of time has been discovered again and again as a key component in establishing trust. This finding is substantiated by the earlier studies by Schutz and Luckmann, who claim that the mere passage of time allows for the development of interpersonal relationships, and that this is an important factor to establish a relationships (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973). Building on this, spending time together creates opportunities for self-disclosure and perspective-taking, which builds trust in a relationship piece by piece. These two

elements are important to move from surface level relationships to interpersonal relationships, especially in a securitized field where roles might appear unclear for clients, and challenging for social workers.

Self-disclosure in a professional context is important and relevant for social work because roles and responsibilities may be unclear for clients. Clarifying these roles and responsibilities leads to predictability of behaviour, which may interplay with time and perspective-taking in constructing a trusting relationship. On the other side of disclosure is the response to disclosure. As self-disclosure of sensitive information may alter the perception others have of us, some level of risk is involved. To further build trust, the response to self-disclosure is crucial, according to Weber and Carter (2003, p. 40). Self-disclosure in professional practice is also a good example of the logic and framing of social workers, as social care givers, not controllers. However, regarding the multi-agency cooperation, these strategies may also serve as contributors to the tension that arise between conflicting logics and expectations.

Importantly, Weber and Carter (2003) draw a clear distinction between being non-judgmental and always agreeing with what is disclosed by the other. This relates to the third main component in the construction of trust: perspective-taking. According to Mead (1934), perspective-taking entails an imaginative placing of one-self in the other's shoes and viewing the world from the other person's perspective. In addition to viewing the world from another individual's perspective and the relational gain from doing so, perspective-taking is found to promote

forgiving and merely liking the other person (Noor & Halabi, 2018). Trust is relational because it occurs within the confines of a personal and, sometimes intimate, relationships. Getting to that point requires time in real life interactions with other individuals, through the following steps: self-disclosure, response to self-disclosure and perspective-taking over time (Weber & Carter, 2003, p. 47-48).

Creating trust is an important aspect of the PVE work between authorities and the target groups (Ponsot et al., 2017) and between the involved agencies (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020). In the UK, distrust towards authorities is observed in Muslim communities because of overt government tactics (Clutterbuck, 2015) and a disproportionate focus on Muslims (Kundnani, 2012). In addition, somewhat similar results have been found in Belgium, where social workers engaging in cooperation with the police have experienced lack of trust from their target groups (Brion & Guittet, 2018). Hence, a possible consequence of this multi-agency cooperation is therefore the risk of impaired trust between social workers and their clients (Chisholm & Coulter, 2017; Herz, 2016).

This dimension and the theories presented above relate to the second research question (please see 1.5), which is about how Norwegian social workers view and handle cases when doing PVE.

### **2.3 Emotional impact**

Social work, inside and outside PVE, may be both rewarding and professionally challenging in a positive way for practitioners. However,

as I have established, PVE is still a novel and developing social work field, with various tensions and conflicting logics at play, thus potentially creating an emotional impact. Social workers experience high emotional demands in their work (Indregard et al., 2017). Furthermore, social workers who face cases that are particularly sensitive have been found to be at risk of secondary trauma and burning out (Acker, 1999; Adams et al., 2006; Lloyd et al., 2002). Past research on the work to engage with clients in ideological extremist groups or to engage with those who harbour ideologies of hate (Lindsay & Danner, 2008) provides some indication that these topics might be challenging for professionals.

When attempting to understand social workers' emotional experience and emotions management when doing PVE work, I lean on Hochschild's concepts of feeling rules and emotion management. According to Hochschild (Hochschild, 2003), workers can experience emotional distress when the expectations towards themselves regarding displayed emotions collide with what they genuinely feel, creating a state of emotional dissonance (Abraham, 1998). This occurs within the context of social work and multi-agency PVE. Further, Abraham connects emotional dissonance with person/role conflict (PRC) by Katz & Kahn (1978). According to Katz & Kahn (1978, p. 194), an individual's "occupational self-identity" is based on his personal values and needs that the individual brings into the professional role. When facing tasks that may be contrasting to inherent personal and professional values, PRC might occur, consequently creating emotional dissonance and stress. Conflicts between personal and professional values are

identified among social workers and social work students (Hatiboğlu et al., 2019; Valutis & Rubin, 2016). These conflicts are usually triggered by uncomfortable feelings and fear in professional practice (Hatiboğlu et al., 2019). As social work organizations express values and ethical codes when performing social work (IASSW, 2018), acting contrary to these can create tension for social workers involved in multi-agency PVE. Earlier, PVE strategies in the UK have been found to create suspicion and distrust towards minority groups, and Muslims, in particular (Finch et al., 2019; McKendrick & Finch, 2016; Qurashi, 2018). This may lead to ‘soft policing’ of clients (McCarthy, 2014) and thereby a possible tension and ethical dilemmas for social workers.

Based on the concepts of emotional dissonance and PRC, one can see that meeting hate with curious exploration can contribute to negative emotional impact and potential difficulties in professional practice. Working with perpetrators of hate crime, which shares resemblance with extremist ideology (Koehler, 2019b), social workers were found to be more confrontational, possibly weakening the working relationship between social workers and clients (Lindsay & Danner, 2008). This is important as some of these clients may be early in their radicalization process and possibly open to dialogue and moderation, whereas others may have contributed to, and been sentenced to prison for, their actions with ISIS in the Middle East (Sandrup et al., 2018). Further, past research on practitioners performing challenging client work have found a link between PRC, emotional dissonance and sickness absence (Indregard et al., 2017). These reactions create a demand for strategies to manage such

emotions (Abraham, 1998). The association between PRC, emotional dissonance and professional practice substantiates the relevance of exploring how Norwegian social workers experience and manage these issues when doing PVE. Following that, the next section will look more closely on emotion management.

### *2.3.1 Emotion management*

The former section suggests that Norwegian social workers may experience emotional challenges when preventing violent extremism in a multi-agency context. This may be explained by demands from public policy weighted against expectations from professional codes of conduct (Bolton, 2005) and their own expectations regarding them being tolerant (Gunnarsdóttir, 2016).

Hochschild (2003) suggested that emotional dissonance can be handled by managing and display of emotions. In this case, this is caused by challenging client encounters with individuals expressing extremist ideologies, unclear roles and person/role conflicts. According to Hochschild (2003), emotional management broadly comprises two strategies: surface and deep acting. Surface acting is traditionally viewed as a strategy for suppressing or faking emotions; for example, pretending to be happy when one, in fact, is upset (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). In contrast, Hochschild suggests that deep acting is a result of genuinely working on feelings (Hochschild, 2003). Thus, deep acting is not pretending but involves genuine feelings and displays of emotions in a situation induced by personal experiences (Gunnarsdóttir, 2014) or

applying theoretical perspectives to the situation at hand (Gunnarsdóttir & Studsrød, 2019). Traditionally, surface acting is viewed as a reactive strategy, whereas deep acting is proactive (Bolton, 2005). This is, however, challenged in new scholarly work on emotion management, such as the study of Grandey & Melloy (2017), which suggests that surface and deep acting strategies can overlap.

As PVE work is largely performed through face-to-face interventions with youth and adults at risk of (further) radicalization, the ability of social workers to manage their own reactions is particularly important (Dwyer, 2007). Research on surface strategies to manage emotions, such as hiding or suppressing them, has been identified to increase the risk of negative consequences such as emotional exhaustion, low job-satisfaction, work withdrawal and a reduced professional authenticity (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey et al., 2012; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Ogunsola et al., 2020). Deep acting, in contrast, has been found to create a sense of personal accomplishment and efficacy (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 2003; Zapf & Holz, 2006). It is also suggested that deep acting may have a positive effect on working relationships because those doing it may be perceived as authentic and genuine (Grandey, 2000).

Social workers engaged in PVE, with possibly conflicting tasks and responsibilities, have not yet been researched in Norway, and the tension in this field may contribute to emotional stress. Because the various strategies of managing emotions may affect workers emotionally over

time, uncovering how this is done by social workers engaged in multi-agency PVE is of significant interest. Thus, the third dimension, dimension C, of this thesis is to explore how social workers emotionally experience their client work in this context and how they manage their reactions during client work. In particular, this dimension, and the theoretical account above, relates to the third research question, which is about emotional experiences and management in social workers' PVE.

Managing emotions under conflicting logics and novel circumstances is challenging. The above theoretical considerations and literature review on emotional impact and emotion management indicate that social workers doing PVE might experience this work as emotionally challenging and in need of strategies for emotion management. (Abraham, 1998; Hatiboğlu et al., 2019; Hochschild, 2003; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Lindsay & Danner, 2008). These theoretical perspectives, as well as the review of literature, is related to level C in Figure 1. This leads us to the fourth dimension of this thesis: the need for social and organizational support.

## **2.4 Social and organizational support**

The final theoretical perspective relates to organisational and emotional support. In contrast to those presented above, the perspectives in this part appear to be relevant to all the, and relate to the fourth research question.

Most people experience struggles in their lives and require social support to cope with physical or mental health issues (Ozbay et al., 2007).

Furthermore, it is widely recognized in scholarly literature that social support has a protective potential (Feeney & Collins, 2015; Nurullah, 2012; Reblin & Uchino, 2008) As such, social support offers important scope when considering the experience of social workers of working in a still developing field of social work in Norway. Specifically, the theory proposed by Cutrona and Russel (1990) offers a useful lens to look through. Cutrona and Russel based their theory upon earlier research on social support and identified a two-dimensional construct of instrumental and nurturant support mechanisms with sub-variations.

The first part of this is *instrumental support*, which, according to Cutrona and Russel (1990), is support that can directly solve the problem experienced. This may take the form of economic support, to ease financial trouble, such as what social services can provide. This category of support may also be advice on how to handle a situation or tangible support that indirectly relieves someone's stress (Cutrona, 2000; Cutrona & Russell, 1990, p. 322; Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). In contrast to instrumental support, *nurturant support* focusses on reducing negative emotions engendered by the stressing situation. However, nurturant support does not seek to solve the stress itself. Emotional support can include lending a sympathetic ear but also esteem support like kind words of someone's value, competency or our belief in them (Cutrona, 2000; Cutrona & Russell, 1990).

Closely related to the emotional experience of this work and how it is managed is the organizational aspect of the services provided by social

workers. High work load has been found to predict higher levels of burnout in child protection services (Baugerud et al., 2017), whereas emotional, social and supervisory support from managers, co-workers and supervisors have been found to increase job retention (Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Ducharme et al., 2007; Nissly et al., 2005) and reduce job related stress (Lloyd et al., 2002; Yürür & Sarikaya, 2012). In the practice field to prevent radicalization and violent extremism, unclear and complex roles are a concern for social work scholars (McKendrick & Finch, 2017; Stanley et al., 2017). To build resilient workers who can withstand high levels of stress and ambiguous roles, organizations are encouraged to build supportive environments, with support and supervision available (Ducharme et al., 2007; Kim & Lee, 2009; Kim & Stoner, 2008). In addition to affecting the well-being of workers, quality supervision can facilitate becoming aware of and critical reflection upon one's own practice (Heron, 2005; Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005) and possibly stimulate to influence policy (Powell et al., 2013).

Cutrona and Russel's work (1987; 1990) is later used in the social construction of loneliness (Stein & Tuval-Mashiach, 2015), matching social support with cancer patients (Merluzzi et al., 2016), when researching stress and support in marriages (Clavél et al., 2017) and in research on social support and wellbeing among police officers in the UK (Jackman et al., 2020). Following these, I argue that this theoretical perspective is also well suited for studying social workers' experience. Thus, it is the chosen conceptual approach in the fourth dimension of this thesis, on social workers' experience and need for social support.

As a still developing field within social work, in cooperation with police and PST and with a similarly developing knowledge base of what might work (Pistone et al., 2019), a specific look at what social workers experience and perceive as their own needs for support is relevant. This dimension has not been explored in the context of preventing radicalization and violent extremism, where roles and tasks might be of even more ambiguous nature than general.

### ***2.5 Theoretical concept model of PVE in social work***

Based on the theoretical frameworks and literature review presented throughout this chapter, Figure 2 is constructed. The outer dimension of the circle denotes the policies, jurisdiction and cooperation between social workers and the police. Within that, social workers carry out their role and tasks following a professional logic and knowledge base, given in the second part of the Figure. These roles and tasks are new, and potentially challenging, which may create emotional challenges for social workers related to discrepancies between experienced and displayed emotions, which need to be managed especially in client meetings. Lastly, the fourth dimension of the figure is that of organizational and social support from peers, managers and supervisors, to build resilient and reflective practitioners in a mixed and still developing practice field. As can be seen in Figure 2, where the dimensions are presented visually, the fourth dimension is located outside of the other three, with a possible influence on all three

dimensions. Following Figure 2, this thesis' methodology will be presented in chapter 3.

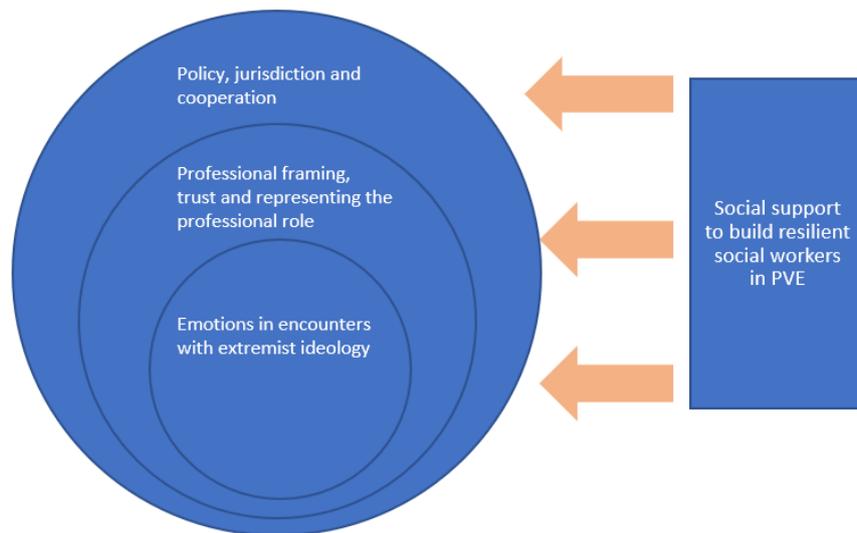


Figure 2 Research dimensions

### **3 Methodology**

The Norwegian PVE work has been on-going, to some degree, since the late 1990s in Norway (Bjørge & Carlsson, 1999; Carlsson & Haaland, 2004). While some social workers did participate in an earlier study (Lid et al., 2016), the involvement of social workers in multi-agency PVE, and social workers' experience from this, has yet to be specifically researched in Norway.

#### **3.1 Research design**

This study has a generic exploratory design, seeking to uncover, describe and understand several novel aspects of this prevention task for social workers. Exploratory research is typically performed to gain insights into scarcely researched topics or topics in new contexts (Blaikie, 2010) to establish a hypothesis or design future studies (Yin, 2016). The research seeks to uncover both how this work is understood and carried out and how it is experienced by the workers during client encounters, as well as their involvement in the multi-agency approach with police and PST. Table 1 shows the research questions, data material and progress of the articles.

*Methodology*

Table 1 Main focus, research questions, method, data and progress of articles

Article nr	Main focus	Research questions	Method and empirical data	Progress
1	Roles and reflections of social workers' position in multidisciplinary cooperation, with the police and the police security service.	How do Norwegian social workers perceive and reflect upon their roles and responsibilities in cooperation with police and security service to prevent violent extremism?	In-depth interviews and focus group interview.	Invited to resubmit with minor revisions to <i>Terrorism and Political Violence</i> .
2	How the risk of radicalization and violent extremism is understood by Norwegian social workers, and the strategies and approaches they employ in face-to-face prevention work.	How do social workers view and handle cases of radicalization?	In-depth interviews and focus group interview.	Published in <i>Journal for Deradicalization</i> (Haugstvedt, 2019)
3	How carrying out indicated prevention work, with clients that express values and attitudes of support for violence and violent organizations, impacts the worker's emotion and role, and how they deal with it during client encounters.	How do social workers experience and manage emotions and role expectations when working with PVE?	In-depth interviews and focus group interview.	Under review at <i>Qualitative Social Work</i>

## Methodology

4	What social workers need at the organizational level, of systems and structures of support by co-workers and managers	How do social workers involved in preventing radicalization and violent extremism experience and perceive their own needs for organizational support?	In-depth interviews and focus group interview.	Published in <i>Nordic Social Work Research</i> . (Haugstvedt, 2020b)
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### 3.2 Generic qualitative research

Generic qualitative research is a strategy that seeks to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process or the perspectives and worldviews of people involved in the phenomenon (Caelli et al., 2003). At first glance, this appears to be closely related to interpretive phenomenology (Tuffour, 2017), stemming from the works of Husserl and Heidegger (Tuohy et al., 2013). However, Sandelowski, a key writer within descriptive qualitative research, claimed that all qualitative research involves some degree of interpretation (Sandelowski, 2000). Generic approaches allow the researcher to draw on the strengths of other methodologies while building the research design but require the researcher to justify the choices made (Bellamy et al., 2016). However, generic research has been criticised for lacking rigour. As recommended from methodology literature to reassure the reader of the trustworthiness of the work (Kahlke, 2014), I have included some of the preconceptions I brought into the project later on. Often, according to Kelly (2010), generic research results in thematic findings, at the surface-level of

analysis. The level of analysis is however contingent on the utilization of theory and how the researcher interacts with preconceptions, data and theories. In this thesis, I utilized a theory-informed abductive analytical strategy by engaging with several related theories prior to data collection and while undertaking analysis. Abductive analysis will be further presented later, along with the researcher's preconceptions in accordance with the suggestions of Kahlke (2014).

### **3.3 *Philosophy of science***

This research rests within social constructionism, where meaning and sensemaking is a process that is influenced by societal factors such as expectations, norms and values. Social constructionist Gergen (1984) claimed that a great deal of human experience exists as it does from the influence of social and interpersonal factors. Although social constructionists recognize that humans are independent entities with their own bodies separating them physically from the collective, this does not mean that thoughts and emotions are located solely within individuals, unaffected by the social realm in which they exist. In contrast, because humans are part of a collective society, the values and experience of others influence their own values (Galbin, 2014). Similarly, in their classical piece, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Luckmann (1991) argued that individuals internalise expectations from society, and through externalisation, these expectations shape and form new behaviours and realities.

When writing this thesis, the work of the Canadian social constructionist Hacking (1999) stood out as relevant because it offered a useful distinction to the field PVE. Hacking argues that there are two distinct phenomena in society: the indifferent types and the interactive types (Hacking, 1999). The first are those who are not affected by being categorized or labelled. This usually refers to objects in nature, such as clouds in the sky or trees in a forest. Although we can label them differently, they will, as far as we know, not be affected by the terms that we use to describe or categorize them. The other type are the interactive kinds: individuals, groups of people or entities influenced by their categorization (Hacking, 1999). Hacking (1999) states that there exists an interaction between the classification itself and the entity being classified. This interaction might be how the individual or groups that are the object of the classification respond to the classification. This response might be in the form of thoughts, feelings or behaviours. In other words, the classifications have an effect on the kind being classified, such as a person deemed at risk of being radicalised, and on society interacting with those being classified.

This is a relevant example of how a social constructionist position is useful because radicalisation and PVE are terms and tasks that are both contested and interpreted differently by different professions, and an academic consensus regarding ‘what works’ has not been reached (Malet, 2021). Hence, both how radicalisation is understood and what kind of prevention strategies this leads to are subjects of construction,

and, according to the above, are possibly conflicting due to the respective framing or reasoning (Abbott, 1988; Goffman, 1974) by various actors.

While some social constructionists, like Gergen mentioned above, are discussed as radical by some (Hibberd, 2001), others recognize the value of ideas and knowledge brought forth as a result of social processes and interaction, in a more moderate social constructionist approach (van den Belt, 2003). Radical constructionists assume that there is no ‘real’ underlying order that may be discovered and interpreted, while more moderate approaches uphold that there is something real there, that the researcher makes sense of (van der Walt, 2020, p. 65). This thesis follows a moderate social constructionist tradition, acknowledging that there is a plausible connection between society and individuals. While these are independently material people with casual powers of their own, they are also shaped and influenced by discursive pressure (Elder-Vass, 2012, p. 20).

### **3.4 Recruitment process**

In the current study, I utilized a two-part sequential design (Morse, 2010), starting with 17 semi-structured in-depth interviews, and ending with two focus-group interviews. The point of departure in the process of recruitment was my own professional network. As a former social worker with 15 years of experience, this was both a logical and pragmatic choice for me to gain access to participants. However, the recruitment process did venture out through local managers and coordinators in numerous municipalities in mainly eastern and western parts of Norway.

The goal of this process was to gain access to those who could provide rich information regarding the research topic; thus, purposive sampling was the basis of this process (Yin, 2016). The first informants were recruited through organizations and other professionals who guided me onwards to the relevant practitioners. Furthermore, additional participants were recruited through the snowball method or chain referral (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

### **3.5 Sampling**

The work to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism is not structured and organised in a standardised manner in Norway. As such, there is no single entity or organization that I could reach out to for recruiting participants, as shown above. To achieve the required level of diversity and richness in participants' experiences, a generic purposive sampling process was established. This implied establishing criteria for cases (participants) a priori to address the research questions and identify and recruit participants (Bryman, 2012, p. 422). The sampling strategy was developed with the goal of recruiting participants employed with different types of services, with tasks and responsibilities in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism, and having professional experience from that particular field. Recruitment of participants was stopped when I had conducted 17 in-depth interviews and two focus-group interviews. The participants in the focus-groups interviews were recruited from the in-depth interviews, and both focus-group interviews had five participants each. As shown in Table 2, the participants were experienced

## Methodology

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with an average work history in social work of approximately 12 years as well as approximately three years of experience related to this particular topic.

Table 2 Participant information

<b>n = 17</b>	
Women	6
Men	11
Age (mean years)	39
Bachelor's degree	9
Master's degree	8
Experience in social work (mean/med years)	12,5 / 12
Experience with radicalization and violent extremism (mean/med years)	3,5 / 2,6
Social/welfare service (NAV)	4
Child protection service	4
Project positions (stand-alone or partially included in other services)	4
Outreach services	5
Average interview length (in minutes)	91

The sample was skewed towards male participants, who were nearly 65% of the sample, especially considering that male social workers only represent 17% of all Norwegian social workers (Statistics Norway, 2021).

### **3.6 Data collection**

For data collection, I engaged with participants through pilot interviews, in-depth interviews and focus-group interviews. These strategies will be presented in the following sections. In contrast to what was planned and proposed, the individual in-depth interviews became the first stage of this process, whilst focus group interviews became the second. This was a matter of pragmatic choices because in the early part of the recruitment process, participants showed signs of reluctance to commit to focus-group interviews. To not lose momentum with the first contacts established, individual in-depths interviews were conducted in the first stage of data collection. This led to both additional participants and a larger base from which I could later recruit participants for focus-groups interviews. Data collection, and therefore, recruitment, continued throughout 2018, until the data showed signs of saturation (Guest et al., 2006).

#### **3.6.1 Pilot interviews**

Based on the literature review, I had some preliminary thoughts on which topics might be relevant and the possible areas of tension for those working in this field. However, I lacked experience from doing the actual work. My thoughts were partially inspired by scholarly literature from the UK and how social workers and teachers have experienced being involved in the PREVENT strategy. To not completely ‘miss the target’ with my interview strategy, I decided to conduct three pilot interviews

with practitioners from this field. Two of these practitioners later became participants in the research itself.

I had two concerns that led me to do this: one was that I was afraid I would not grasp the relevant and interesting topics of tension in the work, and the second was that I would not manage to phrase the questions in a way that opened up and brought forth information from the participants. Pilot interviews have been found to modify and enhance qualitative research, especially with novel researchers, in terms of participant recruitment and interview strategies (Majid et al., 2017). Other researchers have also argued that pilot interviews are a worthwhile investment of time and resources to adjust interview strategies (Hassan et al., 2006). In short, the pilot interviews I performed were used to adjust some of the questions and led to inclusion of new aspects of this work. In particular, I included how the dynamics and authority struggle between security service staff and social workers were played out in multi-agency meetings. As such, the pilot interviews contributed to adjusting the data collection process towards more pressing matters in this fairly novel practice field within Norwegian social work.

### ***3.6.2 In-depth interviews***

The first stage of data collection in this research included semi structured in-depth interviews, which can elicit rich information regarding personal experiences and perspectives and allows for flexibility and responsiveness to the individual participants (Carter et al., 2014). This, however, largely depends on the skills of the qualitative researcher in

establishing a secure atmosphere for performing an actual interview and the ability to elicit information from the participants that truly represents their emotions, experiences and reflections on the subject (Guest et al., 2012; Råheim et al., 2016; Seidman, 2006, p. 39)

The process of interviewing participants started early in 2018 and lasted throughout October 2018. In parallel with interviews with participants, I transcribed the interviews that I had already performed. This revealed what I had interpreted as participants talking on auto-pilot, like they were “on stage”, and telling their stories as something disconnected from themselves. After a few interviews and through a discussion following a presentation I held at a seminar, I adjusted my interview strategy. First, I re-worked my strategy of the initial contact with the participants to establish a more secure atmosphere for having our conversations. Second, I added more probing follow-up questions to supplement the interview guide. This methodological experience and shift in strategy is more deeply presented and discussed in a published research paper (Haugstvedt, 2020a). Throughout the data collection process, seven individual follow-up interviews were performed over telephone. These interviews sought to clarify matters that were not completely covered in the initial interviews.

### *3.6.3 Focus-group interviews*

In contrast to individual in-depth interviews, in which the researcher engages with the research participant alone, in the focus-group interviews, the researcher engages with numerous participants

simultaneously (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The purpose of the group interviews was to establish dialogue and discussion among participants, to gain insights into why certain beliefs are held (Blaikie, 2010, p. 207). For numerous research participants, focus-group interviews are less threatening than individual interviews, and the group provides a helpful social environment for participants to share and discuss their perceptions and thoughts (Breen, 2006; Krueger & Casey, 2015). In addition, some participants may be more open to express themselves freely when being accompanied by peers, than when participating alone with a researcher (Yin, 2016).

One notable consideration while planning the focus-group interviews was the number of participants in each session. The literature provides varying recommendations; however, generally, studies state that focus-groups interviews should have between four and eight participants (Bloor et al., 2001; Malterud, 2012; Wibeck, 2010). Additionally, the group should not contain more individuals than what would allow all participants to participate and share insights, but should also be large enough to gain insights into several perspectives (Krueger & Casey, 2015). To factor in the possibility of some participants dropping out close to the actual focus-group interview, I aimed at obtaining consent from seven participants in each session. I finally recruited five participants for both groups, all from in-depth interviews. Following suggestions provided by literature on focus-group interviews (Breen, 2006; Krueger & Casey, 2015), I sent an introductory text to the social workers who had

agreed to participate in the focus-group interview, about one week prior to the interview. The letter contained time and date reminders, as well as the venue for the interview, and a few bullet points introducing the topics of the focus group interview. With this, I aimed at making the focus group interview more *focused* by having the participants reflect on beforehand.

To create a sense of safety for myself and the other group participants, I started the focus-group interviews with some informal talk, followed by a reminder of the confidentiality between participants, in addition to my own as a researcher. Giving the participants time to introduce themselves to each other has earlier been found to create a sense of security within patient focus groups (Tausch & Menold, 2016). Although none of the participants in this context were patients or clients, this factor might be transferrable to these participants mainly because the topic of preventing radicalisation and violent extremism is a sensitive one. The sensitive nature of this work, I argue, is related to the uncertainties and complexity of what might cause (Neumann, 2013; Vergani et al., 2018) and what might prevent (Malet, 2021) the issue of radicalisation and violent extremism.

### **3.7 Analysis**

In this research, I aimed at exploring social workers' experiences, with an 'open mind' as to what might surface, and undertook this with an abductive approach (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014), searching for the

most likely or best explanation (Walton, 2001). Abductive analysis should start with a broad and tedious reading of theory and research on the subject to make the researcher curious and open for ‘surprises’ in his material (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). These possible surprises, according to Tavory and Timmermans (2014), depend on a deep familiarity with theory and allow the researcher to draw plausible conclusions based on observations and theories but not positively verify them. Abductive data analysis was chosen because it allows a continuous dialectical examination of data and theory, to gain better insights regarding social workers’ experience, and is used in combination with a thematic analysis (Yin, 2016), following the six steps presented by Braun & Clark (2006).

### ***3.7.1 Thematic analysis***

Thematic analysis allows research flexibility, and is considered to be useful at summarizing key features of the data and providing a ‘thick description’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Below, the six steps proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) are presented.

The initial stage of analysis is transcribing and familiarizing oneself with the data, and in the second and third steps, initial codes are systematically generated and themes across codes are searched for. Although my supervisors were not directly involved in the coding process, initial themes were presented during 2018 when the data collection process reached its end. This can give the critical perspective of an outsider, which stimulated the analytical process further. Step four of the thematic

analysis involves checking themes in relation to the codes generated earlier and creating a thematic map. In this process, I went ‘back and forth’ between the themes and codes to refine and adjust the themes. The fifth and sixth steps involved naming the themes and producing the report. As a continuation of step four, the names of the themes were finalized. Later, as a part of the final work for this thesis, member checking was conducted to receive outside validation from study participants (Birt et al., 2016). This aspect of the analytical process will be further elaborated in the section ‘member checking’.

### **3.8 *Researching ones’ own profession***

Researching one’s own profession or professional practice is often labelled as practitioner research. However, this is not a research methodology itself. Rather, it encompasses different traditions and methodologies from other forms of research and is distinguished by being carried out by practitioners or former practitioners (Ellis & Loughland, 2016). The practitioner researcher, or insider, is often characterized as someone with intimate knowledge of the community and its members that are being researched (Drake & Heath, 2010). Practitioner researchers are often divided into two categories: ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ (Reed & Procter, 1995). Some scholars deem this binary distinction limiting (Brown, 1996; Drake & Heath, 2010) and argue that there are complexities to the types of practitioner research positions (Brown, 1996). Nuances between the different research roles were

presented by police researcher Brown (1996), and these can be found in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Researcher position

	<b>Insider</b>	<b>Outsider</b>
<b>Insider</b>	A sworn police officer conducting police research	A formally sworn police officer, now working as an academic
<b>Outsider</b>	A civilian employed by the police	A civilian not working for the police, such as an academic

Regardless of the different research contexts, social work and policing, the distinction provides an interesting nuance to the researcher's position. As a former social worker, I am somewhat of an insider. However, I have very limited experience with radicalization and violent extremism. Even so, I position myself in the position of an insider, possibly as an 'insider-outsider'. I argue that the 'insider-outsider' position provides both closeness and distance to the research topic, while still being able to ask the important 'stupid' questions, which are considered essential in research (Schwartz, 2008). In the initial interviews, I struggled with partly superficial answers from the first participants. Following advice from other researchers, I developed a more sensitive and trust-building approach for the participants, where they also were given more information about the research project. This revealed more personal experiences from the participants (Haugstvedt, 2020a).

A practitioner researcher, regardless of his field, has a preconception or hypothesis of what he or she might find during research. To distinguish knowledge or preconceptions from knowledge emerging from analysis during research, the former should be documented early in the research process (Malterud, 1993). This is also in line with the recommendations for doing abductive analysis (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). Looking back at the research proposal and my memoirs tells a story of a more clinical approach, with a narrow focus on specific communication strategies, less influenced by contextual factors such as national action plans, guidelines and cooperation with police. This gives insights into my preconceptions as lacking to incorporate the bigger picture, e.g. the context, of doing PVE in collaboration with police and PST in particular. The memoirs also show that I did not grasp the potential emotional challenge of engaging in empathic dialogue about ideology that supports use of violence, and the need for a safe and secure emotional environment to conduct the interview within. As such, some of the early findings surfaced as true ‘surprises’, developed through a broad review of literature, theory informed analysis, and through pilot-interviews with key informants in the initial stage of data collection.

### **3.9 *Validity and reliability***

During this research, several steps were taken to increase the reliability and validity of the findings. However, in qualitative research, reliability is often renamed trustworthiness or credibility (Elo et al., 2014). This refers to the various strategies used to instil trust in the data generated

from the research. Validity refers to how properly data has been collected and interpreted (Yin, 2016). In the following paragraphs, I will explain how I worked to increase credibility and validity through the use of quotations, appropriate participants, triangulation and member checking.

### *3.9.1 Quotations*

When writing the articles in this thesis, I followed the traditional method of using extensive quotations from the data material to provide direct insights into what the participants said during interviews. While this is not a validation of the analytical findings, they function, as argued by Eldh et al. (2020) among others, as an illustration of the findings. As such, the quotes are used as evidence but not the whole argument itself (Lingard, 2019).

### *3.9.2 Appropriate participants*

The participants of this study are, as shown in Table 2, experienced in social work in general (12 years mean experience), and with PVE in particular (3.5 years mean experience). Because data collection started early in 2018, it had only been three and four years since the Norwegian government launched its updated action plan and guidelines for preventing violent extremism in Norway (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2014, 2015). Hence, the participants in this research are likely to represent the more experienced social workers in PVE.

### **3.9.3 *Triangulation***

The term ‘triangulation’ is a key principle in navigation, in which more than one reference point is used to calculate the position of an object or to set a course. In qualitative research, triangulation is recommended to strengthen the validity of the study by using either several data sources, using several methods for data collection or applying several theoretical perspectives together (Carter et al., 2014; Yin, 2016). This research engaged with one data source, Norwegian social workers. However, it engaged with two methods for data collection, in-depth interviews and focus-group interviews, as well as several theories to analyse and interpret the data (Carter et al., 2014). I addressed the same questions and topics in both the in-depth interviews and focus-group interviews, derived from the four research questions. While some of the more personal and sensitive issues, such as experiencing emotional tension, surfaced later in the focus-group interviews, both methods produced similar and overlapping data. As this study engages with several different, yet connected, dimensions of social workers’ experience from PVE, several theoretical considerations were included as well. Theoretical triangulation, such as this, can provide a deeper understanding of the research topic, than one single theoretical framework (van Drie & Dekker, 2013).

### **3.9.4 *Member checking***

In qualitative research, in which the researcher often plans and executes interviews personally and analyses data, there is a risk of bias, reducing

the research's validity (Galdas, 2017). One method of addressing this risk is by seeking validation from participants, which is also called member checking (Birt et al., 2016; Bryman, 2012). This can be performed in several ways, such as by passing on the transcribed interviews to the participants or by seeking feedback and reflections on the presentation of the findings in a focus group (Koelsch, 2013). In line with recommendations, member checking in this research was sought through the following two ways.

First, I presented the synthesized data and the overall model at a two-hour practitioner network meeting in December 2020, where six social workers engaged in PVE were gathered. To ensure the right to confidentiality of participants, the number of participants who participated in this session who also were participants in my research will not be disclosed. Prior to this session, a three-page summary of the findings of the thesis and the conceptual model was sent to the session participants. In summary, the findings and knowledge brought forth from this thesis appear to be in line with the experiences of the practitioners in the meeting, particularly regarding the internal and external expectations. I received several comments regarding the work with PST in particular, especially displays of authority and attempts to influence social work practice with security logics. Second, individual follow-up conversations were conducted over the telephone with nine participants who responded positively to me. Like the group session, the summary of findings and overall conceptual model were sent prior to the conversation, and these were talked about and reflected upon. Overall,

the findings and conceptual model that will be presented in chapter 5 appeared to make sense to the social workers, who expressed that they could relate themselves to the findings. However, some aspects of their work and experience had also gone ‘under the radar’. These might serve as useful guidelines for future research endeavours. In particular, work alongside the police and especially PST has a dimension of ‘action’ to it, which some stated that they were drawn into. This ‘positive’ experience of being engaged in PVE for social workers is worth focussing on in later studies, and I will come back to this in the chapter on future research.

### **3.10 Research ethics**

I applied to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) on 18 January 2018, and it was approved on 1 February 2018 (project no. 58477). Information regarding the research project and consent forms were developed and stored in accordance with NSD’s recommendations and the University of Stavanger’s guidelines for privacy in research.

To assure participants’ discretion, all data were anonymized when transcribing the interviews. In addition, as will be presented regarding article I, the topics that were especially related to policy and cooperation with police and PST were subjected to an additional screening before being used as direct quotes. This was done to ensure that specific incidents in which research participants were sought to perform control and surveillance tasks that are outside social workers’ traditional tasks and raised questions about professional ethics were hidden. This information is deemed sensitive and should not be archived or made

available for secondary analysis (Iphofen, 2018, p. 127). Revealing these details, regardless of the interest it could have to the readers, could possibly have revealed the identities of the participants and compromised the relationships between them and their clients and their professional partnerships. Furthermore, this information could also have contributed to a negative influence on the relationship between PVE practitioners and their clients, as well as led to a breach of trust between myself as a researcher and these and possibly future participants.

This decision was based on an ethical reflection between the relevance of these cases and the participants' need for strict confidentiality. As explicitly stated by Morrison et al. (2021) when suggesting a framework for terrorism research, the research must provide a value that outweighs any potential risks or harm for either the participants or researchers. In this case, the protection of the confidentiality of participants outweighed the value of explicitly mentioning certain cases that the participants talked about. As such, notwithstanding the potential relevance or actuality of the cases, they will not be mentioned in detail.

### **3.11 Limitations**

Several steps have been taken to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of this study, yet there are limitations that should be highlighted, the first being that a single researcher conducted it. This implies that there is, regardless of the measures taken, the risk of a skewed or biased understanding prior to, during and after data collection and analysis, derived from the research lens (Yin, 2016, p. 40). However,

## *Methodology*

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as the preconceptions mentioned earlier indicated, a more clinical communication-based scope was found in the early memoires and drafts. Further, as a social worker myself, there is a possibility that something that could have been articulated explicitly was in fact not, due to my own position as somewhat of an insider. While I did not elaborate on my own background or experience when engaging with the participants, there is a risk of aspects from social work PVE that was left untouched because of a narrow research lens or me failing to grasp an important aspect of their work when planning the research (Schwartz, 2008; Yin, 2016).



## **4 Results**

### **4.1 Article I:**

The first article focusses on social workers' cooperation with police officers and security workers from PST and answers the following research question: How do Norwegian social workers perceive and reflect upon their roles and responsibilities in cooperation with police and security services to prevent violent extremism?

An analysis of participants' experiences, in light of Abbott's theory of jurisdiction (1988), indicates an organisation of responsibilities that varies in relation to client cases and participants' municipality. This is of particular interest when considering the other professionals who perform multi-agency PVE work, who do not have the characteristics of a dominant classical profession. In this article, we found practices that indicate several different settlements, such as shared, intellectual and subordinated jurisdiction. The latter settlement is apparently the least favourable, raising ethical challenges for social workers.

As such, no clear picture can be carved out of how the task and responsibilities of social workers, police officers and PST are settled. Rather, several jurisdictional settlements are observed. In some cases, Norwegian social workers work alongside police and security workers, whereas, in other cases, they appear to be subordinated staff from PST. This variation, and the unclarity of jurisdictional boundaries, raise professional and ethical dilemmas for social workers, especially related

to sharing of client information, and the blurring of roles between policing and support. This unclarity can be further traced back to the complexity and unclarity of radicalization and violent extremism itself, and thus, how these tasks should be handled (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Haugstvedt, 2020).

#### **4.2 Article II:**

The second article sought to answer the following research question; How do social workers view and handle cases of radicalization?

In this article, I found that Norwegian social workers frame and address cases of radicalization in a similar manner as other cases (i.e. as a social issue). When doing so, they rely on familiar strategies and approaches from social work to build trust first. They do this by investing time to get to know their clients, taking the clients' point of reference as a starting point, helping them with what they themselves experience as problems, such as housing and unemployment, and employing a curious and exploratory style of communication (Haugstvedt, 2019). This framing of the PVE task agrees with normal social work and might display Norwegian social workers as authentic and in line with role expectations of social workers as caring individuals dedicated to contributing to the betterment of their clients' issues (Graham & Shier, 2014a). In a field in which those deemed at risk of radicalisation may have low trust in public sector workers, such as teachers or social workers (Marsden, 2015), a sensitive and client-centred approach functions as a two-way strategy to establish and strengthen trust. This strategy incorporates the key

elements used to construct trust, as proposed by Weber & Carter (2003): time, self-disclosure and perspective-taking (Haugstvedt, 2019). In addition to spending a lot of time with clients, several hours at times, article I found that both Socratic questioning and motivational interviewing have also been reported to be useful by Norwegian social workers. These strategies resonate well with Dalgaard-Nielsen's (2013) recommendation about remaining close to the clients' doubt and applying subtle strategies of influence to reduce resistance. This strongly overshadows security driven strategies of identification and controlling of those found at risk of radicalisation and resonates clearly with the traditional social work of supporting and emancipating clients (IASSW, 2018).

### **4.3 Article III:**

The third article specifically focuses on the emotional aspects of engaging with clients at risk of further radicalisation and answers the following research question: How do social workers experience and manage emotions and role expectations when working with PVE? We draw upon the sociological traditions of emotions to explore both what might cause emotional reactions in these encounters, as well as how they perform various types of emotion management.

In this article, we found that Norwegian social workers become emotionally affected by engaging in empathic and explorative dialogue with clients who express right-wing extremist or Islamist extremist

## *Results*

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ideologies. Along with listening to expressions of hate, social workers in a field influenced by security perspectives encounter personal and professional challenges, leading to PRC and emotional dissonance. This is triggered by the role related rules and expectations towards themselves as social workers, in a field in which control measures and logics sometimes overshadow support logics. In this field, social workers engage deeply with attitudes and ideologies that collide with their own and of their profession, and this causes tension within the client meetings. We argue that the nature of what clients might express and the possibility of threats towards themselves or society in general contribute to the potential long and strong lasting exposure to PRC and emotional dissonance. Furthermore, Norwegian social workers manage their own emotional reactions by adapting both surface and deep acting strategies. We also found indications of these strategies used both proactively and reactively, in three different ways.

The study revealed different strategies for surface and deep acting. The first being a strategy of reactive surface acting, “keeping face”, which is a reactive surface acting strategy in which social workers merely attempt to work their way through challenging client encounters. This allows them to slow down, manage their emotional reactions and adjust both their emotional state and emotional displays. The second strategy is ‘character acting’ as a proactive surface acting strategy that refers to the mode that social workers are trained in and prepare to get into prior to client meetings. We found that this might make social workers more aware of their own emotional reactions, in addition to being prepared for

them, and thus, allow them to harness and adjust their body language accordingly. The third strategy we found appeared to be a dynamic approach managing emotions through both proactive and reactive deep acting. This strategy was a part of “adopting the client’s perspective” approach. According to our analysis, social workers try to explore and understand where the clients’ ideological standpoints might originate from and relate to them as humans and through theoretical understandings.

Working in a field possibly more influenced by security logics distinguishes PVE within social work from many others because social workers themselves may be looked upon as representatives from a controlling government and security workers in a wider sense. Working in a more securitised field than usual may influence the ability of social workers to stay close to professional boundaries, roles and strategies, particularly if they become emotionally affected.

#### **4.4 Article IV:**

The fourth article focusses on the organizational and peer dimension of PVE work. In this article, I seek to answer the following research question: How do social workers involved in preventing radicalization and violent extremism experience and perceive their own needs for organizational support?

Previous research has found indications of uncertainty among

## *Results*

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social workers carrying out PVE work. These findings are largely from the UK (Chisholm & Coulter, 2017; Dryden, 2017), although some indications of this have been found among Swedish (Mattsson, 2018) and Norwegian prevention workers and coordinators (Lid et al., 2016). However, the influence of organizational factors and support have not yet been studied in this context.

In this article, analysis revealed two main themes: a need for acknowledgement and for what I have labelled ‘professional strengthening’ (Haugstvedt, 2020b). Utilizing Cutrona & Russell's (1990) theory of social support, both nurturant and instrumental support needs were observed. The first theme, acknowledgment, is related to the fact that most of these social workers are single professionals in their service, and sometimes, in the municipality, which has a specific focus on and competency about radicalisation and violent extremism.

In a challenging and still developing practice field, where what works and for whom are still questions that remain unanswered, Norwegian social workers appear to seek supervision and knowledge to raise their competency and to improve their ability to critically reflect upon their own values and practices, to become aware of possibly oppressive practices and policies. Additionally, the study found that emotional and esteemed support from managers has the potential to provide time and space to the workers to relax and clear their minds after challenging client meetings. The findings fit well with Cutrona and Russell's

## *Results*

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theorisation of social support (Cutrona, 2000; Cutrona & Russel, 1987; Cutrona & Russell, 1990). Furthermore, the findings also show that the distinction between nurturant and instrumental support is nuanced and that the two are overlapping.



## **5 Discussion**

In the thesis, I have described novel dilemmas, unprecedented tensions and emotionally demanding challenges, which social workers face as PVE is introduced into their established professional practice. The eclectic approach to theoretical concepts combined with a rich data source provide an opportunity to achieve a new conceptual understanding of how this can create tension, and how the tension can be managed in everyday practice. This new conceptual understanding is developed throughout the thesis, from Figure 1 and Figure 2, and through empirical findings and analysis.

Figure 1 in chapter 1 described expectations from different organisational levels—the policy level (A), expectations from the professional level (B), and professional relational expectations at the micro level (C), as well as the personal level of the social worker (D). In Figure 2 (chapter 2), I characterized the four research dimensions which each of the articles covered. Integrating these dimensions, I next situate them into a common model in which I distinguish between the expectation side and the managing side, from the perspective of social workers.

Moreover, I differentiate between the external and internal aspects of both expectations and management. The four dimensions of this study construct a whole, in the sense that they address four different, yet intertwined and important, aspects of relational work during ambiguous

## *Discussion*

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and unpredictable circumstances. These dimensions are presented in the conceptual model in Figure 3, on the next page.

The aspect of expectation is observed at the top and management at the bottom of the model. The internal expectations are social workers' own professional logic and values, while the external expectations are those from policy documents and cooperating services, such as the police and PST, driven by security thinking and strategies. Because the two types of expectations are not always in accordance with each other, tensions rise. These tensions are indicated by the merging of the two orange arrows in Figure 3. Social workers manage the tension through internal strategies, by themselves in client encounters, and external strategies, in interaction with peers and support staff. The efforts of managing are displayed by the green arrows directed from the 'tension box'.

Following the model, the objective of the discussion is to further explore the complexity of the experiences of Norwegian social workers performing selective and indicated prevention work against radicalization and violent extremism.

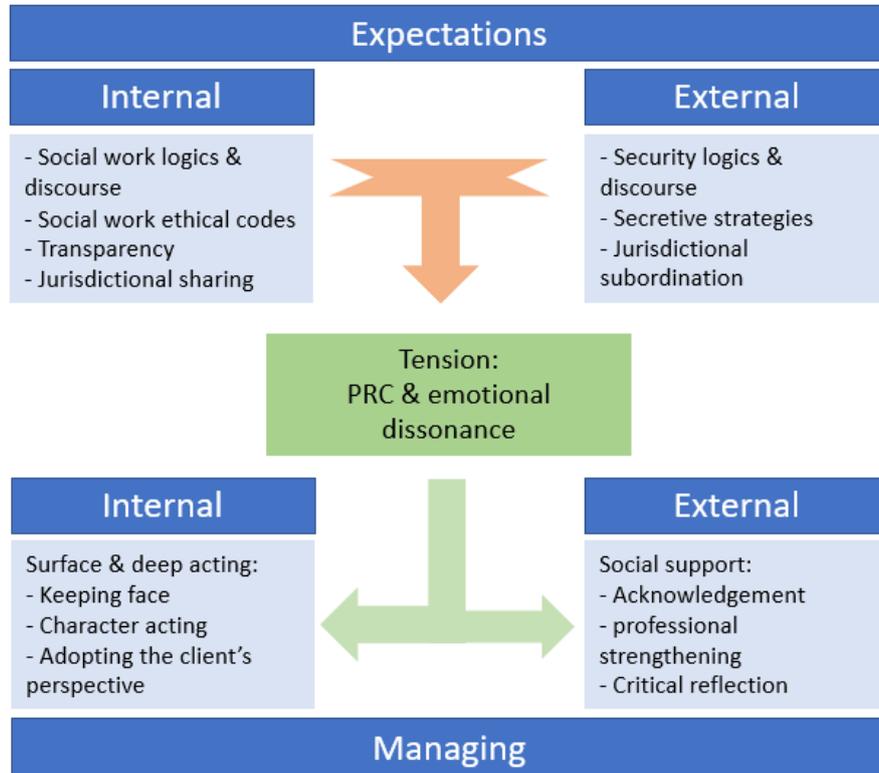


Figure 3 Dynamics of expectations and management of tensions in PVE

In this multi-agency cooperation, the jurisdiction of social workers and other professions is unclear, and several types of settlements have been identified: shared, subordinated and intellectual jurisdiction, among others. As such, the landscape of multi-agency prevention work in Norway appears to be unclear for professionals, and possibly for their target group and the public. The logics in this field vary, on a spectrum from social care and societal safety, where social workers and health

workers represent the extreme end-points in the social care direction and police and security workers represent the other extreme position (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020). The government's expectations that social workers are to be a part of a government strategy, made explicit through the national action plan and guidelines (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2014, 2015, 2020), add up to one of the constitutive elements in the expectation dimension. This expectation is 'located externally', originating from the PVE mandate and the cooperation with other services. According to my findings, the internal expectations within and among social workers in this field can be traced back to how they frame and address the concern for radicalisation and violent extremism. Article II of this thesis found that they frame and address this as a social issue and utilize traditional strategies in their preventive work (Haugstvedt, 2019). Meanwhile, social workers are engaged in multi-agency work, alongside the police, and in some cases, the police security service as well. This creates, as presented earlier, an emotional tension, which can be understood as 'the cost' of staying close to one's own professional ethics and expectations when experiencing conflicting expectations, or what has been conceptualised as PRC. To manage this tension and role conflicts, Norwegian social workers adapt different emotion management strategies within client meetings, which the model depicts as managing expectations internally. In addition, as found in article IV, they have experienced the need for and the value of managing this work externally, outside of client meetings, alongside peers and supervisors through social support and supervision

(Haugstvedt, 2020b). This is depicted as managing tension and conflicting expectations externally in Figure 3. As these aspects are only partly connected in the article discussions, the next sections will both discuss and elaborate more on the expectations creating tension and how the tension is managed.

### **5.1 Discussion: Tensions between expectations**

The objective of the following discussion is to further explore the complexity of these expectations in the experience of Norwegian social workers performing selective and indicated prevention work against radicalization and violent extremism. This is solved by addressing the levels introduced in Figure 1 in chapter 1: expectations from policy (1), expectations from professional logics and discourses (2) and professional relational expectations (3). Between these expectations, tensions build up, thus creating the need for release valves, in this case, through clarifications of roles and responsibilities, character acting, deep emotional work and organizational support. As an extra dimension that distinguishes PVE from many other fields of social work, time itself might be an extra dimension that negatively influences the experience of social workers. This is, in particular, related to the duration of client meetings and the concern for what might happen after meetings if dialogue gets intense during discussions regarding ideology or violence. This might contribute to heightening the level of tension and create a potential for prolonged exposure followed by a risk of health damaging stress.

### *5.1.1 Expectations from policy*

Having a part in the government's strategy, made explicit through the national action plan and guidelines, has added complex external expectations to social workers. Front line staff, such as social workers, are affected by policy and recommendations in the field in which they are engaged. While policy practice is carried out by many social workers (Miller et al., 2017; Powell et al., 2013), lack of proper attention to policy in social work education (Pawar, 2019) and practice (Weiss-Gal & Levin, 2010) may leave professionals inattentive and unprepared for these debates outside the practice field.

From the first to the later versions of the Norwegian action plan, the tasks of social workers developed, as shown in article I, from supporting individuals through normal practice to be more closely linked to a securitized social work practice, as has been identified in the UK (McKendrick & Finch, 2017; Ragazzi, 2017). This formalised part of the national PVE effort leads to a degree of expectation toward social workers to cooperate in strategies to prevent, identify and intervene when concern is raised for radicalisation and violent extremism. Balancing support and control is a well-known ground for social workers (Levin, 2007); however, the dimension of assessing risk for terror or acts of violence adds an additional weight to one side of the scale. This adds to the tension by 'stretching' social workers between on the one side internal (such as ethical codes of conduct and social work framing) and, on the other hand, the external expectations, more aligned with control

than with support. This leads to the second expectation of professional logics.

### *5.1.2 Expectations from professional logics*

In addition to expectations from policy, other professional logics than those of social workers themselves appear to influence them in PVE. In multi-agency cooperation, the jurisdiction between social work and other professions is unclear, and several types of settlements have been identified: shared, subordinated and intellectual jurisdiction among others. As such, the landscape of multi-agency prevention work in Norway is unclear for the professionals, their target groups and the public. Also, the professional logics in this field vary, from ‘social care’ to ‘societal safety’, where social workers and health workers represent the extreme end-points of the social care direction and police and security workers represent the other extreme position (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020). These governing logics have implications for how practitioners understand and perform their tasks and responsibilities.

According to the findings in article II, Norwegian social workers understand and treat the task of preventing radicalization and violent extremism as a social issue.

This framing of PVE implies an approach which resembles ‘business as usual’, in which social workers first, to the extent possible, clarify their roles and responsibilities, establish trust and start working on reducing social risk factors based on the clients’ own understanding of their

problem(s). However, following through this framing comes with a cost; Sticking to a regular trust-based approach may, as articles I and III have shown, create tension both in client meetings and in cooperation with other services, and in interaction with PST, in particular. In regard to cooperating with PST, social workers are, to some extent, expected to or influenced by developing their practice into a more secretive one. This indicates less transparency and a smoother flow of information to police and PST. According to my findings, most social workers claim to resist these attempts of influence, some did not, and others experienced some uncertainty. As such, external expectations appear to have an impact on how social workers understand and handle their professional tasks.

In a field in which the demarcation lines are more clearly drawn between the tasks and responsibilities of different professionals, keeping close to one's own professional logic might be easier because there are historical structures of practice to lean on. However, this is not the case in PVE work in Norway. Tension might therefore be the 'price' some of these social workers pay, when remaining close to a traditional professional standpoint, of care and not control. Committing to a supportive professional approach leads to relational expectations to and from social workers on how to exercise social work practice in client meetings in particular.

### *5.1.3 Professional and personal relational expectations*

Social work is a normative profession, in which values on how to act in a professional manner are obtained through a socialization process

during and after education for social work (Otters, 2013). These normative standards are passed down from colleagues and educators and emphasize that social workers should be supportive, emancipating and facilitators of positive change (Dahle, 2010; Hepworth et al., 2017; IFSW, 2014). Furthermore, to be able to be supportive even when clients face extreme emotional problems and trauma, social workers are expected to keep their own emotional response at bay, follow feeling rules set by management and ethical standards (Dwyer, 2007; Turtiainen et al., 2020; Warming, 2019) and remain resilient in stressful situations (Grant et al., 2015). These feeling rules exist independent of the clients' violent behaviour, who at times, actually inflict harm and stress upon social workers (Itzick et al., 2018).

The findings of this thesis, analysed through the concepts of emotional dissonance and person/role conflict, have shown how PVE work creates tension between internalised role understandings and own personal values and expectations during client meetings in particular. However, performing indicated PVE work, where dialogue about hate and ideological based violence sometimes is at the centre of attention, has the potential to 'rock the boat of social workers' even more, as shown in article III. Topics such as these, of political or ideological violence, diverge from the topics that most social workers engage with because social workers in PVE are mostly the only ones in their organizations that have these tasks and responsibilities.

However, social workers are not just professionals but are professionals who actively tap into their own self when at work (Kaushik, 2017) and align their personal and professional identities (Graham & Shier, 2014b). This involves enacting their professional role in accordance with a set of expectations that they have towards themselves. Earlier research on social workers has shown that practitioners are invested in maintaining an empathic communication and upholding human rights and social justice (Moorhead, 2017). As such, the experience of person/role conflicts and emotional dissonance can be further understood when considering personal expectations. Further, social workers have all been subjected to education with a normative content, aiming at developing personal ethics and professional identity (Graham & Shier, 2014a; Webb, 2017). This additional aspect of identity in social work may act as an amplifier on internal expectations to remain empathic and open, even when workers face stories of hate and are exposed to ideologies that promote injustice. As presented in the conceptual model in Figure 3, tension between personal and conflicting professional expectations, in a muddy practice field, lays the demand for strategies to manage the emotional impact of these tensions. Hence, internal and external management strategies are the topic of the next section of this thesis.

## **5.2 Discussion: Management**

The combination of such partially conflicting expectations and roles contributes to emotional dissonance and person/role conflicts for social workers engaged in PVE. The findings of this study indicate that

practitioners in this novel field of social work experience the need for, and utilize, strategies of management, both in direct interaction with their clients and outside client meetings. The strategies applied in direct interaction are internally focused on emotion management, while the strategies outside client meetings revolve around voicing the need for and utilizing systems for social and organizational support and supervision.

### *5.2.1 Emotion management*

As shown in article III and depicted in the conceptual model in Figure 3, social workers experience a tension between personal, professional and external expectations when performing PVE work. They handle this by managing their emotions and emotional displays, through faking, hiding and suppressing emotions, going into character and trying to think from the clients' perspectives. The surface acting parts of this can be related to the expectations from social workers of working for social justice and displaying and communicating empathy (Gerdes & Segal, 2009; IFSW, 2014). Viewing the surface acting strategies as an expression of professional norms contributes to clarifying how expectations and management are integrated parts of the tension made explicit in Figure 3. As a normative profession, social workers are expected to be empathic, openminded and present for the client (Dahle, 2010; Hepworth et al., 2017; IFSW, 2014). As mentioned before, this implies an expectation to cope with various expressions and opinions. Goffman (1956) wrote that when interacting with others, humans tend to guide the impression of

themselves by adjusting their appearances, in this case, based on what is personally and professionally expected. As presented in articles II and III, a client centred trust-based approach results in experiencing emotional turmoil ‘under the surface’. This was caused by staying close to conflicting professional role expectations and experiencing additional dissonance when conducting surface acting strategies to manage emotional displays.

This suggests that keeping up with the expected appearance and staying close to an empathic ‘business as usual’ strategy when performing PVE, can, in fact, further increase the tension from conflicting expectations in PVE work. This is in line with research on authenticity in health care, where mistreatment from patients resulted in more emotion management, contributing to job-related burnout (Grandey et al., 2012).

Although the deep acting strategies may also be in line with expectations from and towards social workers who are expected to be empathic and curious, taking the clients’ perspective appears to have a moderating effect on emotional tension because the social workers connect more deeply with their clients, regardless of conflicting political, ideological or religious opinions and perspectives.

This can be explained by perspective-taking functions as a part of establishing trust (Weber & Carter, 2003), thus increasing the liking of other people. This even occurs between militant outgroup members and those harmed by violence of such groups (Noor & Halabi, 2018). The findings on deep acting, in particular, are also in line with earlier research

on emotion management, where deep acting strategies are found to be less associated with stress (Grandey, 2003), especially when tasks are perceived as challenging (Huang et al., 2015). Furthermore, although perspective-taking was found to be both a strategy to connect with clients' emotions as well as a way to manage one's own emotions, doing so in a novel practice field with security discourses influencing the results demands external management strategies outside of client meetings as well. Next, I consider the external dimension of management and focus on systems for social and organizational support from peers and support staff.

### *5.2.2 Social support*

Social support from peers, supervisors and other support staff such as psychologists is found to be important outside client and collaboration meetings, as shown in article IV. As indicated in Figure 3, this external dimension of managing person/role conflicts and emotional tension can be understood as a practice arena to raise awareness of the implications of policies for social work and PVE and an arena to prepare for actions directed towards the policy levels through governmental or organisational channels. The possibility of policy practice is further elaborated on in the next section focusing on the developments of jurisdiction and influence on policy.

### **5.3 *Pulling the strands together***

This chapter aims for theoretical development and further discussion of how the dimensions of PVE presented in this thesis sum up to a combined development of new knowledge.

#### **5.3.1 *Jurisdiction, policy influence and social support in social work PVE***

Abbott's theory on jurisdiction and settlements carves out several types of jurisdictional settlements. He stated that the battle for jurisdiction is often first fought in public, while the road to legal jurisdiction may take very long time (Abbott, 1988). The findings of articles I and IV are related as article I discuss how unclear polices appear to be negotiated into jurisdictional settlements, and in article IV, that these polices and settlements create demand for social support. To further understand the implications of the results from article I and IV, it is useful to discuss how the perspectives of Abbott and Cutrona and Russel are inter-related when applied as a lens onto PVE social work.

As shown in article I, the jurisdiction over PVE work in Norway is far from clear, and various settlements have been observed. However, this thesis also focusses on how social workers utilize their network of peers and support staff, such as supervisors or other professionals, to bolster them in their challenging work in and outside client meetings. As such, supervision and other forms of social support services may have the potential to both facilitate empathic and professionally grounded social workers in a new and developing field and also strengthen them in terms

### *Discussion*

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of being aware of the changing policies and possibly oppressive practices, as discussed in article IV. These supportive factors may help the same practitioners notice new tasks and responsibilities that are given to, or forced upon, them and possibly stimulate social workers to more critically become involved in strategies that influence policy and jurisdiction. Social workers may channel their experiences from practice towards policy makers in a bottom-up approach (Evans, 2011; Lipsky, 1980). Thus, social support may provide stimulus to raise awareness regarding changes in policies and responsibilities and possibly stimulate influence of the latter through professional and political connections. This indicates that the social support concept may have a wider, and offensive, reach than just professional well-being and professional practice. Rather, it suggests that it may reach into the realm of policy if organizations and work environments are supportive. However, this policy engagement depends on how accessible political institutions are and how the organizational culture of their own work place facilitates or denotes this engagement (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013).

Social workers previously have been found to have a position as street-level bureaucrats that may raise awareness of areas of practice in which policies are unclear or non-existent (Powell et al., 2013). The findings related to the wider reach of social support may strengthen that ability and thereby allow interactions with questions of jurisdictional settlements. This discussion is also inspired by Hochschild's theories on emotion management (2003), in which both reactive and proactive strategies are employed (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). However, both

## *Discussion*

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reactive and proactive emotion management are ‘defensive’ in nature, meaning that they do not actively seek to influence the circumstances and contexts in which they are carried out.

Similarly, social support appears, according to the findings of this thesis, to have the capability to work on several levels. Acknowledgement and other forms of emotional support can be understood as the equivalent to reactive emotion work, working there and then as a means to calm an emotional reaction after client work. Furthermore, if social workers can become aware of emerging practices that violate the underpinnings of social work ethics and logics, policy directed initiatives aiming to change policies and jurisdictions can be facilitated. This can be understood as the social support equivalent of proactive emotional work—played offensively. In game theory, an offensive strategy actively seeks to score a goal, while a defensive strategy seeks to avoid conceded goals (Gambarelli et al., 2019). Adapted to the scope of this research, the offensive strategy, as argued for above, is a policy directed practice that seeks to influence the context around practice.

Based on the above discussion, I argue that jurisdiction, policy and social support are tightly connected, and there is room for an offensively played policy practice that may influence social workers’ jurisdiction in the field of PVE and other developing areas of social work. Further, this theorization of social workers’ jurisdiction and possibly how the jurisdictional game can be played is of relevance to both the practitioner and academic community as it affects the role social workers have in a

community and how they can influence relevant policy. Building on the latter, future studies should engage with both social workers and practitioners in the security domain, as well as policy makers, to shed light on possibly other relevant perspectives.

### ***5.3.2 Trust in relationships when doing PVE***

In a challenging practice field, restrictions on professional autonomy can increase demand for emotion management (Gunnarsdóttir, 2016). While professional acknowledgement may positively interact with professional autonomy (Karvinen-Niinikoski et al., 2019), acknowledgment is also important in building trust (Pološki Vokić et al., 2020). This brings us to the relationships in social work and the theoretical development of trust. Weber and Carter's construction of trust (Weber & Carter, 2003) was developed from research on personal relations but shows great promise in terms of being applied to professional practice. Their theories have been applied to research in administration (Choudhury, 2008) and policing of domestic violence (Leung, 2014) among others. The strategies highlighted in article II appear to resonate strongly with Weber and Carter's theories and, most importantly, show that Norwegian social workers not only seek to receive but also give trust to their clients. This reciprocal aspect of establishing trust is well-known in private relationships but less obvious in the relationship between clients and professional actors.

The findings from article II indicate that strategies used in personal connections between people are transferrable to professional practice. In

particular, this might be the case in which new ground is to be covered, and social workers rely on strategies they would also use in personal life. Hochschild (1979, 2003) argued that workers are at the receiving end of the demands from organizations and management, for skills in emotion management directly derived from their own personal life. This appears to be the case of social workers doing PVE, in a field where best practices are unclear (Malet, 2021) and expectations are conflicting. Leaning on aspects of their personal life when engaging with challenging clients in a developing field may, over time, create additional stress because the demarcation within social workers themselves becomes unclear. Work–life balance is well-researched, and an imbalance is associated with lower physical and psychological well-being (Rao & Indla, 2010). This could mean that relying heavily on private skills and strategies may have a long-term unintended effect on the workers’ well-being, even though they at first may serve as useful strategies for emotional management. Emotional dissonance and demand for emotion management in client-work, which this thesis finds among Norwegian social workers doing PVE, is associated with sickness and absence from work (Indregard et al., 2017).

Norwegian social workers understand and approach clients’ (further) radicalization as a social issue and were found to invest considerable time in building a trusting relationship with them, focusing on establishing personal connections and addressing their own concerns. This reciprocal dimension of trust building in professional relationships between social workers and clients has earlier been found and argued for

as potentially subversive of the standards of social work practice because of the risk of blurred roles (Alexander & Charles, 2009).

The findings of article II, and those of this thesis in general, do not support that the reciprocal aspect of trust building in PVE work undermines the standards of social work practice. However, the findings may provide an important piece of knowledge to a still developing practice field. Although social workers are not engaged in private relationships with their clients, they can be affected in a personal manner when faced with profound scepticism and distrust among their clients. Acting upon this distrust and engaging in some degree of reciprocal trust building may thus be personally difficult, as well as a challenge to their theoretical and practical standards (Miller, 2006; Pugh, 2007). In addition, as many formal complaints against social workers are directly related to boundary infractions (Strom-Gottfried, 1999), the act of mutuality and reciprocity must be performed with sensitivity, self-awareness and professional critical reflection.

### *5.3.3 Emotion management in social work PVE*

Traditionally, the nuances of emotion management and work have been dichotomously understood as a proactive and reactive strategy on a surface or deep (acting) level (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Bolton, 2005). However, newer research on the subject has shown that these strategies can overlap (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). The findings of article III support this notion as we found both surface and deep acting in

## *Discussion*

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reactive and proactive strategies, and thereby an expansion of Hochschild's (1979, 2003) initial contribution on emotion management

Importantly, the findings of Norwegian social workers adopting the client's perspective as both a reactive and proactive strategy brings valuable knowledge to the theorization of emotion management and on how emotion management interacts with well-established strategies in social work. These strategies, often called person-centred approaches, place the client and his/her understanding at the centre and depart from the client's thoughts on what is needed, what the client can do and what the goals of the service provided should be (Lewis, 2017; Rogers, 1979). This is important because the findings of article III also show that adopting the client's perspective as a strategy for emotion management was a positive experience of Norwegian social workers. This is in stark contrast to the tension experienced when performing reactive surface acting and pulling themselves together and is also in line with social work communication strategies. As such, the expansion of emotion management bridges the strategies in communication and interaction with clients, and this might explain why social workers were able to adopt this as a reactive deep acting strategy.

This bears similarity with strategies that are recommended when engaging in dialogue regarding ideology. Attempting to understand and staying close to the clients' perspective and narrative is recommended to reduce client resistance (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2013). Deep acting strategies have been suggested to make workers appear authentic and convincing

earlier, which has a positive effect on the interaction as well as on the restoration of emotional resources (Collishaw et al., 2008; Grandey, 2000). Additionally, because authenticity is an important trait in building a trusting relationship (Reid, 1977; Runcan, 2020), this strategy might positively influence the communicated image of social workers by being in accordance with the clients' expectations of them being openminded and exploring their perspectives.

The theoretical discussion of trust and emotion management in social work and client relationship within PVE indicates that in new and developing practice fields, boundaries become unclear and private competency is tapped into to build working relationships and manage tension. This development within a specific part of social work practice and role enactment implies a possibly heavier emotional challenge and blurring of roles, both due to an unclear practice field and the strategies social workers use to manage these challenges. In the next section, indications of the development of the social worker role itself are discussed.

#### ***5.4 Implications: Development of the social worker role***

Gazing back to social work's infancy in private and charity organisations, where the core values of compassion for and support of those in need were nurtured (Dahle, 2010), modern social work has matured into also taking part in national action plans seeking to influence individuals on an ideological path towards potential acts of violence.

## *Discussion*

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From the formalisation of multi-agency collaboration between social workers and police in the late 1990s, over 20 years have passed. A formalisation such as this implies further development of the professions' jurisdiction, by formally including tasks and responsibilities in collaboration with the police regarding matters of ideologically based violence. This indicates, both symbolically and formally, a development of the social worker role in Norway. Following Abbott's theories on jurisdictions (1998), gaining foothold within one jurisdiction might facilitate the loss of jurisdiction in another. Although this thesis did not uncover this directly, loss of jurisdiction might develop in line with a closer partnership with police and PST in particular. This partnership and the closeness to strategies of control and surveillance may drastically impact the impression and reputation of social workers and the services they are employed in. This is, in particular, related to lower trustworthiness, and uncertainty regarding who social workers are and who they cooperate closely with.

However, the new dimension of PVE appears to create resistance among social workers, who by far still lean heavily towards traditional strategies, based on dialogue, trust and transparency. This developing social worker role, at least in multi-agency prevention work targeting radicalisation and violent extremism, has a clearer political side to it, by actively addressing ideological aspects and by being formally included in a national strategy to prevent the process towards ideologically based violence. This politization of social work creates tension both within

social workers, and in their working relationship with police and PST, as this thesis has revealed and conceptualized in Figure 3.

This thesis has also suggested that the policy game can potentially be played offensively. As it appears for now, the game is played using defensive strategies only, such as emotion work and social support, as social workers are at the receiving end of a developing policy influencing their own practice field. This new field is troubled with tension from conflicting internal and external expectations, and social workers have been found to tap into their personal and private strategies to manage this tension internally.

Given the tension within and between social workers, police and PST, the developing social worker may benefit from becoming aware of how the profession can influence policy, through both public or professional channels. If the experiences of social workers are communicated to and heard by policy makers, clearer demarcation lines can be drawn between those conducting social support work and those engaged with security and control. This potential bottom-up influence depends on social workers' and social worker managers' ability to notice changes in tasks and responsibilities, as well as the ability to reflect upon the consequence of these changes. While it is important to note that the social work PVE field is small, for those that are engaged in it, it is important to think clearly, stay close to professional ethics and manoeuvre in a landscape with conflicting expectations. As such, the developing social worker role brought forth in this thesis provides a strong argument for increased

attention to societal perspectives and policy practice into university curricula on social work. Keeping close to a professional practice in line with the internal, and possibly also clients', expectations towards social workers could be important to not lose contact with individuals and groups who support violence as a means to achieve social, religious or political change.

### **5.5 Implications for clients**

While not directly aimed at social workers' clients, the findings of this thesis may have some implications for them as well. Most strikingly, the unclarity and complexity of roles and responsibilities in Norwegian strategies to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism show that engaging with social workers may have a price for clients at risk of (further) radicalisation as information they do not agree to pass on to police or police security services, in fact, may be passed on without their knowledge. However unclear the scope and range of that practice is today, it has the potential to weaken the trust in social workers as trustworthy professionals and also the trust in the services they represent. If social workers continue to struggle with managing unclear roles and responsibilities, by being pulled between conflicting expectations, strategies characterised by more control than support as well as more confrontational communication styles might drive these clients further away from social workers.

## **5.6 Contribution of this thesis**

This thesis has provided the research and practice community with insights into how Norwegian social workers' experience and reflect upon their engagement in the preventive work against radicalisation and violent extremism in Norway.

Social workers strive to approach this task in a manner similar to social issues, understood as internal expectations, as presented in Figure 3. However, I have also found that they are influenced by contextual factors, such as various jurisdictional settlements, indications of a more securitised policy, and logics from security driven professionals, in what I have labelled external expectations. This combination of conflicting expectations creates a tension that occurs in client meetings and also in collaboration meetings with the police and PST. This is managed internally by using several emotion management strategies at both the surface and deep level and externally through social support from peers, managers and supervisors. These management strategies are operated in both client interactions and with peers, internally and externally. In the discussion I suggest, based on an extension of social support, that social workers might also influence policy if they utilize professional and organisational channels to communicate their experience of unclear roles and responsibilities and ethical dilemmas that arise from these. A clarification of what is and what is not the domain of social workers performing PVE might help social workers to stay close to professional principles of fair treatment and human rights and to facilitate emancipation, not surveillance, of clients.

The findings also contribute to broadening the theoretical perspectives applicable for the development of the social worker role itself. In this new and developing practice field, social workers appear more influenced by a securitisation of social policy than social workers elsewhere. Similarly, I argue that social workers might direct their attention to how new tasks might have unwanted role consequences and play the policy game by taking active initiatives towards policymakers. If considered by policymakers, this strategy may positively influence the policies that give directions to the multi-agency practice field of PVE by reducing the tension between social workers' internal and external expectations. While also painting a clearer picture to clients, of what social workers' tasks and responsibilities are, reduced tension may also contribute to a reduced need for emotion management in and outside client encounters.

### **5.7 Concluding remarks**

Looking back at the events leading up to this research—the terror occurring in Oslo and on Utøya island in July 2011—it is important to remind myself of the purpose of PVE strategies. Social workers are not at the sharp end of Norway's efforts to counter violent extremism and terrorism, but they do play an important role in both selective and indicated prevention work and are one of the many actors that may potentially contribute to slowing down, derailing or turning a radicalisation process. Keeping a narrow perspective on only one profession's aspects of this work runs the risk of losing sight of the bigger

picture. However, there is a delicate balance, where society's needs must be primary to those of social workers. As such, being a profession that aims to contribute to individuals and communities, the dilemmas and challenges that have surfaced through this thesis, from conflicting expectations, should be considered by municipal managers, coordinators and professional unions and educational institutions involved in prevention work. Raising awareness of the blurred roles and responsibilities and facilitating initiatives for clarification of jurisdiction within PVE could be one approach to make the practice field more manageable in and outside of client meetings.

### **5.8 Future research**

This research was exploratory and revealed a practice field, where social workers engage with professions that are quite different from themselves. Following suggestions on exploratory research (Blaikie, 2010; Yin, 2016), future research topics are outlined below, in accordance with the findings from each dimension of this thesis.

Building on the findings from article I regarding jurisdictional settlements, future studies should engage with the perspectives of police and security service workers. Reduced trust between citizens and social workers may be the outcome of these varying settlements, especially if the settlements indicate a subordination to security workers, as suggested by statements from some participants in this study.

## *Discussion*

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If social work as a profession loses track of its empathic and supportive core, by incorporating the expectations from security logics and leaning more heavily on control and surveillance, the perception of policymakers, politicians and the public of the profession might change. The consequence of this potential shift in image is hard to carve out. However, the responsibilities, tasks and demands might shift in turn with perception. As such, additional research into how intervention receivers experience social workers in this context as well as how policy makers and other stakeholders might view social workers are some future avenues of research. Such studies could provide valuable information on how prevention work is experienced by those receiving them and help develop better tailored services.

A third future avenue for research is to further explore the nuances and overlap that we have identified between surface acting and deep acting, at both the reactive and proactive level. This is especially interesting to look into in PVE, social work in general, and other contexts, where professionals are trained and socialized into certain displays of role and character. Furthermore, building on the discussion about the possible strain of tapping into personal experiences to build relationships and manage emotions, studies using both interviews, observations and biometric measures of stress levels are recommended.

This thesis has also discussed the relevance of external management of tension. However, it has not explored the dynamics of how such social support may be conducted, in terms of participants, what kind of

## *Discussion*

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competency those tasked with providing support should have, or how such services most effectively could be organized internally and between employees at different services. These three aspects should be explored to help tailor both sensitive and effective support services.

Further, policy practice is suggested as an extension of external management, but future research can also explore how supervision and workshops with participants from different professions may have an influence on the external expectations towards social workers. Earlier research has found that factors that promote multi-agency working are understanding aims, objectives and definition of roles and responsibilities, as well as joint training (Atkinson et al., 2007; Cooper et al., 2016; Greco et al., 2005; Sidebotham et al., 2016; Sloper, 2004).

As social workers and police officers in Norway have over two decades of formalized cooperation, research on multi-professional workshops may reveal how conflicting logics may be bridged, and facilitate a better understanding of each others' tasks, responsibilities and dilemmas in multi-agency PVE work to help ease such challenges.

Lastly, as briefly mentioned in the section about member checking, some participants in this study opened up about 'being drawn into security work', alongside police and PST, experienced this as a rewarding task and spoke of it with enthusiasm. This enthusiasm, if not given proper attention, could contribute to practices that further the blurring of roles. Future research exploring the experience of being engaged with matters of security, framed positively, could highlight more nuances to the

## *Discussion*

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conceptual model presented in this thesis, and possibly how matters of security are looked upon by social workers as even more time doing PVE has passed. This might reveal further development of the social worker role and how conflicting agendas are experienced and integrated into practice.

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## Part II – Articles & Appendices

### Article I

Haugstvedt, H & Tuastad, S., E. (*Minor revisions will be submitted in July 2021*). “It gets a bit messy”: Norwegian social workers’ perspectives on collaboration with police and security service on cases of radicalisation and violent extremism. *Under review in Terrorism and Political Violence*

### Article II

Haugstvedt, H. (2019). Trusting the Mistrusted: Norwegian Social Workers’ Strategies in Preventing Radicalization and Violent Extremism. *Journal for Deradicalization*, 19, 149–184.

### Article III

Haugstvedt, H. & Gunnarsdottir, H., M. (Submitted 2021). Managing Role Expectations and Emotions in Encounters with Extreme Ideology: Norwegian Social Workers’ Experiences. *Under review in Qualitative Social Work*

### Article IV

Haugstvedt, H. (2020). The role of social support for social workers engaged in preventing radicalization and violent extremism. *Nordic Social Work Research*, 1–14.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2020.1806102>

## **Article I**

Haugstvedt, H & Tuastad, S., E. (*Minor revisions will be submitted in July 2021*). “It gets a bit messy”: Norwegian social workers’ perspectives on collaboration with police and security service on cases of radicalisation and violent extremism. *Under review in Terrorism and Political Violence*

**Title:** “It gets a bit messy”: Norwegian social workers’ perspectives on collaboration with police and security service on cases of radicalisation and violent extremism

**Abstract:**

Social workers are a part of the prevention efforts against radicalisation and violent extremism in the Nordic countries. While multiagency cooperation is not new in Norway, social workers’ cooperation with the PST is. This cooperation has been scarcely researched, particularly regarding the unintended consequences of multiagency cooperation. We address this gap with findings from a qualitative study that utilised data from 17 individual in-depth interviews and two focus-group interviews of experienced social workers in Norway. Abbott’s theory of jurisdiction serves as our theoretical framework. Our findings suggest that the cooperation between social workers, police and security workers, characterised by various jurisdictional settlements, implies challenges to social workers and their ethical codes in particular. Social workers, in some cases, work alongside police and security workers with shared responsibilities and tasks, while in other cases, they appear subordinate. The lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities raises ethical dilemmas, especially regarding work transparency and client confidentiality, for social workers engaged in multiagency efforts. An unintended consequence of this is the risk of lower levels of trust between social workers and their target group and a reduced ability to support at-risk individuals in this and possibly other fields.

**Key words:** violent extremism, PVE, social work, multiagency, security

**Introduction**

Different strategies to prevent or counter terrorism have been developed around the world, particularly since the 9/11 attacks in the United States. These strategies vary from deradicalisation efforts in prisons in Saudi Arabia (Casptack 2015) and Singapore (Jayakumar and Pantucci 2020), where Islamic scholars counsel detainees, to psychosocial interventions in the Nordic countries (Lid et al. 2016; Finch et al. 2019; Agerschou et al. 2017). However, few professionals work on such cases alone, as complex issues are commonly assumed to benefit from multiagency work (Cairns 2015) or interorganisational cooperation (de Waal et al. 2019). The various mandates and logics of professionals working together may differ or even be contradictory (Webb 2015), causing difficult working relationships (Stokken and Hunnes 2019).

In the Nordic countries, especially in Denmark and Norway, different professionals are closely engaged in multiagency cooperation to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism (PVE)<sup>1</sup> (Carlsson 2017; Herz 2016; Lid et al. 2016; Sestoft, Hansen, and Christensen 2017). Among others, police officers, social workers and teachers are currently involved in this work (Carlsson 2017; Gundhus et al. 2008; Hemmingsen 2015; Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2015). This kind of cooperation is not new (Gundhus et al. 2008); for instance, social workers were engaged in efforts to prevent right-wing extremism in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Egge et al. 2008; Lidén and Sandbæk 2009). However, the task of preventing Islamic extremism is new for Norwegian municipalities, as this emerged as a problem mainly after 2010 (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2015). Moreover, an additional element in the cooperation constellation most present in Norway is the partial inclusion of the police security service (PST) in municipalities (Carlsson 2017; Lid et al. 2016). To social workers as professionals, some aspects of the multiagency PVE cooperation might be challenging, as research from the Belgian and British context has reported (Brion and Guittet 2018; McKendrick and Finch 2017). Some researchers have labelled this as the securitisation of social work and social policy, and they have raised concerns for both the profession and its target group (McKendrick and Finch 2017; 2020; Ragazzi 2017). Similar opposition was found among British teacher unions at the onset of the Prevent Strategy (Busher, Choudhury, and Thomas 2019). This debate is also connected to the issues and disagreements around the term radicalisation itself (Sedgwick 2010; Neumann 2013), especially because a large part of municipal PVE work is carried out in the pre-crime space (Heath-Kelly 2017) before something illegal has been committed.

While the Nordic countries have a long tradition of working in the pre-crime space through various preventive strategies targeting at-risk groups and individuals, such strategies mainly address social, behavioural and mental problems, not political or ideological standpoints (Egge et al. 2008). If not properly legally framed and professionally supervised, this evolution of contemporary prevention work might cause unintended consequences beyond loss of trust between social workers and clients. Consequently, some of the implications of preventive work efforts against radicalisation and violent extremism are worth closer examination.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, we will refer to the work to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism as PVE, as this is a common term in the literature on radicalisation and violent extremism, such as in Stephens, Sieckelinck and Boutellier, 2019, "Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*.

We raise the following questions based on this background: Does preventing or countering violent extremism, or terrorism, supersede the concerns and needs of the traditional mandate given to social workers and other professions at the forefront of the welfare state (Trappenburg, Kampen, and Tonkens 2019)? If so, do we risk the current PVE strategy weakening the ethical and professional foundations of social workers and possibly the welfare state these and others are set to serve?

### **Social work and PVE**

Social workers typically execute the dual role of supporting and empowering clients, on the one hand, and controlling them on behalf of the political authorities, on the other (Lipsky 1980; Lauvås and Lauvås 2004; Messel 2014). Accordingly, some scholars, notwithstanding the debate on the adequacy of this concept, have referred to the social work profession as the prototype of a *semi*-profession (Erichsen 1996; Fauske 2008; Molander and Terum 2008).<sup>2</sup> Semi-professions do not possess the privileges of full professions, such as a unique knowledge base, and their professional autonomy is constantly at risk of being cut by the authorities (Leighninger 1978; Stichweh 2008; Wilensky 1964). In Lipsky's striking conceptualisation, social workers are typical street-level bureaucrats to whom conflicting expectations are constitutive (Lipsky 1980).

When social workers work in tandem with the police, particularly the PST, the tensions inherent in their dual role might be pushed to the edge, as police and social workers represent different institutional logics (Oterholm 2018; Friedland and Alford 1991). How conflicting aspects in these institutional logics become settled might determine whether social workers can meet the requirements in their ethical code descriptions (Fellesorganisasjon [FO] 2019; International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW] 2018). Accordingly, whether social workers end up *sharing* jurisdiction of, in Abbott's terms (1988), preventing and countering violent extremism or they de facto play second violin (become *subordinated*) can influence the balance in their dual role and presumably impact their self-understandings and practice. As this paper's theoretical framework, Abbott's (1988) jurisdiction concept will be further presented later.

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<sup>2</sup> The profession and semi-profession concepts are contested (Fauske 2008; Molander and Terum 2008). We will not go into this discussion but will stick to the understanding that Molander and Terum (2008) presented in the introduction to their reputable anthology on profession studies.

Internationally, a number of studies have addressed professionals carrying out prevention work (Kotajoki 2018; Mattsson 2018; Ponsot, Autixier, and Madriaza 2017). However, none, to our knowledge, have explored social workers' experiences of engaging directly in multiagency cooperation with police officers and security service staff in the Nordic countries. As these countries have a long tradition of multiagency prevention work (Gundhus et al. 2008; Kotajoki 2018), researching Norwegian social workers' experience offers a useful lens to view this specific working model. Exploring multiagency cooperation from the practitioners' perspectives, our research aims to fill this knowledge gap by answering the following research question:

- *How do Norwegian social workers perceive and reflect upon their role and responsibilities in cooperation with police and security service to prevent violent extremism?*

We answer this question by utilising data from 17 in-depth interviews and two focus-group interviews with highly experienced social workers involved in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism in Norway.

Before presenting our findings, we briefly present scholarly literature on experiences from multiagency PVE cooperation and in multiagency cooperation in general. Moreover, we contextualise the specific multiagency cooperation theoretically as a jurisdiction (though *which* type of jurisdiction constellation it is, is contested) and specifically as a politically constituted domain within the Norwegian welfare state. We return to the latter question about the nature of the jurisdiction in the discussion. In that part, we also address some of the ethical challenges for social workers, as demonstrated in the findings.

### **Review of literature on multiagency prevention work**

Researchers at the University of Gothenburg identified two distinct institutional logics at play in PVE efforts in the Nordic countries: societal security logic and social care logic (Sivenbring and Malmros 2020, 135). Societal security logic was identified within police staff, security managers and police security or intelligence services. In contrast, social care logic was found to guide the work of social workers, teachers, youth workers, etc. The two main sets of logics have different goals, strategies, grounds for attention, and authority. Similar discrepancies in logics and understanding were previously identified; in the absence of a common understanding of radicalisation, practitioners frame and target cases of radicalisation through their own professional perspectives (Madriaza, Ponsot, and Marion

2017). Social workers and psychologists may therefore perceive radicalisation as a social or psychological problem, whereas a police officer may look upon it as “simply” crime. This suggests that the workers who manage this prevention work through networked approaches both frame and target the issues in a very different manner.

Municipal PVE work seems to cause uncertainty about how to identify and handle cases of radicalisation among the “softer professionals” (Dryden 2017; Lid et al. 2016; van de Weert and Eijkman 2019). Some researchers have defined these variations, or uncertainties, as typical examples of “wicked problems”, in which origin, definition and solution of problems are all unclear (Fischbacher-Smith 2016).

In the United Kingdom, where the Prevent Strategy has been implemented for many years, scholars have been concerned that this cooperation might push social workers to further control their client groups (Coppock and McGovern 2014; McKendrick and Finch 2016). Similar findings have been reported from Molenbeek in Belgium, where social workers who engaged in multiagency work were met with critical attitudes from the youth they were there to help, who confronted them with claims that social workers were working “for them [police] and against us [youth]” (Brion and Guittet 2018). The consequence of this multiagency cooperation may therefore be the risk of impaired trust between support services and their clients (Chisholm and Coulter 2017; Herz 2016). The same concerns have been raised in Norway by Lid et al. (2016). However, that work is mainly based on interviews with municipal managers and coordinators, not with practitioners doing the actual prevention work.

While multiagency work is an approach to bridging silos and providing universal prevention services (M. Atkinson, Jones, and Lamont 2007; Edwards 2009; Longoria 2005; Sidebotham et al. 2016), evidence is lacking on how the multiagency work actually helps service users (M. Atkinson, Jones, and Lamont 2007). Furthermore, researchers have identified factors that both hinder and promote this collaboration between social workers and the police. Factors that hinder may be “territorial” disputes, constant reorganising, confidentiality issues and lack of understanding of different ideologies and working cultures (Buchbinder and Eisikovits 2008; Greco et al. 2005; Sloper 2004). Ideological differences and lack of trust between social

workers and police officers have also been identified (Cooper et al. 2008; Lardner 1992; Longoria 2005; Westwood 2012).<sup>3</sup>

Altogether, this research review demonstrates that PVE work contains challenges for the social workers, both with respect to their cooperation with the police and because this cooperation raises doubts among the youth they work with. We have not identified studies describing social workers' experiences in this field in a Nordic context.

### **Theoretical framework and political context**

Andrew Abbot belongs to the second generation of researchers in the study of professions. His research has included investigating “professional projects” in a critical perspective by identifying professions' strategies to improve their positions (Larson 1977; Fauske 2008). In his influential 1988 work *The System of Professions*, Abbott launched jurisdictions as a concept to describe the interplay and possibly conflicting interests between various professions and between the professions and the authorities. We make use of this concept and theory to describe the constitution of PVE as a multiagency professional field and to analyse our findings. Abbott argued that, while any occupation, like beauticians, can obtain licenses, professions are distinguished from these because they have developed both knowledge systems and specialised skills. Based on its particular knowledge system, a profession defines the problems and solutions in a professional field, and in doing so, this becomes a crucial part of surviving as a profession as well as maintaining jurisdiction over a domain (Abbott 1988).

According to Abbot, the process of establishing jurisdictions contains two parts. First, professions in their professional projects address the public domain to gain legitimacy for claims on professional tasks. The second area of jurisdictional claims, the legal area, demands more specific claims in terms of content. These can be summarised into three points: monopoly of activities, monopoly of certain kinds of payments and control of certain work settings. Abbott maintained that, while the road to legal jurisdiction may be very long for a profession, the public jurisdiction may be won much sooner. However, the run for jurisdiction is not necessarily straight forward and may be a case of uncertain and temporary settlements –

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<sup>3</sup> For research on factors that promote multiagency work, confer with M. Atkinson, Jones, and Lamont (2007); M. Cooper, Evans, and Pybis (2016); Greco et al. (2005); Noga et al. (2016); Shorrock, McManus, and Kirby (2019); Sidebotham et al. (2016); and Sloper (2004). Research on the complex question about why some do and some do not become violent extremists includes Bellasio et al. (2018); Bull and Rane (2019), Jasko, LaFree, and Kruglanski (2017); Madriaza, Ponsot, and Marion (2017); Silke (1998); Vergani et al. (2018); Verkuyten (2018).

not of full and final control over a jurisdiction. Settlements in disputes over jurisdictions might have various outcomes. One outcome implies a profession might be subordinate to another. Furthermore, professions can split the jurisdiction into two interdependent parts. A third option is that one profession assumes intellectual jurisdiction over a specific area by providing guidance and advising other professions. This gives one profession a claim to control how a particular area is served by other professions (Abbott 1986). An example of this is how medical doctors in several European countries have fought nurses to remain in control of prescribing medicine, basing this argument on a knowledge (intellectual) claim (Kroezen et al. 2013). Lastly, the professions can divide the work according to the nature of the clients (Abbott 1988).

Semi-professions, like social work and teaching, typically possess less authority of knowledge and, as a result, have less autonomy in relation to other professions (Brante 2013). Classical dominant professions, like medicine or law (R. Atkinson 2013), may therefore delegate tasks and responsibility, such as routine work or “dirty work” (Ashforth et al. 2007; Ashforth and Kreiner 2014), tasks they do not want, while keeping what they find more desirable for themselves (Franzén 2019). However, not only social workers but also the police typically do not fulfil the standard criteria of full professions, as they, for instance, lack a separate knowledge base to abstract from. Moreover, Lipsky lists police as typical street bureaucrats along with social workers (Lipsky 1980). Based on this background, which profession should be subordinate to the other is not obvious.

How distribution of jurisdictions comes about is not only a matter of the interplay between professions. The authorities also play an important role, both in constituting professional tasks and in distributing them (Molander and Terum 2008). Consequently, no profession will always get what it wants. Having responsibilities for something other than “what you signed up for” apparently causes role strain in police officers who have to fill the less desirable roles of social workers, peacekeepers and educators (Huey and Ricciardelli 2015). Moreover, counsellors generally avoid being assigned “police work” or reporting clients’ criminal behaviour and would rather stick to their traditional role of treating and supporting them (Appelbaum 2013).

Later in the discussion, we will utilise Abbott’s framework to analyse our empirical findings. However, Abbot’s theoretical perspective can also shed light on the establishment of PVE as professional tasks in the Norwegian context. By using various action plans, political

authorities have included social workers in the multiagency cooperation to prevent and counter violent extremism.

### PVE as a politically constituted jurisdiction

To the best of our knowledge, Norwegian social workers' role in PVE became explicitly known through the Norwegian Ministry of Justice's action plans and guidelines from 2010, 2014 and 2015 (Norwegian Ministry of Justice 2010, 2014, 2015). The following review of these documents examines how the tasks and responsibilities of social workers and other municipal employees in PVE work have evolved from typical social work tasks to a role that includes more "soft policing". Soft policing is described as the noncoercive elements of law enforcement that are carried out through community engagement but still have elements of control (Wooff 2017; McCarthy 2013). Adding elements of this practice to social workers' already dual role of support and control may therefore be troublesome.

First, the 2010 document acknowledged that social matters and health factors may influence a radicalisation process and that municipalities thereby play an indirect role. The task described at this point is mainly to reduce social exclusion and marginalisation, identify those at risk (of marginalisation) and execute interventions to support those at risk. Later, in the 2014 document, the authorities gave social workers and other municipal workers the task and responsibility of addressing concerns of radicalisation among children and youth as well as providing follow-up services to these and their families. The 2015 document involved another change. Now, the plan included an explicit duty to contribute to averting serious crime. The change possibly implied a movement towards the operational level of countering and not just working to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. While the duty to avert crime, which also applies to social workers, has been a part of the Norwegian penal code for many years,<sup>4</sup> this must be weighed against the parallel duty of confidentiality.<sup>5</sup> In light of our theoretical framework, one question that emerges is whether the apparent move towards stronger attention on control tasks implies disputes or negotiations "on the ground" over how to settle, in Abbott's terms, demarcation lines in this jurisdiction

### **Methodology**

This paper is a part of a research project about Norwegian social workers' experiences of

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<sup>4</sup> See Norwegian Penal Code §196 regarding the duty to avert serious crime, [https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2005-05-20-28/KAPITTEL\\_2-5#%C2%A7196](https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2005-05-20-28/KAPITTEL_2-5#%C2%A7196)

<sup>5</sup> See Norwegian Public Administration Act §13 regarding confidentiality, [https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1967-02-10#KAPITTEL\\_3](https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1967-02-10#KAPITTEL_3)

participating in multiagency work to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. We utilised a qualitative in-depth study to explore these practitioners’ experiences through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) with an abductive approach. The steps in this analytical process are presented below.

### Recruitment and sampling

The work to prevent violent extremism in Norway is organised neither in a standardised way nor with fixed participants in multiagency cooperation. However, the multiagency model is often based on the already existing model for cooperation in prevention of drug abuse and crime among youth in Norway (SLT), which was implemented in the early 1990s (Gundhus et al. 2008). We sought to recruit social work practitioners through purposeful sampling to obtain information rich cases (Yin 2016) from a variety of services. The participants had to have experience in providing assessment and follow-up services to youth and adults at risk of (further) radicalisation. The first step in recruiting participants was from the first author’s professional network, which led to local coordinators in several cities and municipalities and later to practitioners “on the ground”. To branch out further, the snowball method (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981) was used to reach additional participants in informants’ professional networks through their referral. We strived to recruit participants in both larger cities and smaller municipalities, as long as they had relevant experience. Information about participants can be found in Table 1.

<b>Table 1 – Participant information</b>	
Female	6
Male	11
Age (mean years)	39
Bachelor’s degree	9
Master’s degree	8
Experience in social work (mean years)	12.5
Experience with radicalisation and violent extremism (mean years)	3.5

### Data collection

We carried out data collection through two main steps: first, through 17 semi structured in-

depth interviews, and second, through two focus-group interviews with five participants in each session. The in-depth interviews provided insight into those particular participant's lived experience (Seidman 2006), while the focus groups facilitated discussion and reflections among the participants (Bloor et al. 2001; Hennink 2014). The focus groups were moderated by the first author, and the interviews had a mean length of 101 minutes.

### Analysis

Braun and Clark (2006) described six steps of thematic analysis that add rigour and transparency to the analytical process in qualitative research. We applied these steps when undertaking this research process. The first step is transcribing the data and becoming familiar with its content. Both interviewing the participants and transcribing the interviews were done by the first author, and during that process, some initial insights about different understandings and ways of conducting prevention work emerged. The second and third steps are the initial coding of content and the search for themes within the data. This was followed by a process of going back and forth between the transcripts, the codes, and the themes to check for consistency and meaning. In this process, some themes were merged. In the following section, themes are presented and excerpts are provided to bring insight and clarity.

### Ethical considerations

This research project was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data on 1 February 2018 (project no. 58477). Information regarding the project's aim and methodology as well as confidentiality and consent forms were provided to potential participants. The same information was provided again and consent forms were collected prior to interviews. To assure the participants' discretion, all data were anonymised. This research brought forth stories where our participants were deemed at risk of being recognised. As such, some situations where social workers have cooperated with PST in nontraditional ways for social workers have been left out or referred to only indirectly to protect the participants' identity.

### **Findings**

The thematic analysis revealed two themes from our data about the cooperation between social workers, police and police security staff: *troubled transparency* and *blurred roles of policing and support*.

#### Troubled transparency

The first theme we identified regards transparency, especially related to information sharing

and strategies used in the prevention work. Social workers in our study experienced that a different logic exists between themselves and their security partners when it comes to being outspoken and transparent about what they are doing.

Social workers, in principle, have a well-established strategy of being transparent about what they are doing to their clients that is grounded in professional guidelines (FO 2019; IFSW 2018) and scholarly research (Oliver and Charles 2016). Police, especially security service staff, appear to deal with this in a more discrete manner. The transcripts below, from two interviews, give insight into how two social workers handle challenges linked to transparency in different ways:

Participant: I am totally transparent about the cooperation with the police, and I try to get their [clients'] consent [to cooperate and share information with the police] early on. We do that as a routine actually, to go through which services I can and cannot share information with. But there's also the part about averting serious incidents. Then, we have to contact the police or security service, of course. I think it's very important that we are transparent on that as well, from the very beginning.

The above citation reflects a common way in which social workers deal with cooperation with the police in this field and others, by seeking clients' consent and involving them in the matters of information sharing. While the statement represented a dominant perspective in our data, other ways of dealing with information existed as well.

Interviewer: This client you were talking about, how does he react to your cooperation with the police or security service?

Participant: No, that has been out of the question [to reveal that cooperation]. As far as I know, I am not obliged to share that information with him [the client], if I have informed the police of my concern for him or provided them with some information.

In our research, we found that security service staff want social workers to give up sensitive information that social workers understand as being regulated by client confidentiality legislation.

Participant: Those working with security and that stuff, they want as much information as possible, but I have my confidentiality legislation. So, we have this

conflict of interest there. And they want [information] from me, but they never give anything back. We get no information at all from the police security service.

This sort of tension appears as a conflict of interest. Below, another participant shares his/her experience and reflections on being pressured to give up information:

Participant: The power imbalance in this cooperation is pretty off. So, when the police and security service enter the playing field, it's like, "Everything we do now is secret. We can't give you any information, but we want information from you." And that can be pretty massive to go up against.

Interviewer: Right, and you have experience on how this cooperation is perceived [by the clients], when they get ear of it?

Participant: Yes, and that did not go well. Because these services want things to go "under the radar". So, the clients sense that I am doing something that they don't exactly know what it is. And suddenly, when they hear about it later on, they want to know why I spoke to these guys [in secrecy].

The passages cited from social workers in the transcripts above demonstrate how they experience it as challenging to work in secrecy and have clients find out about it. The conflicting understanding of what kind of information can be shared is something that we found causes strain on the working relationship between social workers and security staff. While there is an understanding of why security service staff, in particular, need to work differently than social workers, when they are set to cooperate on specific cases, these conflicting strategies and logics represent barriers for cooperation. Next, the second theme *blurred roles of policing and support* is presented.

### Blurred roles of policing and support

Blurred roles stand out as the main feature of the multiagency cooperation to prevent violent extremism in Norway. This revolves around the experience of similarities and differences in the roles and mandates of social workers, police and the PST. When social workers cooperate closely, especially with the security service, their traditional role of providing support services to emancipate and bolster clients with their issues becomes challenged as social workers become influenced by and associated with the work of the security service. One experienced social worker put it as follows:

Yes, it's a bit like, "Oh, who are you really? Are you a police officer? Who are you really working for?" And because they [clients] have that knee jerk reaction [to issues with police], it creates an uncertainty. And since I actually cannot draw a clear line between the municipality's work, with follow-up and care, and those controlling and monitoring the groups, it gets a bit messy. I understand very well that the confidence in us gets weakened by this.

Another participant expressed his experience in the following way:

I think that what is challenging is that their [police and security service's] mandate is very much at the other end of the spectrum; to get an overview, map out, avert stuff, what's on the inside or outside of the law. And it can be very difficult to combine that with what I am trying to do, to listen and understand, to gain trust from them [the clients]. I have seen examples that it can be done; it really can. But there is that risk of us getting into our traditional trenches.

As we understood it, the remark "our traditional trenches" referred to different professional logics and strategies. These experiences of diverging strategies are tightly connected to the uncertainty in how individual radicalisation processes will evolve and, if possibly reversed, to the idea that no one really knows what causes or "cures" the problem.

Earlier research has revealed that some prevention workers fear they might do something wrong when the topic of radicalisation emerges (Chisholm and Coulter 2017; Lid et al. 2016). This might happen because the stakes are experienced as higher in this work compared to in other prevention work. Below, one participant reflects upon an experience of cooperation with police and security service and about how far they should go in their preventive effort:

How much freedom should we give the authorities to act, compared to human rights and citizens' rights to their own integrity? It's that discussion, where we gradually create and push the boundaries for what's okay to do, in the service of the good, to prevent something that might or might not really happen, right? [...] "If this [a preventive effort] might possibly stop terror, then it's okay, right?" That argument is something I hear from the police and security service, and it's so hard to debate or discuss because that trumps everything, in a way.

The participant above reflected upon how he/she gets entangled into a security logic where "better safe than sorry" might trump concern for privacy or client confidentiality. In addition

to the transcripts presented here, we have knowledge of specific situations where social workers have been expected to perform tasks of surveillance and control outside of their traditional responsibilities. However, due to concern for our participants' confidentiality, we must refrain from mentioning these incidents in detail. In these cases, social workers have, according to themselves, both resisted and given into outside pressure from the security service.

The participant cited above and the other referenced cases bear witness to ongoing negotiations between the social workers and the police, indicating that where to draw the demarcation lines in the jurisdiction, as we characterised it, is an ongoing process. This influence from security work logic is connected to the first theme, troubled transparency.

To some extent, our findings are in accordance with earlier scholarly work on cooperation between social workers and the police. "Territorial" disputes (in our case, under the term jurisdiction), confidentiality issues and different ideologies and working cultures have been found in earlier research (Buchbinder and Eisikovits 2008; Greco et al. 2005; Sloper 2004). Similar results have also been clearly present when the professions were engaged in multiagency work against violent extremism in Norway. Our findings are also, to some extent, in line with what others have identified as barriers to multiagency work: unclear roles, responsibilities, objectives and trust between agencies (M. Atkinson, Jones, and Lamont 2007; M. Cooper, Evans, and Pybis 2016; Greco et al. 2005; Sidebotham et al. 2016; Sloper 2004).

Based on these findings, in our further analysis and discussion, we will mainly address two questions. The first question is analytical and motivated by our theoretical framework and concerns the nature of the jurisdiction. The second addresses ethical challenges. As we understand it, there is a connection between these two questions, as the handling of the second, the ethical challenges, depends on which sort of jurisdiction PVE is in terms of power relations and the division of labour among the professions involved.

### **Discussion: The nature of the jurisdiction**

In light of our theoretical framework, the findings signal that PVE manifests an unsettled jurisdiction where negotiations are made on a case-by-case basis. However, PVE work in Norway appears to resemble that of intellectual jurisdiction, found midway between subordination and shared jurisdiction. It is also evident that, in other cases, the jurisdictional settlement is characterised by social workers' subordination to the police as well as what resembles shared or split jurisdiction.

Intellectual jurisdiction is known as an unstable settlement, where one profession might remain in control of knowledge but must allow other professions to practice in more or less unrestricted ways (Abbott 1988). As we presented in our findings, social workers are under pressure to carry out tasks advised by the security service, which our participants have both resisted and complied with. Regarding PVE as a jurisdiction, this question may be of greater importance than of merely academic interest. If it turns out to be close to what Abbott characterised as subordination, apparently some hard ethical dilemmas arise for social workers. However, if it seems to work as a split jurisdiction, like Abbott described, arguably the ethical challenges might be easier to handle for social workers (cf. below).

In the second theme's very first excerpt from the interview data, the participant shared an experience regarding the unclear distinction between the municipality's work to provide support services and security workers' tasks, including controlling and monitoring target groups and individuals. The participant labelled this jurisdictional settlement as "messy" since he could not draw the line between what he does and what security workers do. However, other participants more firmly held their ground, talking about the confidentiality legislation governing their work. They separated their work to support clients from that of the security workers, while they treated potential acts of crime as special incidences. Later, we presented what another participant discussed regarding the security service, in particular, entering the playing field and effectively claiming a dominant position within the multiagency cooperation. This is a clear example of social workers ending up as subordinated to security workers. Altogether, our data does not lay the ground for a clear conclusion on which sort of jurisdiction unfolds but leans in the direction of intellectual jurisdiction claimed by the PST. Importantly, we also found indications of social workers' resistance to security discourses that promote control measures through the logic of "better safe than sorry". Accordingly, jurisdiction in multiagency PVE work appears to be an ongoing negotiation process.

### **Discussion: Ethical challenges**

Professionals like social workers typically work to achieve changes in clients' behaviour (Molander and Terum 2008). To respect clients' integrity, a fundamental side of the professions' work is manifested (Lauvås and Lauvås 2004; Aadland 2018). The nature of social work within PVE implies imminent risk of violating the profession's ethical code of conduct and possibly legal obligations of client confidentiality.

Theoretically, we can imagine social workers face two sorts of ethical challenges when they cooperate with, among others, the PST to prevent and counter violent extremism. First, while working to achieve influence and change with youth at risk of radicalisation, social workers must still respect the clients' *ethical autonomy* (Eriksen and Weigård 1999; Molander and Terum 2008). Second, respect for integrity arguably demands *the protection of the interpersonal communicative process* as well (Rothstein 2010). Regarding the particular client group involved in our case, social workers, for instance, need to protect client confidentiality from harder measures, such as surveillance.

Respecting ethical autonomy and protecting the interpersonal communication process are among what the IFSW and the Norwegian social workers' association (FO) address in their accounts of the profession's ethical guidance (FO 2019; IFSW 2018). IFSW's ethical codes, in chapter 6, contain statutes concerning respect for confidentiality and privacy. In 6.1, the statute holds that social workers respect people's rights to confidentiality and privacy "unless there is risk of harm to the self or to others or other statutory restrictions". The next paragraph, 6.2, requires social workers to inform clients about limits to confidentiality and privacy. The FO has similar statements in its ethical code (FO 2019). In chapter two, the FO statutes address ethical autonomy, maintaining that measures should be taken to enable clients' involvement and that they can live in accordance with their own set of values. Social workers must be able to distinguish between various preferences and lifestyles, which are to be recognised, and conduct that violates basic human rights. The latter assumedly includes planning acts of violence, so the ethical challenge for the social worker is to sort these instances out and address them while respecting the basic right to ethical autonomy. Chapter three addresses the right to confidentiality and privacy (FO 2019). Clients have self-determination regarding information about themselves, the statutes hold, while social workers may forward information if clients consent. If clients do not consent, the statute holds that clients must be informed if social workers share information.

In light of the background of our findings and analysis of the nature of the jurisdiction, questions are raised as to what extent social workers face the challenges described above and how they handle them. The blurred roles within multiagency work involve disputes over what should count as target issues and what should be outside social workers' scope. As one of our participants stated, it is challenging to draw a clear line between what should or should not be done for the sake of the greater good (referring to preventing potential acts of terrorism). The uncertainty of where the line between agencies' responsibilities should be drawn and who

should do what in multiagency work involves risk for an unintended oppressive practice that targets opinions and lifestyles and, thereby, violates the ethical conduct codes (FO 2019; IFSW 2018).

Overall, social workers' basic task is to enable individuals to live in accordance with their life plans, that is, to contribute to providing capacity for ethical as well as personal autonomy. Naturally, political authorities must protect communities against threats. Consequently, the ethical dilemma is that, without societal control, some people might do harm to others, while too much control might violate basic rights. If the social workers do not manage to handle this dilemma, it might redefine their professional role as social workers. The same applies to the second ethical challenge we introduced. A constituting element in social work involves establishing a relationship of trust between the social worker and the client (Rollins 2019). Trust does not develop by itself, but rather through acts in line with social norms and professional values (Ponnert and Svensson 2016) that present the professional as committed and trustworthy over time (Haugstvedt 2019; McLaren 2007). Development of practice and strategies that go vastly outside of the traditional role of the social work profession risks propelling a negative boomerang effect that reduces trust from the clients and communities.

We do not maintain that social workers in PVE, despite single instances, are generally subordinated to the PST and that they consequently need to perform tasks in the borderland of what their ethical codes allows them to do. However, notwithstanding the legitimate aims of PVE, this study clearly demonstrates that there are costs involved for social workers and possibly the larger welfare state if similar findings are found regarding other professionals, like teachers, medical doctors and nurses. This is, and probably will be, a dilemma that causes strain and uncertainty for professionals until a more formal jurisdictional settlement is secured.

### **Limitations**

It is important to note that the findings in this paper are from the perspectives of social workers only. Moreover, our findings are based on a fairly low number of participants. Keeping these aspects in mind, the paper brings forth evidence about a scarcely researched topic where very different professions and professional perspectives interact.

## **Conclusion**

As revealed by previous research, the interplay between police and social workers has led to concerns among the social work profession about securitising social work and social policy (Ragazzi 2017; Finch et al. 2019; McKendrick and Finch 2020) as well as securitising education (Sjøen 2019; Thomas 2020). Building on these earlier works, this paper adds insights into how social workers themselves reflect on and describe their experiences when engaging closely with the police and with the PST in particular.

Our findings have demonstrated that the jurisdictional settlements between social workers and security workers are far from clear in Norwegian multiagency PVE work. This raises professional and ethical dilemmas for social workers. Confidentiality issues are at the centre of their concerns, as are questions about how transparent their work in this field should be. A possible consequence of entanglement with security workers, from the perspective of social workers, appears to be the risk of lower levels of trust between social workers and the target group. Moreover, we have found that social workers question whether their involvement in PVE work puts their ability to serve and support their target group at risk.

How social workers handle ethical dilemmas like those referred to in this paper arguably depends on the nature of the jurisdiction. We found evidence of settlements – or practices that indicate settlements – of both shared, intellectual and subordinated jurisdiction, with the latter settlement apparently not being favourable to the social workers. As a semi-profession, social work lacks authority of knowledge and typically has less autonomy than classical dominant professions, like medicine or law. However, in multiagency PVE work alongside security workers, no typical dominant profession is present. Consequently, what direction PVE will evolve in terms of public and legal jurisdiction remains an open question.

As the ethical dilemmas involved touch upon basic traits in the social worker's professional role, these issues arguably deserve more debate. The outcome of the negotiations over jurisdictional authority might affect what it means to be a social worker and how such practitioners are able to carry out their societal-given mandate. In a still unsettled jurisdictional domain, one possible solution is closer engagement between personnel within security services and social workers at the systemic level to build a firmer understanding of each other's strengths and limitations. Also, strengthening the knowledge base of social workers and other "soft" professions and raising awareness of the knowledge these professions already possess might contribute to bolstering them in tough situations, both in and outside of client meetings and in multiagency cooperation. As we see it, social workers,

professional partners and target groups would profit from a firmer clarification of the lines between the different professional actors. If there actually is a subordination of social workers to security workers within multiagency PVE work, clients and other partners should become aware of this through a transparent statement of who, how and to what end social workers in PVE carry out their duties.

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## **Article II**

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## Trusting the Mistrusted: Norwegian Social Workers' Strategies in Preventing Radicalization and Violent Extremism

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### *Abstract*

Social workers are a part of the wider counter-terrorism efforts in many European countries, such as the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Belgium. While there are several theoretical and discursive studies on social workers' involvement in preventing violent extremism, few studies have explored and analyzed how these prevention workers understand radicalization and the strategies and approaches they employ. This paper addresses this research gap with findings from a qualitative study that utilized data from 17 individual in-depth interviews and two focus-group interviews of experienced social workers doing indicated prevention work against violent extremism in Norway. Goffman's frame analysis and Weber and Carter's theory on the construction of trust are applied to the findings. A thematic analysis found that, first, the participants frame radicalization cases in the same way they do other cases—as a social problem. Second, a two-way process of trust was revealed, as a critical component in their work is creating openings for dialogue about values and ideology. Contrary to other studies, this paper finds that social workers manage this work as close to “business as usual.” Also, it reveals that well-established strategies in social work, such as client-directed practice, Socratic questioning, and motivational interviewing, potentially play an important role in face-to-face prevention work against radicalization and violent extremism.

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### Introduction

Like many European countries, Norway has had its share of nationals travelling to the Middle East to fight for The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS]. By the end of 2015, at least 87 individuals had travelled, 17 had lost their lives, 40 were still in the area, and 30 had returned to Norway (Sandrup, Weiss, Skiple, & Hofoss, 2018). In addition, due to the existence of

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different extremist groups involving both Islamic extremists (Norwegian Police Security Service [PST], 2016) and the far right (PST, 2019), the issue of radicalization has risen to national attention. This has triggered financial subsidies for projects at the municipal level (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2017). When the Norwegian government launched its action plan and guidelines against radicalization and violent extremism in 2014 and 2015 (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security), social workers became part of the national strategy. Their role consisted of (1) preventing (further) radicalization among youth and adults and (2) providing follow-up services to known extremists, such as foreign fighters who had returned from Syria and Iraq.

Radicalization as a term and phenomenon has been debated (Sedgwick, 2010) and triggers the question “radical in relation to what?” (Neumann, 2013, p. 876). There is no agreed-upon definition of radicalization within the research community, but it is generally viewed as a process over time involving many factors (Borum, 2011; Compelo, Oppetit, Neau, Cohen, & Bronsard, 2018) through which individuals become more inclined toward carrying out violence, such as acts of terrorism (Christmann, 2012; Neumann, 2013). At the other end of the radicalization spectrum is deradicalization, which refers to changes in beliefs and attitudes—essentially, a cognitive transformation away from radicalization. Disengagement, however, refers exclusively to behavioral change and could include abandoning violent groups or ceasing the use of violence (Bjørgo & Gjelsvik, 2015; Bjørgo & Horgan, 2009; Horgan, 2009; Radicalisation Awareness Network [RAN], 2017).

The heterogeneous nature of radicalization triggers a broad spectrum of measures, in which social workers are one piece of the puzzle. Social work as a practice field includes a variety of problems and responsibilities and, thus, plays a logical part in this prevention work as well. Traditionally, social work has largely focused on individuals and groups and, to some extent, on the societal level; the very core of social work lies in relationships with clients (Lloyd, King, & Chenoweth, 2002). This involves becoming familiar with clients’ troubles and needs in order to help facilitate empowerment, support diversity, and promote social justice (International Federation of Social Workers [ISDF], 2014). Engaging with clients at

risk of (further) radicalization positions social workers within the indicated prevention category, where concern has already been raised to a higher level (Gordon, 1983).

Earlier in the 1990s, social workers were involved in preventing right-wing extremism, but working to prevent violent Islamic extremism represents a novel experience for social workers and municipalities in general (Bjørge & Gjelsvik, 2015). While there are theoretical and discursive studies on social workers' involvement in preventing radicalization (Guru, 2010; McKendrick & Finch, 2017; Stanley & Guru, 2015), research on how social workers understand radicalization and actually carry out this prevention work remains scarce. The discourse and concepts of radicalization and violent extremism have themselves been found to generate confusion and insecurity among front-line workers in the educational (Mattsson, 2018) and youth work (van de Weert & Eijkman, 2018) sectors, with van de Weert and Eijkman arguing that the uncertainty experienced by prevention workers may have led to arbitrary practices, prejudice, and stigmatization.

Furthermore, there is no single identifiable “profile” of individuals who engage in violent extremism (Sandrup et al., 2018). Instead, a range of reasons for joining extremist groups, as well as different socioeconomic backgrounds, have been identified (Borum, 2011; Compelo et al., 2018; LaFree, Jensen, James, & Safer-Lichtenstein, 2018; Rink & Sharma, 2018; Webber et al., 2018). Contributing to the knowledge about challenges and strategies in this field may be vital to establishing both appropriate and humane strategies to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. Thus, the aim of this research is to explore how Norwegian social workers understand radicalization as well as the strategies they use when working with youth and adults at risk of being (further) radicalized. This leads to the following research question:

- *How do social workers view and handle cases of radicalization?*

In order to answer the research question, this study applies Goffman's (1974) frame analysis, a way of exploring how we make sense of what we experience, and Weber and Carter's

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(2003) construction of trust. Both theories are used as they complement each other and elaborate on the findings in combination. But first, this article presents a short review of previous research involving social workers in multiagency cooperation to prevent radicalization and violent extremism.

### Literature Review

Internationally, many disengagement and deradicalization interventions are organized by the police, the criminal justice system, or counter-terrorism agencies. Ferguson (2016) has argued that it is worth considering moving these services to other branches of government that are less associated with security, as some European countries have. Several contributions on the engagement of social workers within the multiagency approach have raised concerns about the stigmatization of client groups, losing track of the profession, and becoming overly concerned with risk (Guru, 2010; Guru, 2012; McKendrick & Finch, 2017; Stanley & Guru, 2015; Stanley, Guru, & Coppock, 2017)

Safeguarding vulnerable youth and adults from radicalization has become part of the responsibility of child protection services and social work (Carlsson, 2017; United Kingdom Department for Education, 2015; Dryden, 2017; Lid et al., 2016; Stephansen, 2017). However, there are indications of uncertainty among social workers in this field; they are unsure of what constitutes potential risk factors for radicalization (Dryden, 2017) and experience professional uncertainty about how to identify and handle cases in which concern is raised (Chisholm & Coulter, 2017; Dryden, 2017; Lid et al., 2016). The risk factors for radicalization identified in the scholarly literature, such as experiences of loss, discrimination, and exclusion (Borum, 2011; Compelo et al., 2018; Rink & Sharma, 2018), apply to other problems as well, thereby increasing the risk of false positives (Rink & Sharma, 2018) and increasing the challenging nature of identification and prevention work.

A key observation in one study of universal and selective prevention workers was the need for a trusting relationship between participants in an intervention and the local

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community where the intervention is located. Also, the approaches used were similar to those from other prevention work (Ponsot, Autixier, & Madriaza, 2017). The same study found that the practitioners felt unequipped to carry out this work and sought additional support, training, and dissemination of practices (Ponsot et al., 2017). Similar uncertainty about what to look for in the process of identifying those at risk of (further) radicalization was found in other studies (Carmi & Gianfrancesco, 2017; Hemmingsen, 2015). Moreover, collecting and sharing information were found to be key in working to prevent radicalization, while actual intervention methods were largely unclear to social workers participating in a multiagency study (Stanley, Guru, & Gupta, 2018). A review by Bjørge and Gjelsvik (2015) outlined that, among other professionals, social workers were involved in work aimed at preventing right-wing extremism in the 1990s in Norway. According to their review, exit strategies—especially parent network meetings and methods for providing guidance and support to public services and families—were found to be effective in dealing with right-wing extremism. Several studies have also recommended various approaches, for example, motivational interviewing, Socratic questioning (RAN, 2017), and family interventions and strength-based approaches (Stanley et al., 2018). Lastly, when maneuvering into dialogue about ideology, remaining close to the client's own doubt while applying subtle strategies to reduce resistance was recommended by Dalgaard-Nielsen (2013).

The research on social workers' involvement in preventing radicalization and violent extremism has found that uncertainty exists regarding how to both identify and handle cases of radicalization. While trust was identified as important in an intervention (Ponsot et al., 2017), the same study also found that practitioners seek more support in terms of training and dissemination of methods. In the following, the current research article will present the theoretical framework applied here and, moreover, will explore how this prevention work is understood and actually carried out by expert social workers performing indicated prevention work. Indicated prevention work addresses cases where specific concern is raised as a consequence of the individuals' actions or statements (Gordon, 1983) and is typically

characterized by advanced stages of problems. The experiences and perspectives of these practitioners have to my knowledge not been included in previous research.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Frame analysis, as presented by Goffman (1974), is a way of exploring how we make sense of what we experience. Framing is a cognitive, often unconscious, process of identifying what is happening in a specific situation and is based on primary social frameworks within a culture (Goffman, 1974). In frame analysis, Goffman (1974) introduced keying as a means to understand one frame in reference to another. Keyings are thus references that help us understand what is going on around us. When introducing keyings, Goffman (1974) referred to Gregory Batson and his observations of otters playfighting in the zoo. The otters' activity, playfighting, is based on the same pattern as fighting, with smaller adjustments. To the otters, and the spectators in the zoo, it is obvious this is play while at the same time based on something much more serious: fighting. The keying is thus a transformation of something meaningful (the primary social framework) into something patterned on this activity.

In addition to frame analysis, the current paper adds Weber and Carter's (2003) social construction of trust to its theoretical framework. Weber and Carter (2003) argue that trust construction and relationship building are simultaneous processes; the construction of trust allows for the construction of the relationship. Time is an essential part of building trust, and Weber and Carter (2003) argued that trust is neither something that can be given, nor appear in initial encounters, but is constructed through human interaction and the passing of time itself. Similarly, certain roles in society are associated with more trust (for example, our parents or a police officer), and our behavior toward these roles is influenced by our trust in them. Power is associated with structural roles, and this is the ability one has to do whatever one wants or to make others do as one pleases.

Factors that influence the initial process of trust include the meeting individuals' predisposition for (dis)trust, their physical appearance, their personality, common points of

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reference, and their behavior. In addition to time, self-disclosure and perspective-taking are pillars of trust (Weber & Carter, 2003). Self-disclosure is an essential part of the next step in initiating interpersonal relationships and trust and enables the individuals to surpass surface knowledge of each other. Some level of reciprocity is recommended so that neither has more knowledge about the other. Equality in a relationship implies an equal risk and vulnerability. In disclosing something personal, temporality is a key issue: “Knowing when to disclose and what to disclose at that time is an ongoing dilemma in relationship construction. Disclosing an intimacy about the self at the wrong point in time can create a problem in the development of that relationship” (Weber & Carter, 2003, p. 31).

Likewise, the response to disclosure is of similar importance, and how this is managed by the receiving individual influences the construction of trust. Both confidentiality and not passing judgment are factors that Weber and Carter (2003) have highlighted as critical. Information that could possibly result in a negative image of the one disclosing it must not be shared with others, and the person passing judgment creates a negative evaluation of the person being judged. Fear of negative evaluation is something that prevents disclosure and has the power to end a relationship and ruin trust. Likewise, when the self is affirmed through positive evaluation, trust is built. Weber and Carter (2003) have drawn a clear distinction between being nonjudgmental and always agreeing with what is disclosed by the other. This relates to the third main component in the construction of trust: perspective-taking.

Weber and Carter’s perspective-taking is based on Mead’s concept: “According to Mead (1934), taking the perspective of the other entails the imaginative placement of oneself in the shoes of the other and viewing the world as the other would view it” (Weber & Carter, 2003, p. 45). The construction of trust is complete when both individuals know the other’s perspective, and this perspective influences their decision making, what Weber and Carter (2003) call enactment. Trust is thus a way of relating to the other because, knowing that trust is established, we act in a certain way toward each other and expect a certain treatment in return (Weber & Carter, 2003).

## Methodology

This is a qualitative in-depth study of experienced social workers' perspectives and experiences with preventing (further) radicalization and violent extremism (Blaikie, 2010). The research focused on several agencies and municipalities, and qualitative data were collected in the eastern, middle, and western parts of Norway, in both large cities and smaller municipalities. The participants were found and recruited using purposeful sampling to obtain information-rich cases (Yin, 2016). This process started by using my own professional network as well as local managers and coordinators to gain access to front-line practitioners involved in this area of work. The snowball method, or chain referral, was used to reach additional informants through their professional networks (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

### *Participants*

There is no standard way of organizing this particular prevention work in Norway. Thus, the participants were selected from child protection services, welfare services, outreach services, and various projects. Though employed in different services, the participants shared commonalities in terms of experience, tasks, and responsibilities in providing services to clients at risk of (further) radicalization. They mainly carry out indicated prevention work when concern has already been raised (Gordon, 1983). Their clients are recruited through various channels, such as from other caseworkers in child protection or social services, from the police, or from schools. The sampled participants gave a broad insight into the methods and strategies used in their face-to-face meetings with clients.

Data triangulation, which seeks several ways to verify findings (Yin, 2016), was performed by conducting 17 in-depth interviews and two focus-group interviews, with five participants in each session. The five participants in the focus groups were recruited from the in-depth interviews, and they all participated in both focus groups. The two focus group interviews comprised the last stage of the process, and topics from the in-depth interviews were discussed and explored in the groups to shed further light on them. The interviews had a

mean length of 101 minutes. There were both female (6) and male (11) informants, with a mean age of 39 years. About half of the informants (8) had master's degrees as their highest educational attainment, while the other half had bachelor's degrees (9). All were experienced social workers with a mean of 12.5 years of social work practice and a mean of 3.5 years of practice preventing radicalization and violent extremism.

#### *Ethical considerations*

The research was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data on February 01, 2018 (project no. 58477). Information about the research project, its methodology, aim, and confidentiality, as well as the consent form was provided either in paper or by email to the potential participants early in the recruitment process. This information was repeated prior to the interviews. Consent forms were collected before the interviews. The forms were stored in a locked cabinet at campus. Audio recordings of interviews were securely stored according to guidelines of the University of Stavanger. To assure the participants' discretion, all data were anonymized.

#### *Analysis*

The data collection, transcription, and analysis were ongoing and overlapped throughout 2018, making it possible to later explore topics that were partially unanswered in the early stages of the data collection. A six-phase thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with an abductive approach has been applied in this paper. Thematic analysis, as set forth by Braun and Clarke (2006), starts with getting to know the transcripts and generating initial codes. Examining and reviewing the codes reveals the initial themes. In this process, I went back and forth among transcripts, codes, and themes to evaluate their coherence or distinction from one another (cf Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). After a review of the themes, two main themes and three subthemes emerged, as illustrated in Figure 1.

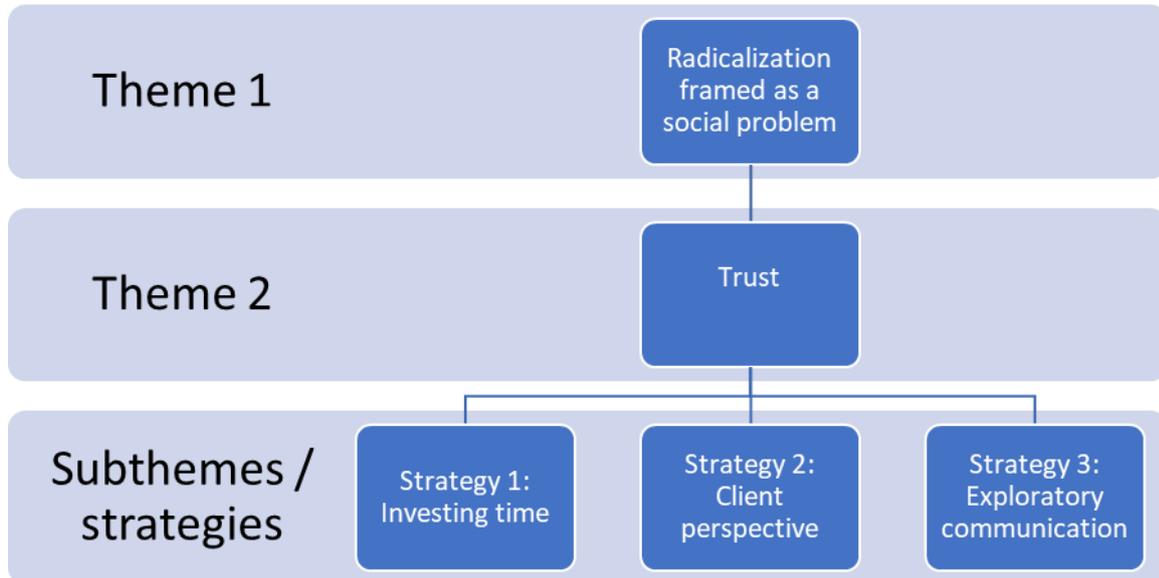


Figure 1. Model of social workers' approaches to handling cases of radicalization.

## Findings

### *Theme 1: Radicalization understood as a social problem*

Throughout the analysis, the overall perception of how social workers understand radicalization stood out—as a social problem. Both explicitly and indirectly, the social workers frame this task in a similar manner as they do other tasks. Radicalization is understood as the result of the interplay between risk factors and protective factors. The framing of radicalization in this way enables the social workers to use traditional approaches within social work and is, thus, a familiar task to them. One participant's statement illustrates an understanding of radicalization and the risk factors involved, which was common to a majority of the informants:

*But it's just youth in crisis. It is just youths who have challenges in the same way as other youths who have challenges in other areas. So, I think that it goes back to seeing the person [not the symptom]. (Participant 5)*

Yet another participant addressed this in relation to marginalization and exclusion:

*I can say briefly what I've noticed. At least I have been very concerned with preventing exclusion. Basically, I think it's a lot about just that—lack of affiliation, perhaps not having anything, perhaps being unemployed, perhaps not attending school. Somehow finding a way to get people back to society again is our job. And that is much the same as what we otherwise do—to prevent exclusion, to create a sense of belonging. (Participant in focus group 1)*

This framing of radicalization can be understood through Goffman's (1974) keyings. The keying presented in the second statement (i.e., lack of affiliation, being unemployed, dropping out of school) shows how the participants understand radicalization through this primary framework. The risk factors presented in the statement are common risk factors that apply to several problems social workers typically deal with. This framing appears to be transferred to the cases of radicalization. Balancing risk factors and protective factors with their clients is an everyday task for social workers (Traube, James, Zhang, & Landsverk, 2012; Wilkins, 2015). Understanding radicalization in this way influences practices and approaches by making the clients' social issues the priority. The second theme, trust, is a result of the first theme. In the following, we explore trust and the methods social workers apply in their prevention work.

### *Theme 2: Trust*

Prior to exploring any sensitive topics related to values and ideologies (e.g., support for extremist organizations, such as ISIS), the participants strive to establish trust between

themselves and their clients. Trust is found to be a goal itself, as well as a component in the strategies that will be presented in the following.

*It's all about relationship building. And without it, you won't get anywhere. They must, first of all, feel confident in me. So, it's all about building a relationship where they understand my agenda—and that it's not to somehow monitor and help the police with security tasks. I have nothing to do with that. My agenda is to help my users get on in life. I am very clear about that, all the way. (Participant 10)*

Gaining trust requires the informants to apply different strategies in face-to-face meetings in order to establish themselves as trustworthy. The above shows how one participant uses clarification of role and agenda to establish himself as an authentic social worker who can be trusted. This particular strategy was identified by the majority of the participants and is applied in combination with a sensitive and curious approach to the clients. Clarification of the social worker's role and agenda was, often repeatedly, highlighted as an essential part of the initial phase of contact. This establishing of initial trust appears to act as a structure on which the subsequent methods and approaches come to rely. Thus, trust is both a goal and a means to carry out later prevention strategies.

*Again, it's all about the relationship. I have been very focused on that. I can't give you any recipe for how to get them to lower their guard, but I focus on establishing a good relationship. It has been alpha and omega, and I have been clear on my role and clear about who and what I have to report, and to whom. But I've also given a lot of myself, like me personally, too. (Participant 11)*

This quote shows that the participant's focus is also on establishing some basic level of trust in the relationship and he utilizes a clarification of his role and agenda to do that. Additionally, and contrary to the previous participant's statement, he also opens up some

personal parts of his life to his clients. While not stated explicitly, this opening up was revealed when he spoke about how to get his clients to trust him by getting them to lower their guard. The act of opening up, aimed at establishing some form of reciprocity, is thus personally seen as a strategy in gaining clients' trust (Weber & Carter, 2003).

*It is essential, that relationship. The first thing I do is that I focus on the relationship with my users. I have users who meet up every day. We do normal things together—we eat together, we drink coffee together—we do everyday things. Things that do not relate to Syria, or some Nazi demonstration. There are only two people sitting and talking, drinking coffee. (Participant in focus group 1)*

The statement above describes a situation and strategy that do not appear to include opening up about one's personal life or be focused on changing the client's behavior or beliefs. On the contrary, it portrays a strategy that aims to connect two individuals through shared experiences in everyday life. Two of the informants did, however, mention that there is a possibility they were being naïve and that their trust could be manipulated by the clients to reduce the concern regarding (further) radicalization. The following examples of strategies (subthemes) will exemplify and elaborate on how the participants move on to prevent radicalization and violent extremism.

#### *Strategy 1: Investing time*

Time is identified, either explicitly or implied, as a major component in the participants' work to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. In the exchange below, the participant's experience is that time spent is of value itself, which may further open up to other areas of the clients' lives:

*Interviewer: What do you think is most important when working to prevent radicalization?*

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*Participant: Spend enough time.*

*Interviewer: To get to know them?*

*Participant: Yes, and then many of the other things just come naturally. You become more familiar with the person. Try to create trust. Work more with relationships, and then the other elements come naturally. You can talk about family, childhood, as much as possible. You have a better base for exploring that then. (Participant 8)*

In addition to spending actual time trying to get to know the individuals with whom they work and build trust through time, the participants also highlighted how they themselves invest their own time in being available. While this is not imposed by their employers, they themselves recognized it and their experience as social workers as ways to show they are willing to invest private hours in getting to know their clients, even after “office hours”:

*Interviewer: It sounds like you have to be pretty close to them, to be there when it happens, regardless of what it may be.*

*Participant: Yes, this takes a lot of time and it requires flexibility and availability. So when you receive a text message in the evening, at half past 10, then you have to answer it. And it may very well be messages going back and forth that lasts an hour. There may be some things they wonder about, and then, you show that “I am here. I am here for you.” I think that is the common denominator for all this work. Availability. (Participant 5)*

The participants in this study invest time in the relationship with their clients in order to make it secure, thus making it possible to move closer to the more sensitive matters of ideology:

*It's about creating a situation where the other doesn't get defensive and you can show that you do not agree with what is being uttered. But that requires a relationship, a relationship where the two are secure about each other. Otherwise you leave it be.*

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*Then, you can try to move on to some other topic, and then, you wait for a time where you can get back to the case, where you say what you mean. You do this when you are confident that this will not result in a confrontation, that it will be a dialogue, a conversation about a thing. It is about equality, being equal in that debate. And then, they have the right to tell you their thoughts, express themselves, what they mean. Only then will you have a constructive conversation. It is very important, and very difficult. I think at first, it's the hardest. Because you don't know each other well. And that takes time. Time is everything, time is gold, to get into these situations. (Participant in focus group 2)*

Above, the participant shows that the combination of investing time and applying a sensitive touch to his approaches to ideology makes a significant contribution to moving the working relationship toward a dialogue between two individuals and to establishing some level of equality.

#### *Strategy 2: Client perspective*

An overall strategy identified by the participants in the early stages of contact with a new client is to strive to understand and identify the client's needs by taking into account the client's perspective. This strategy makes the social worker disregard, at least temporarily, the various expressions of extreme attitudes and ideologies as well as draw attention away from security and risk concern. The statements below give insight into this.

*About the goal of that kind of working relationship, first, one has to identify what the youth needs in the eyes of the youth, and it is not always beneficial to focus too much on the concern for radicalization. It's an open topic when we get in touch—"This is a concern they have for you," and so on—but then, we put it aside a bit and ask, "Who are you, really?" Then, we start from there with common ways of approaching young*

*people: get to know the youth as they see themselves and understand what their needs are. (Participant 3)*

One participant emphasized that viewing the client's perspective, through their needs, is an important approach in this prevention work, as is investing a lot of time in establishing a relationship, which incorporates both perspective-taking and time (cf Weber & Carter, 2003):

*Interviewer: If you were to say the thing that you have experienced that works, what would that be?*

*Participant: I think that, as much as possible, try to meet their needs.*

*Interviewer: Do you start with that?*

*Participant: Yes, and spend a lot of time establishing a good relationship. Then, you can try to work further to explore their background, family relationships, social networks, and so on. (Participant 8)*

While the participants in this study consider spending time getting to know the clients' needs, and being available for them, to be important, they also have to have a sensitive touch regarding how and when to address the topics of either supporting or joining organizations like ISIS. One participant explained that she is cautious about pointing out the danger of travelling to Syria and joining ISIS. While not overlooking the concern for travelling to Syria, the participant focuses on the client's needs, here and now, through the client's perspective. This approach transforms the working situation from being risk- and security-oriented to being client-focused and regards their needs in accordance with their own experience of what they actually need.

*Yes. It took quite some time. But I spent that time on the relationship. Without the relationship, you will get nowhere. If at first you say to a youth that "I'm worried about you. Are you going to travel [to Syria]? It is dangerous there"—things like*

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*that—then they are going to distance themselves from you. They will be scared. They aren't identified by the system so often, but they need help. [...] I helped her with many things, physical health, going to a doctor, helping her find housing, helping her with social services, getting her finances—she had nothing. And I have shown all the time that I am interested in hearing what she has to say and I was very accessible to her. Sometimes I was with her for a whole day, maybe 10 hours even, just me and her. So, I felt like I was getting her confidence over time. (Participant 17)*

Identifying and focusing on clients' needs and taking their perspectives into account is a well-known strategy in social work, and the statements above paint a picture of the participants' work as being close to “business as usual.”

### *Strategy 3: Exploratory communication*

The third strategy revealed was the participants' use of well-established strategies for communication, such as Socratic questioning and motivational interviewing, the aim of which is to reduce resistance from clients and to create open dialogue. The following two statements reflect how the participants use these strategies to further explore and work with their clients' perspectives and thoughts.

*Instead of showing a dismissive attitude toward their opinions, I try to be curious and make him explain his ideology more, do a deep dive. Because there is something about the reasoning that they have to do then. It's like a Socratic approach, where you ask questions and then you get a new answer; then, you often branch it further and further into that person. It promotes some reasoning rather than the rejection they often receive when speaking their opinion elsewhere. (Participant 7)*

In addition to getting to know the clients better and making their perspectives accessible for the social workers, this strategy is also used to promote the clients' reasoning as well as to signal that they can talk about these topics with the social workers.

*Interviewer: Is that a conscious strategy, to ask and be curious instead of confronting?*

*Participant: Yes, I think it's very important that we are curious. I think confronting accomplishes very little, really. Being more curious, I think it's easier for them to tell me then than if I'm more confrontational, like "Why do you mean that?" It's not always that easy, though. But I think it can be important.*

*Interviewer: Your wondering gives you some answers, that you know more about them maybe, understand them in another way. But what do you think your wondering leads to for them?*

*Participants: I hope it signals that I care and sincerely want to know more about them, try to understand them in a different way. At the same time, it somehow legitimizes that they should be allowed to feel what they feel, and it can possibly open up for them to talk about it. (Participant in focus group 2)*

The approaches presented above, characterized by a curious and exploratory mode, were revealed by informants from a range of sites and services. They constitute a typical strategy when addressing a client's ideologies and values. Both motivational interviewing and Socratic questioning were explicitly stated as favored communication strategies by several participants. Their communication strategies are anchored to the goal of gaining insight into their clients' most inner workings—their feelings, thoughts, values, and ideologies. This strengthens the participants' position as well within the realm of client-directed practices. The participants' own professional thoughts and working goals are put aside in favor of the clients'.

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## Discussion

The two main findings in this study are that social workers appear to frame the task of preventing radicalization and violent extremism in a similar manner to other tasks and that trust is a key component in their approach to the clients. Yet, in the multidisciplinary field of preventing radicalization and violent extremism, these approaches appear to be little characterized by risk and security concerns. Trust is specifically presented as a goal itself. However, as the strategies they employ in this prevention work were explored, it became clear that trust is also given indirectly by the participants to their clients. Thus, trust is a two-way approach that social workers utilize as a strategy in preventing radicalization and violent extremism. Being involved in a multiagency approach to prevent radicalization and violent extremism, the participants' strategies emerged somewhat surprisingly and were contrary to my assumptions of what I might find. Security work and risk assessments were strongly overshadowed by a client-oriented approach aimed at identifying and working toward the clients' own goals. Also, as the findings show, there was little evidence of professional uncertainty as to how to handle the cases. The discussions that follow will apply Goffman's (1974) frame analysis, Weber and Carter's (2003) construction of trust, and previous research findings to the findings above.

### *Radicalization understood as a social problem*

The first theme identified in the analysis was that the study participants framed this specific prevention work in the same way they framed their work in general. Framing (Goffman, 1974) is a way of creating and re-creating an understanding of reality, often simplifying and condensing the world "out there" (Snow & Benford, 1992, p. 137). The participants' framing appears to be client-oriented, with an aim to establish trust and confidentiality before moving on to supportive measures and sensitive matters of ideology. Thus, social workers carry out their work in a traditional manner. This was highlighted as an intentional strategy by some informants, with others providing various examples indicating it.

As part of a multiagency cooperation with police and police security services, this framing and its consequence establish the participants' authenticity as social workers vis-à-vis their clients. Both the framing and how the social workers perform this prevention work add to their trustworthiness.

While it is impossible to explicitly state on behalf of others what the clients expect from social workers, social workers themselves claim to stand for principles of respect for individuals and diversity, to not do harm, and to promote social development, change, and empowerment of people (ISDF, 2014). The transition of a primary social worker frame onto the work of preventing radicalization and violent extremism appears to establish the desired image of their role in this multidisciplinary approach as trustworthy social workers.

### *Trust*

A trusting relationship between client and social worker is important (Smith, 2001) and is something that needs to be established over time before clients feel sufficiently secure to reveal very sensitive problems (Weinstein, Levine, Kogan, Harkavay-Friedman, & Miller, 2000). The need to secure confidentiality in social work practice has been argued by many scholars as a cornerstone of trust, essential to building an effective working relationship (Aamodt, 2014; McLaren, 2007). Moreover, it has been argued that, in order for social workers to be perceived as trustworthy, they must perform their work in a way that reflects social norms and professional values (Ponnert & Svensson, 2016). In addition, clients generally seek signs that both parties are committed to the relationship and that positive relational signals provide a sense of security (McLaren, 2007). This explains how the participants perceive the importance of investing time in the process of establishing contact and clarifying their role and agenda. As shown above, this is generally found in social work; however, in the context of preventing radicalization and violent extremism, this may be of even more importance because the ideologies to which some of these individuals subscribe involve acts of violence, which are illegal. Weber and Carter's (2003) concept of trust is constructed of several elements that build trust in an interpersonal relationship. In the

following, the discussion will apply these elements of trust construction to the strategies and approaches identified in Norwegian social workers' efforts to prevent radicalization and violent extremism.

### *Time*

This study finds, both explicitly and indirectly, that time itself is a very important component in the process of establishing a trusting relationship between social workers and clients. According to Weber and Carter (2003), the passing of time itself contributes significantly to creating trust in an interpersonal relationship. Interestingly, the participants in this study revealed no sense of alertness or sensation when it comes to working with the topic of radicalization and violent extremism, and there was also little evidence of professional uncertainty. This finding is in contrast to earlier studies of social workers involved in the same work (Chisholm & Coulter, 2017; Dryden, 2017; Lid et al., 2016; Mattsson, 2018; van de Weert & Eijkman, 2018).

My findings indicate that the social workers' framing of their task influences how they carry out their work. This might, to some extent, also explain why they manage to invest time and not be overwhelmed by their clients' values and ideologies in the early stages of contact. In one of the statements presented in the findings, the participant explains that spending a lot of time with his clients is the one strategy that he would highlight as most important in this work. The participant's experience is that, through spending time together, they get to know each other and insights into other parts of the clients' lives come naturally. Similarly, one of the other participants explained that he just spends time with his clients, at times doing normal things like having coffee, eating, and just talking. This adds another element to the building of trust: reciprocity. While their relationship is not equal due to social norms and their different roles to each other, this practice appears to move the social worker out of the office and its power and into a more neutral way of engaging in the relationship with the client. According to Weber and Carter (2003), this strategy is applied to even out the imbalance of their positions and strive to create reciprocity. While social workers are not typically authoritative,

their part in the multidisciplinary approach connects them to authorities, such as the police and the police security service (e.g. PST). This strategy can be understood as establishing the participants as trustworthy and “there to help,” not control.

### *Self-disclosure*

An extensive reciprocated self-disclosure of private or intimate information is outside of the social worker–client relation. Therefore, establishing an interpersonal relationship that follows the exact same construction thus seems somewhat wrong, as boundaries have been identified to protect both client and social worker (O’Leary, Tsui, & Ruch, 2013). Reciprocity, therefore, must be achieved by other means, such as clarifying agenda and role. The social context and structure within which the relationship evolves are associated with factors that can both bolster and impair the possibility of trust. Social workers are in need of clients’ trust (Smith, 2001), and the clients are in need of the social workers’ confidentiality and time. Although a different kind of reciprocation, it is still a form of it. In the securitized field of preventing radicalization and violent extremism, disclosing and revealing agendas, priorities, and cooperation with other services is one way of presenting self-disclosure to their clients. In one particular statement, a participant in this study revealed that he was clear about his agenda all the way, indicating that this was brought up at an early point in the relationship with the client. Likewise, another participant stated that he makes it clear that he sometimes has to report information to other authorities. He also revealed that he chooses to give a lot of himself personally. As mentioned in the section about investing time itself in the relationship, some of the participants also seem to make an effort to reduce the imbalance of their positions by seeking ways of creating reciprocity in situations where it is otherwise rarely found. This is achieved by doing regular things together, such as drinking coffee, eating, and talking about normal things, as well as by helping clients get to the doctor, assisting in their financial situation, being available, and showing them respect.

While self-disclosure might be a valuable part of an intervention, researchers have struggled with how much to reveal and when (Gibson, 2012). The temporality of disclosing

sensitive information was given attention by the participants in the current study, and it appears that, in early stages of contact, duties and responsibilities are disclosed to the clients, as is how they themselves understand their role and task. This kind of self-disclosure is referred to as transparency disclosure by Knight (2012) and is viewed as less disruptive to a client session than more personal disclosures, which she refers to as self-involving disclosures. Other researchers have found that professionals' self-disclosure provides a sense of symmetry and gives clients a chance to relax for a while (Audet & Everall, 2010). The openness about their part in the multidisciplinary approach was something that the participants in the current study themselves presented to their clients. Concern for role ambiguity and discrepancies have been identified in earlier studies related to social workers involved in preventing radicalization and violent extremism (McKendrick & Finch, 2017; Stanley, Guru, & Coppock, 2017). This may explain why disclosure of multiagency cooperation was of concern for this study's participants.

The other side of self-disclosure in this case is how the participants respond to clients' disclosure of personal thoughts and ideology. One of the statements in the findings section presents a social worker who is clearly focused on not passing judgment on his client's opinions but instead responds with curiosity. Children and youth have previously emphasized the importance of competent and trustworthy social workers when choosing to disclose abuse (Thulin, Kjellgren, & Nilsson, 2019). A positive and nonjudgmental response to private disclosure has the potential to evolve the trusting relationship further as well as to explore the perspective of the other (Weber & Carter, 2003).

### *Perspective-taking*

Self-disclosure is a personalized sharing of information that creates the possibility of taking the other's perspective into account. Weber and Carter (2003) have emphasized that perspective-taking, within the confines of interpersonal relationships, is one of the most important steps in creating trust. Perspective-taking, in combination with confidentiality and nonjudgmental responses, can lead to decision making that is highly affected by the other's

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situation. This study's participants have perspective-taking as a common thread in their identified practices, although not being explicitly aimed to create trust. The participants shared that they seek to get to know their clients, while applying various strategies to explore and understand their thoughts. Perspective-taking has also been found to motivate forgiveness for a possible violent outgroup target in a two-part study of Israelis and Palestinians (Noor & Halabi, 2018). The authors of that study found that, irrespective of a present threat, perspective-taking can lead to increased motivation to forgive as well as increased interpersonal liking towards the target of the perspective-taking. Noor and Halabi (2018) point out that perspective-taking generally leads to more favorable attitudes and gestures to the individuals or groups in mind. This might influence and strengthen the social workers' willingness and ability to engage in empathic and exploratory dialogue about their clients' attitudes, values and ideology. While Weber and Carter (2003) emphasized perspective-taking as a key element in the construction of trust, it was also found that having the client as an active part in the working relationship has other benefits as well.

Research on predictors of addiction intervention outcomes has found that, regardless of the type and intensity of the intervention, client engagement is the best predictor of positive outcomes (Miller, Mee-Lee, Plum, & Hubble, 2005) and that the client should play a leading role in the work (Duncan & Miller, 2000). Moreover, the therapeutic relationship between the social worker and client has been found to contribute 5–10 times more to the outcome than the method or approach used in the intervention (Miller et al., 2005). While these findings may not be directly transferrable to work in which concern for (further) radicalization has been raised, there are commonalities. For example, meetings are face to face, and the social worker seeks the client's own understanding of his or her situation and problems before initiating the various measures and services available. By directing the focus to the client's own understanding, and thus sticking to the more traditional supportive role of social work, the social worker simultaneously draws focus away from the concern for engagement in or support for violent organizations. This focus may add to the social worker's trustworthiness.

Taking into account the clients' perspectives regarding their needs, and working to

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support them, has also been found to have a secondary effect, along with increasing the chance of success in interventions. The counsellors' facilitative attitudes correlate with their clients' trust in them. This trust enables clients to confront and work through difficult issues in therapy (Peschken & Johnson, 1997). With these previous research findings in mind, the findings of this study indicate that trust itself may create openings for dialogue about ideology. Motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2012) and Socratic questioning (Braun, Strunk, Sasso, & Cooper, 2015) are strategies, or components of strategies, aimed at exploring and influencing thoughts and behavior. These and other behavioral techniques require client participation, and establishing a therapeutic relationship is especially important in this context (Turner & Rowe, 2013). This communicates an impression of the social worker as an empathic individual (Lord, Sheng, Imel, Baer, & Atkins, 2015) and sparks client activity and cooperation (Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2010) in the work. These approaches appear as a consequence of the participants' framing of radicalization as a social problem and may contribute to establishing the social worker as trustworthy in a field with mixed professions, where agendas might be unclear. The identified strategies have similarities with the recommendations from RAN (2017), Stanley et al. (2018), and Dalgaard-Nielsen (2013) in relation to focusing on strength-based approaches and staying close to client narratives to reduce their resistance in dialogue.

While the concern for client manipulation was only mentioned by two of the informants, the phenomenon is possibly more relevant in this specific context than in other helping relations. Gaining the therapist's trust, or taking advantage of the therapist's desire to be perceived as caring and liked, is something that manipulative individuals might try to exploit (Hepworth, 1993). While the police and security services manage their concern regardless of how cooperating agencies manage their own, the social workers' voices and perspectives on their clients might, and should, influence how the clients are looked upon in this multidisciplinary cooperation. Hence, efforts to manipulate social workers' level of concern by playing with their trust is worth being aware of.

*How do these findings compare to those of other studies?*

Previous research has uncovered that social workers are insecure about how to handle cases of radicalization and that they have called for dissemination of practices and methods in this field. The present study explored how experienced social workers in Norway perceive radicalization and the strategies and methods used in their indicated prevention work.

The present findings are somewhat consistent with some of the findings from Ponsot et al. (2017) in regard to the need for a trusting relationship between the participants in an intervention. The uncertainty about how to handle cases found by Lid et al. (2016), Ponsot et al. (2017), and Stanley et al. (2018) was only marginally identified in this study. This may be explained by the focus of the study on addressing what they were actually doing. The participants themselves are experienced, which could lead to several answers about professional certainty. They could do what they always do, “play it safe,” so to speak, when confronted with a new task. Or they might have a broader capacity to evaluate the task at hand and how to deal with it. While a few of the informants did experience some uncertainty, others may have overcome uncertainty through how they frame the task of preventing violent extremism—as a social problem. However, this study contributes significantly to the research gap by adding the experience of those doing indicated prevention work, where a higher level of concern is found. Also, this study’s unique finding is that trust is not only something that social workers seek to receive from their clients but is also something that they give in return, indirectly through their chosen approaches. This is found to create potential for a reciprocated working relationship, opening up the path to further explore, and possibly influence, clients’ ideologies.

*Limitations*

While this paper fills a gap in the research on how prevention work against violent extremism is carried out, there are some limitations regarding the findings. As presented earlier, there is no single profile of individuals who become radicalized and engage in violent extremism. Thus, nuanced, individually managed, and context-sensitive measures should be

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applied by local prevention workers, police, and security services. This study engaged with first-line social workers in Norway and explored their strategies and approaches without trying to evaluate effectiveness. There is a risk of selection bias when recruiting participants, especially through own connections and network. In this study, I strived to recruit social workers from a variety of services located in different regions of Norway, that would complement each other and provide both rich and nuanced descriptions of their experiences. The study only grasped how social workers appeared to frame the risk of radicalization and their profession-based responses to it. Therefore, it is important to keep the Norwegian context and profession of the participants in mind when interpreting the findings. Also, the low number of participants (n=17) must be taken into account.

## Conclusion

The current research sought to explore and analyze how Norwegian social workers both view and handle cases of radicalization and engaged with experienced social workers with responsibilities and tasks in preventing radicalization in several municipalities in Norway. This paper has revealed that social workers both frame and target radicalization cases in a similar manner as they frame other cases—as a social problem.

The participants highlighted that, in the context of preventing radicalization and violent extremism, clarifications regarding roles and agenda are crucial to establishing trust in the early stages of contact, as is investing time and taking the clients' perspectives into account. Intentionally or otherwise, a traditional social work approach to cases of radicalization seems to generate both trust and cooperation with clients. This creates openings for social workers to address more sensitive matters regarding values, ideology, and support for various violent organizations. This article contributes to a fairly scarce body of evidence regarding practices aimed at preventing radicalization and violent extremism. It both emphasizes earlier findings of the need for trust and expands the state of knowledge in the current research field by adding the traditional social worker approach. The unique finding in

this paper is that trust is not only something the social workers strive to receive from their clients but is also something that they give in return through their methods. This paper also finds that well-established strategies in social work, such as client-directed practice, Socratic questioning, and motivational interviewing, are used in preventing radicalization and violent extremism and that first-line practitioners may use methods to which they are accustomed in a potential new field of practice.

This study's findings have implications for practice in both social work in general and the broader counter-terrorism field. The development of trust, both in and from the clients, may trigger a vital client engagement in a field where they might feel mistrusted and under surveillance by local and state authorities. Future studies should further explore strategies used in prevention work through both interviews and observations, as well as how interventions are experienced by those on the receiving end. Former members of violent organizations should be included in studies to explore strategies and attempts to manipulate professionals involved in this multidisciplinary approach. Additionally, studies involving various government services and clients should be developed to assess the effect of these interventions and their ethical implications.

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## **Article III**

Haugstvedt, H. & Gunnarsdottir, H., M. (Submitted 2021). Managing Role Expectations and Emotions in Encounters with Extreme Ideology: Norwegian Social Workers' Experiences. *Under review in Qualitative Social Work*

# **Managing Role Expectations and Emotions in Encounters with Extreme Ideology: Norwegian Social Workers' Experiences**

## **Abstract**

To prevent radicalisation and violent extremism, many European countries have adopted a multiagency approach, consisting of both police, teachers and social workers. Such strategies have caused concern for a securitization of social policy and stigmatization of vulnerable groups. This study aims at gaining insight into how Norwegian social workers involved in prevention work against violent extremism experience and manage role conflicts and emotions during interaction with their clients. This article presents findings from 17 individual and two focus group interviews which indicate that social workers experience emotional strain caused by role conflicts and emotional dissonance within a securitized field of social work. To handle these challenges, social workers apply a dynamic combination of surface and deep acting strategies, at both the reactive and proactive level, such as 'keeping a brave face', 'Character acting' and 'Adopting the client's perspective'. Our findings contribute to expanding both the empirical and conceptual understanding of emotion management at work, and provides a novel insight into how prevention work against violent extremism is perceived by social workers. Also, in a field influenced by security rhetoric, our study gives encouraging new knowledge about how social workers can resist falling into oppressive and controlling practices by seeking to engage with and understand their clients' human side, and relate this to own life.

**Keywords:** social work, violent extremism, role conflicts, emotion management

## **Introduction**

Social workers have become a part of the preventive work against radicalisation and violent extremism (PVE) in many European countries, such as the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden and Norway (Lid *et al.*, 2016; Finch *et al.*, 2019). Their preventive work in countering violent extremism is related to direct client work with youth and adults who may support or participate in both right wing extremist or Islamic extremist organisations (Lid *et al.*, 2016). The concept of radicalization is debated, linked to the war on terror (McKendrick and Finch, 2016), and associated with unclarity (Neumann, 2013). While still debated in academic literature, the term is used to describe a cognitive and behavioural development towards an ideology leading to the use of violence to reach its goals (Koehler, 2017).

By preventive work, we refer to selective and indicative measures directed at single individuals or groups for whom concern for radicalisation has already been raised (Bjørgero, 2016). These interventions are often categorized as either disengagement or deradicalization strategies, the first addressing behaviour and the second cognition and ideology (Koehler, 2017). In Norway, individuals in both Islamic extremist groups, and right wing extremists groups are associated with many socioeconomic risk factors, such as trauma, substance abuse and being out of work or education (PST, 2016, 2019). Hence, individual support to manage such problems are sought provided (Lid *et al.*, 2016), often through traditional social work strategies revolving around the clients' own understanding of his/her problems (Haugstvedt, 2019).

Preventing violent extremism is normally associated with hard measures, such as control and surveillance (Qurashi, 2018). Meanwhile, the core values of social work are supporting diversity and social justice, care and emancipation of clients (International Association of Schools of Social Work [IASSW], 2018). Social work has been described as a professions where one will execute both social care and social control (IASSW, 2018). This tension is

possibly even more present in PVE work. The central practices of social work; building trusting relations and supporting empowerment, diversity and social justice, can be in conflict with attitudes of suspicion, distrust and hostility towards the clients (Finch *et al.*, 2019). Further, client encounters in PVE can typically last for hours or even a whole day (Haugstvedt, 2019). Thus, the importance of this work weighs heavily on practitioners' shoulders. However, social workers are competent to help individuals where concern for radicalisation has been raised, as the profession has insight into trauma, alienation and other possible roots of radicalization, and the system that handles such issues (Staller, 2019).

Involving social workers in national PVE strategies has raised concern of a securitization of social policy (Ragazzi, 2017), soft policing of vulnerable groups (McKendrick and Finch, 2016), and stigmatization of Muslims as potential terrorists (Qurashi, 2018). Past research has found uncertainty among social workers when handling cases of violent extremism (Lid *et al.*, 2016). Such experiences may reduce workers' capacity to perspective-taking and empathy (Todd *et al.*, 2015), which may lead to a practice of hiding or faking emotions in client encounters - strategies associated with cynical depersonalisation of work tasks (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002).

While this topic is scarcely described in the scholarly literature, there is evidence that working with violent or traumatised clients has a negative emotional impact on social workers (Adams, Boscarino and Figley, 2006; Bride, 2007). One explanation of the uncertainties when working within PVE, is the unclarity of the concept of radicalisation itself (Neumann, 2013). Another may be the dilemma that when trying to prevent radicalisation; individuals may feel singled out and stigmatized (Gurski, 2018).

The apparent conflicts between core values of social work and attitudes in counter-terror work, in combination with potential issues of fear and mistrust in long-lasting client sessions,

provides an empirical argument for problematizing and exploring how social workers manage these situations. Our approach to these empirical challenges is based on the concepts of person/role conflict (PRC): situations of person/environment mismatch. Research on persons involved in client work has established a link between person role conflicts, emotional dissonance, and sickness absence (Indregard, Knardahl and Nielsen, 2017). Further, PRC is linked with emotional dissonance and increased demands for emotion management (Abraham, 1998).

As both clients' and professionals' emotions hold a key position within social work (Ingram, 2015), professionals' ability to handle and work with emotions (Dwyer, 2007) is important to counteract the negative effects of emotional exhaustion, such as cynicism (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002) and work alienation (Khan *et al.*, 2019). Few studies have explored the emotional impact on social workers working with youth and adults at risk of (further) radicalisation, or how they manage emotions and expectations in this work. Our research aims to address this gap by answering the following research question:

- *How do social workers experience and manage emotions and role expectations when working with PVE?*

## **Social Work and PVE**

Ideologies that promote violence, collide with core values in social work, such as human rights, diversity and respect (IASSW, 2018). Such value conflicts can cause confrontational discussions, making it harder to establish meaningful relationships between social workers and clients (Lindsay and Danner, 2008). Also, some scholars have argued that there is pressure on social work to fit into neoliberal and securitised rhetoric within social policy (McKendrick and Finch, 2016; Finch *et al.*, 2019). This establishes a hierarchy of citizens

which influences their social, civil and political rights (Ragazzi, 2017). Further, it may foster suspicion and distrust towards minority groups, and Muslims in particular (McKendrick and Finch, 2016; Qurashi, 2018; Finch *et al.*, 2019). Thus, reshaping social work into a social policing profession (Finch *et al.*, 2019), can create a stronger sense of ‘us and them. Also, social workers’ traditional role autonomy appears to be challenged by cooperation with police and security services, where decision-making processes are more centralized (Sivenbring and Malmros, 2020). Further, being afraid of or exposed to violence by clients increases the emotional challenges and levels of stress among social workers (Chudzik, 2016). This may explain the insecurity some experience in this work (Lid *et al.*, 2016), combined with PVE training courses that have been found to lack up-to-date knowledge on (de)radicalisation (Koehler and Fiebig, 2019).

The challenges of social work within PVE appear to be threefold; 1) Conflicting role-related expectations from social work values and security tasks, that challenge what social workers should emphasize in their work with minorities and marginalized groups. 2) Fear and worries for personal exposure to threats and violence. 3) Lack of time, competency and resources in this novel part of social work. These three issues are not separate and affect each other, which shows the contextual complexity of this work. Nevertheless, research on how social workers experience and manage PRC and emotions when preventing radicalization and violent extremism is scarce. This study aims to fill this research gap. The concepts of emotion management are based on a critical approach to the exploitations of emotions as a part of the work role. Thus, our theoretical approach extends beyond the individual exposure and capacity of the single social worker and focuses on the work role within its’ context, expectations, and rules for emotion management. Thus, in the following, we will present and elaborate on the sociological perspectives of emotion management and PRC.

## **Emotion management and PRC**

Our approach to investigating how social workers experience and manage the emotional impact of person/role conflict in their work within PVE leans on Hochschild's (2003) concepts of emotion management and Katz & Kahn's (1978) concept of person/role conflict (PRC). According to Katz & Kahn (1978, p. 194), an individual's "occupational self-identity" is based on personal values and needs that the individual brings to her/his professional role. PRC occurs when a focal person faces role-related demands to execute decisions or act in conflict with her/his personal values or needs (Katz & Kahn, 1978). However, as mentioned above social work is a normative profession, with established values and ethical codes of conduct (IASSW, 2018). Thus, one can assume that the social workers' occupational self-identity is based on both personal and professional values and needs, where the professional values are internalized and experienced as personal. The concept of PRC has been linked to Hochschild's (2003) concept of emotional dissonance (Abraham, 1998), or emotion-rule dissonance (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

Hochschild (2003) suggested that emotions and emotional expressions are integral parts of the work role. Thus, work role-related expectations include expectations of appropriate emotional states and appearances. Hochschild coined these expectations 'feeling rules'. Workers are at risk of experiencing emotional dissonance when work role-related expectations of emotional states and expressions conflict with genuine feelings (Abraham, 1998; Gunnarsdóttir, 2016).

Our research review supports the idea that social workers are exposed to PRC and emotional dissonance to a degree that affects them in their work. They must balance the demands of public policy with expectations from professional codes of conduct (Bolton, 2005), and they often have personal expectations of their own enactment of their professional role (Gunnarsdóttir, 2016). Occasionally social workers are exposed to situations where the

expectations of their role-related behaviour collides with their personal values or needs (Miller, Hoggett and Mayo, 2006), similar to PRC. However, as mentioned above, role-related expectations of professional conduct also include feeling rules for accurate emotional displays in the role, or display rules (Rafaeli, 1987; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). Feeling rules arise ‘when rules about how to feel and how to express feelings are set by management’ (Hochschild, 2003, p. 89). Social workers are particularly exposed to such presentation rules (Dwyer, 2007; Warming, 2019). The meeting between professional or organisational feeling rules and the professional person him/herself can lead to emotion-rule dissonance (Hochschild, 2003; Bolton, 2005).

One example of this can be seen in relational preventive work, which depends on the social worker being able to engage in respectful and compassionate interactions with clients (Egan, 2014). However, presenting oneself emotionally as a promoter of empowerment and emancipation in a client relationship, while mapping potentially extremist attitudes in the same encounter, can cause feelings of being fake, or conflicted. Showing respect and understanding, while harbouring suspicion or alienation, can resemble a form of emotional dissonance. Another example is when social workers are interacting with clients who are angry, hateful or threatening. Such situations can cause emotional dissonance through emotions of fear and insecurity in the encounter (Chudzik, 2016). Emotional dissonance is linked to emotion management—the suppression of negative emotions and faking of positive emotions (Gross and Levenson, 1997; Zapf and Holz, 2006). Emotion management can also refer to the expression of genuine emotions (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). Next, we will present two strategies for managing emotions.

### ***Surface and Deep Acting Strategies***

Hochschild (2003) suggested that emotional dissonance is handled, by workers, through the management of emotions and emotional displays. Emotion management consists of two strategies: surface and deep acting. Surface acting has traditionally been viewed as a response-focused strategy, such as pretending to be excited or happy (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). In contrast, deep acting has been suggested as ‘a natural result of working on feelings’ (Hochschild, 2003). Thus, deep acting has been seen as a proactive strategy. The professional not only pretend to feel the ‘right thing’ but self-induces the appropriate feeling to express the expected emotions in the given situation. The worker does this by using personal experiences or memories (Gunnarsdóttir, 2014) or by viewing the situation through theoretical perspectives (Gunnarsdóttir & Studsrød, 2019). Earlier research has indicated that individuals who frequently engage in surface acting are at higher risk of experiencing emotional exhaustion, having low job satisfaction, distancing from their clients, and losing professional authenticity (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Hülshager and Schewe, 2011).

Grandey (2000) suggested that deep acting has a positive effect by being perceived as authentic and convincing, which in turn may lead to positive interaction and restoration of emotional resources. Furthermore, deep acting is a way of decreasing emotional dissonance, not merely suppressing emotion. This strategy has been found to create a sense of personal accomplishment and efficacy (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 2003; Zapf & Holz, 2006). However, although there is sufficient support for labelling surface acting a reactive strategy and deep acting a proactive one, recent research has promoted new insight suggesting that emotion management is more complex and dynamic (Grandey & Melloy, 2017).

Our main assumption is that being involved in PVE causes PRC among the social workers and that this makes them particularly vulnerable to emotional dissonance. We base this argument on the already-stated potential conflict between the relational and trust-based approaches in social work practice and on the potentially severe consequences of not

succeeding in this prevention work—stigmatization and/or possible acts of violence.

Additionally, research findings have indicated that earlier views regarding surface acting as harmful and deep acting as positive are too simplistic (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Judge et al., 2009). Knowledge about how social workers manage emotional dissonance, through surface or deep acting can contribute to the understanding of how different emotions management strategies play a positive or negative role in social work and PVE. Thus, this study aims to explore how social workers manage emotions and roles, and provide new insights into the dynamics of surface and deep acting as strategies of emotion management.

## **Methodology**

This is a qualitative in-depth study (Blaikie, 2010) of a particular branch and phenomenon in social work among several services. Frontline practitioners who carry out client-directed prevention work were found and recruited using purposeful sampling to obtain information-rich cases (Yin, 2016). There is no standard organisation for this prevention work in Norway. Hence, we included informants from child protection services, welfare services, outreach services and various projects. While the participants were employed at different places, they all had professional experiences and responsibilities within PVE. Data collection was carried out through 17 semi-structured in-depth interviews and two focus group interviews with five participants in each session. To address a sensitive issue such as social work and PVE, the main author developed an approach to facilitate trust from the informants which, to our understanding, led to honest and personal reflections from the participants (Haugstvedt, 2020). The interviews had a mean length of 101 minutes. Table 1 shows a breakdown of participant information.

**[Table 1 near here]**

The research was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data on February 1, 2018 (project no. 58477). All potential participants were given information about the research project along with consent forms that were signed prior to the interviews. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. All data were anonymised to ensure participants' confidentiality.

Data collection, transcription and analysis were ongoing and overlapped throughout 2018, making it possible to further explore topics that emerged in the early stages of data collection. The two focus group interviews were the last stage of data collection. Topics from the in-depth interviews were further explored in group-discussions. The focus group context opens communication between participants, facilitating exchange of experiences and reflections that the interviewer cannot manage in a one-on-one interview setting (Lavrakas, 2008).

Thematic analysis is widely used in social studies as a process of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data, through a six-phase process (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The analytical process resulted in two themes: emotional dissonance and emotion management. 'Emotion management' included three strategies of emotion work: keeping face, getting into character and adopting the clients' perspectives.

## **Findings**

### ***Theme 1: Emotional dissonance***

According to our participants, meetings with clients at risk of (further) radicalisation are emotionally demanding. The emotional dissonance appears to increase when social workers engage in deradicalization efforts, focusing on their clients' ideology and values. The volume of these cases in Norway is relatively low, and thus, it takes time to develop professional

experience in this work. One key subject was explicitly expressed in the second focus group interview: “You do not go emotionally untouched by this work”. Further, social workers talk about displaying emotions, risk and security assessments:

I have been sitting here screaming and arguing with the youth in an engaged discussion. When that happens, or they show that they are very hateful, you can feel a horror of some sort [...] and not necessarily scared for myself there and then, but scared in a larger societal perspective. [...]. You constantly have to make revisions on involving the police or not [...].

Thus, displaying emotions and engaging in a heated debate over ideology appears as emotionally demanding for the worker. There is fear and uncertainty about the client’s capacity for violence *after* the encounter. Yet, although our participants felt strained by value-based discussions with clients, several of them used the term ‘accept’ when talking about exploring their clients’ outspoken ideology. This suggests dealing with both PRC and emotional dissonance. PRC is related to personal values being challenged, and the professional idea of being calm and maintaining a professional attitude. The social worker engages in a heated discussion, and thus the emotional dissonance is perhaps not present during the encounter. Yet, the efforts of acceptance and the worries in the aftermath can constitute both PRC and emotional dissonance, especially taking into account whether to pass on information to police or not.

Overall, addressing, exploring and engaging in empathic dialogue about ideology affects the participants emotionally. One participant expressed:

It can be difficult to be professional sometimes. And by professional, I do not mean that one should just keep emotions hidden. [...] You are in some way a bit naked because these are emotions that you are not used to working with. It’s like you’re

exercising, and you're not used to using those muscles., if you understand what I mean.

This resembles emotional dissonance in conjunction with professional codes of conduct. It can be difficult to act professionally, when the emotions are stronger or different from those normally experienced in this work. The risk of exposing “unprofessional” emotions appeared to make the managing part harder. This could be linked to the lack of extensive training in PVE-casework.

## ***Theme 2: Emotion Management***

### *Strategy 1: 'Keeping Face'*

The social workers applied strategies for managing their emotions on two distinct levels: surface acting and deep acting. First, 'keeping face' refers to the social workers just trying to pull through a challenging client session by handling their body language and emotions at the superficial level, hiding their emotional states and keeping calm by breathing deeply. This indicates that social workers apply surface acting to mask their emotions while simultaneously managing them on a deeper level. Their 'brave face' allows them time to slow their emotional reactions, thus enabling them to adjust not only their emotional displays but also their actual emotional state. Reflecting on challenging attitudes, one participant said:

So, I have to manage myself [When experiencing conflicting ideologies], try to control my body language, but it's not always easy when you suddenly sit there for four hours hearing about that, right? I've felt a bit like a guinea pig, actually.

This quote refers to the novelty of this field, suggesting that the pioneer aspect of this work contributes to emotional dissonance. Furthermore, encountering extreme ideas causes value-based emotional dissonance or PRC, urging the professionals to work on their displays.

Additionally, therapeutic sessions, customer or client interactions are limited to one hour or so (Shapiro, 2000). Yet, the professionals in this study, refer to ‘sessions’ that last several hours or even a whole day (Haugstvedt, 2019), indicating an extraordinary long-term exposure to emotional dissonance and emotion management.

### *Strategy 2: ‘Character Acting’*

‘Character acting’ refers to proactive surface acting strategies. One social worker described this as necessary and challenging as follows: ‘Yes, you go into a role; you get into a character. You have to. [...] It’s very draining.’ Similarly, the next transcript shows how the participant gazed inward, becoming conscious of his reactions while trying to harness his emotions by adjusting his body language.

I try to be conscious of what it triggers in me—try to be conscious of my own body language. [...] I challenge myself in the conversation because there are so many things that I should react upon which I don’t react upon. [...]. Normally, you would react to it. But now, I sit back and say something like, ‘Interesting. Tell me a little more about that.’

This participant adopted a professional profile. He explored the clients’ opinions, without discussing. Although the clients’ values and ideologies collided with his own, he held onto his professional character, thus protecting himself through a professional ‘shield’ hiding the emotional response to what he is hearing.

### *Strategy 3: Adopting the client’s perspective.*

The third strategy involves handling the emotional dissonance through preparation by adopting the clients’ perspectives, and make some sense of their attitudes and ideologies.

When I am completely unprepared [...] and then get some extreme ideas thrown in my face, then I have to go through a phase [of surprise]. But if I am prepared and know that I'm going to talk to someone who has extreme attitudes ... right? That's different. [...] So, being prepared for something, I think that plays a role.

Preparations and tuning in gives insight into the difference between a reactive and proactive strategy. The initial phase of surprise can be avoided by applying a proactive approach: being prepared, in an appropriate professional state of mind, enables the participant to handle his reactions without dismissing the clients' opinions.

Below, the participant explicitly states how upholding the core value of applying a client-perspective makes the work emotionally manageable. Further, his statement shows how this proactive strategy also entails a reactive component. The reactive component appears as a value and experience-based immediate professional response.

Also, if you are prepared for it, you try to understand where it comes from and settle in with the person's views and worldview and understanding. [...] It helps me see it from their point of view so I can manage these conversations better so that I won't be like... [gesturing that he will be shocked]

By taking the clients' perspectives, the social workers manage their emotional reactions, possibly also reducing the negative effect his display of emotions may have on the dialogue. This appears to be a reactive strategy because he manages immediate discomfort in situations where he is unprepared. Further, other informants applied a strategy of getting to know their clients:

When I manage to establish a relationship, I meet a person who is a brother, father and a friend. I get a more personal image somehow. You realise that it is only a human

being on the other side of the table. [...] But I think you should meet those people as they are. Each one is different.

Establishing mutual connection appears to make the social worker capable of remaining emotionally open to dialogue and truthful to the core values of social work. Our overall findings indicate that explorative dialogues concerning clients' ideologies, like right-wing extremist ideology, or militant Islamist ideology, are emotionally challenging for social workers. Nonetheless, this method appears to be key for developing constructive strategies for emotion management. Further, having the security aspect entangled into support work causes ethical concerns in client encounters and challenges the core values of social work. Thus, leading to PRC and emotional dissonance among the professionals. The apparent strategies that emerge for managing the emotional dissonance in PVE include both reactive and proactive surface and deep acting, and the two seem to overlap. In the following section, the theoretical and empirical implications of these findings are further discussed.

## **Discussion**

### ***Emotional Dissonance and PRC***

Social workers engaged in PVE is still an understudied research topic. The current study found that working with PVE has an emotional impact on social workers. It also found that social workers make efforts to reduce the risk of developing cynical strategies, that may alienate their clients. Further, perhaps ethical dilemmas in PVE may be of larger importance than the actual stories social workers are exposed to in this work. Thus, the antecedents for the emotional impact are complex.

We have identified that some personal and professional conflicts surface when social workers are involved in PVE. First, the inherent nature of this work, which implies a form of

surveillance and suspicion towards the clients, can cause value-based conflicts between PVE tasks and social work values. Second, the social workers are exposed to statements and stories they instinctively react to, such as support for violent extremism. Third, they are expected to manage and mask emotions in accordance with professional rules of conduct (Bolton, 2005; Dwyer, 2007; Grootegoed and Smith, 2018), meanwhile dealing with internalised codes of conduct and their own personal values (Gunnarsdóttir, 2016). This includes situations of conflicting professional, organisational and personal expectations, and situations where social workers experience and assess threats or concerns for societal safety.

Social workers are expected to be non-judgmental and compassionate (Kanasz & Zielinska, 2017) also when experiencing difficulties with clients' attitudes and personalities (Lloyd, King and Chenoweth, 2002). In our study, PRC occurs as result of the discrepancy between personal and professional codes and expectations in social work (respect, diversity and emancipating clients), how they carry out their complex work tasks, along with dimensions of securitized tasks. Earlier, Norwegian social workers have been found to understand radicalisation as a social, not an ideological, issue (Haugstvedt, 2019). Nonetheless, concerns for clients' capability of violent actions towards others affects them emotionally. The social workers seek to manage professionally inappropriate emotions in accordance with professional codes of conduct. They manage their emotions, by masking or adapting their genuine feelings in their interaction with their clients. The disparity between their genuine inner thoughts and feelings and what they display in client meetings resembles emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 2003). While emotional dissonance has been found among social workers earlier (Gunnarsdóttir, 2016), the securitisation and demand for revealing potential extremists threats appear to put additional strain on professionals working with PVE.

The participants in our study seem to push themselves to establish and maintain an open dialogue, in order to understand and influence clients' values or ideology. While experiencing

challenging feelings, brought forth by PRC, social workers see the need to manage emotions and emotional displays. We argue that this form of emotion management is particularly emotionally demanding because of PVE's novelty in social work, with limited access to specialized training and support. Further, the nature of statements and threats, which the professionals are witnessing and assessing in this work, contributes to longer-lasting exposure to PRC and emotional dissonance than other forms of social work. The securitisation of, and uncertainty surrounding, cases of radicalisation can affect the social workers ability to focus on what traditionally is their role; to support, strengthen and emancipate their clients. Thus, their capacity and strategies in managing the emotional impact of this work should be interesting for this field in social work. Hence, the scope of this study is to contribute to an understanding of how social workers manage emotions to balance the emotional impact of working in the ambiguous and ethically challenging field of PVE. The different strategies of emotion management will be discussed in the following section.

### ***Emotion Management***

Previous research on PVE has identified what appear to constitute a securitization of social work (McKendrick and Finch, 2016; Ragazzi, 2017), labelling Muslims in general as potential terrorists (Qurashi, 2018). This way of looking upon clients are in steep contrast to that of social work in general, of which aims at supporting and emancipating clients (IASSW, 2018). This conflict is additionally fuelled by the outspoken ideologies some clients present. As a response to emotional dissonance and PRC, the participants in this study employed strategies of emotion management; surface- and deep-acting (Hochschild, 2003). The latter by adapting to the clients' perspectives, trying to see the world from their vantage point. The participants referred to unpleasantness when 'keeping a brave face' and 'getting into character', while deep acting was referred to as a positive coping strategy. In table 2, the

strategies are presented in accordance with level of acting and type of strategy.

**[Table 2 near here]**

Surface acting has traditionally been understood as a reactive strategy in the moment. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Bolton, 2005). However, recent research within emotion regulation and emotional labour suggests that surface and deep acting strategies can overlap (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Our study supports this notion, as our participants applied proactive strategies while doing surface acting. ‘Going into character’ appears to put heavy strain on the workers, as the emotional dissonance may be of even greater intensity due to the length of the interaction when working with PVE. Character acting appears to be a surface-related strategy, yet with a proactive approach. The social workers ‘dress up’ in a tolerant and professional role while experiencing conflicting emotions underneath. The emotional dissonance appears to rise from an internal conflict fuelled by professional role expectations, such as being tolerant, open minded and respectful, meanwhile taking part in surveillance, and/or listening to statement and ideology that promotes violence and discrimination.

The examples of deep acting strategies in our study are similar to earlier findings, with personal experiences (Kruml and Geddes, 2000; Gunnarsdóttir, 2016), preparation and theoretical perspectives used to induce genuine feelings (Gunnarsdóttir and Studsrød, 2019). The second strategy, adopting the client’s perspective, has previously been found to decrease negative effects on employees’ emotions (Bechtoldt *et al.*, 2007). Our study indicates that perspective-taking serves to successfully manage emotions, which can help facilitate understanding of others’ perspectives, promoting forgiveness and empathy (Rizkalla, Wertheim and Hodgson, 2008). One way of doing this is by actively seeking to induce

feelings based on own personal experiences and memories (Gunnarsdóttir, 2014).

Additionally, utilizing own past experiences through self-reflection is recommended to understand others (Gerace *et al.*, 2017), and perspective-taking is found to increase interpersonal liking (Noor and Halabi, 2018). This suggests that the strategies identified might function as dually supporting social workers in interactions with at-risk individuals by first functioning as emotion management and second, to resist oppressive practices of control and surveillance. Perspective-taking, what we labelled ‘Adopting the client’s perspective’, is found both as a proactive and reactive strategy. This might help social workers prepare for and prevent how security rhetoric (McKendrick and Finch, 2016; Finch *et al.*, 2019) over time can influence social policy and social work with vulnerable individuals. This proactive self-reflexivity might be even more important in this field than elsewhere, as matters of PVE earlier have been found to stigmatise and label Muslims in particular as potential terrorists (Qurashi, 2018).

Finally, as shown above, our findings indicate that social workers are capable of applying deep acting strategies at the reactive level as well as proactive surface acting. This expands Hochschild’s (2003) dichotomous conceptualisation of surface acting versus deep acting and supports further research into how these strategies develop in different work roles and work contexts, especially in relation to PRC.

To resist pushing clients further away into ‘alienation’, our findings underline the importance of having compassionate, capable and experienced case workers with experience in the field of PVE, as well as a critical eye on PVE’s underpinnings.

This study relies on data from 17 participants in total. Hence, there may be some limitations to our findings due to the low number of participants and possibly from the recruitment

process. Also, this research was conducted with only Norwegian social workers, and the specific characteristics of the Norwegian welfare state may affect the findings.

## **Conclusion**

Our findings show that Norwegian social workers experience emotional dissonance and PRC when working with PVE in face-to-face client work. This experience seems triggered by the following: the rules and expectations towards them in a still-developing field with possibly more control responsibilities than elsewhere, influenced by the discourse on individuals' risk to society, where they are exposed to ideologies that collide with their own. Social workers handle this through various strategies for managing their emotions: keeping a brave face, going into professional character and adopting the clients' perspectives while connecting with their humanity. Theoretically, our findings expand Hochschild's contribution to emotion management in the work role by adding connections and overlap between surface acting and deep acting strategies. Our findings bring some optimism to a field where social workers may risk being 'errand runners' for security services, and lose touch with both clients and own professional values. Further development of constructive emotion work may counteract the initial troubles of engaging in dialogue with individuals who harbour extremist ideologies, or those who are merely susceptible to such influences due to their life situation. Such constructive emotion work might strengthen social workers' ability to challenge, influence and support their clients without crossing over to surveillance and control.

## **Ethical Approval**

The research was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data on February 1, 2018 (project no. 58477).

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**Table 1.**

## Participant information

Female	6
Male	11
Age (mean years)	39
Bachelor's degree	9
Master's degree	8
Experience in social work (mean years)	12.5
Experience with radicalisation and violent extremism (mean years)	3.5

**Table 2.**

## Matrix of strategies

<b>Emotion management</b>	<b>Surface acting</b>	<b>Deep acting</b>
<b>Reactive</b>	'Keeping a brave face'	'Adopting the client's perspective'
<b>Proactive</b>	'Character acting'	'Adopting the client's perspective'

## Article IV

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# The role of social support for social workers engaged in preventing radicalization and violent extremism

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## ABSTRACT

Over the last decade, social workers have been engaged in prevention work against violent extremism in the United Kingdom and the Nordic countries. There are scholarly findings of professional uncertainty among social workers carrying out this task, but the influence of organizational factors and support have not yet been studied in this context. This paper fills some of that gap with findings from research using 17 in-depth and two focus group interviews with experienced social workers involved in prevention work against radicalization and violent extremism. Theoretically, this paper applies Cutrona and Russell's theory of social support to its findings. The analysis revealed that professional acknowledgement is important for these social workers and that being given time and understanding of how this work impacts professionals on a personal level is a critical part of their interaction with peers and managers. Supportive measures, such as peer support, debriefing, and supervision, are also essential parts of maintaining well-being in the aftermath of these client encounters. Additionally, the novel contribution of this paper is that, for practitioners in a mixed and still evolving practice field, these support services may also strengthen prevention workers to remain close to their professional principles and focus on emancipating, not controlling their target group.

## KEYWORDS

Social work; violent extremism; multiagency approach; social support

## Introduction and context

Violent extremism and terrorism is perceived as a big threat to European countries (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation [EUROPOL], 2019). Since the early 1990s, and especially during the last decade, social workers, alongside the police and, to some extent, the security service, have played a role in preventing radicalization and violent extremism in Nordic countries (Carlsson 2017; Lid et al. 2016). This work is characterized both by compassionate dialogue with clients (Haugstvedt 2019; Ponsot, Autixier, and Madriaza 2017) and by elements of control and cooperation with the police and security service (Chisholm and Coulter 2017; McKendrick and Finch 2017). The new task has caused concern that prevention workers will engage in 'soft policing' of vulnerable individuals and groups (Chisholm and Coulter 2017; McKendrick and Finch 2016, 2017) and stigmatize Muslims (Qurashi 2018).

Acknowledgement and social support have been found to influence social workers' ability to handle work stress (Kim and Stoner 2008; Nissly, Barak, and Levin 2005). Within the field of preventing violent extremism, this might be of even higher importance due to the mixed roles,

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closeness to police and security service, and the novelty of this work. This has the potential to create uncertainty about what social workers actually do in this field. Generally, in social work, role ambiguity is identified as a factor associated with work stress (Indregard, Knardahl, and Nielsen 2017; Johannessen, Tynes, and Sterud 2013; Kim and Stoner 2008; Yürür and Sarikaya 2012) for professionals altogether as well as for preventing violent extremism (Sweifach, Heft LaPorte, and Linzer 2010). To cope with such issues, scholarly work has found a need for support from peers and managers (Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth 2002; Nissly, Barak, and Levin 2005).

There are international findings of professional uncertainty among those performing this work (Chisholm and Coulter 2017; Dryden 2017; Lid et al. 2016). However, as no studies have examined the topic of organizational factors and support within the context of preventing radicalization and violent extremism, little is known about what these professionals need from peers, managers, and support staff.

### **What is different about this specific prevention work?**

The balance between control and support is well known within social work as a source of tension (Levin 2007). This tension became further intensified in the United Kingdom after the *Prevent policy* became a legal duty for public sector workers in 2015 (Stanley 2018). While the framework of this multiagency work is different and far less reaching in Norway compared to the United Kingdom, in Norway, the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) is also engaged in multiagency cooperation (Carlsson 2017). This might be of particular concern and possibly create some of the tension found in the United Kingdom. Research carried out in Belgium found that closeness to police and unclear roles and practices have caused Belgian social workers engaged in preventing violent extremism to lose contact with their target group (Brion and Guittet 2018).

Prevention work should be based on solid expertise. However, an international review of the training courses seeking to provide such competency found training to be insufficient to effectively strengthen workers in deradicalizing those identified as extremists (Koehler and Fiebig 2019). This is not surprising, as no proper explanation has been found for why some radicalize into violent extremists and others do not. A wide variety of influencing factors have been found, such as mental health issues among solo terrorists (Grønnerød and Hellevik 2016) and feelings of insignificance (Kruglanski et al. 2018), but no studies have been conclusive. Moreover, no strong evidence exists on what works in terms of prevention or deradicalization efforts (Pistone et al. 2019). Also, screening tools have been developed to help identify at risk individuals. But scholars have raised concern of the conceptualizations underpinning such tools (Knudsen 2018), as well as them being heavily reliant on the quality and utilization of the source information (Egan et al. 2016). Hence, the work to prevent radicalization and violent extremism cannot be based on checklists and standardized approaches alone. This might cause some of the uncertainties experienced by practitioners within the multiagency approach to prevent radicalization and violent extremism (Chisholm and Coulter 2017; Dryden 2017; Lid et al. 2016). While facing uncertainty is recognized as a part of social work (Miller 2006), it also calls for support from colleagues as well as critically reviewing professional decision-making to improve practice (Munro 2019).

These findings point towards a new and evolving practice field where social workers interact both with clients at risk of (further) radicalization and with police and security service. The difference in discourses found among social workers and 'security workers' (Sivenbring and Malmros 2020) set to cooperate in these cases might contribute to some of the uncertainties identified earlier. The novelty of this task in a mixed professional landscape, the lack of training to reach high levels of expertise, and the overall low numbers of cases paint a picture of a task that creates challenges for social workers. Hence, proper support and continuous dissemination of practice through critical reflection and supervision might play a crucial role in both social workers' well-being and their professional practice. This leads to the following research question:

- *How do social workers involved in preventing radicalization and violent extremism experience and perceive their own needs for organizational support?*

This question will be answered through analysis of interview data, from highly experienced social workers involved in preventing violent extremism in Norway. First, this paper introduces findings from scholarly literature on organizational factors that influence social workers' stress at work, their well-being, and their ability to manage challenging tasks.

## Review

Although social work is considered a rewarding profession (Stevens et al. 2012), it has also been found to affect the worker in many negative ways, including through burnout and secondary trauma (Acker 1999; Adams, Boscarino, and Figley 2006; Baugerud, Vangbæk, and Melinder 2017; Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth 2002). This is at least partially explained by the following. Social workers' openness and empathy towards their clients make them vulnerable to stress (Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth 2002), and at times, they interact with very challenging service users who may struggle with mental health problems (Acker 1999) or may be victims of child abuse (Horwitz 1998). In addition, it has been found that social workers experience high emotional demands (Indregard, Knardahl, and Nielsen 2017) and that co-workers or family might struggle to understand their needs after potentially traumatic incidents at work (Horwitz 1998). To gain a deeper understanding of work stress and possibly prevent it, many studies have explored the relationship and influence of organizational factors on job satisfaction, well-being, and stress within social work (Baugerud, Vangbæk, and Melinder 2017; Ben-Zur and Michael 2007; Nissly, Barak, and Levin 2005). For example, Baugerud, Vangbæk, and Melinder (2017) found that a high workload predicted high levels of burnout among child protection workers, while commitment to their organization and a sense of work mastery reduced levels of compassion fatigue. In the following, the influence of organizational factors on social workers' well-being will be presented.

Social support, from either managers and co-workers, has been found to reduce intention to quit among social workers (Ducharme, Knudsen, and Roman 2007; Nissly, Barak, and Levin 2005) and reduce job stress in general (Ben-Zur and Michael 2007; Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth 2002). Supervisory support in particular has been found to positively influence social workers within child protection services to remain in their position over time (Dickinson and Perry 2002). Further, social support from colleagues is effective in reversing negative thoughts on what might happen in challenging client sessions (Chudzik 2016). However, the strongest predictors of work-related stress and burnout appear to be work pressure, workload, role ambiguity, and relationship with superiors (Kim and Stoner 2008; Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth 2002). To bolster workers for the challenges in social work, both formal and informal group support have been recommended to draw attention to the fulfilling and satisfactory sides of doing social work, which could help reduce stress (Collins 2008).

Several authors have argued that organizations need to build supportive job conditions to reduce high levels of stress among social workers (Kim and Stoner 2008; Yürür and Sarikaya 2012) and provide supervisors as resources for frontline staff in social services (Kim and Lee 2009). Supervision that is directly related to clinical practice may also have an indirect buffering effect on working with challenging clients by teaching the workers how to handle these clients, providing adequate interventions, increasing the sense of personal accomplishments, and thus reducing work stress (Ducharme, Knudsen, and Roman 2007; Yürür and Sarikaya 2012). In addition to reducing burnout and raising awareness of professional boundaries (Urdang 2010), self-reflection and critical examination of social work practice also help practitioners become aware of their own values (Iyer 2003) and resist oppressive structures and practices (Heron 2005; Sakamoto and Pitner 2005). As social work addresses the needs and troubles of vulnerable populations, supervision is of vital

importance to handling their cases as well as for personal development as a social worker (Hughes 2010).

This brief review has found evidence that organizational and work factors, such as role ambiguity, high caseloads, and poor support from co-workers and supervisors, are associated with work-related stress. However, both formal and informal social support from co-workers and supervisors have been found and suggested to be effective strategies to assist social workers in managing challenging client work, work-related stress, and job retention. However, even more importantly, supervision and critical reflection of practice have been proven as tools that can heighten the awareness of oppressive practices and influence both social workers' well-being and their practices towards vulnerable target groups. These findings indicate a solid ground for an exploration of organizational support as an influencing factor in social workers' prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, which this paper builds on. In the following, the theoretical perspectives of social support by Cutrona and Russell (1990) will be presented and later applied as a useful lens for this paper's findings.

## Theory

Social support appears to be important for maintaining physical and mental health and for enhancing resilience to stress (Ozbay et al. 2007). Cutrona and Russell (1990) set forth to develop a theory and construction of social support by reviewing and combining findings in earlier studies. This work, as well as Cutrona's (2000) further developments, found that social support contains two main dimensions, instrumental support and nurturant support, with subvariations in both.

Instrumental support includes, as the name describes, instrumental measures of support that can be directly relevant to solving the problem at hand. This may be specific advice on how a situation can be handled or offerings of resources to help manage the problem, such as money if the problem is of a financial nature (Cutrona 2000). This category includes both information support, such as suggestions and advice on what to do, and tangible support. Tangible support is something we can do for the person with the problem to indirectly influence the problem, such as loaning them money or taking care of their children at times to relieve stress. Nurturant support, in contrast, is related to easing the negative emotions influenced by the problem but does not directly solve it. In this category, emotional support is the act of engaging in empathic listening, being attentive, or just being there for someone when needed. This also includes esteem support, which involves showing and telling a person how much they are worth and bolstering a person's self-esteem and sense of competency (Cutrona 2000; Cutrona and Russell 1990).

Researchers of social support, like Cutrona and Russell (1990), have struggled with identifying what type of support is most efficient for easing various problems (Pinkerton and Dolan 2007). One main finding from Cutrona (2000) is that emotional support appears to be favourable in most cases, while instrumental support through advice and information is more likely to be received positively if the support provider has control over or competency in the problem area. While a large body of research has been conducted on the effectiveness of social support, the mechanisms are still debated and findings vary (Nurullah 2012). Among important dimensions is the cultural context wherein support is given and received (Kim, Sherman, and Taylor 2008), and gender of both the giver and recipient (Thoits 2011).

## Methodology

The studies included in the review mainly applied statistical approaches by analysing the association and influence of organizational factors and work stress, burnout and job retention, and various supportive measures. This paper, however, utilizes data from in-depth and focus group interviews to explore organizational factors that influence the participants at work and what they experience as needed or wanted. This is a qualitative in-depth study of a particular branch and phenomenon in

social work that is aimed at providing a richness and depth of data through dialogue with the participants (Blaikie 2010).

### ***Sampling and data collection***

Participants were recruited from a range of services in western, middle, and eastern parts of Norway. To secure various and rich descriptions of practice and experience, purposeful sampling (Yin 2016, 93) sought highly experienced social workers who work in both large cities and smaller municipalities. The recruitment process began by engaging with local managers and coordinators in the municipalities. These starting points served to open doors to others, followed by initial screening via telephone to ensure participants had experience on the research topic. Lastly, the snowball method was used to reach additional participants (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981). Prevention of radicalization and violent extremism is not organized in a standardized way in Norway. Therefore, participants were recruited from child protection services, social services, outreach services, and various projects, all of which have responsibilities and experience in providing interventions or follow-up services for youth and adults at risk of (further) radicalization.

Both the 17 in-depth interviews and the two focus group interviews were conducted from winter to autumn 2018. I sought data triangulation by combining these two approaches (Yin 2016). The interviews had a mean length of 101 minutes. Participants were both female (6) and male (11), with a mean age of 39 years. Their highest educational levels were a bachelor's degree (9) and master's degree (8), with a mean 12.5 years of experience in social work and 3.5 years of working to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. On the basis of the above, the participants are considered by the author to represent competency and experience at a very high level in this field and are able to provide insight into the current research topic.

### ***Ethical considerations***

The Norwegian Centre for Research Data approved the project, no. 58,477, on 1 February 2018. Information about the research project, confidentiality, and consent forms were provided to all potential participants early in the recruitment process. These were collected before the interviews were carried out. Consent forms and audio recordings of interviews were securely stored according to the guidelines of the University of Stavanger. To ensure the participants' discretion, all data were anonymized.

### ***Analysis***

A six-step thematic analysis revealed two main themes, or patterns, within the data (Braun and Clarke 2006): the need for acknowledgement from co-workers and managers and the need for professional strengthening. Next, an integrated findings and discussion section, where Cutrona and Russell's (1990) construction of social support are applied, will follow.

#### ***Theme 1: acknowledgement***

This study found a need to recognize that working to prevent radicalization and violent extremism is demanding and impacts the social workers. The participants in this study appears to understand and handle the task at hand. However, in the interviews, they highlighted that, when they get deep into dialogue about ideology and values, they are challenged, and this challenge creates a heightened need for professional acknowledgement within their own organization. The topic of professional acknowledgement were discussed in a focus group, and the transcript below gives insight into how managerial acknowledgement is of particular significance.

Participant 5: I know it. I have felt the same. It's like all consuming, especially if they are people with a lot on their mind, talkative, and extreme opinions about everything. So, you try to receive everything and try to work it out. At the same time, you have to sit there and listen to and respond when you can. But afterwards, I have experienced many times that I am just sitting there, unable to work. [...]

Participant 2: And then there must be someone who is able to recognize that these tasks are difficult.

Participant 5: Yes, and our leader has been very good at recognizing that this is something that requires a lot. And if it is difficult for us. Then, we can spend some time to process it and have time to ... [gets interrupted]

Participant 2: It's allowed to have a time-out.

Participant 5: Yes, time-out, simply.

The three participants talked about how managerial acknowledgement allows them to process highly challenging meetings and sessions with clients who may have strong views on society that may contradict their own. Managerial acknowledgement of how challenging this task is also seems to create an opportunity to spend time after challenging encounters to calm down, 'shake it off,' and take care of themselves. This form of acknowledgement thereby appears to provide approval for them to spend working hours pulling themselves together after emotionally difficult conversations. The need for acknowledgement is not new in social work or elsewhere. However, these workers explore a still fairly new terrain within social work where uncertainty of roles and tasks may confuse both workers and the target group.

Acknowledgement is not a category itself presented by Cutrona & Russell (1990), but it is within the realm of what they coined nurturant support, and more specifically emotional and esteem support. The participants talked about how co-workers, managers, and other professionals, such as psychologists, all are valuable in the sense that they provide various types of nurturant support to them. Although some forms of support may be counterproductive (Lehman and Hemphill 1990), studies have previously found that emotional support is wanted by most (Cutrona 2000; Cutrona and Suhr 1992). The current research revealed a need for both emotional support, and recognition of their professional task being challenging. Cutrona and Russell (1990) labelled the latter esteem support, and this could include others' acts to boost their beliefs in their abilities and strengthen their self-esteem (Ko, Wang, and Xu 2013). These two aspects of nurturant support appears entangled with each other. However, the provider of support makes an important distinction between peers and managers. While acknowledgement from both groups are desired, managerial acknowledgement has the consequence of also facilitating tangible and instrumental support. This leads to the next theme, professional strengthening.

## ***Theme 2: professional strengthening***

The second main theme includes two sub-themes: support from peers, and formal supportive measures aiming to help the social workers manage challenging client encounters. The latter are measures consisting of services like supervision, debriefing, professional guidance, and self-support training. While these are more 'formal' than nurturant support, they build on the ideal environment for supervision facilitated through nurturant support; a safe space for professionals to reflect and learn (Beddoe 2010).

### ***Peer support***

Below, two participants in the first focus group discusses their experience of working with individuals at risk of (further) radicalization and what they need from peers at work.

Participant 3: We have a group of those who work with these cases, but we call it a discussion group. But it is more of a way to process these things. Get input on what to do next. Seek or ask for help from other services.

Participant 4: To 'play ball' with others . . . Because we have to deal with a lot of cases, it's very nice to be there with someone who has an understanding of what it is like to be in those situations.

The above reveals that the group setting has a dual function: case-oriented processes and peer support. First, the social workers receive input and advice on specific cases they deal with, and second, the discussion groups provide recognition to the participants that the work they share is something special and thus provide sought-after (nurturant) support to the participants. This appears connected with the fact that these workers seldom have a colleague that has the same responsibilities as they do. Below, two participants in individual interviews describe this from different experiences:

Participant: It's tough when you are alone with all of it without colleagues. And I think it's because the consequences are so much greater than in other work.

Participant: I don't think I could have done this alone, like if I didn't have anyone around me who understood the problems I faced. And luckily I had that. I could vent without any chaos happening, without being afraid that they would sound the alarm right away.

These participants point out the value, or need, of a close colleague or partner, as the issues of violent extremism might potentially have severe consequences. These consequences, like travelling to Syria, causes stress and concern in those not familiar with this field. This kind of peer support provides a way for practitioners in a novel practice field to vent, discuss, and reflect upon cases where there are no comprehensive guidelines or professional history of what to do and how to collaborate with other agencies, such as the police and security service.

Information support was found to mainly be received from co-workers and collaborating professionals through group discussions as well as from psychologists and other specialists involved in debriefing and advising the participants as will be presented next. In addition, this study found that various social support strategies are integrated or work in parallel. In discussion groups, the participants experience both recognition and information support, such as advice from co-workers and peers (Cutrona and Russell 1990). As many of the other practitioners in these groups deal with the same target group and tasks, they are in a unique position to give advice on managing both the work and the challenging encounters. Thus, these group discussions have the potential to provide both nurturant and instrumental support.

### *Debriefing and supervision*

The current research also found an outspoken need for supervision and professional guidance. Debriefing is a service to individuals who have experienced distressing incidents. Its aim is to normalize common trauma reactions and provide useful information regarding coping strategies (Hawker, Durkin, and Hawker 2011). Internationally, professional guidance has previously been found to increase job retention among child protection workers (Landsman 2001; Westbrook, Ellis, and Ellett 2006), and perceived supervisory support has been positively associated with reduced symptoms of burnout (Hamama 2012). In the work to address and explore clients' ideology and support for various organizations, social workers have previously been found to use well-known strategies like Socratic questioning and motivational interviewing (Haugstvedt 2019). These strategies expose social workers to clients' attitudes, and as the conversation below shows, these attitudes might also be directed at the workers personally.

Participants: I think it's mostly that I'm not used to it. And I think you have to have good supervision on how not to take it all in because some of it can be very hard.

Researcher: Like what?

Participant: If you meet with a client and talk to someone who utters things that really break with your basic values, your human view, and also get it directed right at yourself or someone close to you. That can be hard.

The participant in the transcript above experiences that he becomes the target of his client's attitudes and that this experience is both novel and very challenging. Supervision, in this case, is presented as the remedy that strengthens the worker's ability to handle these challenging encounters, to not take it all in, as he says. Some of the participants have been educated in techniques that assist them when dialogue and cooperation with the target group become stressful, as well as in ways to understand both clients and themselves in their professional interaction.

Participant: We have had psychologists that specialize in coaching professionals on just that [handling challenging encounters], and they use basic psychological techniques, like taking a short break, to go get some water, get some fresh air, just to manage what you're experiencing. I believe it reduces stress levels so we are more able to manage it all. And then there's the debriefing, where we've had experts explain and help us understand situations and ourselves, so that we're not so easily tipped off or manipulated. It's important that we're firmly grounded professionally in this work because it's so challenging

Also, in addition to social workers' own professional knowledge and competency, debriefing and educational programmes have been established in some services to strengthen the prevention workers' ability to engage with clients as well as shield themselves from clients' manipulative attempts.

Such support services, advice and professional training, has been found to be most effective when the support provider has more control over the subject, for example, competency or experience, than the support receiver (Cutrona 2000). Although not asked about it directly, this did surface throughout the interviews, and participants talked with enthusiasm about receiving advice and thoughts from psychologists who were engaged by their agencies to support them through debriefings and supervision of practice. In regard to the group discussions in which some of the participants in this study also engaged, advice might have the potential to be counterproductive or harmful to the professional relationship if more experienced practitioners find themselves on the receiving end of advice coming from a novice practitioner. As such, status, competency, and overall position might be factors that influence group discussion and especially how advice is received. Instrumental support from psychologists corresponds to earlier findings of receiving expert advice, and this support appear to strengthen practitioners and make them more resilient to the challenges they face in client encounters and their own reactions.

This is also in accordance with earlier findings of supervision playing a key role in good social work for both the clients and the workers' own professional development and practice (Hughes 2010). Through supervision and dialogue with others, social workers can develop reflective practices and critical thinking (Ixer 2003; Urdang 2010). This has been found to have the potential to uncover oppressive structures and values that influence social work (Heron 2005; Sakamoto and Pitner 2005), thereby also creating chances to change them. However, in situations where social workers experience high levels of anxiety, self-reflection has been found to be difficult (Ferguson 2018). This calls for training in self-reflection outside of actual client situations to develop the capacity to think clearly about service users' needs (Ferguson 2018), develop emancipatory forms of practice (Houston 2015; Rogers 2012), and uncover power relations on individual, organizational, and structural levels in society (Mattsson 2014).

The topic of experience and competency in terms of the support provider was not addressed in this research project. Future studies might find this topic worth exploring in association with co-workers of uneven experience and formal competency. Also, the subjects of self-control and the

ability to maintain and control emotions, cognitions, and behaviour (Cohen 2012) have not yet been thoroughly integrated into the scholarly literature on social support (Pilcher and Bryant 2016). This integration could also provide findings that could both strengthen and challenge social support research and possibly uncover new effective pathways.

The paper's finding 'fits' well with Cutrona and Russell's (1990) theory of social support. However, the findings also show that the various types of social support are possibly more connected, or overlapping, than the original assumption. The context, professional social work, not private relations, may however influence this notion. This paper has shown that information support, such as hearing a peer's assessment of a particular case, or receiving training in self-care within client encounters from a psychologist, also functions as emotional support. Additionally, the emotional and esteem support from managers in particular, may provide social workers with time and space to clear their mind after challenging client encounters. This removes other tasks or responsibilities, if only for a short period of time, and thereby indirectly function as tangible support by easing other professional 'burdens'. These findings exceeds Cutrona and Russell's (1990) original categorization. However, the unique aspect of qualified peer support identified in this paper also resonates with Cutrona's (2000) later findings of nurses and counsellors; problems at work are most efficiently prevented at work, with someone how is familiar with the challenges.

This analysis also reveals that the needs that surface from doing client work within the context of preventing radicalization and violent extremism share commonalities with actual client work itself. Like this paper's findings, client work relies on the ability of the professional to acknowledge the clients' perspectives and experiences, communicate empathy, and create a safe supportive environment before exploring sensitive issues (Miller 2006). This supports and substantiates earlier findings from this kind of prevention work as challenging (Chisholm and Coulter 2017). Also, this study revealed that various actors in social workers' organization may fill very different support functions. Peers and managers provide the bulk load of nurturant support, while managers also functions as gatekeepers able to provide both time off, and more specialized services from psychologists and other experts. Hence, social support in this context is recognized as a puzzle with many interdependent pieces.

### **How do these findings compare to those of other studies?**

This study's main findings are that social workers have a need for extra acknowledgement and understanding from co-workers and managers of how this work affects them emotionally and that they are given time to both perform and gather themselves afterwards. Also, it has been shown that, to be able to do this kind of work, social workers feel they need both informal and formal supportive measures, especially professional supervision and dissemination of their practice. This is somewhat similar with earlier research on social workers and social support, especially the value emotional support from co-workers and managers have on work-related stress (Chudzik 2016; Hamama 2012; Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth 2002; Nissly, Barak, and Levin 2005; Nurullah 2012). In previous studies, supervision, debriefing, and advice (Collins 2008; Ducharme, Knudsen, and Roman 2007; Yürür and Sarikaya 2012) were shown to be greatly appreciated by the participants. The supportive work environments suggested by earlier studies (Kim and Lee 2009; Kim and Stoner 2008) were recognized in this study as well.

While also easing stress and possibly burnout (Urdang 2010), instrumental support surfaced as a tool that has the potential to uncover, resist, and challenge discourses and structures of oppression, such as the connection between Muslim populations in Western societies and terrorism (Coppock and McGovern 2014; Qurashi 2018; Stanley, Guru, and Coppock 2017; Stanley and Guru 2015). In social work with refugees in the UK and Australia, supervision was also found to be connected to both workers' well-being, and to the quality of the interventions and services they provided (Robinson 2013). The concern raised by mainly UK scholars about the securitization of social work (McKendrick and Finch 2017; Qurashi 2018; Ragazzi 2017) is highly relevant for today's

practitioners, and perhaps particularly in Norway where PST is a collaborative partner for some services.

## Implications for practice

These findings give direct implications for the above issues. Striving towards an emancipatory and anti-oppressive practice, social workers undertaking new tasks, such as preventing violent extremism, should and can strengthen their practice by having a critical eye on their own values and assumptions and how they might be influenced by security discourses as well as by client manipulation. In addition to taking care of themselves through various supportive measures and supervision, these steps can also help practitioners navigate a 'treacherous landscape,' where the police and security service's agenda does not necessarily coincide with that of social services. As these findings become known, they should be taken into account in the practice field to further bolster practitioners into more confident, and still, empathic workers who have had a short glimpse into the needs of their clients. Social workers may, through discussion and reflection with peers and supervisors, become aware of the similarities between clients' and social workers' need. This may contribute to maintaining an empathic practice based on professional assessments rather than fear and mistrust of minority populations, such as Muslim communities.

## Limitations

It is worth noting that the total number of participants in this study was 17. Moreover, this study only explored the perspectives of one group of practitioners involved in prevention strategies and not those individuals at which it is aimed. The perspectives of the latter group are of great importance, especially regarding how they experience the interventions or narratives about themselves found in mass media and from government agencies. However, the experiences of organizational structures from the perspective of the practitioners are important because these support services may strengthen them into more reflective and ethically conscious workers who are more robust and ready for the dilemmas that arise in this kind of work.

## Conclusion

Violent extremism and terrorism are perceived as a big threat to European countries (EUROPOL 2019). Social workers involved in preventing and countering radicalization and violent extremism have the challenging task of managing a balance of both control and support as well as client encounters that some social workers experience as causing uncertainty and even fear. To support and strengthen these workers within a still evolving task, the participants in this study brought forth experiences that may prove useful to both researchers and practitioners. These workers, who are mainly the only ones with this task in their service, expressed the need and desire to have their work acknowledged as being particularly professionally challenging. Furthermore, both nurturant and instrumental support strategies have been found to help them manage this after client encounters, and the two may be more closely connected and overlapping than Cutrona and Russell (1990) hypothesized, as well as to client work itself. Surprisingly, the findings of social workers' needs are somewhat in line with basic strategies in social work with clients. This insight may, by being grounded in own emotional experience, lower the constructed difference between 'us and them', in which may help facilitate a more curious approach and a deeper understanding of clients' perspectives.

Both peers, managers and specialists are important pieces in the puzzle of social support. However, managers are especially responsible and may create work environments that are supportive of these and other practitioners, as well as clear the way for both nurturant and instrumental support. As multiagency work to prevent radicalization and violent extremism is still developing,

this is and will be a field where practitioners will look for clarity of both their role and tasks. Also, social support may contribute to strengthening social workers' professional identity and practice. This paper's novel contribution is that these findings occur within the context of preventing radicalization and violent extremism, where social workers collaborate with the police and security service. Following this paper's findings regarding the need for both emotional support and dissemination of practice, social workers engaged in preventing violent extremism may be better suited to withstand political agendas and security discourses that may widen, not close, the gaps between minority and majority groups in society.

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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Information and consent letter

#### Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

#### *«Interaksjon, roller og refleksjoner: en studie av sosialarbeideres erfaringer med å forebygge radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme»*

##### Bakgrunn og formål

Studiens formål er å undersøke og beskrive erfaringer sosialarbeidere har med å forebygge radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme i Norge. Prosjektet er en doktorgradsstudie, forankret på Universitet i Stavanger. Hovedveileder er førsteamanuensis Svein Erik Tuastad ([svein.tuastad@uis.no](mailto:svein.tuastad@uis.no), 51834268). Biveileder er førsteamanuensis Hulda Mjøll Gunnarsdottir ([hulda.m.gunnarsdottir@uis.no](mailto:hulda.m.gunnarsdottir@uis.no), 51831521). Studiens utvalg er primært ansatte i prosjekter og tiltak i ulike kommuner i Norge som har fått midler og/eller dedikerte oppgaver med å forebygge islamistisk radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme.

##### Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Studien skal gjennomføres ved fokusgruppeintervju og individuelle intervjuer. Spørsmålene vil omhandle hva slags erfaringer deltagerne har med å etablere dialog med målgruppen, hvordan de blir påvirket av arbeidet og hva slags refleksjoner de har om rollen som sosialarbeidere i denne sammenhengen. Intervjuene vil bli tatt opp med en digital opptaker, samtidig som det vil bli tatt notater underveis.

##### Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Transkriberte intervjuer vil bli lagret etter retningslinjer for datahåndtering og informasjonssikkerhet ved Universitetet i Stavanger. Det er kun prosjektansvarlig som har tilgang til informasjon fra intervjuene og informasjon om hvem som deltar i studien. Prosjektansvarlig vil anonymisere deltagerne i studien slik at de ikke gjenkjennes i publikasjoner. Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 04.09.2021, og opplysninger om deltagere og opptak vil da bli slettet.

##### Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Opplysningene om deg vil da bli slettet. Dersom opplysningene allerede er anonymisert og benyttet i analyse eller i publikasjoner kan de ikke slettes.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med prosjektansvarlig Håvard Haugstvedt på [havard.haugstvedt@uis.no](mailto:havard.haugstvedt@uis.no) eller tlf 414 79 500. Studien er godkjent av Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS.

#### Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

.....  
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## Appendix 2 – Ethical approval



Håvard Haugstvedt  
Kjell Arholms hus  
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 01.02.2018

Vår ref: 58477 / 3 / LAR

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### Vurdering fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning § 31

Personvernombudet for forskning viser til meldeskjema mottatt 18.01.2018 for prosjektet:

58477	<i>Samhandling, roller og refleksjoner: En studie av sosialarbeideres erfaring med å forebygge radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme.</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Håvard Haugstvedt</i>

### Vurdering

Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon finner vi at prosjektet er meldepliktig og at personopplysningene som blir samlet inn i dette prosjektet er regulert av personopplysningsloven § 31. På den neste siden er vår vurdering av prosjektopplegget slik det er meldt til oss. Du kan nå gå i gang med å behandle personopplysninger.

### Vilkår for vår anbefaling

Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:

- opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon
- vår prosjektvurdering, se side 2
- eventuell korrespondanse med oss

Vi forutsetter at du ikke innhenter sensitive personopplysninger.

### Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet

Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke [endringer](#) du må melde, samt endringskjema.

### Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet

Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i [Meldingsarkivet](#).

### Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt

Ved prosjektslutt 31.05.2019 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av

*Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.*

## *Appendices*

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personopplysninger.

Se våre nettsider eller ta kontakt dersom du har spørsmål. Vi ønsker lykke til med prosjektet!

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren

Lasse André Raa

Kontaktperson: Lasse André Raa tlf: 55 58 20 59 / [Lasse.Raa@nsd.no](mailto:Lasse.Raa@nsd.no)

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

## Appendices

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### Personvernombudet for forskning



#### Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 58477

##### INFORMASJON OG SAMTYKKE

Du/dere har opplyst i meldeskjema at utvalget vil motta skriftlig og muntlig informasjon om prosjektet, og samtykke skriftlig til å delta. Vår vurdering er at informasjonsskrivet til utvalget er godt utformet.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at det ikke registreres opplysninger om identifiserbare tredjepersoner som settes i sammenheng med radikalisering/ekstremisme. Informantene bør i forkant av intervjuene minnes om å omtale tredjepersoner på en måte som ikke gjør dem identifiserbare.

##### DATASIKKERHET

Personvernombudet forutsetter at du/dere behandler alle data i tråd med Universitetet i Stavanger sine retningslinjer for datahåndtering og informasjonssikkerhet. Vi legger til grunn at bruk av mobil lagringsenhet er i samsvar med institusjonens retningslinjer.

##### PROSJEKTSLUTT

Prosjektslutt er oppgitt til 31.05.2019. Det fremgår av meldeskjema/informasjonskriv at du/dere vil anonymisere datamaterialet ved prosjektslutt.

Anonymisering innebærer vanligvis å:

- slette direkte identifiserbare opplysninger som navn, fødselsnummer, koblingsnøkkel
- slette eller omskrive/gruppere indirekte identifiserbare opplysninger som bosted/arbeidssted, alder, kjønn

For en utdypende beskrivelse av anonymisering av personopplysninger, se Datatilsynets veileder: <https://www.datatilsynet.no/globalassets/global/regelverk-skjema/veiledere/anonymisering-veileder-041115.pdf>

## Appendices

### Appendix 3 – Notification of project change to NSD

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## Endringsskjema

for endringer i forsknings- og studentprosjekter som behandler personopplysninger

NB: Dette endringsskjemaet kan bare benyttes av prosjekter som skal avsluttes innen 31.12.2019.  
Se [våre nettsider](#) for veiledning dersom prosjektet har lengre varighet.

Endringsskjema sendes per e-post til: [personvernombudet@nsd.no](mailto:personvernombudet@nsd.no)

<b>1. PROSJEKT</b>	
Navn på daglig ansvarlig: Håvard Haugstvedt	Prosjektnummer: 58477
Evt. navn på student:	
<b>2. BESKRIV ENDRING(ENE)</b>	
Endring av daglig ansvarlig/veileder:	Ved bytte av daglig ansvarlig må bekreftelse fra tidligere og ny daglig ansvarlig vedlegges. Dersom vedkommende har sluttet ved institusjonen, må bekreftelse fra representant på minimum instituttnivå vedlegges.
Endring av dato for anonymisering av datamaterialet: 04.09.2021	Ved forlengelse på mer enn ett år utover det deltakerne er informert om, skal det fortrinnsvis gis ny informasjon til deltakerne.
Gis det ny informasjon til utvalget? Ja: ___ Nei: ___x___ Hvis nei, begrunn: I infoskrivet er det opplyst om at prosjektslutt og anonymisering er 04.09.2021	
Endring av metode(r):	Angi hvilke nye metoder som skal benyttes, f.eks. intervju, spærreskjema, observasjon, registerdata, osv.
Endring av utvalg:	Dersom det er snakk om små endringer i antall deltakere er endringsmelding som regel ikke nødvendig. Ta kontakt på telefon for du sender inn skjema dersom du er i tvil.
Annet:	
<b>3. TILLEGGSPPLYSNINGER</b>	
Kommentar til begrunnelse gitt under endring av dato. Da jeg fylte ut meldeskjemaet og skrev at prosjektslutt var 31.05.19 tenkte jeg da på at selve datainnsamlingen skulle avsluttes i mai 2019, og ikke selve behandlingen av prosjektet. Dette var lite gjennomtenkt av meg, og jeg burde sett at dette dreier seg om to forskjellige ting. I infoskrivet er det opplyst om at prosjektslutt og anonymisering er 04.09.2021. Ettersom informasjonsskrivet til informanter inneholder riktig dato for prosjektslutt vurderer jeg at det ikke skal gis ytterligere informasjon til informantene om denne endringen. På bakgrunn av dette søker jeg om forlengelse av prosjektslutt til 04.09.2021	
<b>4. ANTALL VEDLEGG</b>	
1. Infoskriv og samtykke til informanter.	Legg ved eventuelle nye vedlegg (informasjonsskriv, intervjuguide, spærreskjema, tilstelseter, og liknende.)

Har du spørsmål i forbindelse med utfylling av skjemaet, ta gjerne kontakt med NSD, telefon 55 58 21 17. (Bast 1)

## Appendices

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**Fra:** [Lasse Andre Raas](#)  
**Til:** [Håvard Haugstvedt](#)  
**Emne:** Prosjektnr: 58477. Samhandling, roller og refleksjoner: En studie av sosialarbeideres erfaring med å forebygge radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme.  
**Dato:** mandag 4. mars 2019 12.57.55

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### BEKREFTELSE PÅ ENDRING

Hei

Viser til endringsmelding registrert hos NSD 22.2.2019.

Vi har nå registrert at riktig dato for prosjektslutt er 4.9.2021, ikke 31.5.2019 som opprinnelig oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det fremgår riktig dato av informasjonsskrivet, og samtykket anses således som dekkende for videre behandling.

NSD forutsetter at prosjektopplegget for øvrig gjennomføres i tråd med det som tidligere er innmeldt samt våre tilbakemeldinger. Vi vil ta ny kontakt ved prosjektslutt.

Med vennlig hilsen

Lasse Raas  
Seniorrådgiver | Senior Adviser  
Seksjon for personverntjenester | Data Protection Services  
T: (+47) 55 58 20 59

NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS | NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data  
Harald Hårfages gate 29, NO-5007 Bergen  
T: (+47) 55 58 21 17  
postmottak@nsd.no www.nsd.no

## Appendix 4 – Interview guide

### Intervjuguide / temaliste til intervjuer

#### Innledning

Bli kjent	Uformell prat
Informasjon til informant	Kort om studien Info om opptak og databehandling Samtykkeskjema

#### Selve intervjuet

RQ1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helt kort; hva er din jobb?</li> <li>• Hva slags tegn / uttrykk / atferd gjør at du blir bekymret for radikalisering?</li> <li>• Hvordan forstår/forklarer du radikalisering?</li> <li>• Hva gjør du for å bygge tillit til målgruppa?</li> <li>• Hva slags strategier bruker du for å forebygge radikalisering?</li> <li>• Hva slags metoder eller samtaleformer benytter du i møte med <u>de</u>?</li> <li>• Hvilke samtaleformer eller fremgangsmåter har du erfaring med å <u>skaper dialog</u>?</li> <li>• Har du erfaringer med noe som ikke fungerer? Som skaper motstand?</li> <li>• Hvordan forholder du deg til «Nasjonal handlingsplan, og nasjonal veileder for forebygging av radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme»? Hva bidrar de med av hjelp til dere i praksis?</li> </ul>
RQ2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hvordan opplever du å samhandle med målgruppa?</li> <li>• Hvordan opplever du å jobbe med å forhindre radikalisering? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Opplever du å jobbe med å forhindre terror?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Har du opplevd selv å kjenne følelser som usikkerhet, ubehag eller frykt i dette arbeidet?</li> <li>• Har du erfart at kollegaer har opplevd det? (Frykt, ubehag, <u>osv</u>)</li> <li>• Hva er din erfaring med å vise de følelsesreaksjonene?</li> <li>• Hvordan opplever du at rollen din i dette arbeidet er likt eller ulikt det andre du har gjort av sosialt arbeid?</li> <li>• Hvordan opplever du at <u>de/målgruppen</u> forholder seg til deg?</li> </ul>
RQ3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hvordan opplever du å representere en nasjonal plan/tiltak mot radikalisering? (Hvis aktuelt) Eventuelt presentere som påstand.</li> <li>• Hva opplever du at kommunen og andre samarbeidspartnere forventer av deg/dere i dette arbeidet?</li> <li>• Hva opplever du at målgruppa forventer av deg?</li> <li>• Hva gjør disse forventningene med deg?</li> <li>• Hvordan er dette arbeidet likt eller ulikt det andre arbeidet du gjør?</li> <li>• Hvilke tanker har du om samarbeid med politi og eventuelt pst?</li> <li>• Hvordan har målgruppa snakket om dette samarbeidet (med politiet)?</li> <li>• Hvordan ser du på balansen mellom hjelp og kontroll i dette arbeidet?</li> </ul>

#### Avslutning av intervjuet:

Avrundning / oppsummering	Er det noe mer du tenker på om temaet vi har snakket om som du ikke har fått sagt? Noe du vil tilføre?
«Debrief»	Hvordan opplevde du å bli intervjuet om dette av meg?

## **Appendix 5 – Information letters prior to focus groups**

Stavanger, 05.09.18

### Invitasjon og forberedelse til fokusgruppeintervju

Dato og tid: 10.09.18, kl 14:00 – 16:00

Sted: 

Takk for at du stiller opp til fokusgruppeintervju, i min studie om sosialarbeideres erfaring med å være involvert i arbeidet med å forebygge radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme.

Før intervjuet på mandag vil jeg gjerne be deg lese over punktene nedenfor, og gjøre deg noen tanker om de, da de vil danne utgangspunkt for samtalen i fokusgruppen.

- Hvordan det er å arbeide med denne problemstillingen
- Likhet / ulikhet i arbeidet med andre grupper
- Opplevelse av mandatet
- Lojalitet
- Ulike krevende utfordringer
- Hvordan du håndterer utfordringene

Håvard Haugstvedt  
Phd-stipendiat  
Det samfunnsvitenskapelig fakultet  
Universitetet i Stavanger  
Tlf: 41479500  
epost: havard.haugstvedt@uis.no

## Appendices

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Stavanger, 15.10.18



### Invitasjon og forberedelse til fokusgruppeintervju 2

Dato og tid: 22.10.2018, kl 14:00 – 16:00

Sted: 

Takk for at du også stiller opp til fokusgruppeintervju nr. 2, i min studie om sosialarbeideres erfaring med å være involvert i arbeidet med å forebygge radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme.

Før intervjuet på mandag førstkommende uke vil jeg gjerne be deg lese over punktene nedenfor, og gjøre deg noen tanker om de, da de vil danne utgangspunkt for samtalen i fokusgruppen.

- Hvordan det oppleves å arbeide med personer med ekstreme holdninger og ytringer.
- Forberedelser til møtene.
- Hvordan du påvirkes av møtet med disse personene.
- Hvordan du håndterer følelser i møtet med målgruppa.
- Hvordan du håndterer følelser i etterkant av møter med målgruppa.

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