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A hitchhiker's guide to governance networks:

How a governance network can facilitate prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism

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Preface and acknowledgements

The thesis marks the end of two interesting years at the University of Stavanger. The master's programme in Societal Safety has come to an end, and it has (hopefully) prepared me for a career in the field. These last six months have been both exciting and meaningful, and I hope you will have an interesting read as the topic of risk governance, especially in prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism, is one that I take great interest in.

I wish for this research to contribute to the future closing of a rather large knowledge gap, and I hope that the findings of this research is of help both for the practitioners in the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism field, as well as for the people involved in governance networks in other areas.

First of all, I wish to thank the Nordic Safe Cities network for letting me 'hitchhike' and examine the network as an outsider. Without this access to information and informants, I would not have been able conduct such in depth examinations of governance networks as a mode of risk governance, and attempt to make a 'guide' to a governance network. A special thank you to Jeppe and Zina for always being available for questions and Teams calls. I highly appreciate the opportunity I was given.

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Mari Bondevik

Stavanger, 10th June 2021

Abstract

In the Nordic countries, we have increasingly witnessed a model of risk governance that outsources the issue of national security to municipalities and local governments. Municipalities are tasked with tackling radicalisation and violent extremism (RVE), of which they are equipped for to a varying degree. This has created the need for pooling of knowledge and competencies in the effort of preventing RVE. One way of pooling knowledge is through governance networks, which operate as a mode of risk governance. However, there is little knowledge of the value created in such governance networks. Thus, this research seeks to contribute to closing knowledge gap on how governance networks can contribute to prevention of RVE. This explorative study will add empirical meat to a skinny bone.

The research examines the Nordic Safe Cities network, a governance network that operates with the aim of creating safer Nordic cities. This network has 20 member cities from across the Nordic countries, and offers advisory, webinars and knowledge exchange for the municipal coordinators. Through the theoretical framework of *governance networks*, the value added to local preventive efforts from this network will be examined.

The key findings of this research validate much of the previous knowledge in the field when it comes to how a governance network should be structured in order to be facilitate members' capacities in prevention work. It sees ten pillars as necessary for the success of a governance network; a governance network will facilitate members' capacities in prevention of RVE if these pillars are in place. Nevertheless, the lack of evaluations seen in the empirical findings pose challenges to the model for success that this research presents. There is still a long way to go before knowing whether a successful governance network is the same an efficient one, as well as knowing what the real contribution in terms of prevention of RVE-related issues.

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Abbreviations

NAO – Network Administrative Organisations

NSC – Nordic Safe Cities

P/CVE – prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism

RVE – radicalisation and violent extremism

1.0   Introduction

Radicalisation and violent extremism (RVE) have often been seen as global phenomena with local manifestations and have also been present in the usually peaceful Nordic countries.[1] Some scholars have advocated for a common Nordic approach in security issues, as there "appears to be vast similarities, rooted in seemingly common robust social welfare systems, supported by transnational conceptual learning, and manifested in Nordic cooperation and agreements" (Larsson & Rhinard, 2021, p. 4). Despite there being differences between the Nordic countries it is these similarities that form the basis of this thesis – the cooperation between Nordic countries on societal security issues.

The recent shift in how the Nordic countries tackle RVE, from a national issue handled by the nation state to a local issue needing to be undertaken by the communities, creates the need for competencies within the municipalities (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Haugstvedt, 2020, p. 2). There is now a more decentralised approach where local actors have increasing responsibilities (Jore, 2021, p. 180). This means that the Nordic municipalities need competencies and knowledge on radicalisation, violent extremism and how to prevent these.

Nordic cities face varying degrees of radicalisation and violent extremism. These are not straight-forward phenomena. Yet, we expect both smaller and larger municipalities to handle these issues in order to maintain the safe, secure, and peaceful society we now live in. Are the municipalities equipped for this? How can a municipality with one or two people working on RVE ensure safety for all citizens in the community?

Most public sector employees have at some point been part of some form of formal or informal network. This mode of governing has become increasingly popular in Europe. Thus, it is necessary to know whether the time spent on such networks are worth the time and effort that is being put into the network, or whether it is just a fancy name on a wall that has no significant input. It is of importance as money is being pushed through these networks, thus needing to know if this is money well spent.

Networks are not a new phenomenon, and networks on different topics and level has been a product of a more recent form of risk governance where local authorities are responsible for the safety and security of its citizens. In recent years we have seen an increase in cooperation and

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[1] The five Nordic countries Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland are the countries included in this research. When talking of 'the Nordics', these are the countries in mind.

information sharing in the Nordic countries when it comes to RVE and how to solve these. We go to conferences, attend meetings and seminars, and we join networks on particular issues in order to increase our competence and knowledge. What are these networks worth? Are they just glossy images, nice web pages and success stories, or are they arenas for learning and information sharing? Are they a place for competence increases and value adds for the local communities as well as the practitioners? How can we assess the value of such networks? It is important to know what aspects of prevention work is fruitful and which means are not beneficial to the local coordinators on prevention work.

It is of high importance to the academic field to figure out how efficient these networks are in the preventive work regarding radicalisation and violent extremism. If networks are an efficient means to reach safer cities, capacities can lie in the networks, as opposed to the cities. For smaller cities, this could be important as local capacities might be pressured and creating expert departments in each and every field of wicked problems in order to create safe cities will be both costly and demanding. Rather, if efficient networks can pool the most updated knowledge and research, each municipality will not need to create their own expert hubs; expert knowledge will be available for all communities facing similar problems. Hence, this research will examine how such networks can facilitate prevention of RVE.

1.1   Contextualisation

The issue of terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism has increasingly been given attention. The 9/11 attacks have become an anchoring event that drastically transformed peoples' perception on terrorism due to its dramatic character (Nacos, 2019, p. 2). In the last two decades, attention surrounding radicalisation and violent extremism has increased dramatically both in volume and number of actors (Lid et al., 2016, p. 15). Recent events in the Nordic region, such as the 22nd July 2011 attacks in Norway, the 2015 Copenhagen shootings and the Bærum mosque attack in 2019 highlight the need for preventive measures (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 11).

This research is an explorative study which seeks to improve knowledge on how practitioners in the field operate in networks, and what they find useful about these networks. The thesis seeks more knowledge on whether networks and network organisations are a fruitful approach in preventive work. In order to do this, one network has been selected as the unit of analysis. The Nordic Safe Cities (NSC) network is a formal, membership-based network working on

RVE issues in the Nordic countries. This research will look into the theory of network governance and see this theory in light of the network analysed here. The empirical findings will add data to both the theory of network governance as well as how value can be added to local communities through this form of risk governance.

1.1.1 Research on prevention efforts

In the last two decades, attention surrounding RVE has increased dramatically both in volume and number of actors (Lid et al., 2016, p. 15). Since 9/11 there has been an increasing focus onto how and why certain people become radicalised and violent, also in the Nordic countries. There has been extensive research, albeit without clear results, onto why certain individuals become radicalised and/or violent extremists. A lot of the research focus on the reasons for radicalisation and the platforms for radicalisation (schools and prisons have been of particular interest).

Research regarding prevention and countering of radicalisation and violent extremism (P/CVE) is still considered a small field of research despite the political focus gained by the topic. Network organisations as a means of risk governance for P/CVE work is an even narrower field of study with few articles consisting of empirical studies or empirical data. Additionally, lack of mutually agreed upon definitions of both radicalisation and violent extremism makes prevention complex and relatively unorganised despite efforts to review and establish a common ground of knowledge (i.e. Bjørgo and Gjelsvik (2015) and Stephens et al. (2019)).

Radicalisation and violent extremism take many shapes and forms. Right-wing extremism, left-wing extremism and Islamic extremism are often studied separately and tackled differently (Carlsson, 2017, pp. 9-16). There is still a lot of research needed to be done on the field of radicalisation and violent extremism (RVE), which has consequences for the P/CVE field. Municipalities in all Nordic countries have in the last decades had increasing focus on P/CVE, although the threat of radicalisation and violent extremism is highly uneven spread out between the countries and municipalities. Thus, it is a bigger problem for some municipalities than for others (Carlsson, 2017, p. 21). Increasingly, local authorities and communities are expected to engage in prevention efforts (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Haugstvedt, 2020, p. 2). It is therefore important that the local apparatus is equipped to deal with the issue at hand (Carlsson, 2017, p. 17).

Dalgaard-Nielsen and Haugstvedt (2020, p. 13) claim that Denmark and Norway have been among the frontrunners in local preventive efforts. Despite this, Lid and Heierstad (2016a, p. 95) makes the claim that coordinators in the municipalities are not equipped for the task. Employees on all levels see challenges connected to the task that in the worst case could cost lives. This is cause for insecurity for both coordinators on the strategic level but also for the practitioners and front-line workers in fields that are expected to deal with such issues. This includes, social service workers, teachers, and the police.

However, not all research on RVE is as dispersed as presented above. Social capital through stable trust-based relationships and networks among the actors of a community, including local authorities, have been emphasized in several studies. Indications have been made that local governments need a degree of freedom to test local solutions on a case-to-case basis, and the need to avoid one-size-fits-all seems clear (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Schack, 2016, pp. 311-319). Despite certain mutual indicators, knowing what efficient P/CVE efforts is seems an impossible task due to the wickedness of radicalisation and violent extremism.

The policy field concerned with P/CVE in the Nordic countries is relatively new and is undergoing rapid incident driven development (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 24). National Action Plans to counter radicalisation and violent extremism are gaining momentum, yet little scientific knowledge on the topic hamper potentially beneficial P/CVE measures. Through an analysis of the Nordic Action Plans, Sivenbring and Malmros (2020, p. 25) concluded that the need for knowledge and more research is focused on seeking evidence for best practices as well as knowledge of how to identify and report vulnerable and suspicious individuals. It is in the former field this thesis wishes to add knowledge.

1.1.2 Networks as a means of tackling radicalisation and violent extremism

Networks are being created as part of the efforts of gathering information and sharing ideas in the common effort of P/CVE. Some networks exist internationally, amongst these are the Radicalization Awareness Network, the Strong Cities Network, and the NSC network (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 106). Despite these networks being present and mentioned in multiple research papers, none have evaluated or assessed the effects of these networks on their members. Thus, little is known about the efficiency of such networks; their real contribution and effectiveness is largely unknown.

As P/CVE is a research field still in its infancy, there is little data to be found on the effect of networks that operate in the field. According to Dalgaard-Nielsen (2016, p. 137) trust-based networks are able to utilise useful resources such as pooling of knowledge and competencies. Hence, networks should present a beneficial opportunity to be an efficient work mode. These networks also allow for a centralisation of knowledge and scientific research. Thus, there is no need for each community to contain expertise in a field as one can seek out networks in the field that contribute with information and knowledge, which is seen as a precondition for successful action to prevent and reduce a complex and wicked problem, and the urgent need for systematic learning and evaluations has been argued (Carlsson, 2017, p. 18).

Despite seemingly offering a more effective intervention to counter radicalisation and violent extremism than any other single government agency acting on its own, these governance networks, however, are no easy solution despite seemingly offering a more effective intervention to counter. As far as this research is concerned, no studies have been conducted that assess or evaluate the efficiency or effect that governance networks have in the field of P/CVE. Neither will this thesis offer an evaluation of the NSC network. Rather, this research seeks to close the knowledge gap on how governance networks increase their members' capacities in preventive efforts. In essence, one step closer to evaluating the effect of such networks.

1.1.3 Nordic collaborations in the P/CVE field

Many aspects of the P/CVE approach in the Nordic countries are similar. Collaborative work between agencies is a model used in all of the Nordics (see figure 1), albeit in varying degrees and not widely used in Sweden (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 7). RVE present a challenge no single actor can handle on their own. Thus, new patterns of cooperation and preventive work are constantly developed as complex problems demand complex solutions (Lid & Heierstad, 2016c, p. 176).

Some researchers talk of a Nordic model, despite smaller differences in approach. One point important to note is the grave lack of scholarly information on Iceland. The Nordics are in many settings grouped together but there is a big knowledge gap on RVE and P/CVE knowledge in Iceland.

Due to their long tradition of cooperation, there are many similarities in how the Nordic countries tackle the challenges RVE present. Despite smaller differences in how the Nordic

countries deal with P/CVE related issues, the Nordic governance model consisting of trust, tolerance, openness, and legitimacy is relatively similar (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 31). This makes for good possibilities in collaborative forums.

1.1.3.1 The Nordic Safe Cities

One of the Nordic collaborations in the P/CVE field is the NSC network. This is a Nordic organisation that aims to create safer cities, with safe public spaces (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020e), and is the unit of analysis in this research. This network consists of 20 Nordic cities from all of the Nordic countries (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020b). According to Høybråten (2017, p. 7), the network enables cooperation across borders and hope that good initiatives in various Nordic cities can serve as global inspiration.

Despite arguing that no two cities are the same, Nordic Safe Cities (2017, p. 8) claim that the Nordic region and Nordic cities have a lot in common, which is in line with the scholarly view of the existence of a Nordic model of governance. Thus, making it possible to create a common Nordic approach. Both the Nordic P/CVE approach and the NSC network will be elaborated in the following chapter.

1.2 Problem statement

The problem statement was reached after seeing what gaps in the scientific knowledge presented a good opportunity for research. Thus, the overall theme of this thesis is whether *networks are an efficient means of governing radicalisation and violent extremism.* I wish to look into this topic through a problem statement. This problem statement will be answered by looking into one specific network, the NSC. I wish to look into what the cities gain from the network; whether they find motivation, ideas, or specific measures that they make use of. Is there value in the network for the practitioners, or the communities as a whole? The aim is to see whether this form of risk governance – governing the local preventive measures through formal networks – is an efficient way of preventing radicalisation and violent extremism (RVE).

The thesis will thus answer the following problem statement:

How can governance networks facilitate members' capacity to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism?

In order to answer this problem statement, it is important to see first what a governance network is, then how a governance network operates and how a governance networks affects the praxis of its members. To clarify the problem statement further, when talking about the members, they will be referred to as: the members, the coordinators, the cities, or the municipalities interchangeably. It is, however, important to note that this refers to the active participants of the network, and not their communities as a whole. When mentioning societies or communities, the local citizens, or population, will be included in the meaning. The reason for this divide will be elaborated in chapter 5.2.

Further, when the problem statement refers to *facilitate*, it will be equated with an *increase* in capacity. This is due to the connotations of the word. If a governance network is facilitating a member, it is implicit that the work of the member becomes easier, or the capacities of the member is enhanced. Thus, these two concepts will be used interchangeably.

This research uses the governance network Nordic Safe Cities as the unit of analysis to see how governance networks affect the members and their capacities to tackle RVE in the Nordic countries. There will also be an examination of the success factors for such a governance network.

1.2.1 Delimitations

The boundaries of this thesis are set by the unit of analysis that is the NSC network. This is the only network that will be examined in this research. The focus of this research will be on how the network is perceived by its members and the value add the network creates for the member cities.

The various approaches to RVE set by the cities internally will fall outside the scope of this research. The focus in this research is on the strategic level, as the informants are all operating as city coordinators on P/CVE issues. Thus, the focus will remain on the strategic level and not go into detail on any of the P/CVE measures put in place by the municipalities. Neither will there be an evaluation of measures by the municipalities or an evaluation of the NSC network. The research emphasises certain factors that need to be in place for a successful network, and what these factors are, in order to answer the problem statement.

The full extent of RVE issues cannot be tackled in this research alone. There are various types RVE, for example right-wing, left-wing and Islamist ideologies. Often these are seen as separate

phenomena. As the NSC focus on all of these there will not be specific mentions of how they are tackled separately.

The reason for the change in RVE being increasingly seen as a local issue as opposed to one of national security will be outside of the scope of this research, despite this being of importance for the municipalities affected by this gradual rotation towards local prevention. Rather, the problem statement comes as a consequence of risk governance increasingly being seen as a local challenge rather than one of national security.

1.3   Structure

This thesis consists of six chapters where the first chapter introduces the previous research in the topic of study, as well as research this thesis is building on. This first chapter introduces the knowledge gaps the P/CVE field, thus the reason for choosing the problem statement.

Chapter two introduces the theoretical framework the empirical data will be analysed through. This theory is gathered and combined for the purpose of this research. A preliminary model has been made for the purpose of this research, and I will present these pillars of success in a governance network in this chapter. The introduction and description of the NSC will also be done in this chapter.

Chapter three takes the reader through the research design and method of study. This chapter shows the research process and reflects around decisions made throughout the process.

Chapter four is the chapter of the key findings in this research, presented in the order of the pillars of success. In addition, two new pillars are added as a result of the empirical findings. The empirical data will be introduced in the chapter but discussed in the following discussion chapter.

Chapter five is the discussion that gathers all lose ends between the above chapters. Here, the model on the pillars of success in a governance network will be discussed in relation to previous literature, the theoretical framework, and the key findings in this research.

Lastly, the conclusion will summarise the discussion, and explicitly answer the problem statement in this research. This chapter will also look into the implications of this research, both practical and theoretical, as well as suggesting some topics of further research.

2.0 Theoretical framework

The chapter will start by looking into some of the concepts used in this research. This will be done to clarify what is meant as several of the concepts have multiple meanings. In order to see whether the NSC network is an efficient network, it is important to see how the network operates. Therefore, the theory to be introduced will be network governance theory, then the NSC will be seen in relation to this theory. At the end of this chapter, an operationalisation of certain factors for success in governance networks will be presented. This operationalisation comes from an extensive literature review and gathering of documents in order to discover all plausible factors for efficiency in governance networks. Eight factors linked to successful governance networks will be provided. Accordingly, I have grouped eight pillars of governance networks together in a model for success.

2.1 Conceptual clarification

Some definitions and clarifications of how this research will use the concepts are necessary, as this research concerns itself with a network that operates in the field of RVE. Thus, it is important with a mutual understanding of the issues concerning in this thesis.

2.1.1 Risk governance

Governance is a concept used to refer to "the steering of society and the economy through collective action in accordance with common goals and standards" (Kenis, 2016, p. 156). Risk governance refers to governing of risk and risk-related areas.

> "Governing choices in modern societies is seen as an interplay between governmental institutions, economic forces and civil society actors, such as non-governmental organisations. At the global level, governance embodies a horizontally organised structure of functional self-regulation encompassing state and non-state actors bringing about collectively binding decisions without superior authority. In this perspective, non-state actors play an increasingly relevant role and become more important since they have decisive advantages of information and resources compared to single states" (Renn, 2008, p. 8).

Risk governance concerns itself with the complex mechanisms concerning how management decisions is made (Renn, 2008, p. 9). In essence, network governance is a method of doing risk governance. It is a way of undertaking issues at hand.

2.1.2 Wicked problem

RVE can be classified as wicked problems. Wicked problems are complex challenges that are difficult to solve, and where no effective solution exists. Their characterisations are blurry and the parameters of the problem are difficult to define. To complicate wicked problems further, they can also be symptoms of other problems and they are seen as highly interlinked (Fischbacher-Smith, 2016, p. 402). Common traits in wicked problems are that they contain multiple actors, often with divergent interests and values; situations are messy and uncertain; and academia is unclear and has little reliable knowledge.

As a wicked problem has no solution, some researchers claim that learning across different perspectives, reaching a shared understanding of the nature of the problem, and developing better intervention capacities should be the focus (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Haugstvedt, 2020, p. 9). As the root of wicked problems is their unruly nature, reaching a shared global understanding of a particular wicked problem could be counterproductive. Nevertheless, in similar countries, such as the Nordics, a unified approach could be argued for as the countries are based on similar systems of government and governance (see chapter 2.1.8 for an introduction to the Nordic model).

2.1.3 Terrorism/counterterrorism

"It appears that terrorism, radicalisation and extremism have increasingly become merged into a single discursive framework" (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 12) .

The focus of this thesis is radicalisation and extremism but in order to understand these two concepts it is important to see them in relation to the umbrella term they sometimes fall under, namely terrorism. The issue of terrorism is not new to society. The phenomenon has existed for centuries and has always caused fear due to its dramatic and sudden character (Nacos, 2019, p. 4). Terrorism is not an easy concept to define, and there is no agreed upon definition. However, some traits are less controversial than others, and that is that terrorism is violence, or the threat of violence, and that it is committed to intimidate a population (Lindahl, 2017, p. 527; Nacos,

2019, pp. 24-29; Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 12). Counterterrorism is, thus, the measures taken to prevent terrorist attacks. It is the strategies and tactics adopted in response to terrorism (Nacos, 2019, p. 282).

The general understanding seems to be that radicalisation and extremism precedes terrorism (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 11). In addition, Jore (2021, p. 179) states that it is now viewed that "terrorism can be prevented by focusing on radicalisation", showing that terrorism and radicalisation is tightly linked and the focus on radicalisation is currently part of counterterrorism strategy. The current approach also highlights the importance of preventive work; It could save lives.

2.1.4 Radicalisation

As with all challenges that fall under the wicked problems umbrella, radicalisation is a contested term that has no one accepted definition. Nevertheless, some similarities between definitions exist and a much used, relatively wide, definition of radicalisation is:

> "a social process through which an individual or group of individuals adopt extremist views" (Nehlsen et al., 2020, p. 3).

This, or similar, definition has been used by several researchers, and there is consensus in the research community that radicalisation is a process that occurs over time (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Haugstvedt, 2020, p. 6). Despite some definitions of radicalisation being narrower, only focusing on certain groups being radicalised, this definition encompasses the phenomenon that can be seen in Nordic cities. Sivenbring and Malmros (2020, p. 21), however, claim that there exists confusion between practitioners in Scandinavian municipalities and the research field. Municipalities have seen radicalisation as a static outcome and/or political or religious position. This is not in line with the definition presented above. Hence, the lack of unified definition complicates local preventive efforts.

The definition does not say anything about how or why some people become radicalised. One issue facing researchers in this field is the lack of knowledge of the root causes of radicalisation. There is no unanimity as to what the problem or the solution might be (Lid & Heierstad, 2016c, p. 175). However, the dominating understanding of the causes of radicalisation is similar to the understanding of other social concerns such as addiction, crime, and other behavioural issues.

Amongst the believed root causes of these problems are exclusion in arenas such as the labour market and education, as well as social exclusion (Lid & Heierstad, 2016a, p. 97).

2.1.5 Extremism and violent extremism

> "Extremism…usually refers to broader ideological and political milieus, specific organisations and individuals that have attitudes, values, ideas, norms and behaviours that, in comparison with the majority political and religious mainstream norms, are viewed as extreme" (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 13).

In short, extremism can be seen as rejection of democracy and human rights, whereas justification of the use of violence for political goals can be classified as violent extremism (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 13). Some claim that individuals seeking extremist milieus find themselves not fitting in, whether it is in school, in the workplace, or in society (Nordic Safe Cities, 2017, p. 11). This is similar to the view of the causes of radicalisation and the claim to causes of extremism has been disputed with the argument that no single cause can be found as to why some people chose to become extremists.

The boundaries between extremism and violent extremism are fluid but one definition of violent extremism is: "using, threatening with, instigating, encouraging or justifying violence based on ideological grounds" (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020b).

2.1.6 The complexity of radicalisation and violent extremism

The phenomena of RVE are closely linked to the issue of terrorism. Some researchers claim the difference to be that terrorism is an act of violent extremism and radicalisation is the process that makes someone a violent extremist and/or terrorist (Bjørgo & Gjelsvik, 2015, pp. 14-16; Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, pp. 11-14). Consequently, these phenomena are tightly linked and, in many cases, cannot be separated. However, the linkage between these phenomena is not as simple as presented above. Bjørgo and Gjelsvik (2015, pp. 14-17) claim that violent extremism ranges across more violent phenomena than terrorism, such as violent demonstrations, vandalism, or participation in civil war. However, they also suggest that persons can be radicalised without ever becoming violent extremists.

Sivenbring and Malmros (2020, p. 11) claim that making direct causal links between terrorism and radicalisation, and extremism and radicalisation is a misconception. Some people will have

radicalised opinions without acting violent, and some may be violent extremists before becoming radicalised (Bjørgo & Gjelsvik, 2015, p. 16).

In other words, radicalisation can occur without engagement in violent extremist or terrorist actions. The concepts are tightly linked but there is not necessarily linearity between becoming radicalised towards conducting a terrorist attack. The practical implications of this is that P/CVE can also be seen as counterterrorism despite the process potentially never leading to a terrorist act. Hence, the distinction between these concepts is highly unclear.

The issue of how to tackle these interconnected phenomena then appears. "In the prevention field, it is rather widely acknowledged that there are at least two main approaches to handling the problem. One is security measures, the other is social preventive measures" (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 18). This research has this in mind when it looks into how networks are used to tackle wicked problems. The Nordic mode of prevention is often viewed as focusing on the social preventive measures.

2.1.7 Prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism

As stated above, RVE are separate phenomena even though they are tightly linked. There are no clear definitions of measures to prevent or counter radicalisation and violent extremism, and it has become synonymous with numerous safeguarding measures, from early prevention to targeted measures for violent extremists (Gielen, 2019, p. 1153). Hence, prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism is "an umbrella term for strategies and approaches that aim to prevent or mitigate radicalisation and/or extremism" (Nehlsen et al., 2020, p. 3).

Some authors separate between prevention of violent extremism (PVE) and countering violent extremism (CVE), where PVE are the early preventive measures and CVE are measures more related to deterring those already radicalised (Davies, 2018, p. 4). This distinction is not clear and concise, and many authors use CVE and PVE interchangeably. Some use either CVE or PVE to cover both the early preventive measures and the direct deterrence of already radicalised individuals. P/CVE measures do not only aim to include individuals and milieus in positive processes but also to protect citizens from extremist violence and terror attacks (Lid & Heierstad, 2016b, p. 35). The abbreviation P/CVE will cover both prevention and countering measures. In this acronym radicalisation seems overlooked. The reason behind this is unclear, but for the purpose of this research P/CVE will include early measures and deterrence of individuals in the process of radicalisation. Thus, covering all aspects of the preventive work.

In other words, P/CVE will be seen as the term for strategies and approaches that aim to prevent, counter, or mitigate radicalisation and violent extremism.

2.1.7.1 Backfire processes

One issue in P/CVE work is the possibility of backfire processes, which is the unintentional increasing of the risk whilst attempting to mitigate the very risk (Lindekilde, 2012, p. 340). In trying to tackle RVE issues, there is the risk of increasing the problem through P/CVE measures. However, little research exists on these processes, how and why they occur. Backfire processes is of relevance as it has increasingly been seen in relation to P/CVE work. It will be used to refer to the perversion of effects from P/CVE measures leading to an increased risk of RVE (Lindekilde, 2016, p. 52).

2.1.8 The Nordic Model

There is much debate about whether there exists a Nordic model in prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism. In welfare and democracy studies there is much talk of a Nordic model. Similarities between the Nordic countries in labour, economic policy, education, culture and state media has been emphasised in these studies (Larsson & Rhinard, 2021, p. 6). As part of this Nordic welfare model is a perspective on criminal prevention as inclusion in the civil society through work, education, and housing. This also appears to be the approach on P/CVE issues (Lid & Heierstad, 2016a, p. 97).

In addition to a long tradition of cooperation between the Nordic countries, the Nordic model of democracy emphasises "a state and government that provides protection from physical and social risks, fundamental freedom for all, mutual respect, trust and equality under the law" (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020b). These societal similarities allow for thinking that prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism could be similar in these countries. It is still important to note that similar approaches are not the same as identical approaches.

The Nordic model can thus be transferred to the field of P/CVE, as the Nordic countries' focus on "early prevention initiatives that promote social cohesion, democratic values and resilient communities with a particular focus on vulnerable youth" (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020b). This can be seen in the cross-sectoral prevention approach which includes work in schools, social

services and the police, such as the Danish SSP model[2] that has spread to Sweden, Norway and Finland, albeit with minor adjustments and local adaptations (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 31). Building positive relationships with communities and young people have been emphasised as the recommended practice in the P/CVE praxis (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 139).

The Nordic prevention model is one classified as a multiagency approach which means that "no single actor or agency has the knowledge, information or operational space" to tackle the subject on their own, for example are both police, schools and social services working on the same concerns with a collaborative approach (Sivenbring & Malmros, 2020, p. 30). Consequently, needing several societal agencies in order to tackle RVE issues.

The figure below highlights the similarities and differences in the Nordic countries' regarding what appears to be the focus area of the prevention approach:

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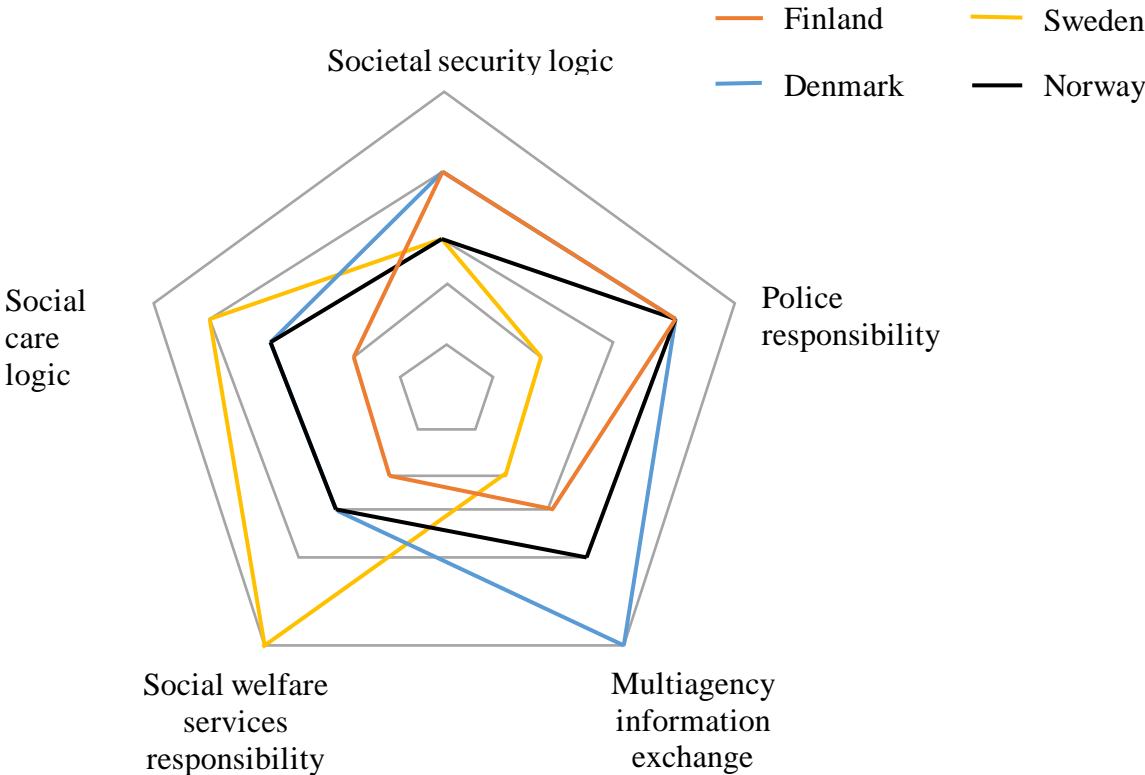
[2] SSP is short for Schools, Social Services and Police, which means that the SSP model is one of collaboration between these agencies. In short, it is the name of the multiagency approach to P/CVE work in the Nordics. For more information on this approach, see: Sivenbring, J., & Malmros, R. A. (2020). Mixing Logics. Multiagency Approaches for Countering Violent Extremism. *Segerstedtinstitutet*.

Despite smaller differences in definitions, frameworks, and underlying assumptions, the four Nordic countries[3] show similar types of operative structures in the fields (Kotajoki, 2018, p. 18).

Sivenbring and Malmros (2020, p. 31) claim that this multiagency approach rests on core tenets of the Nordic governance model, namely legitimacy and mutual trust, despite smaller differences due to some variations in the pre-existing structures in the Nordic countries.

2.2   Network governance theory

In order to know how a governance network can facilitate P/CVE capacities in Nordic cities, it is important to know what a governance network is and how they operate.

Network governance theory has mushroomed in the last three decades/since the 1990s (Fawcett & Daugbjerg, 2012, p. 195; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007a, p. 3). As a response to changes and challenges in society, network governance represents a social or communal form of organising society in which trust, reciprocity and the pursuit of mutual benefit interact to forge jointly agreed and achieved outcomes (Keast, 2016, p. 442). As mentioned, I see network governance as a mode of risk governance.

In all simplicity network governance theory is the governing of public goods and spheres using cooperation through networks to solve issues and problems facing society. The concepts of *networks* and *governance* have been seen as "notoriously slippery terms" (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007a, p. 9). Generally speaking, *networks* are seen as actors bound by mutual interaction, and *governance* refers to the steering of society through collective action (Kenis, 2016, pp. 152-156). This process can be both formal and informal (Sørensen, 2016, p. 420). Hence, network governance is:

> "A movement of politics and administration towards being intertwined in various forms of interactive networks which in many cases are not prescribed by constitutions, legal

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[3] Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. Iceland is missing from the figure as little is known about its P/CVE approach.

frameworks or statutes. Network governance is neither market nor government nor civil society, it is a hybrid organisational form" (Bogason & Zølner, 2007, p. 5).

In other words, network governance is the means of tackling societal security issues through formal networks of interaction and information sharing. This view of network governance fits well with the description of the NSC and encompasses several other networks that the results in this thesis can also cover.

Some authors use the concept network governance, and others consistently talk about governance networks. In many cases they talk about the same phenomenon, and in some cases, they mean different things. Network governance is here seen as the overall theory. Governance networks will be used to refer to the specific networks that fit into the theory of network governance; the particular form of network within a particular form of governance (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007a, p. 9).

2.2.1 Network governance and P/CVE issues

Network governance in the field of wicked problems, such as P/CVE issues, can be seen as a recent phenomenon. Some authors have argued that New Public Management[4] is the reason behind the proliferation of praxis. Top-down governing is losing its grip and being replaced by pluralistic governance based on interdependence and trust (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007a, p. 3). Dalgaard-Nielsen (2016, p. 135) argues for the need to de-emphasise central government at the advantage of networks and collaborations that includes local government and civil society. A network is more likely to possess the necessary resources and expertise and is therefore a better solution to the complex challenge that is P/CVE. This is also a trend that has been followed in the Nordic countries, where local governments are increasingly responsible for tackling RVE, which was previously seen as a matter of national security and the nation state (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Haugstvedt, 2020, p. 2).

Wicked problems, such as RVE, need a transboundary risk governance approach that seeks to bring actors and stakeholders together, strengthening cooperation and enhancing horizontal learning (Noordegraaf et al., 2017, p. 392). Networks such as the NSC should therefore in theory be a sensible governing mode in order to facilitate P/CVE efforts.

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[4] The increasing marketisation, privatisation and outsourcing of public services that has occurred in the last few decades (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007, p. 3).

2.2.2 Governance networks and efficiency

Efficiency is a slippery term, and here an effective governance network is defined as "the attainment of positive work-level outcomes that could not normally be achieved by individual organisational participants acting independently" (Provan & Kenis, 2008, p. 2).

Networks are seen as an efficient way of tackling wicked problems as resources from a range of different providers and interest groups can be pooled together (Blanco et al., 2011, p. 301). Regardless of the competencies of the local actors, a network will in many cases expand the knowledge and competency in order to effectively intervene to counter RVE (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2016, p. 137). Sørensen (2016, p. 421) argues that there is scholarly agreement that the "pooling of knowledge, resources and competencies, the possibility for mutual learning and the ability to coordinate the actions of social and political actors in the process of implementation" can contribute to a more effective and efficient public governance. It has also been argued that in order to be effective, some degree of internal commitment from members must be maintained (Peters, 2007, pp. 74-75).

According to Torfing (2016, p. 3), governance networks "bring together relevant and affected actors with different ideas, skills, and resources". In some cases, the governance networks will be separate actors directly involved with P/CVE measures, whereas the network relevant in this research is a governance network that connects the academia, or research field, to the P/CVE coordinators in the cities. The importance of governance networks can be claimed to lay in the increased collaborative learning process that may lead to innovation in public policy or P/CVE measures (Torfing, 2016, p. 3).

According to Torfing (2016, p. 9), researchers argue that the "combination of flexibility and authority in governance networks will tend to enhance effective governance" and has also claimed that "despite the lack of transparency and accountability in governance networks, their contribution to the enhancement of empowered participation, public deliberation, and democratic legitimacy tends to have a democratising effect on society and public governance".

2.2.2.1   Efficient governance network = network management

Complexity in governance networks as shown above has created a need for certain amounts of organisation, guidance, and management of interactions. This has led to the emergence of

network management (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 5). Some authors believe that attempts to manage networks is futile and contrary to the idea of governance (Fawcett & Daugbjerg, 2012, p. 197). Others see this as a way of maximising efficiency (Blanco et al., 2011, p. 302). Governance networks that take a network management style are seen as "interorganisational arenas for interest mediation between self-interested actors who interact because of the presence of a mutual resource dependency" (Torfing, 2016, p. 20).

A network management facilitates interactions, explores new content, and organises interactions between actors (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 5). Provan and Kenis (2008, p. 8) brands this Network Administrative Organisation (NAO), where there is a separate administration to govern the network. The administration can consist of one or several people who coordinate and sustain the network. Research has shown that intensive network management strategies have caused better performance, as perceived by respondents, compared to networks with fewer managerial strategies (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 7). Thus, this far it can be seen that a successful governance network is an efficient one.

2.3 The Nordic Safe Cities as a governance network

This part of the chapter will see the NSC in terms of the network governance theory presented above. Here, the NSC will be seen as a governance network despite minor deviations from the theoretical framework.

The NSC was initiated by the Nordic Council of ministers in 2016, in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Copenhagen in 2015 (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020e). Since then it has become an independent non-profit, non-governmental organisation, an NGO (Kelk, 2020). It is a non-profit organisation run by a secretariat with its offices in Copenhagen (Nordic Safe Cities, 2021). With its 5 employees, the organisation consists of a secretariat in charge of organising activities for the member cities in the network. Two have been part of the organisation since its birth (executive director and deputy director), and the others have joined in 2020 and 2021. The NSC secretariat also work with partners and partner organisation to enable the cities access to the most recent research in the field and best practices from other Nordic cities (Nordic Safe Cities, 2021). There are eight 'safe city advisors' connected to the network, who work on a contract basis, and also hold positions as professors, researchers at universities or science institutes, or work in the field of RVE. From the partner organisation there is a range from local stakeholder organisations to research centres (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020d).

With the aim to create "local safety in the Nordic cities", "has its origins in and primary focus on the prevention of extremism", and "make the Nordics a global pioneer region in the prevention of extremist violence and hate", the NSC alliance work to share information and best practices with its 20 member cities (Nordic Safe Cities, 2021).

The NSC network's vision emphasise trust in addition to Nordic values of democracy, equality and mutual respect, as important factors for the network (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020e). They see violent extremism in the Nordic countries as a societal challenge as much as it is a security matter. Thus, seeking the underlying causes of radicalisation and violent extremism (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020b). The NSC network calls itself a 'thinkubator' that helps member cities create "safe cities, stand against the rise of polarisation and safe-guard citizens from extremist violence and hate" (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020a).

The network takes an advisory role to create individual strategies for its members (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020e). Through advisory, summits and various initiatives the NSC network seek to share knowledge and best practices amongst the Nordic cities to develop policies and practical solutions. The network enables meetings across cities and departments, as well as meetings where the most recent knowledge in the field of radicalisation and violent extremism is shared (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020a, 2021).

According to the NSC network they:

> "Function as an advisor to reinforce existing strategies or concepts, and as an entrepreneur to shape and launch new pilot concepts. We further aim to compare the metrics and success criteria, experiences and results across the cities when dealing with similar challenges. This will hopefully give us an opportunity to compare the outcome and impact of the work done in and with the cities and share and scale 'what works'" (Nordic Safe Cities, 2020c).

Membership in the network is voluntary and costs DKK 75,000 annually (Nordic Safe Cities, 2021). A city commits to a minimum of two years of membership which allows for tailored and adapted approaches (Nordic Safe Cities, 2021). This membership is for all members up for renewal ahead of 2022, as the network started 2020 with the new organisational structure as an NGO independent of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

As have been shown above, governance networks have been increasingly important as a mode of governance in the Nordics. The NSC have several of the traits seen in this literature and a

summary of these traits can be seen in Table 1 below. These traits, or characteristics, are not examined in detail, and are not to be confused with the factors of success but are shortly mentioned in order to see the similarities and differences between the NSC and governance networks as seen from the theoretical framework on network governance.

Network traits	Governance networks	Nordic Safe Cities
Hierarchy	Non-hierarchical	Non-hierarchical
Interactions	Across public, semi-public, and private	Semi-public, and private
Regulation	Self-regulating	Self-regulating
Purpose	Contribute to public purpose	Safety of citizens
Competency	Pooling of knowledge, coordinate resources	Pooling of knowledge
Form of organisation	Not in themselves organisations	Independent organisation, NGO
Structure	Complex and potentially chaotic, territorial anchor, range from informal to formal	Organised through a secretariat/network management – formal structure
Policy making	Create routines for policy making	Policy making is not an aim in itself. Strive to provide better knowledge for the cities on P/CVE issues
Vision	Change is incremental	Four aims: information, connecting, advisory and innovation
Trust	Trust is critical	Trust is important
Communication	Interactive – knowledge exchange/dialogue	Interactive – knowledge exchange
Dependence	Interdependent between network actors	Dependent on membership fees, the Nordic Council of Ministers' funding and through partnerships

Goals	Mutual goals	Safer cities
Membership	Various degrees of autonomy	Membership-based but autonomous cities

Table 1 The Nordic Safe Cities as a governance network, theoretical framework adapted from Bevir and Rhodes (2007); Blanco et al. (2011); Hertting (2007); Keast (2016); Sørensen (2016); Sørensen and Torfing (2007a, 2007b).

As seen in the table above, the NSC network in many ways fit the characteristics of a governance network with a network management (a NAO), and will therefore be seen in the context of this form of risk governance. Nevertheless, the matching of characteristics is not an indication of the performance of a governance network, and it is important to see this form of governance in relation to whether or not it facilitates P/CVE efforts. For this to be seen, the characteristics need to provide value for the network.

2.4 Pillars of success in a governance network

As we have seen above, the NSC can by its characteristics be seen as a NAO governance network. However, in order to see whether a NAO form of governance network, such as the NSC, contribute to prevention of RVE, it is important to know how it is considered successful, in the sense that a successful governance network also implies that it is efficient:

> "NAO network governance will be most effective for achieving network-level outcomes when trust is moderately to widely shared among network participants (moderate density trust), when there are a moderate number to many network participants, when network-level goal consensus is moderately high, and when the need for network level competencies is high" (Provan & Kenis, 2008, p. 13).

These three factors, trust, goal consensus and need for competencies are seen by Provan and Kenis (2008). Nonetheless, these are not the only authors who have found factors that could be relevant for the success of a governance network. Through an extensive literature review, eight pillars stand out as important for the success of governance networks. For the purpose of this research, the eight factors that have been chosen, have all been seen in the light of the structure of a NAO governance network. These eight pillars have been gathered in the table below (table 2) and show the findings in previous literature on the topic.

Some studies have in the last two decades made progress when it comes to seeing efficiency in governance networks. Efforts have been made towards finding commonalities and factors for success of a governance network. Whether success in a NAO is the same as an efficient NAO will be discussed in chapter five but as far as previous research is concerned, these two concepts (success and efficiency) are overlapping. Following is eight pillars, or factors, that point towards the success of governance networks: trust, size, managerial activity, need for competence, goal consensus, legitimacy, learning and innovation, and stakeholder involvement.

Pillars of success	Previous literature
Trust	The higher degree of trust the better for the governance network. This leads to predictable interactions and possibilities for showing vulnerabilities.
Managerial activity	A high activity level is important, variety of contacts needed and acting as facilitator is vital.
Need for competence	Gathering experts and scientists, as well as stakeholders and competencies is important.
Goal consensus	Goals tend to be fluid, unclear when the goal is reached but goal consensus should be high.
Learning and innovation	Individual and collective learning is important. Deliberation is important, and so is the degree of diversity or homophily. Size and centralisation of the network could also contribute or hinder learning.
Size	A larger network is more resilient but the bigger the network the more complex the interactions.
Legitimacy	Often considered a-constitutional but can also connect civil society and civil society organisations to avoid this.
Stakeholder involvement	Stakeholder involvement raises the quality. This also relates to legitimacy.

Table 2 Pillars of success in a NAO

2.4.1 Trust

For many researchers, trust seems to be an important common denominator in networks, in addition to resources and expertise. Klijn and Koppenjan (2012, p. 7) argue that trust is often seen as the core coordination mechanism of networks despite it being a rare occurrence. Thus, trust affects network performance as trust reduces uncertainties and increases information sharing and exploration of new solutions.

Trust is seen as an important part of a governance network. There are several reasons for this, and Edelenbos et al. (2011, pp. 436-438) shows that trust both leads to more predictable interactions, as well as making actors more inclined to being vulnerable. One important conclusion on the efficiency of governance networks is that it is not the intensity of interaction in the network but what the interaction consists of that matters.

The network management is seen as having an effect on the level of trust in a governance network, and high degrees of trust coming from greater management efforts (Klijn et al., 2011, p. 14).

2.4.2 Managerial activity

"The character of wicked problems requires managers to maintain a wide variety of contacts in order to be able to connect with the necessary actors and to acquire information and options from them" (Edelenbos et al., 2013, p. 134).

Adequate network management is vital in achieving valuable outcomes (Edelenbos et al., 2011, p. 421). The structure of management activities seems to have an impact on efficiency of the network. Edelenbos et al. (2013, p. 131) found that "a strong connective style of network management is related to good outcomes". Edelenbos et al. (2011, p. 427) emphasise that it is important that the managers know their networks as the job takes a lot of effort and commitment. Subsequently, it can be claimed that "a manager who employs a large number of different activities in the governance network will achieve better outcomes" (Edelenbos et al., 2011, p. 428).

Edelenbos et al. (2011, p. 422) see the role of the network manager to be a mediator and a facilitator where the aim is to bring people into contact with one another, and to build relationships among actors in the network. As governance networks often address wicked problems, there might be a need for the managers to "maintain a wide variety of contacts in

order to be able to connect with the necessary actors and to acquire information and opinions from them" (Edelenbos et al., 2011, p. 426).

Managerial staff seemingly has an effect on the efficiency of the governance networks, with a high turnover in managerial staff seen as a negative influence on satisfaction. As trust is seen as an important factor for governance network success, and building trustful relations and connections is time consuming, a quick turnover over network management can be a hindrance to high degrees of trust within the network (Edelenbos et al., 2013, p. 155).

2.4.3 Need for competence

As claimed by Edelenbos et al. (2011, p. 420), dependency relations are crucial to efficient governance networks. This dependency relationship can often be seen as a need for knowledge increase. However, Noordegraaf et al. (2017, p. 395) points out that it is "unclear who ranks as 'expert'". One important aspect in the competence increase coming from a governance network depends on whether the expert knowledge is recognised by other members (Riche et al., 2020, p. 8). In other words, it is important that the members of the network recognise both fellow members' competencies and the expertise drawn into the network from outside.

2.4.4 Goal consensus

A complicating factor for evaluation of governance networks is that the goals of the network tends to be fluid (Klijn et al., 2011, p. 3). A further complication is also that not always the member organisations share the same goal, despite often showing similarities. One of the reasons for the difficulties in measuring the outcomes of such networks is because of the differing goals, making it difficult to pick a goal to measure and assess outcomes of processes (Edelenbos et al., 2011, p. 424).

It has been claimed to be impossible to determine when P/CVE efforts are successful (Noordegraaf et al., 2017, p. 397). Thus, determining efficiency of the network membership can be a complicated task.

2.4.5 Learning and innovation

"Learning relies on a balanced configuration of structural characteristics, which means that several conditions must be present, but none of them must be overriding. Learning is most effective when in governance networks when informal norms offer room for creativity and consensus, but also when formal rules control for power imbalances and ensure adequate information change. Similarly, a well-adjusted size as well as balanced levels of diversity, centralisation, and density seem required" (Riche et al., 2020, p. 12).

Riche et al. (2020, p. 2) claims that "the success of governance networks depends on individual and collective learning". However, it is not known exactly how this learning is supposed to take place. Yet, there are some indications in the literature that when network members are willing to listen to alternative viewpoints there can be learning; when there is presence of a skilful leader there can be learning; but also a lot of learning depends on individual conditions (Riche et al., 2020, p. 9).

Riche et al. (2020, p. 9) claim that learning is a product of social interaction. Newig et al. (2010, p. 6) also correlate with this viewpoint, that information transmission and deliberation foster learning. Some studies referred to by Riche et al. (2020, p. 11) indicate that homophily, or the similarity of actors, can facilitate learning. Additionally, they found that larger networks lead to more diverse ideas and opinions, however, that there is also the risk of increasing transaction costs for sharing. Factors such as size of network and network centralisation also makes a difference to learning as too large a network can make deliberation complicated and overly centralised networks rely on a few heavily linked individuals which can make the network vulnerable (Newig et al., 2010, p. 10).

Another important factor for learning is the degree of centralisation of the network. The higher degree of centralisation, the smaller the chances of learning from diverse sources of information and peripheral participants. In other words, learning seems to occur only at certain points in the network. There seems to be a need for certain amounts of certain characteristics, but not too much of anything with the exception of trust. There can never be enough trust (Riche et al., 2020, pp. 12-13).

2.4.6 Size

A factor that appears for several authors in the governance network field, is the size of the governance network. It can be assumed that the more actors there are in a network, the more resilient it is due to less vulnerability to loss of members. However, the bigger the network, the more complicated it is to engage in deliberation (Newig et al., 2010, p. 10). A large network also needs an organisation, or a management, to coordinate all members. Hence, a NAO such as the NSC is suitable to larger networks (Provan & Kenis, 2008, p. 10).

2.4.7 Legitimacy

An issue for governance networks is that they often are considered a-constitutional, as they are often only loosely coupled to democratic institutions. However, it has been argued that democratic legitimacy can be realised as citizens, civil society organisations and business have more room for direct engagement (Edelenbos et al., 2013, p. 134). Thus, it is important to involve the stakeholders in the governance process.

2.4.8 Stakeholder involvement

The literature claims that stakeholder involvement raises the quality as tackling wicked problems benefit from the presence of multiple actors (Klijn et al., 2011, p. 4). This also relates to the legitimacy factor as stakeholder involvement raises legitimacy of the network. Some authors, like Sørensen (2016) and Torfing and Ansell (2017) claim that network governance is not less democratic as it often involves stakeholders on the local level. Thus, being a new form of local democracy as opposed to removing democracy.

3.0   Method and research design

The chapter will take the reader through considerations and decisions of the research. Throughout the chapter strengths and weaknesses of the research design and strategy will be discussed. The work on this thesis commenced in January 2021. Through an extensive literature review and contact with the NSC, the initial problem statement took shape. I wished to research an area where there was little previous knowledge. Thus, seeking missing links in the literature review as this precedes any good problem statement (Grønmo, 2016, p. 83). After multiple conversations with the executive director of the NSC network, and a literature review that showed a grave lack of knowledge on the usefulness of network participation, this ended up as the topic of study.

3.1   Research design and research strategy

This research is a qualitative study, which is beneficial to attain deeper knowledge on a specific topic. The reason for the qualitative focus is that I wish to look into how the NSC can facilitate members' capacities in P/CVE issues and to discover this I will need to dig into the tacit knowledge and understanding of the informants. This qualitative approach will allow for nuances as well as the meanings behind the complex social structurers we find in governance networks in relation to RVE issues. The problem statement is phrased as a 'how' question, as the research seeks to "bring about change, with practical outcomes" (Blaikie & Priest, 2019, p. 71). There is already some research into what a governance network is, exploring how they can be efficient or how these networks can contribute to P/CVE efforts, was an interesting angle for this thesis. Also, to bring about change, it is important to examine what works well, in addition to what needs improvement. Therefore, a qualitative approach appeared to be the preferred design for figuring out how a governance network can facilitate P/CVE capacities.

This is a research project that uses an abductive logic, which is described as "a mode of inference with a defined logical form comparable to induction and deduction, and on the other hand as a more fundamental aspect of all perception, of all observation of reality" (Danermark, 2002, p. 89). In other words, the abductive strategy is somewhere in between the inductive and the deductive approach which is relevant for this research as the inductive logic starts by collecting data to derive generalisations, whereas the deductive logic tests already existing theories (Blaikie & Priest, 2019, p. 21). As this research seeks to utilise previous research

through categorising already existing research into the theory chapter as well as gathering new data to add to this theory – and derive some form of generality or generalisations from.

Blaikie and Priest (2019, p. 22) argue that the starting point when using an abductive strategy is the world of the social actors and their tacit knowledge being investigated. It is this tacit knowledge this research wants to take advantage of and examine. What separates the abductive strategy from the inductive and deductive strategies is its way of letting the data lead the rest of the research process, as opposed to the problem statements and hypotheses leading the data collection. As the research process was all about letting the information from the informants guide how the network could or should operate in order to facilitate its members, it was important that the data were at the centre of the research. This was also the reason why semi-structured interviews were chosen. I will return to this in chapter 3.2.1.

From the outset and throughout the process of completing this thesis, there has been a provisional schedule to ensure continual progress. This schedule was only an estimate of a timeline that ensured completion by the deadline. Under way the schedule has been modified and deviated from as the research changed course. A detailed scheduled was written underway to keep track of progress and changes made to the thesis (Appendix A). The research depended on the data collection and most of the information left in the final draft of the thesis was made after the data was collected. The initial research questions were discarded and the problem statement was slightly edited after the data collection. In line with the abductive approach, the thesis was modified in accordance with the collected data, and the findings interpreted from a continual revision of the problem statement. An outline of the research process can be seen in the figure below.

An advantage with the abductive reasoning is the degree of flexibility and creativity it allows for (Danermark, 2002, p. 81). The aim is to recontextualise phenomena into a framework or an idea. The end result as a framework for success criteria in a governance network has been possible due to abduction's possibility of creativity and imagination. This has also enabled the creation of a new model for success in a NAO-structured governance network.
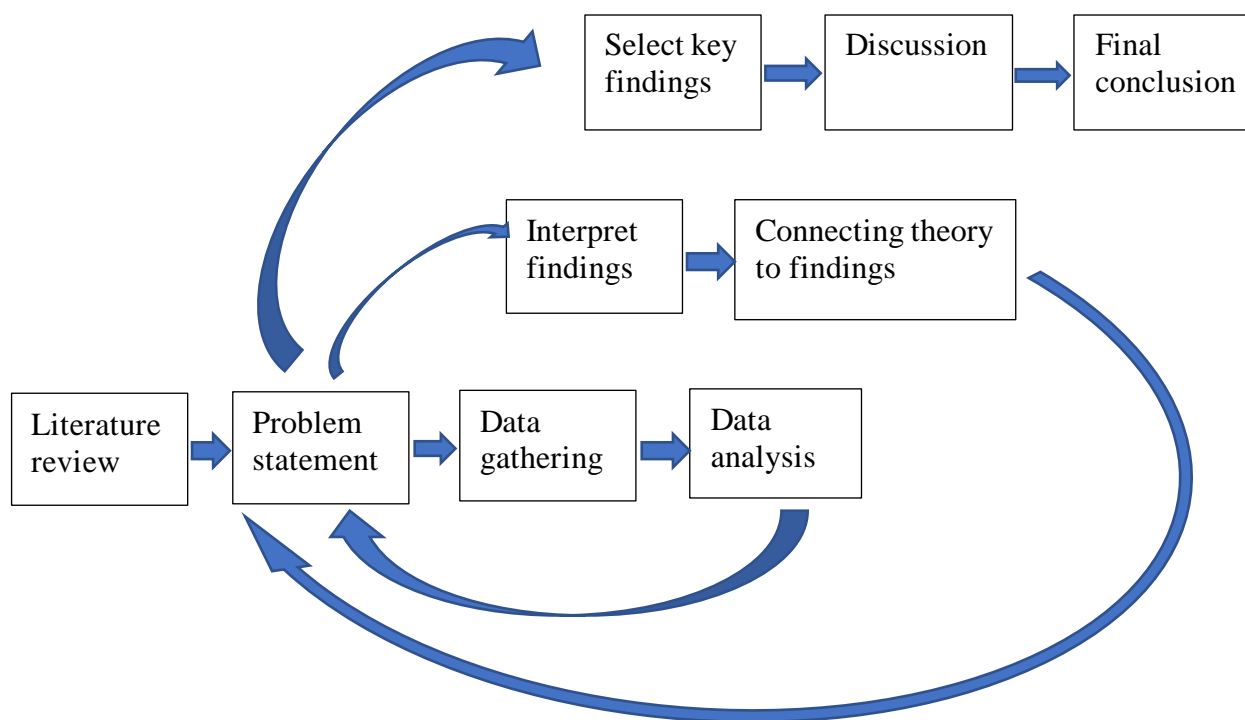
Figure 2 The research process

Through the informants in the NSC network there is knowledge on the efficiency of the network that is never formalised or written down and passed on. It is this knowledge the thesis seeks to grab hold of and write down so that it can be used by all actors and participants of NSC network, in addition to other networks and network participants. The aim is not necessarily generalisation. However, there is a possibility that the factors reached in the conclusion can also be transferrable into similar networks working on wicked problems.

Danermark (2002, p. 92) argues that abductive conclusions seldom can be seen as true or false. Rather that the phenomena can be recontextualised in different ways. This is highly relevant for the issues that can be classified as wicked problems. One of their issues is that they are hard to define. In other words, how they are defined will affect how they are treated. Consequently, the NSC network is a suitable network to use as the unit of analysis as it is a Nordic governance network.

3.2   Data collection

As mentioned above, this research is a qualitative study which means that the data collection is completed on a selected few respondent in order to understand the depth of how governance networks function and how they affect their members' capacities to tackle societal security issues. The problem statement sets out to understand how a governance network can contribute to its members' capacities, thus it is important to know how the members themselves sees the network as contributor to their capacities. Hence, the data collection in this research is semi-structured interviews. Eight interviews were conducted, seven with member cities and one with an employee at the secretariat of the NSC.

This research was quick in selecting units of analysis for interviews; as the network was the main object of the study it became natural to interview the members, or participants, of the network. This meant that interviews would be conducted with coordinators of P/CVE work in various Nordic cities.

All my interviews were conducted with people that could comment on the microlevel, or on their personal experiences, but none could make any generalisations based on formally gathered and structured data. As part of this abductive research, an attempt at structuring individuals' experiences into a larger system will create the basis for commenting on the efficiency of the NSC network. These interviews were conducted to gather data on the network, the meaning of the network for the cities and the efficiency of the network.

As this research seeks to degrease a knowledge gap in the P/CVE field, it was important that I had a sound understanding of both RVE as well as P/CVE. In addition, as the unit of analysis was a governance network, I sought information on networks as a form of risk governance. In order to set the theoretical framework for the research, I looked for factors that could contribute to the success of a governance network. These factors have been drawn from 10 articles on governance networks and efficiency through an extensive search on Google Scholar for search words like "governance networks and efficiency", "network governance and efficiency", and "governance networks and success". The process of selecting these documents have been described in the figure below, and the documents included in chapter 2.4 are listed in Appendix B. This literature study came in addition to the literature review done in chapter 2.1.

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Approx.
15.000    • Titles were checked and documents that had relevant titles were downloaded.

147       • Abstracts were read from the titles downloaded.

49        • Articles were considered relevant to read from the abstracts.

10        • Documents were the final number included in the table completed in chapter 2.4.
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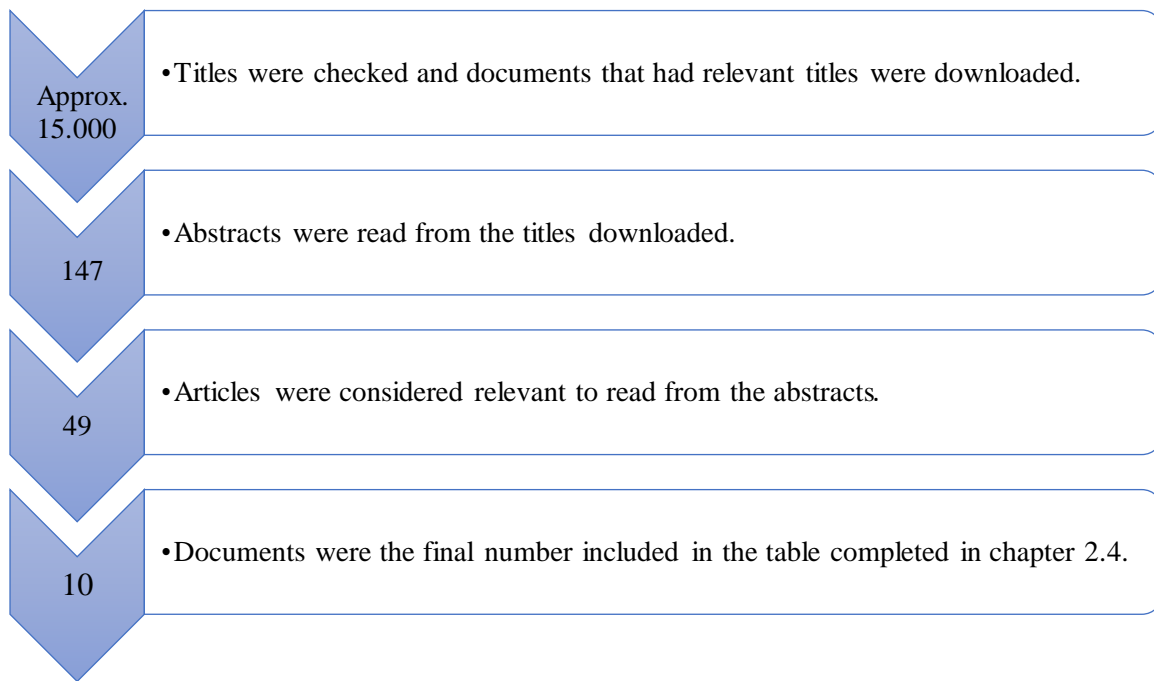
Figure 3 The process of finding the pillars of success in a governance network

3.2.1 Interviews

The main source of data for this research has been gathered through semi-structured interviews, or conversational interviews. This means that the researcher takes an active role in the interview to probe into the knowledge of the informants (Andersen, 2006, pp. 280-281). An interview guide was made, and open-ended questions were prepared (see Appendix C and D). The interview guide was made with the theoretical framework in mind and sought to explore whether the theoretical framework was aligned with the tacit knowledge of the informants or whether there were deviations or additions that was not in line with previous knowledge. With some main questions on topics I wished to look into, a set of sub-questions were also prepared in order to dig deeper into the answers of the informants.

The interviews were used as a way of finding real world data on previously explained theoretical grounds. One interview guide was made for the secretariat informant (Appendix D) and one was made for the city informants (Appendix C). The main questions were sent to the informants ahead of the interviews in case the informants needed to prepare. However, the full set of questions were not sent as I did not wish to let the informants know exactly what topics I wanted to probe into. Despite a detailed interview guide, there is always a need for spontaneity to make a conversation flow naturally. The researcher needs to be open for new information from the informants which can alter the course of the interview (Andersen, 2006, pp. 280-281). In several

of the interviews I strayed from the interview guide to probe further into details provided by the informant. The interview guide was also made with this in mind and opened up for follow-up questions.

After several conversations with my contact person at the NSC network, seven cities were selected for interviews (out of 20 possible member cities). All seven accepted the invitation to participate. These interviews were with P/CVE coordinators in the cities, and the selection was made by my contact person at the NSC network, which can be seen as a weakness in this study as the selection was not random and not made by the researcher. Yet, the process of reaching these cities has been strategic and there has been put some thought into which informants could contribute in the best way possible.

Amongst the selected interviewees are coordinators who have been active in the network both for a long, and for a short time; in addition to coordinators who have P/CVE as their main work and coordinators who only deal with P/CVE on occasions. This was done to create the best width of informants. The interviewees were also coming from all of the five Nordic countries, which means I could gather data from all over the Nordics. This approach is supported by Grønmo (2016, pp. 103-104), who argue that such a strategic selection can still lead to fruitful theoretical generalisations despite there being no method to calculate the size of such a selection. A drawback to this argument is, again, that the selection was not done by the researcher but the network. Which was also the unit of study. Despite the number of informants leading to data saturation, it is important to acknowledge that the results could have been otherwise if all members were offered the possibility of being interviewed. It is also important to note that all informants work on the strategic level where action plans and strategic documents are part of their daily work.

In addition to the seven city coordinators, an employee at the NSC secretariat was interviewed. This was the first interview conducted and aimed to figure out whether there were any discrepancies between the secretariat and the cities, and to make sure all knowledge of the network was correct on the part of the researcher. This interview provided the researcher with information from the networks' point of view. The informant has also supplied information via email correspondence in the aftermath of the interview – either to clarify information from the interview, or to add information relevant to the thesis.

Ahead of the interviews I applied for approval for recording the interviews and collecting of personal information at the Norsk Senter for forskningsdata (NSD), which was granted two

weeks prior to the interviews. As the informants can potentially identify each other as they all cooperate in the same network it was important to get this approval. Still, as much information as possible is omitted from the thesis in order to secure anonymity. In addition to this, there was also made a consent form that all informants had to sign (Appendix E). This consent form ensured awareness of voluntary participation, the ability to edit or change their own quotes and their knowledge of the possibility of withdrawing their consent at any point ahead of the publishing of the thesis.

A few interviews into the data collection I felt the point of saturation as most of the informants seemed reasonably similar minded, despite smaller differences. However, it was important to conduct interviews in all Nordic countries to see if there were differences between the countries. A weakness in the research is that there was one informant from four of the Nordic countries, whereas there were three informants from Norway. This disproportionate access to Norwegian informants could also be a factor for some of the results in this thesis.

Below are all the informants numbered, with the length of the interview included. Informant 1-7 are coordinators from the cities that are part of the network, whereas informant 8 is an employee of the network and works for the secretariat.

Informant	Date of interview	Duration of interview
Informant 1	8th March	43 minutes
Informant 2	10th March	50 minutes
Informant 3	10th March	33 minutes
Informant 4	11th March	29 minutes
Informant 5	11th March	40 minutes
Informant 6	29th March	27 minutes
Informant 7	30th March	29 minutes
Informant 8	5th March	37 minutes

Table 3 Overview of informants

3.2.1.1   Data reduction and analysis

By the end of March, all interviews had been conducted, transcribed, and coded in the qualitative data analysis programme NVivo. As an abductive approach has been utilised in this

research, data analysis has also been completed as a cyclical process throughout the process. It is commonplace that data is analysed as they are collected (Grønmo, 2016, p. 265). Hence, data reduction and data analysis are not separate processes in the research. Rather, it is the continual and gradual clarification of the path forward.

The transcription was done without adding conversational fillers such as "umm", "so", and "like". Transcribing is a time-consuming process. However, having recorded the interviews, the transcribing took place after the interviews finished. Despite transcribing from a recording, there is no guarantee that the interpretations I made during the transcriptions are one hundred per cent in line with what the informants meant. There were also points in time where the sound was unclear and I was unsure of certain words. This could contribute to misunderstandings.

As interviewing is a means of communication that involves thinking on the spot, and sometimes the informants would start a sentence with a point in mind and ending up on a totally different thought. This means that when I were to use quotes and information from the interviews, I had to interpret meaning. This is something we as humans do at all time, but in research it is important to be aware of these interpretations. Sometimes we struggle to express ourselves orally, and spoken words end up differently as to how we intended them.

On some occasions I have restructured the sentences from the interviews into better, more academic English. To mitigate the weakness with the spoken word as opposed to the written word, and with potential mistakes during transcription, I have sent all the informants the empirical findings chapter, so that they themselves could read their own quotes, edit or remove anything where they felt they expressed themselves incorrectly, or where they feel misinterpreted. Thus, being able to edit or rephrase themselves in a more eloquent matter if wished. At all time during the process, I have been conscious in interpreting the informants with their best intention in mind. It gives the research no added value to play the member cities up against the secretariat, but there is still a need to present weaknesses or disagreements. This has been done as objectively as possible, although I do recognise that full objectivity with no bias is impossible.

The categories, or codes, are developed throughout the analysis and seek to uncover patterns in the data material (Grønmo, 2016, pp. 266-267). This was done through the programme NVivo, which is a computer software tool that enables structuring of large quantities of data, both qualitative and quantitative. The coding was selected on the basis of findings and provisional

themes relating to the research questions. The following nodes were made, and statements were coded into these categories:

Best practice	Knowledge hub
Connections/cooperation	Political relevance
COVID	Practical projects/praxis
Efficiency	The role of the network
Evaluation	Time and resources
Financial matter	Why the Nordics

Table 4 Coding categories

These categories were part of how I structured the data initially. These provided some common topics of what became important during the interviews. Some nodes were more heavily used during the analysis and data reduction, as they were closer to answering the problem statement. Thus, they were more relevant. However, I did not frantically stick to these categories when conducting the analysis. I also had to go back to the interviews and see what questions the informants had answered. However, it was a good way of structuring data, and made the process of data reduction and analysis smoother and clearer. These were some common trends, or topics, that most interviews covered, and coding into these nodes made the analysis more structured. In hindsight I also see that the category 'the role of the network' became quite large and unmanageable and it would have been an advantage to use subcategories for this. I also found the COVID-19 category not as useful as I thought I would, which made the node slightly redundant. The nodes could also have been coded in the categories for factors for success but this was discarded as it would exclude new information and viewpoints that did not fit into those categories.

3.2.1.2   Challenges in the interviews

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, all interviews were conducted through Microsoft Teams. Despite the pandemic making all my interviewees acutely busy, they all set aside time to speak to me and to cover all topics necessary. Teams made it possible to conduct seven interviews with coordinators from all of the Nordic countries – from Iceland to Finland. Digital interviews were to a certain extent an advantage in the sense that most interviews could be conducted within one week, despite large geographical distance between interviewees. Interviews through Teams also allowed for efficient use of time as this is by now a form of meetings most of us are

used to, so with few technical difficulties all the interviews were conducted. However, a part of human communication is body language and gesturing, and this is to a large extent lost in these types of communication. Introductions and small talk were also more formal via Teams, thus the natural flow that would appear in a physical meeting was slightly hampered. Nevertheless, in Teams conversations faces and body language shows, so this was preferable to phone calls.

One issue that had not been foreseen was related to home offices. As the consent forms for participation in the research were sent out (see Appendix), many replied that they had no access to printing or scanning facilities. Thus, unable to sign the consent form. Digital signatures were collected, in addition to oral consent at the beginning of every interview to make sure the informants understood their rights. Also, two of the interviews had to be rescheduled due to unanticipated closings of nurseries, and the need for a corona test. Despite these minor hiccups, all interviews were conducted by the end of March.

All interviews were planned to be conducted in English, as this would make the task of data reduction and data analysis swifter for the researcher, one interview was conducted in Norwegian, at the request of the informant, in order for the participant to feel comfortable in expressing themselves. There is an obvious limitation to the interviews being conducted in our second language as the vocabulary and fluency of English would vary. The reason for English as the chosen language was partly due to the thesis being written in English and partly because it is the language spoken in the network meetings. In addition, this made the vocabulary similar, as the cities and countries might translate the concepts differently. Interviews with cities in Finland and Iceland would have to be conducted in English, so the decision to make all interviews in English was made for simplicity reasons. A drawback to this approach is that some informants might not be able to express themselves as freely as they would have been able to do if the interview was conducted in their native languages. I realise that this can be a weakness in the data collection and mitigation efforts were made. All informants have been able to review all information used from their interviews before thesis submission.

One major challenge as a researcher is to not ask leading questions. To get honest and real answers, it is important to ask open questions and not lead the informants in any way towards one or the other direction. Nonetheless, in some of the interviews I actively asked a leading question as the informants spoke only of positive aspects of the network. In order to probe deeper into the challenges of the network, I asked a leading question to see how the informants would respond. This was also to see if there were reflections or willingness to disagree with me as a researcher, or to criticise the network. In these questions I found that all informants were

able to reflect around or disagree with my statement. This also shows that the power dynamic in the interviews were equal and not that the informants were looking to give the answers they thought I would appreciate. In addition to this, I also asked leading questions to make sure I understood the informant correctly. These were often in sentences like: "So have I understood you correct if…", "…is that what you meant" or "To not misunderstand you…". This also opened up for clarification on the informants' part.

3.3   Research quality

The quality of the data material has to be put in context with the problem statement. If the material answers these to a high degree, then the quality is good. Hence, the same data material could be of high quality in one thesis but of low quality in another, depending on the questions the research seeks to answer (Grønmo, 2016, p. 237). For this research I attempted to answer the problem statement through questions of how the informants perceived the network, what they got from the network, and whether they saw it as an efficient network. These questions were asked to see reflections around the value added from being part of the network, or how the network could facilitate capacities in P/CVE issues.

As this thesis is not looking into a field of research that is particularly controversial, and none of my informants can be said to be vulnerable, there were few considerations when it came to who I could or could not interview. However, when an organisation has opened up channels for information and resources, it was important not to abuse the trust given by the NSC network. Despite the need for the researcher to remain objective and neutral, some considerations were made when looking into the challenges and weaknesses of the network. In some of the meetings with the contact person and in sessions hosted by the network, there has been shared information that could not be published in the final thesis. This is not because it could harm the network. Rather, it is information that cannot be considered public information and is confidential within the network. In order to not publish any information that could be seen as confidential, the contact person has been able to review all information written about the network before submission of the thesis. This will help alleviate ethical conundrums as the network will also be able to discuss with me if any information needs removing or editing.

In addition to the relevance of the data material, other criteria are being used to describe the quality of the research. In quantitative research reliability and validity is pretty straight forward. In qualitative studies, however, it is not this simple, as for example reliability in the sense of

replicability is not seen as possible (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 229). Thus, other concepts have been suggested as better measurements of quality, such as trustworthiness[5], which is a way to test rigor in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Johannessen et al. (2011) presents an adaptation of the concept of trustworthiness, and it is this I will make use of here. In order to achieve trustworthiness reliability, credibility, transferability, and objectivity has to be presented.

3.3.1 Reliability

Reliability in a qualitative study is high if the data material is credible. This chapter providing a detailed description of the research is thus important in showing trustworthiness of the material through tracking the data, methods, decisions and the end result (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 230). A process description is also added in Appendix A. The interview guides used for both interviews with the city informants and the secretariat informant is also added in Appendix C and D. However, one issue with the reliability in this and other qualitative studies is that open ended questions and semi-structured interviews means that the interview guide has not been followed wholly. Certain questions have in some interviews been omitted and in other interviews new questions have been asked that were not a part of the interview guide. Thus, the reliability in qualitative studies can be problematic to calculate and present (Grønmo, 2016, p. 248).

The informants are perceived as honest and through body language and tone of voice are all perceived as speaking in a frank and direct manner, thus there is a high degree of trustworthiness in the informants. At times informants contradicted the researcher, which shows they were speaking from their own viewpoint, and not adopting to a wish of pleasing the researcher.

3.3.2 Credibility

In qualitative studies, the validity relates to what degree the data and empirical findings reflect the aim of the study and represents the reality (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 230). Some authors see this as construct validity (Yin, 2018, p. 42). In order to see if the findings represent the reality, it is important to know whether the correct operational measures for the concepts have

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[5] Lincoln and Guba (1986, p. 76-77) see credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as the four criteria of trustworthiness. These are seen instead of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity.

been established. As mentioned in the conceptual clarification, wicked problems, radicalisation, and violent extremism are all concepts that are hard to define and demarcate. Despite the Nordic cities being relatively similar in their P/CVE approaches, there is no guarantee that all informants have the same view on the issue. As this debate has been ongoing for years, it is not one that can be concluded in this research. Thus, I see that there is a weakness in the confusion and complexity of the concepts this is concerned with. In addition to these concepts, I make use of the term *efficiency* as a measurement for success in a governance network.

Despite having defined the concept in the theoretical framework, I do acknowledge the meaning of the word is highly diffuse and blurry. Thus, it is important to state clearly in the text how I wish to use these concepts as they are inherently low in validity but through conceptual clarification (chapter 2.1) and the discussion chapter (chapter 5.0), I wish to mitigate this low degree of validity and ensure the reader that the complexity of the constructs and concepts have been addressed. However, I do acknowledge that other researchers might define the same concepts in many different manners than what have been done in this thesis.

Throughout the winter and spring, I have also been allowed to attend certain meetings hosted by the NSC. These meetings have not been directly contributing to the thesis, but they have given me as a researcher a feel of how the network works. This has also allowed me to get to know how the NSC work, which has provided me as a researcher a better ground to interpret my data. The network has been open in sharing information and details about the network that has advantages my thesis, but also information that opens for criticism of the network. This has been useful to the research and has opened up possibilities of scrutinising the network and looking into details. However, remaining unbiased has been an important aspect of the research, which I will return to in chapter 3.3.4.

It is important that the data and findings reflect the aim of the research and that it presents the reality (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 230). Through interviews with city informants, I found the informants to be trustworthy and knowledgeable in their field. The informants were honest about the challenges they faced in the network, thus indicating that the reality was presented. Nevertheless, in qualitative studies one cannot claim to hear the objective truth from informants. The answers will always reflect the informants' viewpoint and experiences. However, as will be shown in the discussion chapter, there is a high correlation between theory and the findings of this study, suggesting that these findings have also been seen in similar studies.

Sending the empirical chapter to the informants is not only done to mitigate misunderstandings, it is also done to increase internal validity. In addition, the results were presented to the entire secretariat in the aftermath of the interviews. Positive aspects of the network and their challenges were here validated as the secretariat also had similar feedback from the cities. This shows that the interpretations I make in the results have also been made by others in the network. In addition, fellow students from the university course has read and commented on a draft, which also suggests a strengthened validity.

3.3.3 Transferability

Another aspect of research quality is external validity, or the potential of generalising from the research (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 230). I believe that the results from this research can be transferred to similar governance networks working on wicked problems. This might not mean that this research can be generalisable but it could indicate that knowledge from this study can be transferred into other networks, or that there is generality (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 231). Nevertheless, this qualitative study cannot automatically be generalised to all other governance networks working on P/CVE issues.

The aim of this paper is to see what factors can be seen in network participation in the field of P/CVE, and how these can contribute to the network's efficiency. This is not to say that the model cannot be used for networks working on other wicked problems or any other issues. However, if it is wished to be used in other fields should be adapted to suit other themes or topics. This theoretical generalisation is dependent on systematic discussion of the empirical data in conjunction with other research (Grønmo, 2016, p. 285). This has been done in the discussion chapter, where previous research on factors for success in governance network is seen against the data collected for this research. Here there are correlations which can contribute towards a generalisation of successful governance networks. As Danermark (2002, p. 73) states, "all science should have generalising claims". Nonetheless, it is not possible to generalise from this research alone as the unit of analysis is one single governance network. More information and scientific knowledge is needed in the field before generalisations can be made. Still, some generality can be seen as mentioned above.

The generality of research depends on certain factors such as the success of describing, interpreting and explaining in ways useful for other areas than the one in the study (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 231). The pillars in the model for success in a governance network can be

transferred to similar networks, such as NAOs. This research is an effort towards creating a model of governance networks that creates efficient networks in more wicked problem fields than just the RVE field.

3.3.4 Objectivity

Despite an aim of qualitative research being that a unique and in depth perspective is being presented, it is important that the results are not discoloured by the researcher (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 232). As interpretation is an important factor in qualitative research, it is important to be aware of one's own biases and previous experiences in order to mitigate these.

A consideration important to the researcher was the importance of remaining unbiased throughout the process. It would be a lie to say that I wasn't initially very impressed by the professionalism of the network, and it was important that this did not affect my research. Remaining critical and reflexive have been a task more complicated than initially thought. I do acknowledge that at times it has been a difficult manoeuvre to remain critical of a network that appears well organised and structured. Remaining unbiased has been a constant focus.

Another way of checking for objectivity is through confirmability (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 232). As some researchers have presented similar results to the ones found in this study, and I to some extent lean on previous research for my model of the pillars of success in a governance network, I consider the confirmability to be high. However, as there is a lack of extensive research in the fields I am researching, there is a need to validate the findings of this research. However, this will have to be the task of another researcher. As mentioned previously, all informants have also been able to read the empirical findings chapter and found their views reflected in the presentation of the key findings.

4.0 Empirical findings

The empirical findings presented here are structured in the same way as the eight factors for success in the theory chapter to highlight the NSC's convergence, as well as divergence, with the theoretical framework. Two pillars have also been added to the model for success as these were found to be relevant for the apparent success of the NSC network. The last part of this chapter presents key findings on efficiency, as well as empirical data related to whether the network is seen as efficient or not – despite the theory arguing that the NSC network should be considered an efficient network as the findings in this research align with findings from previous studies. In sum, these findings will present data that enables an answer to how governance networks facilitate members' P/CVE capacities. The key findings suggest that these ten pillars might bring about an efficient governance network but one element is missing in order to know whether a successful governance network equates and efficient one, namely evaluations.

4.1 Pillars of success in a governance network

The theory chapter presented an extensive literature study in order to discover the factors tied to successful governance networks. The eight factors seen as important in previous research in the field, forms the basis of the argument of whether the NSC should be an efficient network or not. From the empirical findings in this thesis I would also like to add two factors that can be seen as important, namely tailoring of the membership and membership fee. Several of these factors are highly interrelated, but an attempt to categorise the empirical findings has been made.

4.1.1 Trust

Part of the reason for the possibility of sharing of challenges and pressing issues as well as best practices and success stories could be the high degree of trust that all informants agree on. Upon asked the question "Do you trust the information you receive from the network? Information from member cities, advisory or any other information sharing", all informants responded that they had a high degree of trust in the network. Informant 3 claimed that:

"there is honesty, and I find that both the secretariat and the cities are honest about their difficulties which is really great because that is the way to actually learn something. If you are willing to lay it all out there and tell your difficulties and challenges. This is the most useful and has been more useful than the efforts that are just going really well."

Likewise, informant 7 claims that "when the other cities talk, they back up with examples. They are putting out peer reviewed papers and other things I would generally trust". As informant 3 claims, "I do not know why I should not trust the information I receive from the network". However, informant 2 states "not always. But it is also important to acknowledge just that, and I have to go to myself and ask why I do not trust the information… It is important to listen even if you do not agree". Although this does not signify low levels of trust, it is a reflection around not agreeing or accepting all information coming from the network. A similar reflection is made by informant 6, who states that:

"I trust the information I receive but I do notice that sometimes there is a silence when we are posing some questions. It might be because of the differing job descriptions… If I talk about something that does not really fall into the expertise of the other members, they might be unable to talk about these sorts of issues. But I do trust the everything I get from them. However, I know that sometimes not everything is being said."

Despite informant 6 trusting all the information, as opposed to informant 2, there is a clear reflection around what is not being said in the conversations. Informant 6 goes on to clarify that:

"The members of the network might present quite a variety of different challenges that we are to give opinions or spar on, as we have different job descriptions… the challenge is then to give our assistance on something we do not always have the expertise on… We do not necessarily have the expertise to fruitfully give answers to these kinds of questions" (informant 6).

As seen above, an honest conversation seemingly takes place in the network but some things could be left unspoken due to differences in P/CVE approach or job descriptions. This point is not only seen in relation to trust but can also hinder learning as several informants saw the sparing that happened between the cities as a productive and direct way of causing impact for the members. Nonetheless, when there was a need to contribute to this conversation there were

challenges concerning the different roles of P/CVE coordinators in different countries and cities. As the coordinators' roles seemingly varied, it could be difficult to offer useful advice to other cities on how to handle certain situations.

4.1.2 Managerial activity

The NSC secretariat is the network management in this research, and overall, there are clear views of the secretariat as beneficial both to network existence but also to the members of the cities. The facilitation of contact between the cities was highlighted as an important role of the secretariat by both informant 5 and informant 2. Informant 2 tells a story of how the NSC network was used to get in touch with other cities with similar issues, and the secretariat was used as a facilitator for contact between the cities on a particular issue. In other words, the network is a platform to contact other member cities, outside of regular network activities. However, informant 7 claimed that they so far had gained the most from the support from the secretariat despite the usefulness of the other cities' experiences.

A feature of the NSC secretariat, or the network management, was its professionalism. Two of the informants, informant 1 and 7, claim that the network has been very professional, as informant 7 claims:

> "this network is far more professional than other networks we participate in. It is better funded and more staffed and they are good at keeping projects alive and finding new ways of interacting, giving out information, create ways of making discussions and presenting things."

This professionalism has been strived for from the secretariat as they spent six months in 2020 to map the member cities, what their resources were, the local contexts, how they see extremism, and whether this is seen as a big or small problem. Based on this structured mapping of the members, the secretariat tailor information and which safe city advisors they connect together with cities, as the expert need to have knowledge on the city and the local context, according to informant 8. Not only did they tailor information to the member cities, but the secretariat also tailored the membership in general, which is seen as a separate factor and will thus be elaborated in subchapter 4.1.9. Several informants also stated that the ability for the NSC network to see to the local context was one of its strengths. Informant 2 notes that the

NSC network focus on helping the cities translate abstract knowledge received from conferences and experts into practical knowledge that they can act on.

As previously mentioned, the formal structure chosen by the network was a conscious decision made in 2019 and implemented at the start of 2020. Informant 8 states that this change was made to create more value for the members and help them in a better way by being closer to their everyday problems and speaking more often. "When we know what they think, what their strategies are and where their soft spots and difficulties lie, we are able to work much better with them and figure out how and from which cities can help them" (informant 8). From this quote we can see that the secretariat seeks a closer cooperation in order to be a more efficient network. As the informant notes, the secretariat wish to be what they call "a thinkubator" – closer to the issues and be more partners to the cities as this seem to be what works for them.

Another significant role of the NSC secretariat, in addition to facilitating contact between the cities and between cities and experts, is as a trusted colleague. This was mentioned as an aim for the network during the interview with informant 8. It was also highlighted by informant 2 that "they are colleagues". Informant 5 claimed that it has been easy to get in touch with the secretariat, and that "I have been able to call the secretariat to get council on challenges or needing to get in touch with cities who face similar issues". These two informants mentioned that this low threshold for getting in touch with the secretariat has been an advantage. The secretariat then puts them in contact with a city with a similar issue or a safe city advisor to help address the issue.

Informant 2 claimed that it was a positive trait that the secretariat could carry on with the project, even when there was little time in the city to continue:

> "I really appreciate that they can carry some weight when I do not have time because we are all up to date in this project. They [the secretariat] have become very important to me, and to the work on democracy and P/CVE here".

Here we can see that the network functions as someone to rely on. This can especially be seen as an advantage in cities with few resources allocated to the P/CVE section of the work. As noted by informant 8, the secretariat were highly aware of the time pressure the members experienced, this was also acknowledged by the city informants despite informant 5 noting that

the network at times demanded of them things they did not see as beneficial, and the 'city portrait'[6] required from them was mentioned as an example.

4.1.3 Need for competence

For many of the informants, the role of the network was also to strengthen city capabilities in P/CVE issues. All informants mentioned increasing knowledge on the subjects relevant for the network as important. This learning came both from meetings with experts and scientists, and also from the practitioners and coordinators in the other Nordic cities.

> "We are building a kind of infrastructure, or library, of knowledge… And we also have these 8 safe city advisors who have been in the field for a long time. Whatever the issue or question, there is most definitely someone in our organisation who knows something about this. So, we go out to find this information and send it back to the city" (Informant 8).

Bar one informant, all informants appreciated the use of experts in fields that could increase their knowledge on topics related to P/CVE. Informant 7 expressed that there appeared to be knowledgeable experts connected to the network as it was claimed that "some of them have been to the city and that helps in applying the expertise they are bringing on board our situation". The secretariat was by one informant seen as an important facilitator for contact with experts as well:

> "I think they have been good at finding experts… I do not know if I would ask the secretariat themselves for expert help on an issue, but I would ask them how they could help me… I think they themselves [the secretariat] have a good network to find the right people" (Informant 1).

Not only did experts serve as a way of increasing knowledge, but also as a means of getting feedback on cities' work. Informant 6 points out that, "meeting with outside experts that will give us critical feedback on the strategies we are building our P/CVE on is certainly something I look forward to". Similarly, informant 3 said that the network provides good opportunities to

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[6] The city portrait is an in-depth description of the city, its characteristics, strengths, challenges, strategies, focus areas, best practices, and more.

get input from and spar with experts in the field, and that this is something they wish more of. However, informant 2 shows unappreciativeness to the use of experts and claims that "I have already heard these experts and heard what they want to say. Sometimes they expand their expertise into areas where they aren't really experts". Rather, this informant claims that a positive aspect of the NSC network was a different approach to experts:

> "I appreciated the way the network did workshops and how they made us work. They did not just invite experts all the time… I experience that those experts never help us translate the expertise into what to do at the local level…. I need experts on local work, and I find that in the other cities".

The informants had differing views on the use of experts in the network. However, all had similar views on the knowledge increase that came with the network, regardless of whether it came from the other cities, experts, or the secretariat. Nevertheless, informant 3 states that more information, ideas, and toolboxes would be helpful – "it would be nice if someone could compile that information into useful products". This is echoed in the interview with the informant 8 as the secretariat are conscious of the hectic schedule of the member cities and seeks to be a trusted ally in making P/CVE efforts more manageable. Thus, creating useful meaning from the knowledge from the webinars, and translating long reports into understandable and practicable terms still has some way to go.

The importance of the member cities to one another was pointed out by informant 8. All informants mentioned that the connection to other member cities and learning from other cities' experiences were a highly valuable part of the network; how the knowledge exchange increased the member cities' competencies. Informant 3 states that "it is primarily a network for sharing of knowledge with likeminded cities…it is a place to meet with Nordic cities". This is also echoed in the interview with informant 4, who claims that "it is also a way to meet other cities and learn from what they do in this work". Hence, knowledge exchange and learning from other Nordic colleagues is a focus for many of the cities. Informant 3 also mentions that to "naturally spar with other cities" was a positive feature of the network. In this sense, the role of the network is to take experiences from other Nordic cities and learn from these.

Learning from other members is an important aspect of the NSC network. Informant 7 voiced an interest in learning from other cities' best practices, as well as to "use what they have learned not to do". Knowledge exchange between member cities appears to have been an important role

of the network. Informant 2, 3, 4, and 7 all claimed that experiences from other cities were useful in their own P/CVE work. As informant 2 states, "I appreciate sitting with two other cities having coffee. It gives me more".

A lack of experience when it comes to radicalisation and violent extremist events is also mentioned by informant 4 as a reason for the membership:

> "If you want to learn something you have to be in a network with several countries and cities, as it [radicalisation and violent extremism] does not happen very often. The last year we actually had more cases than we have ever had, so I think it is good to be part of a bigger network."

This is also echoed by informant 3, who states that "we would really much like the opportunity to dive more deeply into initiatives in the other cities and to gain a more thorough understanding of how they are put together." Learning from other cities' experiences appears to be something all informants can agree on being useful. Additionally to seeing learning from others' experiences as an increase in competencies and capacities for the informants themselves, this is also interlined to learning and innovation, which will be expanded on in chapter 4.1.5.

Informant 5 claimed that the raise in competence that came from the network was treasured. The role of the network was in many cases to raise knowledge and competency for the people involved in the network. This view of the network as a knowledge hub can also be seen by most of the informants. For example, informant 4 who claims that gaining "new knowledge and learning from other cities' experiences have been especially valuable". A goal for the network secretariat was to create value for the members, according to informant 8. Implicit in this 'value creation' is the creation of safer cities. Despite several of the informants stating that the network was valuable, what is meant by valuable is not always explicit.

Informant 1 also claimed that "it has been a confirmation that we are on the right track". In this sense, the role of the network has been to reassure the competency within the cities, where other cities had made similar work or where expert knowledge functioned as reassurance for the knowledge present in the city.

4.1.4 Goal consensus

The structure of the network is non-hierarchical in the sense that the NSC secretariat does not have authority over its members. In other words, the goal of the network will be the same as the goal of the cities. Informant 8 was throughout the interview conscious of the fact that the secretariat is there to aid the cities, and to help them connect with actors relevant to achieve their goals. However, a goal consensus does not equate same measures to reach what the findings see as a similar goal. There is variation in P/CVE approach between both countries and cities in the network, and despite informant 3 arguing that this was more of a difference between smaller and larger cities, informant 6 mentions that the varying job descriptions also posed a challenge to the network. Thus, the goal can be similar between all Nordic countries despite measures taken to reach the goal being different. This will also be elaborated in subchapter 4.1.9.

Despite the goal being similar for the member cities, the means to achieve the goals and the challenges within RVE facing the members varied. This makes the dynamic more of a dialogue than a monologue, which was also highlighted by informant 2:

> "I see phenomena before they do as I am in the local area and they are not. They are an NGO; they do not see everything that happens in the streets because they are not connected to the public sector in that way. So, they can be quicker in lifting important issues to the other cities because of what I saw here in the city for example. I could ask them for help, and they would realise that this is a new challenge or a complex matter that maybe other cities also need to work on. It becomes more flesh and blood if we work with the network this way, with instant phenomena in our streets, or online. I am not afraid to ask for help, so I think we both benefit from working this way. More ad hoc."

The network operates in a way that makes sense for both the city and the network; they are mutually dependent. As seen from this quote, the informant also appreciates the quick turnaround that is possible for the network, since the network is not as bound by the bureaucracy, as will be explored in section 4.1.7. Thus, also being able to shift focus swiftly and more often.

4.1.5 Learning and innovation

One of the main roles of the NSC secretariat was to bring forward new knowledge and innovation in fields with no existing best practice. One of the aspects several of the informants appreciated was to naturally spar with other members and learn from their challenges and experiences. As informant 2 notes, "when you go to a conference, listen to a lot of experts, and get engaged you might feel that "wow, this is a lot of knowledge" but when you get home you get so preoccupied with everything else that the translation part does not sit". This was a view that some of the other informants also echoed, where they saw there were existing networks that did not lead to any practical output in the cities. The Strong Cities Network[7] was mentioned as one of these networks that look good on paper but makes little contribution in reality.

When asked if the NSC network is sugar coating challenges or mainly discussing the positive aspects of their work, all disagreed that the NSC was such a network, or as informant 2 puts it, "not compared to other networks, not at all". Informant 1 reflected on the issue and concluded that:

> "It has not just been like 'it is a great network with great people and expensive dinners', it has not been like that. The network is open to discuss difficult issues, I do not think it is just a nice wrapping where things are glorified and sugar coated…there has been some depth into it."

Informant 3 mirrored this viewpoint by claiming that:

> "I definitely find that the network and the cities are open to share the negative experiences as well. Actually, sometimes the challenges are what takes up most of the time, which is nice, I think."

Informant 5 expressed that there might be more focus on the things that work and share more of the good experiences. Despite this, the informant also claims that there have been shared challenges and cities have presented issues. Even they themselves had shared challenges as "we had some major issues with youth violence and extremism and through the network got tips on how to deal with this". Thus, the statement "I think we bring forward solutions, and are not just a talking and debating club" from informant 8 is voiced in various ways by the member cities.

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[7] The Strong Cities network is a global P/CVE network. For more information, see:
https://strongcitiesnetwork.org/en/about/

Informant 8 also claimed that the network strives to be a place for both best practices and a place where the more pressing issues can be raised:

> "It is not a network where you can come and there are 400 people sitting in the conference and you have to brag about something. We try to talk about the difficulties, and how to handle these".

Hence, there is a conscious effort taking place in not being a network that comes together just to tell the success stories but remain focused on delving into the challenges and issues facing the Nordic cities. As informant 2 shows:

> "We differ all the time. Not that it becomes hostile but we conclude that we do not see the problem that way, or not here…When I listen to the more creative parts of the seminars… it is better to do nothing than to do this or that. Prevention is not a playground; it is peoples' lives we are dealing with here…We can be creative but then we have to see if this could be harmful in any way…I can see that in all networks, I would not say it is a blind spot, but we do not view prevention as science. We can make a difference but we have to know what we are doing and what we are trying to tackle."

Possibilities for open dialogue and differing viewpoints can also be correlated to high degrees of trust and the willingness to be open and vulnerable in addition to this being a prerequisite for learning. However, the backfire processes referred to in this quote could make innovation difficult in the P/CVE field.

Despite the overwhelming positive feedback on the sharing of challenges the member cities face, one of the informants also understands that it is a network that has to lobby and gain new members in order to maintain the business model they are currently using. Thus, it is important to also share best practices and success stories as well. Informant 4 acknowledges this by stating that "when they started to charge for the membership, there will be commercial interests… They want to sell the membership, so they want to make it look good." Informant 5 also claimed that such matters, such as the city portrait (mentioned in chapter 4.1.2) took up too much time and did not feel as valuable as other parts of the network.

The obvious question that had to be raised in the interviews with city informants were their motivation behind joining a Nordic network. Why was there a need for the NSC network when there are already other European and global networks in the P/CVE field. This question was

also seen in light of the theoretical viewpoint that claimed homophily facilitated learning. Five of seven city informants stated that they were part of other networks locally, nationally and/or internationally. Informant 8 claims that the Nordic welfare system makes the geographical scope of the NSC natural, which is echoed by informant 6 who claims that "even if we have some differences in our realities and the challenges we face, there are a lot of similarities." All city informants recognised that the Nordic countries have a welfare model that is similar, which makes cooperation natural. However, informant 2 and 5 stating that the use of the English language in the meetings were a weakness that could lead to some members being more silent on matters they have knowledge on than necessary, which could hinder learning.

Nonetheless, informant 8 emphasises that European P/CVE work differs a lot, and that for example:

> "prevention of extremism in France is quite hard core. It is very in the red zone. It is not the same as the approach you have in the Nordics with universal prevention and trust building... That is one of the reasons why the Nordic Safe Cities is needed and why also the cities argue that they have chosen the NSC, usually it is similar systems and structures."

Despite not all informants phrasing themselves in similar matters, they all seem to mention that the Nordic welfare model seems to be a good starting point for similar P/CVE approaches. Still, informant 5 notes that there have been positive outcomes from other networks they participate in, like global ones. An example of an online competition is mentioned as a direct return from a global network.

Even though there are many similarities, there are also minor differences between the countries as the Finnish informant sees a lot of similarities in the welfare structure, as also pointed out by the employee of the secretariat, whereas the Norwegian informants seem to agree that a separate Scandinavian network could make more sense. On the other hand, the Swedish informant claims to see similarities with the Finnish approach and that "I am very inspired by Finland. I think they have a sound view of society. But I do not see that we are that much alike Norway and Denmark either." When asked about the Nordic cooperation being sensible as opposed to a purely Scandinavian approach, the Danish informant claimed to not see more differences in conversation with Finland and Iceland but adds that the differences might be more due to size of the city.

The informant from Iceland sees similarities with the Nordics and claims they have a lot to learn from the other Nordic countries that they would not get from a European network or other networks. However, this informant also recognises that Iceland is "ten years behind with things that happen in the Nordic countries". Other informants also saw Iceland as the country furthest away from their own struggles, and informant 4 said that "sometimes when Iceland talks about their challenges, I think that we are so close yet so far away from each other". Regardless, most informants seemingly agree that they have a lot to learn from each other and that the network provides exactly this opportunity.

In other words, the informants see the Nordic cooperation in the P/CVE field as a natural extension of how the rest of the Nordic society is governed, despite minor differences between the coordinators' roles in the different cities and countries, as mentioned (chapter 4.1.1). However, as the network was born out of the Nordic Council of Ministers, it can be argued to be a political decision as much as a natural derivation of the Nordic welfare model. Hence, the natural boundaries seen by the city informants, is in reality a political decision which is seen by informant 5, who acknowledges the beginning of the network came as a result of the political cooperation. This is further elaborated in subchapter 4.1.7.

4.1.6 Size

One point that informant 5 noted was that the size of the network was good. Two of the informants mentioned the Strong Cities network, and informant 5 noted that this network dwindled into nothing once it was opened for more members. One of the reasons for this could be that a smaller, more exclusive network creates the feeling of ownership. As informant 2 claims, "we are also part of Strong Cities but that is more a name on a paper", suggesting that the Strong Cities network at least is not an efficient network. Both of these informants felt a strong connection to the NSC network, both to the member cities and the secretariat.

This was also pointed to in the interview with informant 8; That it was not a network with 400 member cities, and the fact all members had to pay made the network more committing. Internal commitment can also be seen in relation to membership fee, which will be examined in chapter 4.1.10. Thus, the size of the network was seen as beneficial.

4.1.7 Legitimacy

The NSC network was started based on a decision by the Nordic Council of Ministers. This decision was made in 2016, and the network then invited cities to join. As this was a political decision made at ministerial level it is seen as a legitimate network. "I think the history with the Nordic Council of Ministers, that might be a strength. It gives legitimacy to what we do now" (informant 2).

The Nordic Safe Cities (2021, p. 2) states that the network wants the members to have their local politicians on board as they also host conferences for city mayors. For some municipalities it is a completely political decision, such as for informant 3. For others it has been a choice to make it a political decision to create legitimacy:

> "I could have made the decision on my own because we do have the money in my unit. However, I made it a political errand because I wanted to make sure that it was known…I made the politicians accept the cost, so that they knew about the network… The deputy mayor has become very close because of this project… It seems that the work we are doing is interesting for him too" (Informant 2).

A similar view is also voiced by informant 1, where the network has been:

> "A good way of making the politicians and leaders have focus on these issues and on this topic [radicalisation and violent extremism]. When you lift it to this level… I think that is really helpful… I think you need to work on prevention on so many levels, because if you see it as the part that will make the politicians and leaders prioritise this kind of work, I think that is quite efficient… You are dependent on resources and on the municipalities' different services and that they prioritise the issue."

Hence, the NSC network is seen as legitimate for its members. However, one challenge with this is that things could get done faster, and outside the local democracy. As informant 8 at the secretariat mentions that the cities are bound by the bureaucracy and the law, whereas the network has more freedom to have open forums as they are not a government institution. Informant 2 also highlighted that the network:

"can be quicker in lifting important issues… they can move faster as they do not have these decision makers in the local democracy that I have to deal with. They can run, while I take my steps one at a time."

Despite it being a political decision to start the network, the view that it operates on the outskirts of the local democracy is seemingly confirmed by the above quote. Nevertheless, changing policy is not an aim for the NSC network. The network aids the cities in fulfilling action plans and policies already put in place to reach their goals of safer cities.

4.1.8 Stakeholder involvement

The last factor identified in the literature review of the success of governance networks is stakeholder involvement. Five out of seven informants from the member cities mentioned practical projects as a positive aspect with the NSC network. A motivation to remain in the network for many informants was the "action focus", as informant 2 stated. Most of the informants found this focus to be useful and beneficial. This was echoed by informant 4 who stated that the network had direct impact on a project due to feedback from other cities on their plan regarding the city park. It was claimed by informant 1 as the Gjensidigestiftelsen's initiative 'Trygge, norske byer' contributed to "actually putting projects into life". Informant 8 explains that these are projects designed from scratch where they can apply for funding, and the network secretariat is providing support for the cities.[8] For informant 1 this project was concrete and something to work on locally, which made it easier to prioritise and follow up.

"to get into it with corporations like Gjensidigestiftelsen is a really good idea as you actually get some money to do real projects. I think that is a really good idea… the Trygg By-project is more concrete and something we are working on locally".

Yet, for informant 5 this cooperation with Gjensidigestiftelsen came at the cost of spreading the focus of the network too thin. By allowing Gjensidigestiftelsen to decide who got grant requests accepted, the cities risked having to tick boxes that were not necessarily directly linked to RVE. Therefore, watering down the focal point of the network. In other words, despite practical projects being seen as a positive aspect of the network, and something that made the network

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[8] For more information on this initiative, see: https://kommunikasjon.ntb.no/pressemelding/bruker-10-millioner-pa-a-trygge-norske-byer?publisherId=16416575&releaseId=17876281

stand out from other networks, it was also important for two of the informants that the network still focused on radicalisation and violent extremism. This will be further elaborated in the following subchapter.

4.1.9 Tailoring of the membership

In addition to the eight pillars identified in previous research, the empirical findings show other factors that were highlighted by informants as important for the network. One of these was the secretariat's ability to tailor memberships. As seen in chapter 4.1.2, the NSC secretariat spent time tailoring the memberships in order to offer advice suitable to the local context. The municipalities also varied in the usage of the network, as will be shown in this subchapter.

The role of the NSC for the member cities were in most part similar. The cities seek knowledge, competence, and connections to other cities with similar experiences in order to tackle RVE-related issues. These were common goals for all of the informants. Still, there were some differences in the role of the network for the various informants, and they were using the network for differing purposes. For some informants it was one of several networks, whereas for informant 6 it was one of the most important networks on radicalisation and violent extremism. Likewise, there were differences in how the informants made use of the NSC network. Two of the informants stated that they used the network for purposes it was not intended. Informant 2 claimed to use the secretariat in a case of crisis management and informant 3 stated that:

> "We have also connected the secretariat to a specific initiative that we have been developing but that was seen as separate from the network participation as it was an arrangement made outside of the network. But we have used the secretariat as consultants on parts of our initiatives."

For informant 4, the NSC network is "a place to get new information and knowledge about radicalisation and violent extremism. We meet a lot of professionals in the network and it is also a way to meet other cities and learn from their experiences in this work." This slight difference in informant responses shows that the role of the network was tailored for individual members.

Informant 8 claimed that the secretariat sees their role as creating value for the cities in terms of prevention work. They see their work as "related to building resilience and capacity" for the cities. In essence, there are three areas the network sees as areas that cover their role towards the cities:

1. To connect the cities with one another.
2. To support the cities with one-on-one counselling to further their projects, as well as being colleagues who provide new knowledge.
3. To bring forward new knowledge and innovation in fields with no existing best practice.

As the secretariat seeks to tailor experiences to the cities' varied needs, some of the city informants noted that they had given feedback to the network that they feared a watering down of topics if the network delved into general crime prevention more, as opposed to staying strictly put on P/CVE issues. This fear of spreading the topics too thin has been seen in two of the interviews (with informant 1 and 5). Informant 1 noted that in the network:

"We start to talk too much about crime and crime prevention and stray a bit from radicalisation and extremism. I think that may get more cities to join as it is relevant for more people, but I think it is good if we can continue to be a network on radicalisation and extremism… Rather than letting cities bring on topics that I sometimes find irrelevant, I think that it should be a network that should not work on general crime prevention because I think we also lose something."

Despite the informant understanding the need for keeping the membership rates at a certain level, the importance of feeling ownership of the network and not taking in too many members was important for informant 5. This informant also noted that certain other networks had grown too large, thus lost their importance.

4.1.10 Membership fee

"There is no time to relax and that might also be part of how the Nordic Safe Cities differ. They demand that if you are a member, you should get your money's worth and be active. It is not a passive membership" (Informant 2).

Informant 8 gave details of a change in structure leading to the becoming of an NGO as described in chapter 2.3. From 2015-2018 the network hosted conferences and camps where they had researchers speak about new developments in the field. In 2019 changes were made to the organisation, and a new structure was in place by 2020. Now they are working differently, with briefings and webinars with updated knowledge. A conscious effort is now put into translating long reports and new studies into a useful context for the members.

There is also increasing possibilities for dialogue where member cities can raise questions that the secretariat will gather information on or ask advisors for information on. Part of this restructuring also created changes in the funding. The NSC network is currently funded from three channels, the Nordic Council of Minister, the membership fee, and partnerships. When the membership fee was introduced, the cities had to make a mindful decision of whether to spend the money on the membership fee or withdraw from the network. "As with everything that costs money, we have to defend why we wanted to be members and that it is worth it" (informant 4).

Informant 1 also mentions that due to the membership fee introduced in 2020, there was a discussion of what the city got out of the network, and whether it should be a priority:

> "Even we have tough priorities to make… So when we decide to be part of the network or to help a family… If the priorities get tougher, I am not sure what we will do… But that will be a political question."

However, the informant also acknowledges that the city receives more in return through the *Trygge, Norske byer* project. Thus, making it easier to defend the membership fee. This is also voiced by informant 5 who claims that:

> "We get a lot in return for the money we put into the network. I would rather say that we get a little too much as my job as a coordinator also includes other tasks, and the NSC membership has been very demanding and time-consuming. At the same time, the knowledge increase we have gotten from the network is priceless."

An element of insecurity for the NSC secretariat is the membership continuation. The membership for all of the city informants are up for renewal in 2022. Despite all informants showing clear appreciation for the network and the need for the network, membership fees can present an issue for the secretariat. In order to remain a relevant governance network in the

P/CVE field, maintaining the members or gaining new members is of importance. None of the city informants knew for sure whether they would remain in the network. Despite this, all of the informants argued that they would like to remain and that they saw the network as beneficial.

4.2   Is the NSC efficient?

As seen in chapter 4.1, the NSC network appears largely successful as seen by its members. Regardless, this part of the empirical findings chapter will examine some of the weaknesses of the key findings in order to see how the NSC as a governance network can facilitate its members' capacities to prevent RVE.

> "There is a lot at stake here, and I know that. I have never gone to so many conferences as I have on P/CVE issues. Millions of dollars are just pumped into this challenge and feeding these middle-aged white men" (informant 2).

Despite the previously mentioned ten factors seeming relevant for the success, thus the efficiency of the NSC network, the data presented some limitations to the claim that the NSC is an efficient governance network. Amongst these are the lack of evaluations, both of P/CVE measures themselves, but also what the members gain from the network. Despite the city informants being positive to the network and all claiming that in some way it was an efficient way of managing wicked problems such as radicalisation and violent extremism, there appears to be little knowledge on exactly what is received from the NSC network.

When asked if the informants found the network an efficient way of working on P/CVE efforts, six out of seven city informants claimed "I think so, yes" or similar statements. Informant 5 also added that "especially within the field of extremism we cannot solve anything by ourselves". Similar claims were made by other informants. For example, there was a need for the competency that the network offered on the more complex issues, such as wicked problems (informant 3). Nevertheless, informant 6 noted that "this network is efficient for me to gather information but the question of how I can put this into practice in my city remains", and informant 3 claimed that the network was efficient "to some extent, yes".

Since the network is quite new, and 2020 is seen as the first year the network became more active and less of an informal network where you passively listen to experts and new knowledge, informant 2 noted that "in two years you cannot make miracles" but adds that the

practical projects make it somewhat easier to see whether it has made a difference in a shorter amount of time.

4.2.1 Evaluations of the Nordic Safe Cities

Despite most informants agreeing that the network is efficient, there appears to be little knowledge of exactly how it is efficient. The empirical findings see a lack of evaluations of the network. The NSC network is open to feedback and discussions of what is and is not useful in the network. "We get feedback every year on the general assembly in November, so we do an assessment of what kind of activities were appreciated, what was not of value, and what to do different" was claimed by informant 8. In other words, feedback is offered and informant 5 stated that the secretariat is open and receptive of criticism.

This is also voiced by other informants, and despite some weaknesses mentioned by informants, such as the network being too time consuming (informant 5), the heavy digital focus due to the pandemic (informant 7), and the language causing some members to be more silent than they usually would (informant 2), there appears to be consensus that the network is efficient and beneficial to the informants. Nevertheless, only one of the city informants had evaluated their membership in the network in any way. Informant 6 had carried out an evaluation of their membership in the network. This informant claimed that a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats analysis, or SWOT-analysis[9], was executed not long ago. Three of the informants mentioned informal conversation or discussions with colleagues and other member cities as a way of assessing their membership, but as informant 5 contemplates:

> "we have not thoroughly evaluated but we often discuss it with the other cities and assess together. Sometimes we agree, sometimes we do not. So, there is a continuous assessment but I do not know if I can call it an evaluation. However, it is a continuous assessment of the network value."

Despite several informants making similar statements on the value of the membership, measuring the effectiveness of the NSC network seems to be a difficult task if few to none of

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[9] For a simple introduction to SWOT analyses, see: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm

the informants evaluate their membership. However, four of the informants claimed that there would be evaluations in the autumn as their membership renewal was at the end of 2021.

Despite a clear lack of evaluations, an indicator of an efficient network seems from the interviews to be whether the member cities take experiences from the network into their own work. As informant 3 mentions:

> "to some extent it is an effective forum for exchanging knowledge and experience. However, this does not always fit with what is going on in the city…but there have been opportunities where we could bring existing issues to the table to discuss or ask for input and that has been useful."

In this sense, there is a gap between the formal knowledge from the network and the tacit knowledge they experience in their work lives on certain parts of the network. However, there has been parts of the NSC network that appears more efficient to the coordinators.

An issue for informant 1 was the inability to use a network to its fullest:

> "I think it has to do with resources but you cannot just sit in many networks at the same time as having to work on local issues. I think that might be some of the problem, not using the network to its fullest, as the municipality have things to deal with on their own, locally."

Thus, there is some differences between the informants' usage of the network and some cities use it more actively than others. For instance, informant 7 stated that for their city the main support had come from the secretariat, and not the cities in the network. This was due to the nature of the project they were undertaking. However, informant 7 was also looking forward to getting input from other member cities when, or if, this became an opportunity. Informant 5 on the other hand stated that "…they have facilitated. They have also played an important role as they know which cities have similar issues and whom to connect us with". Two of the informants, informant 3 and 4, also note that they do not always make use of the network events, as it is not everything that is relevant for their work or their city. Sometimes they select the things they see as interesting, thus missing out on certain network opportunities. It was also pointed out that there is no time to attend all meetings and seminars on all topics.

Notwithstanding some assessments of the network itself, the issue remains unsolved. How can the members assess the network's efficiency? The findings show that there is also a lack of evaluations of P/CVE measures. This will be further elaborated in the following subchapter.

4.2.2 How the Nordic Safe Cities have affected praxis

Throughout the interviews, most of the informants praised the NSC network in some form or another. However, in six out of seven interviews the informants were not sure exactly what information, input, and changes to praxis the NSC network had contributed to. The last informant, informant 7, were receiving specific help and input on how to make an action plan for a city that currently had little experience and knowledge on radicalisation and violent extremism. As this was a practical process, and also one that the secretariat took part in, it was easier to see what input the network (the secretariat and connected safe city advisors) had made. Informant 1 points out that "it is difficult to pinpoint what you do, for what reason, and exactly where you picked up that knowledge." Whereas informant 4 claims that "I do not know if we can say that it has changed the way we work. Maybe we have, or maybe we have not, I am not sure." Informant 6 claims that "for sure they are affecting our standard of knowledge, and that affects the actions taken in our city. But a straight effect on something on a very practical level, I am not sure about." More of the informants agree with this line of thinking. As informant 2 resonates, "no, it is changing but it is impossible to see if it is the network" to the question of whether the NSC has changed P/CVE efforts in the city. Informant 7 echoes this by adding that:

> "Not yet, I do not think… We are really underdeveloped and are trying to gather more information… We are real beginners so I do not know if it has changed a lot so far but it has definitely made us in the working group more aware and hopefully the network will have more effect on us."

Notwithstanding lack of examples of how the network has affected praxis, all informants agree that the increase in knowledge and competencies is of value to their cities:

> "I think our praxis has not changed on the basis of our membership in the network but we have been provided with some good ideas and some areas of focus that we are also discussing from time to time and bringing into our efforts. Definitely in the upcoming work on writing, or producing, a new action plan in this field… it would be a good idea

to look into other countries and to the network for ideas because that is a point in time where network input could influence praxis… And I think that is exactly what we want from the network. It is the useful input when developing new initiatives. As well as the one on one support" (informant 3).

Informant 8 states that it is hard for the secretariat to know exactly how the network has impacted the member cities, which is also reflected by the informants in the previous subchapter. If some cities were to write action plans and reference the network, that is one way of seeing direct impact. In many cases, however, the impact is more subtle and not always observable. For instance, a knowledge increase within the city does not necessarily make a direct difference, but it can alternate how to think about certain activities. This is not always measurable.

The network has made some efforts to build practical projects with the member cities. Here, it is easier to measure impact, as it is observable what comes from the network, and what does not. As informant 8 puts it:

"We can help the cities decide how they should design their activities to reach the desired outcome… The idea is helping the cities set the right outcomes, the purpose of their actions, and set targets that we know based on evidence and competence."

The desired outcome might vary from city to city within the network as noted in chapter 4.1.4, and this adds to the difficulties of measuring direct impact of the network. Informant 2 also mentioned that they had yet to see positive changes from their project with the NSC. However, the informant appeared sure that changes would come from the project and that impact would be seen in a year. Nevertheless, as this was only a prediction made by the informant, there is no way of knowing now what effect the project has had in a year.

A practical project where the NSC 'network did have direct impact was told by informant 4. Through sharing plans for a public park upgrade with other member cities, direct comments were made that affected the end result. Changes came as a direct result from input made my other members of the network. Similarly, informant 7 also claims that the secretariat has been important in providing information, guidance, and support in the creation of an action plan in the P/CVE field. Inputs to such projects in cities count toward direct impact from the network, both from the member cities and the secretariat. However, for informant 1 the support in the

daily work was not from the NSC network, but from other colleagues in the country. Yet, some of these cities were also members of the NSC, so there might be possibilities of having met the colleagues through the network.

One challenge with seeing the direct impact of the network is that none of the informants said they evaluate their P/CVE measures in a formal and structured manner. Still, five out of seven informants claimed that either others in the municipal system evaluated on occasion, or that there were informal talks, discussions, and assessments regarding implemented measures. Informant 7 claimed not to evaluate P/CVE measures at all in the city, whereas informant 6 notes that there are other actors in the city who evaluate, such as the police. This is also reflected in other interviews, and informant 5 admits that this is something they are not doing despite a wish to do so. This informant states that evaluations have taken place through cooperation with students and research facilities, but a structured evaluation of all P/CVE measures is not done.

Informant 2 also notes the lack of evaluations in the department: "it is not my line of assignment… and there are other functions better suited". Also, informant 4 adds that "to evaluate prevention is not easy, it is so difficult". When asked how the city knows the measures are effective if they do not measure P/CVE measures, the response was "we do not know if they are effective, no." Informant 8 states that evaluation of P/CVE measures is something the network is working on, as they are currently developing a model of evaluations the member cities can make use of in their work. It is, though, very clear to all eight informants that evaluation of prevention work is complex and complicated.

Informant 2 noted that, "I realise that in my lifetime I will probably not solve anything but I can feel satisfied when I have moved something; I can move a question a centimetre… move the question a little bit, just like a little snowball it keeps growing. We take small steps." This informant stated that there was a shift in the way the city looked on P/CVE, and how it has shifted from being "against" something to being "positive" to something – the focus was on strengthening democracy and inclusiveness, as opposed to fighting radicalisation and violent extremism. In this way, there was a shift in prevention work. However, this change cannot be ascribed to the NSC network. A similar reflection is made in the interview with informant 5, who states that it is important to be proactive and up to date in order to make progress. Here, the NSC network is seen to provide this.

4.2.3 Covid-19 and the network

As mentioned above, the network receives praise for its ability to share knowledge and increase competence within the cities. Despite this, 2020 was a year that changed much for several cities. This also involved changes for the network, both the cities and the secretariat. The informant at the secretariat, informant 8, said during the interview that:

> "We changed the organisation, where you now had to pay from 2020. We started out 1st January 2020 envisioning we should be a network where we met often. We have now gotten hundred per cent online… This has also been very much of a change for us and a change for the cities in terms of how you operate in a network with digital meetings."

Many of the informants from the cities also acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic had changed the dynamic in the network, and that physical meetings were something to look forward to again. Informant 2 claimed that she would much rather sit down and have a cup of coffee with other cities as that gave a lot of constructive input. Other informants recognise that the secretariat has put in a tremendous effort in remaining relevant throughout the pandemic and adapted to the situation by asking how the Covid-19 pandemic has changed things for the Nordic cities:

> "I think I may have learned more from the network during this Corona-year; about radicalisation and the impact of a crisis on people, what it does to people, the mistrust and difference between the poor and the rich" (Informant 4).

On the other hand, informant 1 recognised that maybe 2020 was not the right time for the network as a more active network in addition to a much higher workload due to the pandemic caused the network to become too much. This viewpoint is also mirrored by informant 5, who sees that the time and effort spent on network activities and actions might have been too much this last year. This informant, however, notes that this is not only due to the pandemic changing the job descriptions, but also due to work for the secretariat such as the 'city portrait'.

5.0   Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to gather all lose threads and discuss the theoretical framework against the findings in this research. Where suitable, the literature review and contextual clarification will be drawn into the discussion. First, this chapter will examine all factors for a successful governance network. In order to see how a governance network can facilitate members' capacities in preventing RVE, I will need to discuss all ten pillars in relation to how they facilitate members' capacities as seen in the empirical findings. Throughout the research I have equated facilitate and increase. I have also equated a successful governance network to an efficient one based on indications from previous literature. However, as this discussion will show, there are some weaknesses to this approach.

Despite these ten pillars being important in a governance network's ability to facilitate P/CVE capacities, the research has its limitations - whether these capacities in reality decrease the level of RVE in these communities. In other words, these ten factors are not sufficient knowledge on whether a governance network is efficient in decreasing RVE prevalence in the societies of the member cities. Evaluations of both network value and P/CVE measures are important to validate the efficiency of a governance network regardless of how successful its members view it.

Is a governance network efficient as a knowledge hub for its members, and in that sense increasing members' capacities in P/CVE issues? Or is network membership contributing to decreasing RVE occurrence in the communities of the members? These are questions this discussion will attempt to answer in order to answer the problem statement:

How can governance networks facilitate members' capacity to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism?

5.1   A model for success in a governance network

The eight pillars for success in a governance network found in the theory chapter 2.4 has throughout the empirical findings shown how they are present in the NSC network. Furthermore, two additional pillars for success were added due to key findings in this research. Consequently, the new model for success includes ten pillars for success, as opposed to the

eight pillars found in previous research. A summary of the key findings can be seen in the table below.

The findings are to a large extent in line with previous research on governance networks and wicked problems, in this case P/CVE issues. Despite smaller deviations, which will be discussed later, much of the empirical findings in this study validates and verifies research in this field.

Pillars of success	Previous literature	Empirical findings
Trust	The higher degree of trust the better for the governance network. This leads to predictable interactions and possibilities for showing vulnerabilities.	The higher degree of trust the better. Spending a lot of time on challenges and vulnerabilities were seen as an advantage.
Managerial activity	A high activity level is important, variety of contacts needed and acting as facilitator is vital.	Members saw a high activity level and appreciated that the secretariat could take on some of the project tasks. However, it is important to not lay too many tasks onto the members. Vital as facilitators.
Need for competence	Gathering experts and scientists, as well as stakeholders and competencies is important.	Had a good infrastructure of experts and practitioners the members appreciated. Knowledge increase that came from the network was vital and invaluable.
Goal consensus	Goals tend to be fluid, unclear when the goal is reached.	Secretariat tailor experiences to meet the goals of the individual members. Goal of the network was overarching, but the means to reach the goals varied slightly. Important to not open up too much as this would water down the network.
Learning and innovation	Individual and collective learning is important.	Individual learning was high. Informants stated that they had increased their

	Deliberation is important, and so is the degree of diversity or homophily. Size and centralisation of the network could also contribute or hinder learning.	competencies in the field. Deliberation was important, also a focus on challenges as the trust was high in the network.
Size	A larger network is more resilient but the bigger the network the more complex the interactions.	A smaller network was appreciated as there was a feeling of ownership. Several informants mentioned the Strong Cities network as a failed network (too big and passively listening).
Legitimacy	Often considered a-constitutional but can also connect civil society and civil society organisations to avoid this.	Got political legitimacy through the Nordic Council of Ministers. Is now an NGO, but ties to stakeholders and implementing of projects in an effort to engage local communities. The NSC actively encourages its members to have the local politicians on board.
Stakeholder involvement	Stakeholder involvement raises the quality. This also relates to legitimacy.	Cooperation with stakeholders and practical projects mostly seen as an advantage but also seen as important to not water down the field of the network.
Tailoring of the membership	Little previous knowledge but a variation of management efforts seen as positive for the network.	Tailoring of the memberships seemingly benefit the members as the network can be used when needed. This is not only a managerial activity, but it is also important that other members make themselves available to be contacted and provide information to other member cities.
Membership fee	Little previous knowledge of benefits.	The membership fee was seen as a way of making the members commit to a certain degree of activity. This ensures that the

		network maintains a higher activity level and that the decision to be parts of the network has to be an active decision.

Table 5 Summary of findings together with the pillars for success in a NAO.

Summarised in the table above is the findings as they are seen together with the theoretical framework. This is of course a simplification of both the theory and the findings, but it does suggest that there is significant overlap in the findings of this research and the previously existing literature in the field. The two added factors were seen in the empirical findings as important for the success of the network as the NSC is largely successful governance network as measured by its members.

As seen in Table 5, the need for the ten pillars of success for a governance network to facilitate members' capacities in the P/CVE field is of significance. It is also important to note that the NSC network is a NAO form of governance network, thus, the generality drawn from this chapter has to be seen in the context of a NAO structured governance network as seen in the theoretical framework (chapter 2.2.2.1). These ten pillars has one major weakness, however; there is no knowledge of whether a successful governance network as seen from the ten pillars in Table 5 is an efficient governance network as seen in Figure 4 due to a lack of evaluation in the P/CVE field. However, this will be discussed in chapter 5.2.

Despite there not being a possibility of generalisation from this study to all governance networks working on wicked problems, some claims to what a model for success contains will be presented. The model for success can in some ways be seen as efficient network governance in the sense of the definition provided by Provan and Kenis (2008, p. 2). However, as will be discussed, the key to increasing P/CVE capabilities is not as simple as the definition presented. Limited by only one unit of analysis, and only a limited number of informants, the claim to generality is an attempt of moving the debate of how to prevent RVE forward as opposed to solving the issue.

The graphic presentation of the model (figure 4) below consists of the ten pillars of success as explained in Table 5. Yet, the model also explains that the ten pillars for success is not sufficient for a governance network to be seen as efficient. The ten pillars say something of how a governance network can facilitate P/CVE but in order to validate this there is a need for evaluations.

This model is a simplification of reality in the sense that P/CVE work is as complex as the RVE issues themselves (as seen in chapter 2.1). The model and the ten pillars cannot in any way be seen as a solution to the governing of RVE-related risks. The pillars are not a conclusion of which factors are necessary for a NAO governance network, and there are possibilities of creating this model in several ways. Despite this, it is clear that the model presents an overview of the recontextualisation of the theoretical framework in line with the key empirical findings from this research.

The pillars of success can be seen as the basis of an efficient network, but as we shall see in this chapter – these pillars are not sufficient for a network to be efficient. These ten factors can say something about a governance network's ability to facilitate P/CVE capacities for the coordinators and active participants of the network. However, it cannot say anything of the efficiency in relation to the overall goal of the governance network; in this research, safer societies in the sense of decreasing prevalence of RVE-related issues.
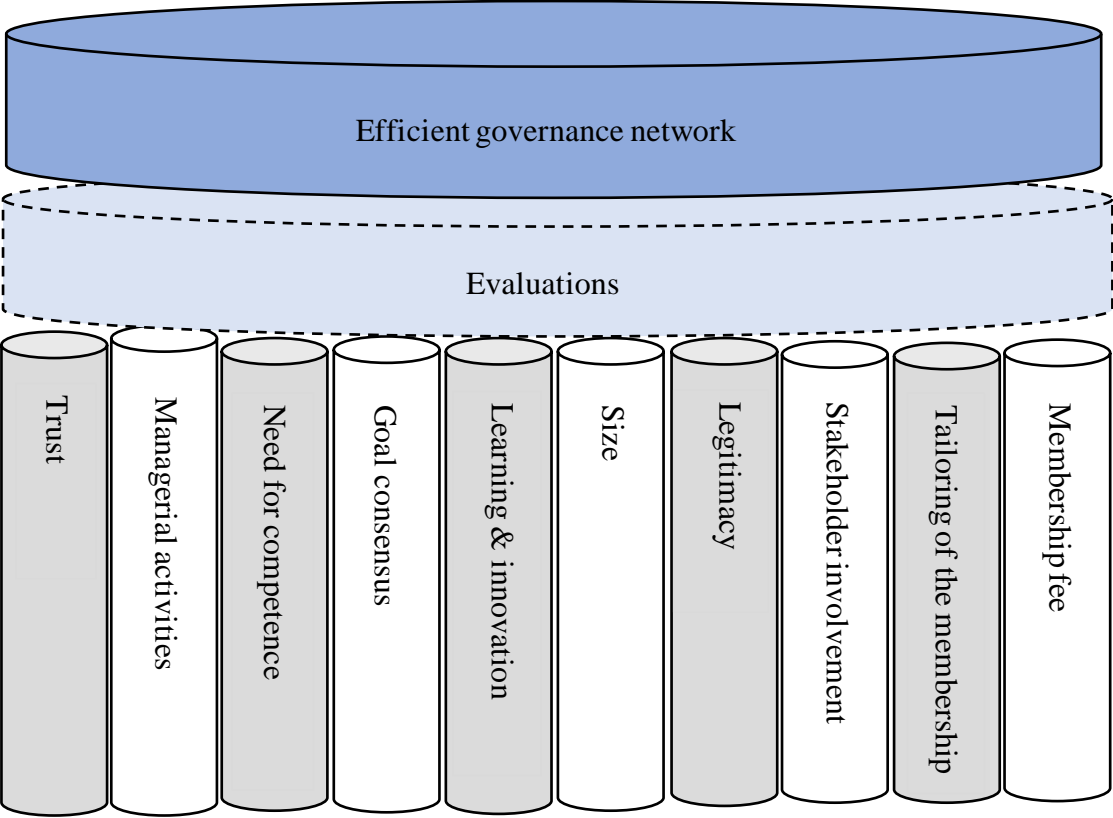

Figure 4 A model of efficient governance networks

5.1.1 Trust

The theory appears to be confirmed in relation to the claim that trust leads to predictable interactions and vulnerability (Edelenbos et al., 2011, p. 436). The empirical findings indicate that a large portion of time is spent on issues and challenges. The NSC network spends time on discussing vulnerabilities and challenges the cities are facing, as seen in chapter 4.1.5. The sharing of challenges and issues was an invaluable part of the network for many of the informants, which was also something they learned a lot from. As well as strengthening of trust within the network, it also presented an opportunity to learn from others' experiences. Here we can see that a NAO can facilitate members' capacities through increasing trust in the network. With trust comes also other benefits. This research also indicates that trust is important for learning as the informants claimed there was learning from listening to other member cities' challenges and vulnerabilities. This argument will be further developed in chapter 5.1.5.

Another element to the high amounts of trust is one that could be reflected in the Nordic society as a whole, as one informant asks why there should not be trust in the network. This could simply reflect trust on a societal level, not necessarily related to the NSC network in itself. The Nordic P/CVE model also relies on trust between agencies in order to cooperate and work together, in addition to the scholarly view of trust-based relationships amongst local actors as important in P/CVE work (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Schack, 2016). These are things that could contribute towards the high amounts of trust in the network but they could also be hard to replicate outside Nordic countries. Regarding generality it might appear that a NAO structure of a governance network could only work in societies where trust is already high. The validation of trust as important for the network is important as trust is also interconnected to other pillars in the model (Table 5). For example, the theory states that the network management has been seen as an important source of trust (Klijn et al., 2011, p. 14). This research suggests that there is correlation between management efforts and trust, as claimed by Klijn et al. (2011, p. 14).

From the theory, we can see that trust is important, and that the higher the trust the better it is for the governance network. This is also reflected in the empirical findings in this research, where there is a high degree of trust. However, what is also seen in the NSC is that parts of the tough conversation could be missing. This could be due to the members of the network not knowing each other's job descriptions or it could be due to the language barrier as English is the language used in the network but no one's first language as opposed to a trust issue.

However, the findings also state that if there was information an informant did not find trustworthy it was still important to listen and reflect why this information was not trusted.

One of the reasons for this could be that the core mechanisms behind RVE are heavily debated and despite some agreement as to what contributes to the phenomena, there is still much disagreement in academia and between practitioners (Lid & Heierstad, 2016c, p. 175). The cities in the NSC network operate according to their strategies and action plans, and their own beliefs in the root causes of RVE. Thus, informant 2's statement that the city does not see a certain problem in that manner, or "not here", reflects this complexity. Nonetheless, the high amounts of trust reported to be in the network arguably benefits other factors in the model for success despite trust not being seen as a factor that increases members' P/CVE capacities in itself. Trust is in the findings of this research rather seen as a prerequisite for the beneficial conversations. Consequently, trust is needed in a governance network but it is not trust as a pillar in itself that facilitates members' P/CVE capacities.

5.1.2 Managerial activities

As the theory suggests, there is a need for a network management in the NSC network, and that this contributes towards its efficiency. The network was trusted to find the correct experts when contacted, it was praised for its efforts to remain active and relevant, and despite one informant wanting more of it, they were appreciated for their efforts to translate knowledge into a Nordic context to be useful for the member cities. This translation of knowledge appeared to be an issue in other networks. Thus, this appears to be an important part of managerial activities. As the most important aspect of the network management was the facilitation of contact – both between the cities but also between cities and safe city advisors or other partners – the NSC secretariat was appreciated. Previous research from Edelenbos et al. (2011); Edelenbos et al. (2013) is consistent with the findings from this study, where the role as facilitator and builder of relationships inside and outside the network is of importance to the quality of the network, and that a connective style is of importance. Finding the correct knowledge and being capable of translating this knowledge into the local context is an important part of creating value for the members. Thus, increasing coordinators' capacities in P/CVE related issues. Translation of knowledge into the local context will also be elaborated on in 5.1.5.

Despite previous theory not stating that sharing the workload with the network management could be an added benefit of a NAO, the findings suggest that this was beneficial. This implies that the greater managerial effort, the more beneficial the network. On the other hand, one informant cautioned the secretariat in creating too many tasks for the coordinators. As the network has to get funding and potentially new members, it is important to lobby and showcase the network. The work relating to lobbying and showcasing the network were tasks that did not appear to increase efficiency and view of the network as efficient. Consequently, there is a limitation to the tasks a network management can request of the members. However, taking on tasks that were previously seen as belonging to the coordinators on the other hand, could create progress in a project that would possibly otherwise be on hold until time allowed for progress from the coordinators. Despite this creating progress in the projects, it is not intuitively clear whether this facilitates members' capacities in P/CVE issues. It does, however, appear to create value for a project with the aim of tackling RVE issues.

One element of the theoretical framework seemingly relevant in the NSC too, is the managerial staff. The findings in this study suggests that the managerial staff is of importance for the network. The low threshold for contact reported by the informants suggests that there is a degree of informal contact between members and the NSC secretariat. This appears to be a benefit for the members as it allows contact on issues not planned for and it allows for aid and help in between meetings and webinars (which also relates to tailoring of membership in chapter 5.1.9). However, as also suggested in the theory, this leaves the network vulnerable to changes in NSC secretariat staff. This poses the question of whether it is the governance network that facilitates the members' capacities, or whether it is just a small group of people driving the network forward. Edelenbos et al. (2013) suggests that a change in managerial staff will have a negative effect on the NSC. As can be seen in chapter 2.3, the director and deputy director of the NSC has been in the network management since its beginning. Thus, there is no way of knowing whether the NSC would be vulnerable to a high staff turnover.

Newig et al. (2010, p. 10) also claims that a few heavy linked individuals could make the network vulnerable. This is reflected by one of the informants, who notes that it is the people in the secretariat that are doing a good job. Hence, whether a governance network can facilitate its members' capacities in preventive work is not validated by this argument. Rather, it is indicating that active individuals within a network can increase P/CVE capacities. This discussion will be elaborated in chapter 5.1.5.

One part of the managerial activities not mentioned in the theoretical framework is the degree of acceptance of criticism. From the findings, it appears that the NSC secretariat is open and receptive of criticism and points of improvement. As one informant notes that it is the coordinators that are closest to the ground and knows what is happening on the ground level, thus it is important that the network is responsive to input and changes presented by the members. This also ensures a non-hierarchical structure which also relates to the legitimacy of the network. In addition, it could also prevent a high degree of centralisation if all members are presenting their perception of the network and the degree of usefulness in their work. On the other hand, a large network would potentially not be capable of considering input from all members. As seen in the findings, there is already slight disagreement on whether general crime prevention should be part of network activities or not. This is elaborated in chapter 5.1.4.

The network management's ability to accept changes and inputs does not appear to facilitate members' capacities directly, but similar to trust, it appears to be a factor interlinked to other factors that facilitate capacities, such as management activities. The NSC secretariat here are seen as validating the theoretical framework on NAOs and managerial activities in the sense that it could be argued as an efficient mode of risk governance. Nonetheless, as shall be seen in chapter 5.2, the lack of evaluations in the field is the elephant in the room.

5.1.3 Need for competence

Most of the informants appreciated the experts and safe city advisors that were brought into the NSC network during meetings and webinars. However, the findings of this research also raise the question of who is allowed to call themselves an expert in a field, as highlighted in the theory. As experts can be seen to bring in new knowledge and updated research, it is important for a governance network to access experts in the field. However, as seen in chapter 4.1.3, it is important that the quality of these experts is acknowledged by the members of the network. This could also be related to the decrease of trust in a network if the members cannot relate their local contexts to the knowledge provided by the experts. Thus, it is important that the network management maintain connections with experts and researchers in the field but it is also important that the members recognise the experts as such in order to trust the information, thus increasing their capacities in P/CVE work.

This also highlights the complexity that is wicked problems and RVE. Chapter 1.1 highlights that there are several knowledge gaps and a lot of the information on RVE is disputed (chapter 2.1.6), which could insinuate that the pooling of knowledge is beneficial only as long as the members view the issue at hand similarly. On the other hand, the theoretical framewoek also argued that diversity was important for innovation. I will return to this later.

Despite the apparent appreciation of the level of competence within the NSC network, the informants remain unsure of what information and input they actually have brought back into their daily work and local communities. Some examples of specific ideas brought back into the cities is mentioned but overall, the empirical findings suggest that there is a lack of exact knowledge on the contributions of the network. Thus, whether the network is a beneficial one to more than the active participants of the NSC. Despite this, several of the informants make use of the Strong Cities network as an example of a network they do not see as beneficial, suggesting that there is some tacit knowledge of what a beneficial network consists of. Hence, it is implicit that the NSC is a beneficial network. Nonetheless, there is no formal evidence of the NSC being useful for its members. This will be further discussed in chapter 5.2.

The need for competence was highlighted by most of the informants, suggesting that there is a need for more knowledge on P/CVE issues. This shows a dependency as seen in the theory chapter 2.4.3. The informants noted that this knowledge increase was happening in the network. The knowledge hub that the NSC was seen as appears to have benefit the members. As one informant notes that they would not be capable of doing the work they are doing on their own (this discussion will be developed further in chapter 5.2). The findings of this research suggest that a governance network being a knowledge hub appreciated by the members could increase capabilities. The findings also suggest that the knowledge increase has been a learning experience for some of the NSC member cities. For a governance network to contribute to the P/CVE field, it is important that the members receive knowledge they would otherwise not be able to access as simply as they get access through the network. The pooling of competencies and knowledge need to be less costly, both in terms of finances and labour power. This is also reflected in the definition of efficient used in chapter 2.2.2. However, lack of evidence implies a lack of formalisation of this tacit knowledge.

5.1.4 Goal consensus

The overall aim of the network is to create safer cities, and to work on bringing forward new knowledge and innovation in a field with no previous best practice. This goal is on a strategic level, and all the informants work on a strategic level in their respective municipalities. The findings suggest that the municipalities see themselves as similar in many ways, despite minor differences. These differences, however, were ascribed to different sizes of the cities and differences in threats facing the countries. The informants saw the Nordic cooperation as natural despite the NSC being a political cooperation at the beginning. This research contradicts previous theory on the topic and sees smaller differences amongst the member cities but the goals of the network are not seen as fluid, as noted by Klijn et al. (2011, p. 3).

The issue with the goals of the network was not the consensus of wanting safer cities but the means of reaching this goal. RVE is highly complex, as seen in the conceptual clarification (chapter 2.1.6). The NSC is a non-hierarchical network working to aid the members. The goals and aims of the network have been formed by the needs of the members in addition to the political will of establishing the NSC network. This could suggest that successful governance networks operate towards the same goals. However, the multiple views on root causes of RVE could complicate the means to achieve the goals. Consequently, tailoring of membership is important (see chapter 4.1.9). It also highlights that assessing the outcome could be a complex matter, as noted by Edelenbos et al. (2011).

As one informant points out, nothing will be solved but if the question is moved one centimetre, then the work has been valuable. Thus, the goal consensus appears less significant for members' capacities than the means of operating towards getting closer to the goal. In this sense, goal consensus itself does not appear as a significant pillar in increasing members' P/CVE capacities. It does, however, appear relevant to keep the network moving in the same direction. Thus, it is interlinked with other important factors.

The differing views within the organisation of widening the scope of the network to include general crime prevention was an issue that could be seen in relation to the root causes of RVE. In accordance to the research and literature in the field, this wide scope would be a sensible choice in order to facilitate members' capacities to prevent RVE. This, however, was not wished by some of the informant. Opening up would make the network too general and there were already parts of the network some informants did not find as relevant as others. There was a

fear of watering down topics of conversation within the network. This appears to be a fine line to balance. On the one hand, scientific evidence is leaning towards a general crime prevention approach on RVE-related issues as a sensible approach despite there being little consensus on the root causes of RVE (Lid & Heierstad, 2016a, p. 97), whereas on the other hand this could open up the network to more members which could lead to it becoming too large. This was also highlighted by using examples of networks which lost their value.

This is a dilemma for the NSC network that could also be relevant for other networks, and the findings in this study makes no clear statement on which approach is preferrable. However, there are indications that some of the member wishes to remain a smaller network with a narrower field of interest. This dilemma highlights the complexity of P/CVE work. Thus, signalling to other governance networks in similar fields that a balance is complicated. On one hand, opening up for general crime prevention could lead to increased capabilities in tackling RVE-related issues, whereas it could also lead to a large governance network with passive listeners and no benefit for its members, as suggested in the findings. This research offers no solution to this dilemma, and further research is needed to know how this dilemma should be approached.

5.1.5 Learning and innovation

The lack of data and statistics on RVE issues can be seen as an important reason to join the network. As well as being connected to the need for competencies, it is also important for learning. In order to attain enough knowledge and competence on the issue it could be argued that a network is necessary. A lack of data suggests governance networks are a good way of pooling knowledge (Sørensen, 2016). Learning from other cities and coordinators was a clear argument in the findings of this research, and potentially the most important reason for being part of the network. Despite the language barrier noted as a potential hindrance for learning the findings suggest that learning from other cities is beneficial. This information exchange is seen as increasing members' capacities – often through sharing the challenges and vulnerability. Subsequently, a governance network can be an efficient mode of risk governance and facilitate P/CVE capacities through being a knowledge hub, or a 'thinkubator', as the NSC calls it. The deliberation needed for learning as seen in the theoretical framework (chapter 2.4.5) has been

validated by this research. Thus, deliberation can facilitate members' capacities through possibilities for learning.

The findings show clear signs that learning has taken place, thus that members' capacities have increased. There is a tendency for the informants to praise the network and the knowledge and competence the network brings. The member cities are eager to learn from one another and examples of learning from the network were presented. Nonetheless, as mentioned, most of the informants also remain unclear of exactly what the network has contributed to, and few examples of concrete advice or impact are shown. Thus, an increase in personal competencies seemingly is taking place, but it is unsure how this transfer into the local context and whether this learning is reflected in P/CVE measures in the member cities. However, as Riche et al. (2020, p. 2) states, collective learning must also be in place for there to be success in a governance network. What this collective learning entails is uncertain.

As the Nordic model of P/CVE work is a multiagency approach, does there have to be learning in all agencies for there to be collective learning? In which case, there is no evidence of collective learning. A grave lack of evaluations of P/CVE measures imply that there is little knowledge of the effects of the measures put in place, both as a result of network activity but also outside network activity. I will return to this argument in chapter 5.2.

As the network is reasonably new, and the new structure was only in place just over a year ago, it is difficult to measure impact this soon – as pointed out by one of the informants. A weakness in this data is that it is not longitudinal. Thus, knowing effects of the network so soon is difficult in any organisation, not just in one focusing on a wicked problem. A follow-up study in a few years might end up with different results than here, and there might be possibilities of seeing learning on a collective level. Nevertheless, collective learning was predicted by informants on the practical projects in the network, suggesting facilitation of P/CVE capacities, but this cannot be known for sure.

Some individuals could be argued as important for the NSC network as they have been around since the start of the network. As trust is important for learning, and trust is built over time, it could be argued that a network with the same few individuals could be the best way of governing the risk of RVE. Nevertheless, it can also be seen that this makes the network vulnerable. This links to both the theory on managerial activity that says a high turnover in managerial staff is a weakness, as well as a high turnover being a hindrance to building trust.

Nonetheless, the network is per date set for learning and building capacities, but a centralisation of the network could also be argued as a hindrance for sustainable learning.

The theoretical framework argued that homophily in a NAO could be a facilitation for learning (Riche et al., 2020, p. 10). The findings suggest that the theory is confirmed. As one informant notes that the differing job descriptions could be a hindrance for giving good advice to colleagues, it suggests that homophily would make this conversation easier. The same could be said about the language barrier encountered in the NSC. However, as mentioned by the secretariat informant, innovation is also an aim for the NSC. Thus, a certain amount of diversity in order to come up with new ideas is also necessary (Riche et al., 2020, p. 12). Here, it can be argued that due to the similarity of the Nordic countries and their similar P/CVE approach they can make use of learning from each other's failures as well as success stories. However, there could also be a possibility of a lack of innovation due to the very same homophily but the results of this research cannot conclude on this. Thus, whether homophily in a governance network facilitate members' capacities is highly uncertain despite some indications signalling better learning in such networks. On the other hand, if innovation is a goal, some divergence is needed, according to the theoretical framework.

Innovation was one topic that appeared more controversial than others in the P/CVE field. This has also been an issue in the scientific knowledge on P/CVE issues. There is little knowledge on backfire processes, and as one informant pointed to – it is better doing nothing than certain things. This is arguably a sensible viewpoint as we know little about these backfire processes. Nonetheless, without evaluating the measures, there will never be knowledge on their effects. From the theory it can be seen that creativity is important for learning. Thus, innovating could also be argued as important. However, the reasons for occurrence of RVE could be changing and adapting to changes in society and keeping up with the newest research and trends within the RVE field is an important part of tackling the issue. Hence, innovation could be seen as important but it is important to proceed with caution. The lack of evaluations will be discussed later. Nonetheless, the theoretical framework appears to be consistent with the empirical findings of this study which suggests that learning and innovation facilitate members' capacities in prevention of RVE-related issues.

5.1.6 Size

The size of a NAO is one factor for success that appears to be interrelated to many of the other factors. A larger network hinders deliberation, thus potential learning. A small network could consist of a few tightly knit members which makes the network vulnerable. In addition, the theoretical framework in this research suggests that the NSC as a NAO is suitable as a larger network due to its network management being capable of pulling the strings and keeping the network together (Provan & Kenis, 2008, p. 10). This is in stark contrast with the empirical findings in this research. Informants name the Strong Cities network as an example of a network that is too large to function well. Rather, the findings suggest that a small to medium sized network is large enough to maintain the trust as well as small enough to deliberate. Whether this is large enough for the NSC network not to be overly centralised is not certain. In this way, a NAO governance network can facilitate its members' capacities through remaining relatively small in size.

The size in itself appears less relevant for capacity building but important for other factors. Also, the size was linked to the feeling of ownership, indicating that this causes a higher activity level and better output. Despite the previous theoretical framework not stating that a smaller network is related to this argument, there are suggestions that commitment is important for efficiency (Peters, 2007, pp. 74-75). This research suggests that size is also related to internal commitment, and that a smaller network is better suited to facilitate members' capacities in preventing RVE.

5.1.7 Legitimacy

One of the issues presented in the theory chapter is the threat to local democracy governance networks apparently present, as it in many cases are not defined by constitutions or legal framework (Bogason & Zølner, 2007). However, as the NSC was an initiative by the Nordic Council of Ministers, it can be argued to be a democratic process behind the creation of the network. This seemingly gives the network legitimacy for its members. There is also an aim to include the local democracy of the member cities, and the findings show examples of local politicians getting involved.

Nonetheless, the aim of the network is not policy creation. Rather, it is aiding the members reach their policy outcomes. It can be argued that NSC participation does not affect the local

democracy. This, however, is not as simple as it may appear. The city coordinators have sound knowledge of what goes on in their city, and the need for agility and quick changes could be an important part of increasing the members' capacities in P/CVE issues. The findings also suggest that the network can operate faster than through the local bureaucracy, and they are not bound by the laws in the same way as the city coordinators.

This signal both potential for being more efficient than traditional channels but also a challenge to the local bureaucracy and traditional way of governing. This is, however, in line with Renn's (2008) view of risk governance as an interplay between institutions and NGOs. Still, it is important that the governance network operates within the systems and the boundaries of the law and local democracy in order to avoid legitimacy issues. The empirical findings of this study suggest that involving the local democracy can be one way of including democratic institutions whilst at the same time be quicker and more efficient than traditional governmental institutions.

5.1.8 Stakeholder involvement

In addition to raising the legitimacy of a governance network, previous literature claims that stakeholder involvement raises the quality of the P/CVE work (Klijn et al., 2011, p. 4). As the NSC network was seen as a politically legitimate governance network through inclusion of local politicians, it is also important to anchor the network in the local community. Inviting stakeholders into the network or its projects has been a way to accomplish this. Practical projects carried out through cooperation with Gjensidigestiftelsen is one of the examples of involvement of local actors. The focus on practical projects were seen as an asset to the network, and despite six out of seven city informants not knowing exactly what the network contributes to, these projects were seemingly overlooked when answering the question. In these projects there should be a knowledge of exactly what the network has contributed to. However, for this to be known, it is important to evaluate. I will return to this in chapter 5.2. Thus, here the NSC network through its cooperations affect the local capacities in the P/CVE work. Nevertheless, the effects of these projects are uncertain.

These practical projects mentioned by the informants as an advantage with the network are also projects involving stakeholders, and projects relating to the local communities. Thus, it could be argued as more local engagement. As mentioned above, several pillars for success contribute

to a facilitation of members' capacities in P/CVE issues. It was also mentioned that these factors do not necessarily correlate with a decrease in occurrence of RVE. Practical projects were one of the issues raised as having an effect in the local communities. Thus, knowing the effect of these projects can mitigate this knowledge gap. In other words, projects like this is a way of facilitating capacities in prevention work. This could also be a way for the network to attain collective learning as the projects are affecting local municipality staff outside the active participants of the network. However, it is important to be ware of the backfire processes such projects can cause.

5.1.9 Tailoring of the membership

One aspect of a successful governance network that lacked mention in the previous theoretical framework is the need for tailoring of the membership. As seen in the findings, the members of the NSC had slightly different needs, and wishes for the use of the network. Thus, tailoring the membership to the various needs of the city is an important part of creating a successful network. As the members vary slightly in how they tackle the issues faced in the local community it is important to avoid a one-size-fits-all model, both in P/CVE measures but also in the network approach towards the cities. An important aspect of this is also to make the coordinators aware that they can tailor their membership. As seen in the findings, some informants claim to use the network for purposes not intended. These purposes are exactly what the NSC should be for, as these are the needs of the member cities. In order to facilitate P/CVE capacities, it is important that the cities gain knowledge on issues relevant to them. Some members might face issues from right-wing extremism, whereas others face challenges from Islamic extremism. Thus, as noted in chapter 1.1.1, the cities will need different means of tackling the issues as the various forms of RVE are often studied and tackled differently (Carlsson, 2017). However, this also makes the managerial activities more complex and labour intensive.

In a non-hierarchical governance network, it is important that all members are aware of this option. It is also important that all members make themselves available for contact in situations of need from other cities. It could be a member city facing the same issues needing to get in touch or a city needing input on certain projects or initiatives. At the same time, it is important for the network management to also balance its members' in the sense that none becomes too

demanding, or some not getting enough attention. Retaining balance and only a certain amount of centralisation is important for this factor to be beneficial. Thus, tailoring membership to their specific needs is a means of facilitating capacities in a manner that in theory should benefit the member, as this has been seen as beneficial to the NSC members.

5.1.10 Membership fee

The last factor that should be added on the basis of the findings in this research is that a membership fee appears beneficial. This ensures commitment and involvement in the network. The need for a degree of internal commitment in a governance network is also emphasised by Peters (2007) in the theoretical framework. As the data covers only seven of the 20 member cities, this cannot be said for sure, but the findings indicate that a membership fee creates internal debates within the member cities on whether the network is 'worth the money'. This ensures commitment and a conscious decision of staying or leaving the network when membership is up for renewal. The findings suggest also that if there is a membership fee, it also limits the amounts of networks a city can participate in. Whether this is an advantage or disadvantage is not known yet and will need further studies. However, it could indicate that large networks with passive members would not survive in the long run. Thus, implying that in order to remain a governance network, value needs to be created. In turn, this will facilitate members' P/CVE capacities.

Nonetheless, a membership fee also ensures that the members can demand more from a network than they could if the participation is voluntary. In this sense, it could be a win-win situation for both the network and the members. The findings in this research suggests that members are themselves aware of what they see as an efficient network or not, and examples like the Strong Cities network show that the informants appreciate the approach of the NSC and find this in most part beneficial. Although, when transferring into this model of network, members could be lost along the way.

However, one issue with the membership fee where there is still a lack of knowledge is how large the membership fee ought to be. Large enough to fully fund the operations of the governance network or a symbolic sum in order to ensure activity? Respectively, the network management needs to spend time on gathering funding from elsewhere, or the members need to make even tougher choices on which networks to be part of. As mentioned by one informant,

this is a priority that affects the whole municipality. Nonetheless, despite membership fee seemingly causing commitment which in theory suggests efficiency, it remains unclear what practical consequences this has for RVE in the local communities. If there is no evidence of a safer society or a decrease in radicalised individuals or violent extremists, how a membership fee changes anything is unknown.

5.1.11 Summary of factors for success

What has been shown in the above subchapters is that several of the factors are not themselves directly relevant for the members' capacities. However, it is the interconnectedness between these ten factors that appear to be important for a governance network. For example, trust in the NAO needs to be in place in order to accept the information presented through the network; it is important that the network does not grow too large for trust-based conversations which could be a hindrance for learning; or that a membership fee can contribute to internal commitment in addition to the size of the network. These examples are just a few of many examples of interconnectedness.

Some of the pillars of success have been seen as more important than others, such as trust being the basis of several other factors. In addition, it can be seen that managerial efforts such as translating information and knowledge into the local contexts appeared to be significant in order to adapt to the various views of the causes and factors for RVE. In this sense, the NSC was seen as an efficient NAO governance network. However, simply being an efficient network that facilitate the P/CVE capabilities of the coordinators does not necessarily make governance networks an efficient means of risk governance. Whether the NSC is an efficient network in decreasing the prevalence of RVE or increasing societies' capabilities of tackling RVE-related issues is still unknown. The rest of this discussion chapter will reflect on this issue facing the governance networks within fields of wicked problems.

There is little exact knowledge of what the members take back into their communities from the NSC network. As suggested, collective learning is still missing despite beliefs that this will happen in the future. Nonetheless, despite several indications that the ten pillars of success is important factors in determining the efficiency of a governance network, there also needs to be other measurements in place. This will be discussed below.

5.2 Success factors = efficient network?

From the theory chapter we can see that there are certain indicators of a successful network also being an efficient one: The findings in this research clearly suggest that the coordinators, and members of the network, have increased their knowledge and theoretical competencies within RVE-related issues. The findings in this study suggest that a NAO form of organising the network could be beneficial. As the informants are overall very pleased and appreciative of the network, there are indications as to the NSC network being an optimal model for risk governance in the field of RVE in terms of providing its members with a significant knowledge increase, a governing method that allows for more agility, and a network that provides learning from others' experiences.

Arguably the most important part of the network was the knowledge increase that came with network participation. This pooling of knowledge allows for the main competencies to remain in the network, as opposed to locating expert knowledge in each municipality facing the threat of RVE. By any standards, it would be more efficient to organise this in a governance network.

All informants are stating clearly that they appreciated the information sharing and knowledge exchange that took place in the network. This is strongly in line with the theoretical viewpoints of what an efficient network is supposed to be (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2016; Sørensen, 2016; Torfing, 2016). Hence, governance networks appear to be a sensible way of governing complex risks such as wicked problems.

As mentioned above, one informant accidentally paraphrased the definition of efficiency during an interview. The claim that they could not do this on their own shows that by this definition the network is efficient. This highlights the definition of efficiency used in this research where the aim is to create "positive work-level outcomes that could normally not be achieved by individual organisational participants acting independently" (Provan & Kenis, 2008, p. 2). By this definition the network appears efficient, and as a sensible means of governing the RVE risk. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the work is contributing to preventing RVE, simply that there are greater efforts being made to attain more knowledge and work more knowledge-based.

As seen in the Oxford English Dictionary (2021), the word efficiency means "fitness or power to accomplish, or success in accomplishing, the purpose intended." The purpose intended for the network would be to create safer societies and decrease occurrence of RVE. As far as this

paper is concerned, there is no knowledge of a decrease in RVE or increased capability of the societies to tackle RVE issues, as a result of network participation.

Thus, there appears to be one major weakness in the previous scholarly knowledge that can also be seen in the findings of this study; the members' appreciate the network and all see a knowledge increase but whether this transfers into actually decreasing RVE, or contributes towards a safer society is not known.

The findings in this research show that there is a grave lack of evaluations in the field, and despite some actors, such as the police, reporting of evaluations, little is known about the effects of P/CVE measures. There is even less knowledge of the backfire processes they lead to. Academia shows a large knowledge gap in how local P/CVE efforts affect the local communities and the levels of radicalisation. However, this research did also not probe into the specific measures implemented in the cities and their evaluations. Thus, this research cannot comment on what evaluations have been made and whether the cities have learned from these previous evaluations.

Through the theory chapter we see that a successful network in many ways equals an efficient network. However, the findings of this study suggest that this correlation is highly uncertain. The findings in this research indicate that the network is efficient in terms of the city coordinators attaining knowledge and competence to run their departments. Six out of seven informants claim that they see the network as efficient, which provides clear indications of the efficiency of the network. In other words, a governance network can facilitate its members' capacities to prevent RVE in a similar way as described above. Nevertheless, six out of seven city informants also claim that they were not sure exactly what information, input or changes the NSC network had contributed to. This is highly problematic in terms of assessing the efficiency of the network. Despite coordinators having increased their capacities, the communities show no evidence of a decreased level of RVE as there are no evaluations to show for. Thus, the members' capacities might be increased but the societies' capacities to tackle RVE issues is still unaccounted for.

If network governance is to be seen as efficient risk governance it is important to know what and how the network effect contributes to lowering the risk. Despite the NSC secretariat being seen as professional and good at keeping projects alive, as six out of seven city informants are unsure of exactly what information, input and changes to the praxis that had come out of

network participation there is a cause for concern for governance networks. In order to measure efficiency, it is important that the network contribution is known. This also complicates the issue further. The findings suggest that few concrete changes have come from the network. However, there were some indications of direct impact in addition to practical projects.

Ultimately, there are indications in the findings of this study that a governance network is an efficient way of increasing the competence of the members of the network. Thus, how a governance network can facilitate members' capacities is mentioned in the ten factors for success above. Nonetheless, the findings in this research insinuates that this does not necessarily have an effect on the degree of safety of a local community or that a governance network at all has any effect on levels of RVE. Nevertheless, it is clear that the NSC facilitate the P/CVE capacities for the active participants of the network. However, this research provides little evidence of a facilitation of capacities in the communities of the member cities. Thus, evaluations of P/CVE measures could be able to close the knowledge gap on the real contribution of governance networks and could provide evidence of the efficiency of governance networks as a mode of risk governance. This is an issue that needs to be solved in order for it to be an efficient mode of risk governance.

6.0 Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to find an answer to the problem statement:

How can governance networks facilitate members' capacity to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism?

This problem statement was made after finding large knowledge gaps in the current research on governance network as a mode of doing risk governance in wicked problems, more specifically within RVE. The NSC network was the unit of analysis for this research, and this network has been used to create some generality on the matter of governance networks and efficiency.

Through eight pillars of success seen in the theoretical framework, the empirical findings of this study have to a large extent validated previous research in the field of governance networks in P/CVE work. In addition, two new pillars have been added to the model of success in a governance network. These ten pillars, or what I have called *the pillars of success in a NAO,* lays the groundwork of creating efficient risk governance in the P/CVE field. The ten factors included in this table is trust, managerial activities, need for competencies, goal consensus, learning and innovation, size, legitimacy, stakeholder involvement, tailoring of the membership and membership fee. These pillars are highly interlinked and complex in their interaction (see chapter 5.1.11), which also symbolises the very issues they try to tackle – interlinked, complex issues with little acknowledgement of root causes or how to tackle them. The data from this research suggests that the pooling of knowledge appears to be an efficient manner of governing the risk of RVE.

However, this research finds few correlations between a successful governance network and an efficient one. Despite the NSC network being important in increasing the P/CVE capacities for the coordinators active in the network, this research does not find that the work translates into a decrease in prevalence of RVE-related issues. In other words, there is little evidence of governance networks being an efficient mode of risk governance for RVE-related issues, despite some indications that it is a more efficient approach than attempting to tackle the wicked problem on their own. A more knowledge-based approach in the P/CVE field is necessary. Thus, *a model of efficient governance networks* was created in order to visualise how the ten pillars can facilitate members' capacities in P/CVE issues as well as seeing what is still missing in order to call it an efficient mode of governance, namely evaluations. In conclusion, this study

finds that the capacities of the members in the governance network has been facilitated in P/CVE issues. However, the communities of the member cities are largely unaccounted for as little evaluation of P/CVE measures is taking place.

Thus, the elephant remains in the room – the NSC can be seen as a successful NAO governance network but do these pillars have any effect on the level of radicalisation that occurs in the local community? Is there less violent extremism in the societies that are members of the network? Indications point towards the answer being no but evaluations of P/CVE work is needed to see whether governance networks are in fact efficient.

6.1   Practical implications

This research has clearly shown that in order to bridge the knowledge gap on efficiency of governance network it is important to evaluate P/CVE measures. This is of relevance for the academic field, of course, but this is mainly of importance to the practitioners. It is important to know that official spending is used effectively, that P/CVE practitioners know the effect of the measures and when evaluating measures there could be an increased knowledge on backfire processes, which is important for both practitioners as well as the societies as a whole. P/CVE work seemingly 'fumbles in the dark' to a certain extent. Little exact knowledge about what works and what does not work exists, despite recent progress into a more knowledge-based approach. It is important for the member cities of the NSC network to know what parts of their efforts are worth their time. The communities and societies of the member cities will in turn reap the benefits of a more knowledge-based approach in P/CVE work. As this research adds an empirical dimension to the knowledge already found in the theoretical framework, there is now exists a model for a governance network and how it is suggested organised. Although the pillars are many and vague, it offers some indications to other governance networks on similar issues in the Nordic countries.

Although this research cannot be generalised to all NAO governance networks globally, there are indications that other issues within the Nordic countries could be tackled in a similar manner. One element of this study that could potentially pose as a hindrance to the generality of this research is the issue of trust. As raised in the discussion chapter, Nordic societies are inherently trusting, thus, this pillar cannot simply be reproduced in all governance networks. For some networks, there will be a need to focus on different pillars than showed in the findings of this research. Thus, the model of success cannot simply be replicated. Nonetheless, this

research also provides the members of the NSC with evidence, or lack thereof, for what their network is contributing to. It is a step in the more knowledge-based direction, and a step further in knowing what needs improvement for a governance network to be considered efficient. Despite efforts of working more knowledge-based, as noted by one of the informants, change cannot happen overnight, there is still a large need for further research.

6.2 Theoretical implications and further research

This research has provided a model for success in a NAO governance network. The model is based on previous literature in the field, as well as the key empirical findings from this research. Thus, it is important that this model gets tested in other networks. Theoretical knowledge on optimal approaches for risk governance should not be underestimated despite this paper clearly stating that a one-size-fits-all approach is counterproductive for RVE and other wicked problems. As noted in chapter 6.0, one of the issues with the model presented in this paper, is that it states something about how successful the members perceive a governance network but it provides no evidence. In order to validate this model, it is important to study a governance network in the P/CVE field where evaluations do occur. In this way the correlation between success and efficiency in a governance network could be validated. This will also allow for further practical developments in the field of P/CVE.

Through this research process, I discovered the need for more knowledge on efficiency in P/CVE work. There is little knowledge on what works and what does not, as well as whether risk governance through governance networks is an efficient way of organising P/CVE work. This thesis has made some indications pointing to governance networks being sensible, but there is still much unknown about outcomes of P/CVE efforts. Further research is also needed when it comes to the dilemmas presented in this research, such as the dilemma between opening up to general crime prevention topics as opposed to a strictly RVE focus. Significantly more information is also needed on backfire processes in order to know how beneficial a network actually is.

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Appendix A

Period	Output
January 2021	A thorough literature review was completed to get a grasp of where there was a need for more research. Several knowledge gaps were found, and the focus area on risk governance in P/CVE issues was chosen. This was then narrowed down to look into governance networks as a mode of risk governance. Several meetings with representatives from the Nordic Safe Cities led to the assigning of a contact person from the secretariat. A provisional problem statement and research questions were drafted to create a clearer path to what data needed to be collected. Drafted an introduction chapter to give more clarity into what I was looking for and what direction I wanted the research to take.
February 2021	Theory surrounding governance networks and how to evaluate P/CVE measures was located. A draft of the theory chapter was made ahead of the interviews as a guideline for the interview guide. Edits to the theory chapter regarding evaluation of P/CVE measures were made as focus shifted from a goal to write about P/CVE measures, to the wish of drafting a model of how to assess the efficiency of a governance network. Interviews were scheduled and interview guide was set up ahead of the interviews.
March 2021	Completed all interviews during this period. Transcribed the interviews in NVivo. Began drafting chapter on research design and methods, as the interviews went on, I assessed strengths and weaknesses of this method as I went along. After the interviews had started, the process of coding and data reduction commenced. This work was done simultaneously with the interviews and in the weeks following the last interviews.
April 2021	Throughout the month the data has been analysed and written into empirical findings. Thus, this chapter took shape during this month. In addition to the empirical results chapter. Revision of theory chapter and research methods chapter to edit in or out relevant information since data has now been collected, and more knowledge on what relevant information consists of, has been finalised.
May 2021	Made edits to all chapters in accordance with updates in the research. The theoretical framework was narrowed and irrelevant sections were

	edited out. The key findings were also highlighted and structured in accordance with the theory. Completed the discussion chapter. Throughout the month there were continuous edits to the conceptual clarification subchapter. Made edits to the problem statement and finalised this as well as cut out the research questions I had originally intended on using.
June 2021	June was spent rewriting the empirical findings chapter to structure it more clearly according to the theoretical framework. Thus, the discussion chapter needed revisions in order to maintain structure. The conclusion was written, and so was the acknowledgements section. A title was set and formal requirements were checked. Finalised all parts of the document. From grammatical revisions to visual ones. Ensured all sources were in place at the correct spot and that page numbers where correct according to APA 6th.

Appendix B

List of articles included in the model for success

Authors	Title	Year
Edelenbos, Klijn & Steijn	Managers in governance networks: How to reach good outcomes?	2011
Edelenbos, van Buuren & Klijn	Connective capacities of network managers: A comparative study of management styles in eight regional governance networks	2013
Klijn & Koppenjan	Governance network theory: past, present and future	2012
Klijn, Steijn, Edelenbos & Vermeeren	Steering for social outcomes in governance networks: The effects of participation and network management	2011
Newig, Günther & Pahl-Wostl	Synapses in the network: learning in governance networks in the context of environmental management	2010
Noordengraaf, Douglas, Bos & Klem	How to evaluate the governance of transboundary problems? Assessing a national counterterrorism strategy	2017
Provan & Kenis	Modes of network governance: Structure, management, and effectiveness	2008
Riche, Aubin & Moyson	Too much of a good thing? A systematic review about the conditions of learning in governance networks	2020
Sørensen	Democratic Network Governance	2016
Torfing & Ansell	Strengthening political leadership and policy innovation through the expansion of collaborative forms of governance	2017

Appendix C

Interview guide Member Cities

Introduction: small talk, introduce the topic of the study. Ask to record the interview (approx. 1-3 minutes).

1. What was the motivation behind joining the Nordic Safe Cities network?
   a. What kind of support is your city looking for from the Nordic Safe Cities network?
   b. What is Nordic Safe Cities' role for your city?

2. How can the Nordic Safe Cities network strengthen your city's capacity to create safer cities?
   a. Have you received this?
   b. How has information sharing and advisory through the Nordic Safe Cities network affected praxis in your city?
   c. Is both positive and negative city experiences shared equally?
   d. Have your P/CVE efforts changed since you joined the network? If yes, was this because of the network?

3. Is the network an efficient means of supporting your preventive work in the field of radicalisation and violent extremism?
   a. Has the Nordic Safe Cities met your city's expectations of the network?
   b. Is the network seen as an efficient way of aiding your city's preventative efforts?
   c. Are there any parts of the network you do not find useful?

4. How does your city evaluate measures to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism? And does your city evaluate the network participation?
   a. Do you evaluate the process of the measure or the effect of the measure?
   b. If no, why not? How do you know the network's contribution to the measures?
   c. Do you evaluate your cities' participation in the network?

5. To what extent do you trust the network? (clarify if necessary: the advisory, the experts, the information, competency, and other things the city receives from the network)
    a. If high amounts of trust, why?
    b. If little/no trust – why? Why participate in the network?

6. Are you members of/or participate in other networks or network organisations?
    a. Are these more/less connected/better?

7. Are you planning on renewing your membership in the network (in 2022)?
    a. Yes/no question.
    b. If no, what would it take for you to remain a member in the network, or renew your membership?

Appendix D

Interview guide Nordic Safe Cities

Introduction: Ask if okay to record the interview. Start recording.

1. What is the Nordic Safe Cities' role towards the cities?
   a. How do you adopt to the varied needs of the cities? Are these needs country-specific/city-specific?
   b. How frequent is the contact between the cities and the network?

2. Why is there a need for the Nordic Safe Cities network in P/CVE efforts?
   a. Why the Nordic countries? Finland and Iceland have some issues that differ from the Scandinavian, why not a Scandinavian approach?
   b. What makes the Nordic Safe Cities different from other similar initiatives?
   c. Why was an organisation model with its own management? (clarify: a formal network structure with an independent leadership - as opposed to city leadership)

3. How does the Nordic Safe Cities network strengthen the cities' capacities in P/CVE measures?
   a. How does the network stay up to date on the newest research in the field?
   b. How does the network assess which information is passed on to the cities? You share best practices, do you also share efforts that had negative, unintended consequences?
   c. How much impact does the network have in P/CVE measures the cities implement? Or adaptation of already existing measures?
   d. Why is the Nordic safe Cities network important to the member cities?
   e. In your blueprint (Chapter 2) you state that you seek the underlying causes of radicalisation and violent extremism – have you found these causes? Are they similar in all of the Nordics? If you haven't found these causes, how do you do preventive work?

4. What feedback do you get from the cities on the work the Nordic Safe Cities network does?
   a. How do you process/handle negative feedback?
   b. How can the Nordic Safe Cities improve its efforts in aiding the cities?
   c. Has any city left the network?

5. Has the Nordic Safe Cities network evaluated its own capacities in aiding the member cities?
   a. How do you know that you are doing a good job in helping member cities?
   b. What are the shortcomings of the network?

6. Does the Nordic Safe Cities evaluate the member cities' P/CVE measures?
   a. Why/why not?

Appendix E

Participation in research project

<u>Background and goal</u>

This research project is a case study of how well networks work in solving wicked problems. The case is the Nordic Safe Cities network. I wish to interview member cities to see if there is an effect in network participation in tackling radicalisation and violent extremism.

This research is part of a master thesis at the University of Stavanger, in the master's programme Societal safety. The thesis deadline is on the 15th June 2021.

<u>What does participation in this study mean?</u>

Participation in this study involves a semi-structured interview that may take from 30 minutes up to one hour to complete. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. Questions will be centred around the Nordic Safe Cities network: how participation in the network affects work related to prevention of and/or countering radicalisation and violent extremism, and whether the city evaluates measures in this field.

No other data about the participant than given in the interview will be collected.

<u>What will happen with the information?</u>

All personal information will be treated confidentially and not used in the thesis. The data presented in the thesis will not give away the participants identity. Abbreviations of the interviewees will not disclose identities of the interviewee.

The interviews will be recorded transcribed, and the recordings will be deleted after the end of the project. The project is finished 15th June 2021.

If you wish to see the transcription from the interview, remove sections of the interview or clear up any misunderstandings, the transcription will be made available for you, and the thesis will be sent to you to check for misquotes or misrepresentations.

<u>Voluntary participation</u>

Participation in the study is voluntary, and you can at any time withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you chose to withdraw the consent, all the data collected from the interview will be deleted immediately. There will be no negative consequences if you do not want to participate or chose to withdraw from the study.

At any point in the project will you be able to access the information stored about yourself, and the transcription from the interview. At any point will you be able to correct and/or delete information about yourself.

After the project is finished, all information that can identify you will be deleted.

You have the right to send a complaint to Datatilsynet regarding the treatment of your personal information.

Privacy

Any information collected in the interview is for the sole purpose of this thesis. The information is treated confidentially and in compliance with privacy regulations.

In addition to myself, my thesis supervisor will also have access to the data. Your name and contact information will be stored separately from the data.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me.

Student Mari Bondevik, +47 95 55 10 52 or m.bondevik@stud.uis.no

Consent

I have received information about the study, and I hereby give my informed consent:

(Signature of participants, date)