Local governments’ role in disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration initiatives

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Published online on: 03 Mar 2020
The growing understanding of the complex process of leaving violent extremism and reintegrating into (mainstream) society has led to an acknowledgement that multifaceted measurements and involvement of various actors are required to promote these processes (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2016). In many countries, local governments are made accountable for countering violent extremism (CVE), including disengagement, deradicalisation and, in particular, reintegration of former extremists (Andersson Malmros & Mattsson, 2017; Gielen, 2018; Heide & Schuurman, 2018; Hemmingsen, 2015; Lid et al., 2016; Marsden, 2017). Local governments can, in some cases due to their functions, be in a position to influence the individual’s motivation to leave extremism, to assist the person’s reintegration into mainstream society, in addition to society’s willingness and support to reintegrate the person (Marsden, 2017, p. 44). In this chapter, I discuss how local governments can promote disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration, and local governments’ challenges and opportunities to stimulate these processes.

As demonstrated in other chapters in this book, there are significant differences between countries in the role local governments take in promoting exit from violent extremism and the transition of former extremists back into society. For instance, in comprehensive welfare states, such as the Benelux countries and Scandinavia, local governments are a prominent actor, but in the US, Horn of Africa and South Asia, their role is limited and the need for non-governmental actors is greater. These differences can be explained by the variations among local governments’ societal functions. The main argument in this chapter is that local governments’ role in promoting disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration processes is closely linked to their primary societal functions, which means that local governments use their ordinary functions for promoting exit and reintegration. Based on Stoker’s (2011) typology of local government’s core societal functions, four functions of local governments in supporting exit and reintegration processes are identified: provision of welfare services, control and surveillance, reconciliation and community tolerance, and coordination. Those prominent functions and the ability to mix these functions vary considerably between local governments.
Combining the function of control with other functions is also a significant challenge. The emergence of control and surveillance as a prominent function can reduce trust among the target groups, which local governments heavily depend on to promote other functions. It follows from this that local government has an exposed position and that a broad complexity of factors influences their role and capability to succeed.

The chapter departs from the understanding that disengagement and deradicalisation should not only be understood as a process of leaving violent extremism (physically and ideologically), but it is also about re-engaging with a non-extremist environment. Here, I draw on the logic of Barrelle’s (2015) Pro-Integration Model, which underlines that sustained disengagement is about the proactive and harmonious engagement the person has with wider society. Using such holistic understanding of disengagement and deradicalisation, the role of local governments is becoming most prominent. Additionally, a broader perspective of the deradicalisation process, which includes reintegration, must also take into account to some extent the criticism by Clubb and Tapley (2018, p. 2054) that the deradicalisation literature has neglected the intersection between deradicalisation and reintegration, and how contextual factors mediate the success of these two.

The ambition of this chapter is to contribute to fill the gap in research on different actors’ involvement in countering violent extremism (Koehler, 2017), particularly on local governments’ engagement. By drawing on Stoker’s (2011) typology and the analysed data, I will suggest a preliminary systematising of local governments’ key functions to promote disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration. I will utilise primary data from Norway and Kenya and secondary data from various countries to provide examples to illustrate the identified key functions, and major challenges and opportunities. Hence, this is not a comprehensive comparative study of all local government systems that could ensure solid theories and models of local governments’ functions.

The chapter proceeds by providing a short description of the reasons why people join and then leave violent extremist groups to help grasp how local governments can influence these processes. It continues with a presentation of local governments’ core functions and tasks as a basis for the main analysis of local governments’ role in promoting exit and reintegration. Thereafter, some key challenges are discussed, followed by the conclusion.

Ways in and out of extremism

Understanding who the extremists are and their motivations for joining violent extremist groups, in addition to the processes of leaving the militant group and reintegrating into (mainstream) society, is important for local governments in their effort to develop efficient interventions. Disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration are understood as complex psychological, social and physical processes that may elapse differently between individuals. The processes vary during the desistance of illegal behaviour (disengagement), reduction of the ideological commitment (deradicalisation) and reconnection to mainstream society (reintegration) (see Chapter 2). Former extremists who have disengaged, in the sense of having reduced violent participation or leaving the violent extremist group, have not necessarily rejected ideologically based violence. Ideological changes often happen after the person has left the violent milieu (Horgan, 2009). Webber et al. (Chapter 5) suggest distinguishing between methods that can directly lead to deradicalisation (that counter the ideological narrative by articulating arguments against it) and those that indirectly facilitate it (via a non-radical network or need components). Marsden (2017) argues that the reintegration process should be understood as a two-way process; society must allow, and ideally actively
support, the individual’s reintegration, and the individual must demonstrate a willingness to reintegrate.

Individuals involved in terrorism have undergone rather different processes of violent radicalisation. They come from a diversity of social backgrounds and relate to ideology and politics in different ways (Bjørgo, 2011; Nesser, 2015). However, disengagement is far from being a simple reversal or mirror-image of the initial process of engagement in militant extremism, although the processes of becoming engaged in militant extremist groups have some important bearing on the processes of disengagement (Bjørgo, 2011). Individuals radicalised because of personal grievances, social, economic or health problems might have other needs for support than resourceful, educated and previously well-integrated individuals who may have been attracted because of the ideology and the thrills of activism. Thus, individual variations affect the local governments’ possibilities of influencing the processes of leaving extremism and reintegrating.

Individuals’ motivations for leaving violent extremism and reintegrating into mainstream society are generally not due to a single factor, but several different push, pull and inhibiting factors (Altier et al., 2017; Barrelle, 2015). The most commonly cited reasons for disengagement are disillusionment with the group’s strategy or actions, internal conflicts, dissatisfaction with one’s day-to-day tasks and burnout (Altier et al., 2017; Barrelle, 2015). There are also important inhibiting factors that might hamper the decision to leave, such as social and penal sanctions, in addition to loss of protection and feeling of nowhere to go (Bjørgo, 2009). Important pull factors are amnesty for offences, job and education opportunities and financial incentives, interaction with moderate peers and the desire to live a normal life, be married and have children (Altier et al., 2017; Barrelle, 2015; Bjørgo, 2009; Hwang, 2018; Jacobsen, 2010; Rosenau et al., 2014). These pull factors are important not only for pushing people out of extremism, but also for dissuading re-engagement and in the reintegration process into mainstream society (Altier et al., 2017). Many of these push, pull and inhibiting factors are beyond what governmental actors can influence, and studies of former extremist processes of leaving violent extremism show that many do so unassisted (Barrelle, 2015). The role of counter-terrorism and the role of states are often overemphasised (Cronin, 2009, p. 52). However, some of the identified potential push, pull and inhibiting factors might be possible for local governments to influence. As I will show in the following text, local governments can provide new opportunities or alternatives such as a job, education, housing, financial incentives, social and psychological counselling and guidance, in addition to a safe and secure local environment. These might be within the functions and mandates of local governments.

Local governments’ functions, approaches and target groups

Chandler (2001) defines local governments in a Western liberal democracy as “the authorities and dependent agencies that are established by the Parliament to provide a range of specified services and represent the general interests of a specific area under the direction of a locally elected council”. They “vary in terms of the number of tiers, the comparative size of local units and the functions assigned to them” (Chandler, 2013, p. 188). Moreover, from a global perspective, the levels of autonomy and democracy vary considerably. In Africa, the process towards devolving political power and economic resources from national to local levels of governance, and creating autonomous democratic local governance has halted. Local governments remain as an agent of the national government and centralised rule (Enemuo, 2000), despite attempts from aid donors to support such devolution processes (Smith, 2007). In this chapter, a broad understanding of local governments is used, including hybrid forms of local governments that are controlled by central government and centralised rule.
Although there are major variations among local governments, Stoker (2011, p. 20) has identified five core societal functions for local governments at the beginning of the 21st century: expressing identity, economic development, welfare provision, lifestyle coordination and security. Security and the discipline function can be categorised either as embedded in each of the other four roles or as a disciplinary coercive function expressed through the controlling and surveillance power of local government. The latter categorisation is the one used in this chapter, due to the importance of this function for local governments in promoting disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration processes. Security and the discipline function can be categorised either as embedded in each of the other four roles or as a separate disciplinary coercive function. Stoker argues that security might be considered as a fifth core function, particularly if security is more broadly defined as a disciplinary/coercive function expressed through the controlling and surveillance power of local government. In disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration processes the controlling and surveillance power of local governments seem as significant. Security will therefore be categorised as a separate fifth function of local governments.

According to Stoker (2011), there are considerable variations between local governments in terms of which functions are prominent and their ability to mix roles. Economic development is prominent in countries such as the US, China and Brazil, but welfare provision is the prominent role in European and particularly in Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Germany and Britain. The welfare function is also prominent in local governments in Latin America, as well as in East Asia, China and African countries. The scale of the resources available and the effectiveness of the support provided by welfare services vary enormously, but the basic idea that local government has an embedded role in welfare provision and redistribution is a prominent one. The co-ordination role in promoting the general well-being of a community and its citizens has risen to prominence in a range of local government systems in recent decades. Moreover, the modern condition is characterised by the complexity of function, scale, purpose and responsibility, and coordination or networked community governance is the solution to this complexity (Stoker, 2011, p. 23).

All five functions may be relevant for the processes of disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration. For instance, local economic development and sustainability may be an important underlying condition to reintegrate entire extremist groups successfully, as we have seen in the reintegration of thousands of former extremists into local communities in Colombia (Carranza-Franco, 2014). However, I will argue that the most prominent functions for local governments are welfare provision, security and coordination. In addition to these three functions, there are examples of local governments’ importance in reconciliation and community tolerance of reintegrating former extremists. I argue that these four functions are the main functions for local governments in promoting disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration. These identified functions might either directly support persons in their exit and reintegration process (for instance, welfare services), or ensure the conditions for successful disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration initiatives to take place (for instance, community acceptance). Local governments do not essentially carry out all these functions and there are significant variations between local governments as to which of these functions are prominent in their efforts to support people out of extremism. Hence, in states where local governments hold these functions as prominent, they would play a greater role in promoting disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration than in countries where these functions are weak, such as in the US. In the latter countries, non-governmental institutions play a greater role (see Chapter 23).

Due to local governments’ various societal core functions, local governments’ target groups are several. The main target group includes persons or groups with extremist beliefs and behaviours, such as for the security sector. The second target group includes the extremists’ family and
networks, which can be important for reaching the main target (extremists) and in reintegration processes (Altier et al., 2014; Bjørø & Horgan, 2009; Horgan, 2009; Koehler, 2017; Ranstorp & Hyllengren, 2013). Lastly, local society is essential due to the importance of the acceptance and willingness of the recipient community to welcome back former extremists (Clubb & Tapley, 2018; Kaplan & Nussio, 2018; Marsden, 2017). The last two target groups differ at least from those in the security sector.

Local governments’ main societal core functions are presented above. In the following, I will elaborate on local governments’ four key functions in promoting successful exit and reintegration of former extremists.

**Welfare provision**

Local governments can, by providing different types of welfare services such as financial and social support, offer the extremist new opportunities and alternatives to continuing in violent groups or movements. Moreover, these services may also hinder any relapse back into the group or movement, or to another type of criminal activity. In many countries, such as the UK, national laws set out the duty of government actors to provide support (economic, social, health) to people in need (HM Government, 2015). In many countries local governments are the provider of several of these services, and through this duty are pledged to engage in disengagement and reintegration processes. There are variations around which types of services local governments are in charge of, and an important role for local governments is therefore to refer the person to other institutions that provide the services required, such as hospitals, mental health clinics and other governmental institutions (Anindyaa, 2019; Lid et al., 2016). For instance, most of the deportees in Indonesia have lost their identification cards, and (some) local governments assist them in submitting their application for a new identity card to the Civil Registry and Population Agency (Anindyaa, 2019, p. 233).

In Western democratic states such as the Netherlands (Schuurman & Bakker, 2016), the United Kingdom (Neumann, 2010), Ireland (Lynch, 2015), the Scandinavian countries (Lid et al., 2016; see Chapter 18) and Colombia (Carranza-Franco, 2014) municipalities arrange accommodation and, if necessary, allocate financial assistance and benefits to former extremists. Municipalities may also allocate funds for and facilitate education and vocational training to strengthen the person’s professional skills and employment opportunities in the future.

In addition to provision of financial and practical services, local governments are in some countries more directly involved in the social and psychological processes of change, by providing social and psychological counselling and guidance. For instance, in Aarhus in Denmark, the municipality does one-on-one mentoring and counselling of people who are at risk, or currently hold extremist positions or previously have been involved in violent extremism (Agerschou, 2014; see Chapter 18). The municipality and police also provide family counselling to families of radical youths, or youths at risk (Agerschou, 2014). Provision of welfare services emerges as a key function of local governments in countries where this function is allocated to local governments.

Another important function for local governments is control and surveillance.

**Control and surveillance**

Law enforcement agencies have the main responsibility for maintaining safety and security in society and for conducting risk-assessment of identified individuals, such as returned foreign fighters. However, maintaining local security is also a task for local governments, either
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embedded in other functions or the control can be a more prominent or separate function (Stoker, 2011).

For instance, Norwegian municipalities are not directly given the task of controlling or monitoring released returned foreign fighters, but through the provision of economic and social welfare services they have, at least indirectly, a control and surveillance function. Local governments’ detection of major negative developments or rule breaking must be reported to the police and intelligence services. As such, local governments’ roles consist of providing both care and surveillance (Lid et al., 2016). The challenges of this dual role will be discussed more broadly later in this chapter.

In other countries, local governments are more involved in control of the (former) extremists who live in the communities rather than in providing care. Kenya has officially created initiatives that have consolidated the role of local governments’ representatives in maintaining security. A neighbourhood watch initiative, called Nyumba Kumi, was launched after the terrorist attacks against the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi in 2013. Nyumba Kumi is the idea that 10 households constitute one security unit that solves mainly security problems and helps security personnel with information gathering. These local committees are chaired by chiefs, who are government’s local representatives, appointed and paid by the government (Lid & Okwany, 2019). In practice, Nyumba Kumi is not operating well in many areas of Kenya due to implementation concerns, lack of trust in the chiefs and the entire law enforcement system (Ibid). However, some of the chiefs we have interviewed claimed they receive intelligence about returnees from Al-Shabaab in Nyumba Kumi meetings. Regardless of the success of this initiative, Nyumba Kumi is an example of how maintenance of local security, and control and surveillance are considered prominent functions of local governments in some countries.

Safety and security are, as previously described, important conditions for successful disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration, both for the recipient society and for the person who has disengaged or is considering disengaging from a violent extremist group. Feelings of insecurity might reduce the person’s interest in resettling in the local community and the recipient community’s willingness to reintegrate the person. Reconciliation and community acceptance are therefore also of significant importance.

Reconciliation and community acceptance

Local communities’ acceptance of reintegrating former extremists is an important condition for a successful sustained disengagement and reintegration (Clubb & Tapley, 2018; Kaplan & Nussio, 2018; Marsden, 2017). The society must allow, and ideally actively support, the individual’s reintegration. Local governments can be, in some cases, in a position to influence the society’s willingness and support in reintegrating the person (Marsden, 2017, p. 44). Carranza-Franco (2014, p. 257) claims local governments in Colombia played a significant role in promoting reconciliation and community acceptance in the reintegration of more than 50,000 ex-combatants from paramilitary and guerrilla groups. The high number of former combatants who needed to be reintegrated created extraordinary challenges due to pressure on the municipal services and the potential growth in unemployment and poverty. For the municipal authority, it was important to achieve a balance in the care provided to victims and to perpetrators to avoid perception among the citizens of “preference towards the perpetrators”. To address these challenges one of the cities, Medellín, created a model for reintegration by merging two previously separate areas of action: the reintegration process of ex-combatants and social care for victims of violence. The peace and reconciliation programme carried out
activities for reparation and forgiveness in addition to integration, with the aim of reducing discrimination and grievances in the recipient communities. The advantages of the local governments compared to the central government were, among others, the possibilities of understanding the local dimensions and citizens’ concerns and creating local solutions, including the flexibility of the Mayoral office to provide services to people outside the targeted population (ex-combatants) (Ibid).

Local government’s representatives in Nairobi claimed in interviews that local citizens view the returnees from Al-Shabaab as enemies and criminals, and there is a need for reconciliation meetings with family, the local community and local authorities to avoid discrimination and provide human security for the returnees. Some of the local government representatives interviewed argued that they are in a position to hold such reconciliation meetings, and asserted they had facilitated such meetings.

The examples above show the importance of addressing the challenges of reluctance in the recipient society, in addition to how local governments can, due to their local presence and knowledge of the dynamics of the local society, be in a position to address the challenges of unwillingness in the society. However, the capability for stimulating acceptance in the society to reintegrate former extremists depends on the local government’s capacity and legitimacy, which will be discussed later. The local presence and broad network provide local governments also with an important coordination and cooperative role, as we will investigate in the next section.

**Coordination and cooperation**

There has been a growing acknowledgement that multifaceted measurements and involvement of various actors are required to promote disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration into (mainstream) society. A multi-agency initiative, which uses partnership and coordination between actors with various responsibilities and tools, is a much-used strategy also to counter violent extremism, at least in Western countries such as the UK, Netherlands and Scandinavia (see Chapters 17 and 18, Gielen, 2018; Hemmingsen, 2015; Lid et al., 2016). However, the functions, legal framework, structure and organisation of the multi-agency initiatives in these countries have interesting similarities and differences that can illustrate some variations in local governments’ coordination and cooperative role.

The functions of multi-agency initiatives are similar, and consist of identifying individuals at risk, assessment of the individual concerned and developing appropriate support for the individual needed (Ibid). However, the legal framework differs between countries. In the UK, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CT&S Act) sets out the duty of local authorities to ensure that a panel (Channel programme) is in place for its area, and to list the partners required to cooperate within the panel, including local police, local government and statutory partners (such as education sector, social services, children and youth services), probation services and local communities. The nature of the case decides which partners to include (HM Government/Home Office, 2015).

In Scandinavia and the Netherlands, local governments are not obliged by law to establish multi-agency initiatives. These are mainly initiated locally by municipalities and local police (Agerschou, 2014; Gielen, 2018; Lid et al., 2016). However, the national governments strongly recommend that local actors establish local multi-agency initiatives and they have set up protocols for multi-agency case management (Gielen, 2018; Hemmingsen, 2015; Lid et al., 2016). It is left to the local actors to decide which partners to include, and this depends on the case. To a large extent the same actors are invited as in the UK.
However, a main experience from the Netherlands is that the larger cities and other municipalities that have been confronted with cases of violent extremism have initiated multi-agency strategies, whereas many smaller municipalities have not established these, or initiated them later than the larger municipalities (Gielen, 2018).

The organisation and structure of the initiatives vary also between countries. Channel is chaired by the local authority (CT&S Act, 37(1)), but it is coordinated by the Channel Police Practitioner (CPP). Channel police investigators will assess whether or not the received referral falls under the responsibilities of Channel. Partners in a panel may be requested to provide information about an individual to the CPP during the information-gathering stage (HM Government/Home Office, 2015).

In the Danish Aarhus model, which has many similarities to other multi-agency initiatives in Scandinavia, the leadership is divided between local police and the municipalities. The coordination group also consists of representatives from local police (two police officers) and the municipality (several social service officers representing different social sectors). This coordination group assesses the received referral. In serious cases such as returned foreign fighters, the police undertake an individual risk assessment (Johansen, 2018).

These multi-agency initiatives have overall many similarities, but as highlighted above, there are some key differences between them that can illustrate variations in local governments’ coordination and cooperative role: in particular, whether agencies are required to participate or if it is voluntary, and the relationship between local government and the police. For instance, in the Aarhus model, the municipalities’ position seems stronger and more equal to the police than in Channel. Furthermore, the structure, regulations and framework of these coordination initiatives may also influence target groups and citizens’ trust in local governments. Later I will discuss how this can influence local governments’ opportunities to succeed in promoting exit from violent extremism and reintegration.

Above, I have tried to illustrate how the identified core functions of local government might, under specific circumstances, be valuable and useful in supporting disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration initiatives. In countries where local governments have societal functions that are relevant for promoting disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration, their importance can be significant. For instance, the evaluation of the resettle programmes of more than 50,000 ex-combatants from paramilitary and guerrilla groups in Colombia in the 2000s summarises the role of the municipalities as essential. The evaluation underlined that the economic and social services provided by the municipalities to the ex-combatants, and the peace and reconciliation programme carried out for reparation and forgiveness, were crucial for successful reintegration. This made it possible for the ex-combatants to settle in a specific community instead of becoming predators on it. The extraordinary effort by the municipalities was possible due to the institutional capacity, political will and successful cooperation with civil society (Carranza-Franco, 2014).

Moreover, local governments’ opportunities to promote disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration are, in addition to their societal functions, closely related to local governments’ local presence. The local-based position provides them with insight into the society that is very important, for instance, to understand the dynamics in the local society and citizens’ concerns. This is vital to address the challenges of reluctance in society, and the local network can be used to find, for example, jobs, vocational training, housing and so on. Local governments’ use of ordinary societal functions for promoting disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration means they can use already-existing institutions, structures, personnel and services, but as I will discuss below, the existing systems are not always sufficient, especially for minor local governments.
Challenges for local governments

Local governments’ challenges to fulfil their functions depend significantly on the allocated functions and tasks, in addition to the governmental structure and economic and human resources. This is clear in developing countries such as Kenya, where local government’s economic and human resources are limited, but these challenges are also evident in developing countries. At least several European countries have chosen a decentralised approach where local governments are made accountable. That strategy entails local resources, capacity, knowledge and services. Some local governments have the required resources, but for many local governments, especially for minor municipalities, strengthening their capacity, knowledge and programmes is required (Gielen, 2018; Lid et al., 2016). However, the number of cases is usually limited for most local governments, which constrains the scope of the programme and expertise that is reasonable to develop and maintain locally. That can result in varying quality of the services delivered. The challenges to maintain appropriate knowledge, resources, capacity and services locally is an argument for reducing the tasks and duty of local governments, and rather strengthening the national level or civil actors. However, as this chapter has highlighted, it is necessary to maintain a programme and competence locally to ensure at least an adequate reintegration process. The best balance between national, regional and local level has to be negotiated within each country taking into consideration its demographic and governmental structure.

In addition to these structural challenges, a major challenge for local governments is to gain trust and legitimacy among the target groups, which they depend on to fulfil tasks, in particular welfare provision and reconciliation. In the following, I will discuss three issues that can influence local governments’ trust and legitimacy.

State as the enemy

Which actor implements counter-initiatives may have a significant impact on their potential credibility and effectiveness (Bjørgo, 2016; Koehler, 2017). Christensen argues in this volume (Chapter 11) that this is particularly evident in the process of leading individuals out of violent extremism, due to participants in political radical or extreme environments often acting in opposition to political issues and against specific powerholders. That often leads to categorisation of the state and its actors as part of “the enemy” and political position (Karpantschof, 2014). The public institutions’ lack of distance and independence from the state might reduce the trust the institutions need (Koehler, 2017).

This challenge appears prominent also in countries with generally relatively high levels of trust and legitimacy in government and local governments. For instance, the right-wing group, the Nordic Resistance Movement (DNM), considers the Norwegian authorities to be directly linked to the team of the Zionist power channel they wish to fight. They consider the authorities, and especially the police, as a power tool to fight their movement (Gjelsvik and Bjørgo, 2018). Furthermore, some returned foreign fighters from Syria have expressed little or no trust in public authorities in the light of their experiences after they returned and their previous experiences with Norwegian police, health and welfare services. Their experience is that the services they are offered aim to monitor them and reveal them as radical and dangerous (Kristiansen & Lid, 2019). That might explain why returning foreign fighters and their families have rejected the efforts of several Norwegian municipalities to offer assistance and support. However, the police and welfare agencies in Norway report they are able to establish solid trust relationships in some cases, although this is often among those who want to exit from the extremist groups (Lid et al., 2016).
The potential challenges due to lack of independence of the state are difficult for local governments to unravel. However, local governments’ legitimacy and trust are also influenced by how they balance the function of providing care and control, which they may influence to a greater extent.

**Balancing care and control**

Welfare service and control and surveillance are, as previously described, two of the major functions of local governments in fostering disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration. Local governments’ capability to mix care and control are essential, especially due to their impact on trust and legitimacy. I will use the experiences from Norway (Lid et al., 2016) to discuss the challenges of balancing the roles of care and control.

There is traditionally a relatively close link between care and control in Norway, due to how the function of control is embedded in the provision of services, as described earlier. The close link between care and control seems to be enhanced within CVE, including in exit and reintegration processes. Among municipalities and other welfare providers their priorities have been to strengthen their ability to identify people at risk, and handle specific cases of concern. Additionally, local governments’ cooperation with local police is strengthened. A few social workers in Norwegian municipalities reported they had experienced an expectation from the police to assist in police intelligence work, and some of them had collected the information the police requested. The Norwegian social workers’ argument for collecting information on behalf of the police was that the municipality and the police have the same goal of a safe local community (Ibid). Relevant questions include how close the partnership between local governments and police should be, and what is the role of the actors. Could police and other criminal justice partners make use of local social workers to collect information in local areas and about families and people to whom the police have no access?

The question is whether the strengthening cooperation, and what is seen as blurry definitions of roles, responsibilities and tasks, can have unforeseen consequences. A key lesson from crime prevention policy and practice is that police involvement can undermine the integrity and effectiveness of preventative diversion (Cherney, 2016, p. 86). Close cooperation with the police and intelligence services might increase the perception of local governments as part of the control regime, and raise the target group’s scepticism about the local governments. That will hamper local governments’ chances of forming relations with the target group and providing services. This may be a decisive factor in why Norwegian municipalities have had comprehensive challenges in gaining contact and trust among returned foreign fighters, although the municipalities’ approach to the extremists and their families is mainly care (Lid et al., 2016). If this is the reality, cooperation and multi-agency initiatives, which seem to be crucial for success in disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration, may become major reasons for failure.

**National policies’ influence on local governments’ legitimacy**

CVE initiatives throughout the world have several similarities, but also dramatic differences (Harris-Horgan et al., 2016; Vidino & Brandon, 2012). By demonstrating some of the variations between the national CVE approaches in the UK and the Scandinavian countries, I will discuss how national policies might influence the legitimacy and trust of local governments.

The UK’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST), including Prevent, has been heavily criticised for securitisation of social and political life (see, for instance, Chapter 17).
These types of criticism have occurred to a lesser extent in Denmark than in the UK (Lindekilde, 2015, p. 224) and in Norway such criticism has been almost absent (Lid & Heierstad, 2019). There are undoubtedly various reasons for these differences, but the foundation and legal framework of the programmes emerge as essential. In the UK, as part of CONTEST a new Act (the CT&S Act) has been implemented. The CT&S Act sets out, as presented above, the duty of local authorities to cooperate with the police and the panel (Channel programme) in carrying out the functions “so far as appropriate and reasonably practicable” (Prevent duty) (HM Government/Home Office, 2015). This Prevent duty has been criticised particularly for putting inappropriate pressure on actors to report terrorism-related concerns which result in increased surveillance and securitisation (Busher et al., 2017; Saaed & Johnsen, 2016). However, the educationalists mainly understood the Prevent duty as a continuity of previous practice, such as how the government presented the duty, and they broadly support Prevent and the Prevent duty (Busher et al., 2017).

The Scandinavian countries have not implemented a specific counter-terrorism strategy and associated act. The primary strategy is to build CVE initiatives on previous crime prevention work and (mainly) use existing legislation. For instance, the Aarhus model is a further development of the long-standing multi-agency approach consisting of police, social services and school (SSP) (see Chapter 18). Moreover, in Denmark, governmental authorities have a statutory duty to safeguard children, young people and adults. These regulations oblige these partners to provide support to the people concerned, but also to report cases to the police to prevent crime (Johansen, 2018; Lindekilde, 2015).

These substantial differences in the foundation and legal framework of the CVE approach in the UK and in Scandinavia might generate varying impressions of the models. Although the British Government claims the aim of Prevent is to “safeguard people against the risk of radicalisation”, impressions and criticisms of Prevent are that it leads to securitisation of society. It appears to be a programme dominated by security and control where local government agencies and other welfare providers perform as a tool to protect society. For the Scandinavian countries, the CVE model, which is deeply rooted in the welfare state, appears to be dominated by care and integration (Johansen, 2018; Lid & Heierstad, 2019). These variations may influence citizens’ and target groups’ perception of the national counter-terrorism strategy, the role of the agencies (including local governments) and the legitimacy of the interventions. This may explain to some extent the variations in criticism in these countries, although, some of the practice on the ground does not seem to be as different. For instance, the introduction of the Prevent duty in the UK caused a sharp increase in the number of referrals to the police. Many referrals were not related to radicalisation, but out of “inappropriate behaviour” duty (Busher et al., 2017). In Norway, which has a mostly similar model to Denmark, the number of reported cases from statutory agencies, particularly from schools, to local police due to concern about radicalisation grew rapidly after increased attention on the topic. Many of the reported cases were easily disproved by the police as radicalisation, but assessed as another type of concern (Lid et al., 2016).

To sum up, the apparently security and control-dominated British CVE programme may have reduced the legitimacy of and trust in the public actors, and led to a stronger critical perspective of the practice. However, some of the criticism of Prevent may also be applicable to the Scandinavian countries at least, but the apparently care and integration-dominated Scandinavian CVE programme may have covered some of the fundamental problems with the practice, such as surveillance and securitisation of some arenas and groups, increased number of unnecessary referrals to the police and the extent of information sharing between collaborating partners in multi-agency initiatives. From a local government perspective the influence of the national policy on their legitimacy is an aspect that is hard to address.
Conclusion

In this chapter, I have illustrated how local governments can, in some cases, be in a position to influence exit and reintegration processes, building bridges between individuals and societies, due to their local presence and their core societal functions. Control and surveillance, reconciliation and coordination are all functions that are important to ensure the conditions for successful disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration initiatives to take place. Moreover, welfare services can offer new opportunities and alternatives to continue in the extremist environment. However, which of the functions are the prominent function(s) varies significantly between local governments. For many local governments around the world the identified functions are probably more a description of what local governments can ensure under certain conditions, rather than what many of them do.

Local governments’ capability to fulfil these functions is primarily governed by their general resources, functions and mandate. The political and practical willingness to engage in cases seems crucial in addition to the target groups’ and local citizens’ trust in and legitimacy of the local government. Trust and legitimacy are determined by a range of elements, such as the foundation of the national and local counter-terrorism strategy, how local governments balance the roles of promoting care and control, collaboration with the police and the level of expertise and capacity, in addition to general trust in local government.

Local governments’ greatest challenge is that they are part of the state, which some extremist groups perceive as an enemy. That is a challenge that cannot be modified, and this constrains the position of local governments in many cases. However, local governments have greater impact on other factors that influence trust. In this regard, it seems important to clarify the role of local governments, their area of responsibility and tasks in disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration, in addition to transparency and clear procedures in partnership with other actors and make these procedures visible for all stakeholders and target groups (see also Koehler, 2017, p. 156). This probably may not entirely solve these challenges, but it may help to diminish the potentially undesirable consequences of combining these functions and being in close cooperation with the police.

Moreover, it seems clear local governments’ opportunities to promote welfare services and reconciliation particularly are best ensured if local governments are not dragged too far into control and surveillance, but keep an appropriate distance from the actors in the security sector. If local governments’ function of control and surveillance is becoming too dominating, it may be at the expense of other functions and limit the role of local governments in control and surveillance. Especially for those local governments that have the resources, mandate and structure to promote welfare services, that will seriously reduce their importance. Probably even more importantly, it will also constrict the services from which individuals in exit processes will benefit and reduce their chances of a successful disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration process.

There has been an increasing recognition of the intelligence and security services’ limitations in successfully promoting exit and reintegration processes, and the need for involvement of other public and civilian actors. The involvement of these actors must not be reduced to being the extended hands and helpers of intelligence and security services. It is probably more important that these actors strengthen their efforts to provide services that are attractive for target groups, and build bridges between individuals and society. Addressing some of the challenges described in this chapter may strengthen local governments’ role in disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration in the future.
Notes

1 In several countries, such as the Scandinavian countries, Austria, the Netherlands and the UK, the national action plans make local governments responsible and highlight the importance of their involvement. Moreover, national networks (Götsc, 2017), and global networks, such as the United Nations’ Strong Cities Network (SCN) and the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), are established to strengthen the capacity to counter violent extremism among local governments. This shows how local governments are considered to be a prominent partner.

2 The primary research is mainly a comprehensive study of Norwegian municipalities’ role in countering violent extremism. The study consisted of more than 70 interviews, mostly group interviews, with representatives from the most relevant municipal agencies and political and administrative leaders in five Norwegian municipalities, in addition to cooperating partners such as local police, intelligence services and civil society organisations (Lid et al., 2016). Additionally, a smaller study was conducted in Nairobi, Kenya, in April 2018. Twelve local government representatives (members of county assembly and local chiefs) in informal settlements in Eastleigh and Majengo were interviewed about their engagement in disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration initiatives of returnees from Al-Shabaab. The interviews were conducted as an extension of another current research project about community policing, which included citizens’ relations to local government representatives.

3 Push factors are often defined as “negative social incidents and circumstances that make it uncomfortable and unappealing to remain in a particular social movement”, and pull factors refer to the “positive factors attracting the person to a more rewarding alternative than continuing in the movement or group” (Bjørgo, 2016, p. 234).

4 Koehler (2017, p. 133) argues that the level of social services delivered through governmental institutions affects the need for non-governmental actors in deradicalisation processes. This need might either be broad (including vocational training, employment facilitation, financial support, etc.) or narrow (focused on ideological debate, networking, guidance or contact provision).

5 Other European countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands and France, have organised family counselling differently. It is a joint project between national government and non-governmental organisations (Koehler, 2017).

6 The chiefs are part of the executive power structure of the old public administration implemented by the colonial administration, and their main functions are gathering intelligence for the president. Although the 2010 Kenyan Constitution dissolved this old public administration, it still exists and is supported by the president. However, the local levels in the new public administration engagement in promoting exit and reintegration are assessed as limited (BRICS, 2017; Taita, 2016; see Chapter 22, this volume). At the Kenyan coast, which is the area that has received most returnees from Al-Shabaab, the county governments’ involvement was considered to be reluctant, and the county governments failed to take initiatives and responsibility (BRICS, 2017, Taita, 2016). Hence, in Kenya, the local representatives from the old public administration appear to have the most prominent role in countering violent extremism, due to their function of gathering intelligence.

7 See Clubb and Tapley (2018) for a similar challenge in Nigeria.


9 Prevent is one of four pillars (prevent, pursue, protect, prepare) in CONTEST.

References


Local governments’ role


