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# **Risk assessment tools against violent extremism. A valuable addition to Norway`s toolkit?**

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International Relations.

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Declaration I, Henrik William Velde, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

## **Acknowledgment**

This is the big one. The final task to complete. After five years of higher education, I will finally deliver my contribution to academia, as so many others before me have done. It was a long road, with many sleepless nights and long hours awake, but like all things, this too must come to an end. The last five years have gone by so fast and even a pandemic could not stop me from enjoying my time as a student.

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All mistakes and errors are mine alone.

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## **Abstract**

Norway do not use risk assessment tools for violent extremism. What Norway use instead are a set of programs that aid to deradicalize people in prisons. While these programs work to deradicalize prisoners, they do not aid in finding and analyzing how great of a risk these people are at committing violent acts of extremism. This master thesis aim to finding out if implementing a risk assessment tool will benefit Norway and their deradicalization program.

By using method triangulation, this master thesis was able to find data that will support the argument that adopting a risk assessment tool will aid the programs that Norwegian prisons systems use to deradicalize their inmates. Interviews and literature show that the program already being used, do not show if the prisoner actually have been deradicalized. By using an SPJ tool that use a form of interview to analyze just how radical a person is, will aid the deradicalization program.

Based upon findings, this author will argue that adopting a risk assessment tool, and more specifically the VERA 2R tool, will benefits Norway's counter terror work. The tool on its own do nothing to deradicalize but used together with a deradicalization program such as the mentor program, the risk assessment tool can more accurately analyze the effectiveness of deradicalization.

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## Introduction

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, the small city of Kongsberg was attacked by a lone man, armed with bow and arrows and a knife. When the man was finally arrested and stopped, five people had lost their life, and two were harmed. (Steiro. 2020). In the aftermath of the attack, a number of reports came in about how this person had been considered a danger to himself and people around him. BBC news reported that the perpetrator had converted to Islam and he had shown signs of being radicalized. (BBC news. 2021) Many began to wonder why this person was not taken care of, or why there were no institutions or safety nets for preventing such people as the perpetrator to act out. Aftenposten even wrote an article, asking if there are any systems at all to analyze the risks of people committing violent actions. (Johansen. Skogstrøm. 2021). While the attacker claims to represent Islam, there is an ongoing debate as to if this attack is considered a terrorist attack. (Elgaaen. 2021). This however does not change the fact that a person became radicalized and violent, and that Norway seemed to lack a system to figure out if this person was a danger to begin with.

Radicalization and threats of violence from extremist groups and individuals is a common concern for many different states around the world. While certain states and nations are more prepared to combat or mitigate the risk of such actions happening, there is always the possibility of terrorist acts to occur, even though the number of incidents has declined over the years. In many of these states, there are people in prison for either radical actions or for different forms of terrorist acts.

A huge challenge for counter terrorist actors is to analyze and find out how much of a risk it is to release such people from jail. Many of these people will soon be finished with serving their time in prison, and a big question is if there is a possibility to see how much of a risk it is for these people to commit another act of terrorism. This master thesis will look at some of the already established tools for risk assessments that are already in use in Europe. By looking at the Norwegian prison care system and established tools for risk assessment, this master thesis will conclude if a risk assessment tool will benefit Norway, or if the prison cares already established tools are enough to prevent radical violence.

## Research question and hypothesis

Many nations such as the UK, Netherland and Sweden have developed different tool kits for how to analyze the risk of a person committing a terrorist attack, which can be of great use of

it implemented. Something that can be viewed as challenging with this topic is to understand what the arguments against the use of such tools are. Implementing such tools as those of Sweden or Netherland will benefit the Norwegian prison care system, and by studying the tool that the NUPI report write about in their paper “Rissikovuderingsverktøy mot terrorisme og ekstremisme”

This NUPI report was written by Ole Martin Stormoen and Rita Augstad Knudsen and was published by Norwegian institute of foreign affairs (NUPI) in 2020. Their report views the different experiences of the criminal justice system in Sweden, Netherland and Great Brittan. In the report, Stormoen and Knudsen look at reports and experience from the three different nations that use two different tools in their prison system to prevent terror acts from happening, and they ask the question if there is possible to simply use one of these tools. The tool used by Brittan is the ERG 22+ (Extreme risk guideline) while Sweden and Netherland use VERA 2R (Violent extremist risk assessment) The Dutch ministry of justice and security write that other VERA 2R is used by Germany, France, Belgium and Austria (*Ministry of justice and security. 2021*), but the author has chosen to focus on Sweden and Netherland. Sweden due to its similarities with Norway, and Netherland due to the experience and knowledge that the interviewees have on Netherland and VERA 2R. This master thesis will write about the topic of using such tools in in Norway, in order to analyze and possibly prevent acts of terrorism.

The author has chosen to focus on the VERA 2R model and the ERG 22+ model. The reason for this choice was due to the number of different countries that have chosen to use the VERA 2R model. As for the ERG tool, the author chose to include this tool, as it is interesting to see how a state can develop a new tool entirely, rather than to build upon something that already exist.

Following is the research question for this thesis:

**Would it be beneficial for Norway to adopt a risk assessment toolkit for violent extremism?**

In order to specify the research question, the author of this master thesis has developed three sub questions that will aid in answering the main research question.



*Do Norway need risk assessment tools?*

The purpose of this question is to discuss if Norway need to use risk assessment tools to begin with. The intension is to find out what kind of risk that Norway is facing and if these risks pose such a threat that risk assessment tool is needed at all.

*What type of counter extremism work is already being done to stop potential extremism threats in Norway?*

The purpose of this question is to answer what type of work the Norwegian prison is already doing to mitigate radicalization or acts of terrorism. How is the practice, and how effective is it?

*Can VERA and ERG 22+ be used outside of prison care?*

This question will answer if the risk assessment tools that are already being used in different prisons around the world, could be implemented elsewhere. Risk assessment tools are according to the NUPI report, almost exclusively used in prison, and this question wish to find out why and if those tools can aid elsewhere as well.

The main research question asks if it would be beneficial to adopt a risk assessment toolkit, and with the aid of the sub research questions, the main research question will be answered. The author will address each of these sub questions in the discussion chapter of this thesis, in order to answer them as clearly as possible for the readers.

### Structure of master thesis

The literature review chapter will cover the different authors and relevant articles, books and papers that might be of use to this thesis. In the third chapter, methods will be discussed. This chapter will look into what methods will be used, as well as arguments for the choice of methods, as well as validity. The fourth chapter will be the discussion part. This chapter will

discuss empirical data collected from articles, interviews, paper and other relevant sources based upon research on risk assessment tools. The chapter will be broken into smaller parts where the different sub questions will be discussed, in order to create an easier overview. Following the discussion chapter is chapter five, the conclusion. Chapter five will feature a short conclusion showing the findings from the previous chapter.

## Literature review

*By breaking down and analyzing literature relevant to each of the sub questions, the author will clearly state what the literature says about the sub question and ending the chapter with a conclusion. Finally at the end of the chapter, a short literature review on comparisons of the two tools.*

Risk assessment tools are developed with the intension of measuring the possibility of violence to occur. Such tools have been used for decades and has been shown to be both reliable and valid in assessing the risk of future violence. However, the use of such tools was questionable at best when it came to analyzing violent extremism and terrorism, because the factors used for risk assessment did not correlate well to the background and factors for motivating such use of violence as extremists use. The need then arose for a type of tool tailored specifically for violent extremist and terrorist. (*Pressman. 2009.*)

Over the years states have implemented such risk assessment tools that are specifically developed for analyzing the risk of violent extremism. Scandinavian states such as Sweden have used VERA 2R since 2017 due to the rise of foreign fighters returning home from fighting for ISIS, (*Knudsen. Stormoen. 2020*) but states such as Norway do not have any risk assessment tools at all. Reports on risk assessment tools have been written on a number of states such as the UK, Netherlands and Sweden (*Knudsen. 2018*) but there is a lack of literature on risk assessment tools in Norway, something that made the author of this master thesis curious.

While reports on the number of tools show a great use for such type of risk assessment tools, Norway do not use any SPJ tool at all, and rely instead on other methods for deradicalization. (*Orban. 2017* The goal of this literature review is to compare established literature on risk

assessment tools with the sub questions that this author has written for master thesis to see what data and knowledge is already established, and what new data can be contributed with this master thesis.

### Do Norway need risk assessment tools?

When it comes to extremist violence, Norway has had its fair share of experience. From right wing violence primarily in the 80`s and 90`s (*Bjørge. Gjelsvik. 2017*) to the terror attack on Utøya on the 22nd of July in 2011. The repeating offenders for these attacks and actions have been committed by right wing extremism, either through the use of intimidation, and all the way up to firebombs, shootings and terror, as mentioned. (*Bjørge. Gjelsvik. 2017*) Since the early 2000s, Norway has seen a large decline in the precents of neo-Nazi groups around the country, due to Norway`s effective use of counter violent extremist programs. (*Hardy. 2019*) Programs such as the Norway-exit program that was founded in 1997. The reason for how the neo-Nazi milieu in Norway seemed to vanish in the early 2000s can be argued as due to the effectiveness of the EXIT program, but the right-wing terror attack in 2011 showed that there was still something missing. (*Hardy. 2019*) While the attack on Utøya was the actions of a lone man and not a larger organization, it still showed that Norway is in need of some type of tool or program that can analyze the potential for extremist violence.

Studies have been done on the EXIT program both in Norway and Germany by Keiran Hardy and the study focus how effective the EXIT program has been on the two countries. One factor of the EXIT program that seem to be very efficient is the aid for youth to exit such extremist groups, rather than the state to combat the groups through other means. (*Briggs. 2010*) While an argument against such an approach can be viewed as naïve, but the EXIT program is built on the principle of reformation and rehabilitee rather than punishment. (*Hardy. 2019*) If one is to base the sub research question on the literature written by Keiran Hardy, then it would seem that Norway does not need any risk assessment tools, as the EXIT program has been a success. But even though Norway has programs such as the EXIT program and mentor program, there is still the question of why the PST report of 2021 still believe that Norway could see terror activity from both right-wing extremism and Islamic terror.

PST (Polities sikkerhetstjeneste) write in their 2021 report on the national security that while right wing terrorism is still considered a great threat to Norwegian security, Islamic terrorism, or at least the threat of Islamic terrorism has risen since the last report in 2020. (*Shala. 2021*) PST write in their report that there are heightened tensions between radical Islamic groups that believe freedom of speech is used to criticize Islam, and that this could inspire someone to act in violent manners. The heightened tension in Europe will also have consequences in Norway according to PST's 2021 report. With a growing tension around Europe, one can argue that the need for a risk assessment tools grows too. Due to a growing number of foreign fighters in Sweden, the state implemented the VERA tool for Swedish prisons (*Knudsen. Stormoen. 2020*), as they feared that a growing number of people were becoming radicalized. If the PST is concerned with the heightened tensions, then it could be of great benefits to implement a risk assessment tool, to combat extremism.

If one base the report from PST as legitimate, and especially the quote from the author on how there is the potential for violent extremism in Norway in 2021, show that Norway does indeed need risk assessment tools. With the growing tension around Europe according to the PST, the argument for risk assessment tools is only strengthened. However, risk assessment tools are most commonly used in prison as SPJ tools, meaning that they are interview based (*KRUS. 2016*), and do not aid Norway when it comes to stopping potential threat that are not already known to Norwegian authority. Both the VERA 2R and the ERG are tools used for inside prison to analyze through interview if the person being interviewed pose any serious threat for violent extremist activity. The PST report will argue for the potential threats that right-wing and Islamic extremism pose, but when it comes to how to prevent it, there is little aid in the report. The lack of literature on the subject of if Norway even need risk assessment tools, can mean that there either are enough of such programs or tools that Norway do not need to implement more, or that there is a lack of data and literature on other options and tools.

### What type of risk assessment work is already being done in Norway?

As the previous literature discuss, Norway already have certain programs in place for aiding youth out of extremist milieus, but little to no literature is written on SPJ tools in Norway. The manual on deradicalization used at KRUS discuss on how to deradicalize in prison and mention the VERA 2R and ERG tool, but only as viable options to what is already being

done in Prison. (KRUS. 2016. P. 33) The manual briefly discuss that the two tools map out to what degree of risk the inmate is to being radicalized and fail to mention anything of why these SPJ tools are not in use. A second manual is used by KRUS and discuss the use of the mentor tool. While the first report focuses on work done in prison to stop radicalization, the second report aid more in answering the sub question of what work is already being done. The mentor program report is written by Franc Orban and give detail on a program developed to aid prisoners already in prison with deradicalization, as well as aid outside of prison, when the time served is done. Such a program has been advocated for a time (Viggen. 2016) and in 2015 the program was put in place. Orban wrote in an article in 2019 on how the results of the mentor program has been good, based upon feedback from the participants. Both inmates and mentor agree that there are benefits to the program. (Orban. 2019) Former extremist inmates also agree that the mentor program has aided them well while serving time and that they now no longer feel the need to use violence. (Anderson. 2019)

The mentor program and the EXIT program seem to be a repeating program for other states as well. Literature on deradicalization programs in prisons explain how states such as Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka use similar programs in their own prisons, in order to deradicalize inmates. (Hansen. Lid. 2020) While the literature on other states use of deradicalization programs do not explicitly discuss Norway, the literature aid in discussing how programs similar to the mentor program in Norway seem to work well, with results showing how deradicalization programs can work, even without the use of risk assessment tools to aid them.

There are a number of literatures that can back up the claims that the mentor program work well in Norwegian prisons, but there is less data on criticism of the program, meaning that either the program works flawlessly or there is a lack of literature on the strengths and benefits of such a program. While Norway already have two programs for deradicalization, these programs are aimed at people already being convicted for extremist activity or well-known members of such groups, meaning that if people are to be radicalized inside the prison, then it can be more challenging to spot. Especially for smaller prisons around Norway with less knowledge on radicalization.

## Can VERA and ERG be used outside of prison?

While there are a great number of literatures on the subjects of SPJ tools and VERA and ERG, very little is being written on how such tools can be used outside of prison complexes. While some reports on ERG and VERA discuss how different states use the SPJ tools (Knudsen. Stormoen. 2020) very little is being said about the application for these tools outside of prisons. The NUPI report of 2020 on ERG and VERA, simply write how neither of the three states they analyzed have chosen to adopt the tools outside of prison.

This thesis will work on finding out as to why there is little to no literature on SPJ tools outside of prison. Literature on the SPJ tools all discuss the benefits of SPJ tools inside prisons (Evans. 2018) But while the report focuses on comparisons of the two models, it focuses on France and do not mention the application of these tools outside prison either. While Norway is a small country with relatively few numbers of extremist cases (Bjørge. Gjelsvik. 2017) the author sees it as important to analyze and discuss the practical application of such tools outside of prison care, and instead within institutions such as mental health care.

Another important part to discuss is the lack of literature on how risk assessment tools can be used outside of prison. As mentioned, reports like the NUPI report state that nations like Sweden and Netherland have not chosen to implement the VERA tool any other place than prison, but do not further explain this.

## Discussion and conclusion

A thorough review of the literature in risk assessment tools show a repeating trend withing the literature on the subject. This trend shows that there is little to no research on risk assessment tools with a focus on Norway. An important factor for this is that Norway do not use such tools at all, meaning that research on the subject would yield no data and results. With the answer to the lack of why there is any research such a subject, the discussion must then be focused on why there is such a lack of research into why Norway do not use risk assessment tools at all. The research questions for this master thesis aim at answering that question and to also find an answer to what tool is most suitable for Norway to adopt.

Literature show that while Norway according to the PST report and past experience (*Bjørge. Gjelsvik. 2017*) (*Shala. 2021*) do need some type of counter extremist tool, they already have different programs for either deradicalization or helping radicalized members out of their extremist milieus. (*KRUS. 2016*) (*Orban. 2019*) While these programs show great results, there is a lack of data and discussion on what can be improved or if the programs have any flaws to them. Literature such as the PST report aid in understanding the threat level in Norway from extremism, and aid in answering the research question on why Norway need risk assessment tools. While not answering the question explicitly, it does aid in seeing that extremism is still a concern in modern day Norway.

While the report writes about what might happen, it does not discuss what type of counter measures are done to prevent extremist activities. Another point to make is how the programs already being used in Norway, are not interview based and might give other types of information about a radical person that what programs such as the mentor program and the EXIT program. ERG and VERA ask a number of different questions in order for psychologists to rate the interviewee on how radical they might be. Based upon literature on both Norwegian deradicalization programs and literature on risk assessment tools, it seems that there is a possibility of utilizing both a risk assessment tool as well as a deradicalization program, in order to overlap each other.

The SPJ tools have been used by different states in Europe for a while now, and it does not come as a surprise that there is little literature on Norway and how they use risk assessment tools, as Norway do not use such tools at all. Data and literature on the SPJ tools and more specifically on the ERG 22+ and VERA are common, with plenty of literature on the comparison of the two tools and how states have implemented them. (*Knudsen. Stormoen. 2020*). (*Evans. 2018.*) (*Heide. Leyenhorst. Zwan. 2019*) But while there is plenty of literature on comparing the two models, there is little to no literature on these tools with regards to Norway and their systems. NUPI wrote a large report on the tools back in 2020, but the report only aid in understanding the tools and focus on case studies of the tools in three different states. The report does not mention Norway or if these tools could be implemented in Norway. Seeing as the report was written by the Norwegian institute of international affairs, it can be viewed as rather odd that the report fails to discuss how such tools can be of benefit to Norway.

When discussing the main research question, one must also discuss the individual tools in order to see if they can benefit Norway, and also which of the two tools that are most beneficial to adopt. While both tools have similarities, there are still some distinctions that is important to take into account. While the literature on these tools do not specifically answer the research question, with the use of discussion and secondary data analysis, they will aid in answering the question. By looking at literature written by NUPI and the UK ministry of justice analytical service, one will find data and knowledge on the ERG tool and its development, history and results. Knowledge on the VERA tool can be collected from literature written by Elain Pressman and Martin Herzog Evans. By writing about these tools, the author will be able to discuss the strength and weakness of the two tools and how they relate to Norway.

With the literature having such gaps when it comes to risk assessment tools and Norway, this master thesis will aid in filling some of these gaps. The research questions are specifically designed for aiding the research of ERG and VERA in Norway. With the use of literature and reports from different actors within extremist and risk assessments, this thesis will aid in finding a risk assessment tool that is suitable for the Norwegian system and also aid in future research on risk assessment with focus on Norway.

## Methods

This chapter will present the methods that the author of this thesis sees as most relevant. Here the process of collecting data will be presented, arguments the choice of methods, discussions on the validity of the data and finally the challenges the author had to work with while collecting data.

With the use of triangulation, or more specifically method triangulation, this thesis will strengthen its validity and reliability when collecting data. This method includes many different types of methods including interviews, observation and fieldnotes. (Cope. 2014. P. 545) The author of the chapter on triangulation state that mixing qualitative methods allow for different perspectives that otherwise could be overlooked. By using different methods one can compare data on a phenomenon and if the results are the same, it indicates that there is validity and reliability. Uwe Flick write in the textbook *Companion to qualitative research*



that methodological triangulation involves the process of playing two or more methods off each other to maximise the validity of field efforts. (*Flick. 2004. P.179*)

This master thesis will interview people that have knowledge on the subject of risk assessment tools. Such interviews have given great data and knowledge on the different subjects that these people have expertise on. If there are any consequences or expenses that make the use of such tools hard to implement, then it will be interesting to hear it, in order to create a more balanced point of view. If multiple countries such as England, Netherland and Sweden use these tools then why cannot Norway use the same tools. The master thesis will focus primarily on how these two tools, ERG 22+ and VERA 2R can benefit the Norwegian justice system. Authors such Franc Orban have done research on counter terrorism and have produced scientific reports that will be of value in order to understand more about counter terrorism in prison.

## Research design

Due to the ongoing pandemic caused by Covid-19 the author will not conduct any fieldwork and will rather rely on other forms of interview than to physically meet interviewees. Other types of communication will be used instead, such as interviews through email and zoom/teams.

As for the research strategy, the best option is a qualitative research approach. Alan Bryman describes qualitative research as a research strategy that “focus on words instead of quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman. 2016. P.374) Another part of qualitative research is that the sampling pool is often fewer than that of quantitative research, something that is relevant to this thesis. Within qualitative research, there is a method called qualitative interviews which is be the most relevant method for the research. Bryman describes it as one of the more common methods to use in qualitative research. For the interviews the author will be trying to make it a semi structured interview. interviews via teams, zoom or skype will be done in order to make it a semi structured interview, but might have to make it a structured interview that the interviewees will have to answer via email.

It can also be challenging as of now to plan any accurate timeline due to the fact that the people the author wish to come in contact with for interviews, might have different schedules

and may find it either time consuming or challenging to fit questions and interviews into their time schedules. It is also the possibility of not being able to come in contact with any of the planned individuals, something that can create some challenging problems for the research. There is already literature on some of the topics that is written about, meaning that it can be possible to write a thesis and a conclusion through the use of primary and secondary sources, with the use of triangulation.

### Secondary source analysis

Alan Bryman describes secondary analysis as “*the analysis of data by researchers who will probably not have been involved in the collection of those data*”. (Bryman. 2016. P .309)

What this means is that secondary analysis is analyzing the data collected by other researchers, and secondary analysis may include analysis of quantitative data or qualitative data. Jane Heaton write that secondary analysis can also aid in asking new research questions about already established research, or it can verify the findings of research that has already been done. (Heaton. 2008. 35) There are a number of different advantages to using secondary analysis as one of the methods for research. An example is the cost and time as the researcher already has access to good quality data, for far less researches than if the research were to be done by the researcher themselves. Another argument is high quality data. As stated, a secondary analysis gives access to data that has been deemed as of great quality if chosen from credible institutions and well cited sources. A final example is the possibility of reanalysis, where the researcher finds new interpretations in the data they are analyzing. Bryman ask if there is a possibility of data running dry of new analysis, but he later argues that data can be analyzed in so many different ways that is borderline impossible for data analysis to be exhausted. (Bryman. 2016. P. 312)

There are however also limitations to the method. When conducting once own research, you familiarize yourself with the data you collect, but when doing a secondary analysis, the familiarity is lacking. This mean that the researcher must spend more time familiarizing themselves with the data there are collecting and might lose grip with different variables that could be of relevance. Another issue could be the share amount and complexity of data that is possible to analyze. There can be many challenges in finding the correct data, and it is not always a certainty that the data being collected has any quality. While many institutions

produce data of quality, the researcher might not find the particular data they are searching for. It is important for the researcher to look for validity in the data that they are analyzing, although Bryman write that most institutions and archives have quality control, but this should not be taken as a given. (Bryman. 2016. P. 313) Another question about issues with using secondary analysis could be asked. The question is about the ethical and legal process of obtain informed consent from research participants, sharing data and reusing data for something other than its original intent. This led to the question of how to anonymize the data without rendering it bare. This however can be achieved by using data that is publicly available. (Heaton. 2008. P. 41)

## Interviews

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, a qualitative thesis relies on collecting data from text, people and images, rather than from numbers and graphs. A key part of collecting such data is through interviews. When doing interviews, it is important to find the correct type of interviews that suits the interviewers need the most. In Alan Bryman`s textbook about social research methods, he mentions that there are a number of interviews, with the most common interview being structured interviews or *standardized interviews*. (Bryman. 2016. P.198) Bryman describes this as a collection of questions that all interviewees will be asked, with the intension that all interviewees will be given the same context of questionings. For this master thesis though, a standardized interview will not be relevant, as the intension is not to collect the same data from different people.

The author has chosen to use qualitative interview instead. As stated, there are different types of interviews and a qualitative interview, according to Bryman is a combination of a semi structured interview and an unstructured interview. Semi structured interviews according to Bryman is less formal and can almost be explained as a conversation rather than an actual interview, but still with some questions in order to stay on topic. An unstructured interview has no special questions but focus more on different topics that the interviewer wishes to talk about. For the interviews, the author has written down different topics about the subject, but has also written down specific questions, in case the interview does not answer the questions while the interview is going on. Sometimes it can be better to let the interview go on like a conversation as new data or knowledge can reveal itself. The author often starts the interview

with a question, and let the discussion go from there. This style is often informal, and phrasings and questions might vary depending on the interviewee. (Bryman. 2016. P. 201)

The benefit of a qualitative interview would be that one way or another, you usually get the answers you ask. If it is over email, then more people might be inclined to accept answering, since it isn't too time-consuming and socially awkward people might be more relaxed about it. As for recording the author will write and transcribe the interviews that he will be conducting. It is important to get a consensus from the people that will be interviewed. If not, the author will offer then write him up as anonymous in the hopes that it will change his or her mind.

For the interviews themselves, a number of topics have been written down in advance. Following the guidelines of a qualitative interview, the author wishes to ask a number of questions that are relevant to that particular person being interviewed. The people being interviewed have different experience and knowledge in regard to risk assessment tools and the Norwegian prison care system, meaning that if the author were to use a structured interview, there would be gaps in knowledge that the interviewees could not answer.

Bryman mention that there are a number for problems with using interviews. While most of them are centred around structural interviews, many do also relate to interviews where there are questions to be answered, such as with qualitative interviews. One critique is social desirability bias. Described in short as the desire to give an answer that is socially acceptable to answer. (Bryman. 2016. P. 216) The very nature of these subjects that the paper is based upon is political and some might fear some type of consequence for answering honestly. The questions that the interviewees will answers does not ask any particular questions that should be considered politically charged as no question ask about the interviewee's opinion, but rather their experience and knowledge on the subject.

### Selection of response

For this particular master thesis, the author has chosen specific people the interview. Bryman describes this type of sampling as purposive sampling, meaning that the sampling is done with the research question in mind. (Bryman. 2016. P. 410) Through the use of purposive sampling, the aim is to find interviewees that are relevant to the thesis, due to their

knowledge and expertise. The approach is to get in contact and interview people that have either researched on risk assessment tools, or people that work with prison care or the prison care system. An interview with an expert on radicalization would also be of great use to the thesis as it is relevant to some of the questions or topics that the author wishes to discuss.

The author of this thesis has chosen to keep the interviewees anonymous. This means that their names will not be mentioned in this thesis. Their relevancy and background when it comes to risk assessment tools will however not be anonymised, in order for the reader to understand that though these people are anonymous, their knowledge and experience on the subject of risk assessment tools, make them relevant for this master thesis.

Being able to interview members from NUPI was an important and maybe even obvious choice. Their report on the risk assessment tools and how they are used in different countries can be of great importance to the master thesis. While the report itself aids in understanding more about the tools, NUPI has many members with years of experience, meaning that an interview with a member from NUPI can either yield great results, or guide the author to other people with relevant knowledge. One of the sub questions for this thesis is it is possible for the risk assessment tools to be used outside of prison care. In the NUPI report, the authors state that neither Sweden nor Netherlands use the tools outside of prison, something that makes one wonder as to why. By conducting such an interview, one might find more answers. Another institute that stood out was KRUS. To be able to interview employees at KRUS would be of great significance due to their knowledge of how the prison care system operates. While KRUS's manual covers some of the work that Norwegian prisons use, it would be far more interesting to discuss and learn about such work from an interview.

Finally, this author was able to get an interview with two experts on either risk assessment tools or on Norwegian deradicalization programs. As mentioned, these two individuals will remain anonymous in order to protect their identity. Both have many years of experience on their respected field and was of great help in answering questions that this author had, on a number of subjects regarding their expertise. Due to time limitations and the Covid-19 pandemic, the author of this paper was not able to reach out to all the people that he wished to contact and interview, but thanks to the knowledge and expertise of the two individuals, many of the most important questions were answered.

## Validity and reliability

Reliability is most commonly used for testing and evaluating data in quantitative research, but is still used in most type of testing, and the most important form of testing, is its quality. (Golafshani. 2003. P. 601) This mean that reliability is concerned with the replicability and consistency of its findings. (Thyer. 2001. P. 355) In short, one achieves reliability when the same result shows up in observation, reading of field notes or similar interpretations.

Reliability can be tested through different methods. *The time- retest* measure the consistency over time. *The interrater* measure consistency through multiple people and *the internal consistency* measure if you get the same result from different parts of the test that are meant to measure the same thing? (Middleton. 16.06.21)

Validity can be described as how accurate a method can be measure what it tries to measure. If research has high reliability is usually means that it is valid as well. This does not mean that there are exceptions. Reliability on its own isn't enough to ensure validity, as Fiona Middleton write. "Even if a test is reliable it might not reflect the real situation. ((Middleton. 16.06.21) As with reliability, there are methods for testing validity too. *Construct* is the connection to measuring excising theory and knowledge. *Content* is the extent to how much the measurement covers all parts of the concept being measured. And finally, is *Criterion* which is how much a measurement relates to other valid measurements of the same subject. (Middleton. 16.06.21)

Alan Bryman write in his textbook about the challenges of validity and reliability when using qualitative methods in research. While quantitative methods rely on the ability to reproduce the data that was collected or the entire research project in itself, qualitative methods are more challenging. Bryman explain that a vital component in quantitative studies is the ability to measure, but when it comes to qualitative, measurement is simply not that relevant.

(Bryman. 2016. P. 383) A way for this thesis to achieve validity is through the use of method triangulation as stated earlier in the chapter. By crossing secondary analysis with interviews and other forms of methods one creates an alternative criterion to validity and reliability.

Robert K. Yin explain that through the use of method triangulation, one can achieve validity since multiple sources of data provides multiple measures of the same phenomenon. (Yin. 1994. P. 92)

## Research ethics

The Norwegian national research ethics committee describes research ethics as “wide variety of values, norms, and institutional arrangements that help constitute and regulate scientific activities.” (*The Norwegian national research ethics committee 08.09.2019*) One can then argue that research ethics is another word for scientific morality in practice. Within research ethics there are guidelines that specify basic norms and values within the research community. These guidelines are based upon ethics of science, in many ways like how ethics are based upon the morality of society. While these guidelines focus mainly on research, they are applicable to other field as well, such as dissemination of research, management of institutions and also teaching. Following the four guidelines that the Norwegian research committee describes as based upon norms for research ethics.

- 1) Norms that constitute good scientific practice, relevant to accurate, adequate and relevant knowledge.
- 2) Norms that regulate research community (Integrity, accountability, criticism)
- 3) The relationship to people that take part in the research
- 4) The relationship to the rest of society

*(The Norwegian national research ethics committee 08.09.2019)*

While ethics are important all around for every research, there are guidelines that are more relevant to research papers than other. This master thesis relies on interviews with different actors, meaning that it is of great importance to focus on the ethics of interviews and the respect of the individual. The people being interviewed for this thesis, do not share any personal data other than their experience with the subjects being written about. The Norwegian committee for ethics writes about human dignity and how researchers must base their work on a fundamental respect for human dignity. This means that the writer of this thesis must protect personal integrity, preserve individual freedom and self-determination for the interviewees that aided the author.

Since the interviewees share data with the author of this master thesis, it is important to remember the storage of personal data. While the interviewees do not share any personal data

about them self, some of their own opinions can be considered personal data. The interviewees all agreed to the interview being recorded, and the author has agreed to delete all recordings when the thesis is written. This is in line with what the Norwegian committee dictates, *“It must be clearly decided and communicated to the participants in advance whether or not the material is to be destroyed at the end of the project”* (The Norwegian national research ethics committee 08.09.2019)

Due to the choice of keeping the identity of the people being interviewed as anonymous, these preclusions are not as relevant. Even then, the collection of personal data creates issues when keeping the individual anonymous as the data might reveal their identity. This means that the author of this thesis must still be caesious as to not reveal the identity of the interviewees.

### NSD and anonymity

The Norwegian centre for research data (NSD) require that students apply at their data base if data is to be collected. The NSD work on archiving data and look after personal privacy. As of such, the interviewees will stay anonymous. Rose Wiles write in her article on confidentiality and anonymity in social research that it is common practice for researchers to change the characteristics of participants in order to protect their identities. (Wiles. 2008)

Annukka Vaino write in the article *beyond research ethics* that «anonymity is one of the core principles of research ethics and is usually regarded as the mechanism through which privacy and confidentiality are maintained». (Vaino. 2012) The ethical guideline state that changing the participants identity should not occur if it changes the data but Wiles state that it can be challenging to evaluate such impact on the data. One challenge is that readers do not always know that such changes has been made, and therefor might not be able to judge the integrity of the data. There is an ethical debate around anonymization within qualitative research, as to whom one can anonymize and whom should not be anonymized. While some believe anonymization cast certain groups into negative roles, while other see it as an empowering tool that aid in making readers focus on what has been said, rather than who said it. (Vaino. 2012)



## ERG & VERA 2R, explained

This chapter is dedicated to explaining more in detail about the two risk assessment tools that are being discussed. The author of this master thesis has chosen to go into detail on the development of the two tools, as well as purpose and use of the tools. The chapter will also include three different states that use the tools.

Knudsen and Stormoen continue to explain that VERA 2R and ERG 22+ are SPJ (Structural professional judgment) tools. What this means is that the risk assessment tools in general are not quantifiable, summative or point based. SPJ tools are developed with the intention of structured and indicative assessments with room for the interpreter to make professional assessment based upon their own experience as well as to take nuances into consideration. (Knudsen. Stormoen. 2020. P. 12) The authors specify that even though the tool is used differently by different states, it still operates as counter terror tool as no matter how it is used, it will pick up on factors that are related to extremism and terror. The big challenge of using any SPJ tool is how if they are to be implemented in such a way that it will work, it will need time and a lot of experience and excising knowledge of the tools, in order to use them.

### ERG22+. (Extremism risk guide)

As explained earlier in this master thesis, ERG was developed with the intention of stopping the process of radicalization rather than to focus on stopping violence like the other risk assessment tool focus on (VERA)

This chapter is dedicated to explaining more in detail what and how ERG22+ operate, the intentions behind the tool and strengths and weaknesses that comes with the tool. Rita Augstad Knudsen wrote a chapter in in the textbook *Behavioral science of terrorism and political aggression*. In her chapter “*Measuring radicalisation: risk assessment conceptualisations and practice in England and Wales*» Knudsen focus on ERG22+ and how England and Wales have used the tool.

Knudsen state in her chapter that ERG focus on radicalization, a term that many scholars and politician’s debate. Knudsen write that the term radicalization or at least the concept of

radicalization is debated for being misleading, vague and based upon wrong and ill assumptions (Neumann, P. R. (2013) Further on, Knudsen write that in the context of counter terrorism, some claim that there is no link between religious thoughts, political views and ideology, while other believe that there are in fact such links. (*Knudsen. 17.01.2018.*) The author also write that it is important to distinguish between cognitive radicalisation and behavioural mobilisation, extremism, or engagement on the one hand, and ‘deradicalisation’ and ‘disengagement’ on the other.

Within UK counter terrorism, the term radicalization and the continued view of radicalization being linked to terrorist acts have led the police to try to criminalize nonviolent extremism, but it has been put down indefinitely by investigative commissions, due to a lack of definition of extremism in what is a legal way. Even though there is a lack of such a definition, the ERG still works on extremism as the topic and target. (*Knudsen. 17.01.18*)

### Purpose and use of the ERG tool

England, like many other European nations were early in developing specialized tools for counter terrorism. In 2006, the UK terrorist act or TACT included many nonviolent terrorist crimes as well as some violent crimes. The majority of terrorist acts are not violent, but more about encouragement, incitement to violence, terrorist publications, training future terrorist and preparing acts of terrorism to name a few. Knudsen further explain that with the addition of different acts of terrorism and the expansion of terrorist crimes, many psychologists working to assess offender risk in prisons, found out that their former tools which focused more on violence was unable to capture the new risks. (*Lloyd, M., & Dean, C. (2015)*)

While this tool was being developed, scholars and academics were researching on risk assessment and were now beginning to question the usefulness of generic risk assessment to the field of terrorism, extremism and radicalization. Another point was made, that psychological factors that made someone more disposed to terrorism activities, seemed to differ from those that were more disposed to act violently in other ways. If risk assessment tools were to be effective, such tools would need to account for these differences. (*Knudson. 17.01.18.*) (*Monahan, 2011; Pressman, 2009, p. 16–17*))

Back in 2009, two forensic psychologists were given a task by the UK national offender management service, otherwise known as NOMS, to develop a tool for assessing risk among imprisoned terrorist offenders. The psychologist was motivated by need to prioritize between cases in the UK and this became the ERG tool. They hoped to find a way to more easily identify people of particular concern and to select these people for targeted attention as well as interventions. Based upon input from 20 different cases of convicted extremist offenders, 21 indicators were eventually discovered.

With the help of feedback and additional knowledge from caseworks, 22 risk indicators were discovered. The “+” was added incase new factors or indicators are to be discovered and added. The ERG 22+ was the result of their work and research in the UK prison and their reading and study of forensic literature. While the ERG and the study was written with experience if sympathizers and people inspired by AL Qaeda, the ERG tool is useful for anyone, no matter the gender, ideology or religious view, as well as lone actors or groups. When a psychologist is conducting an assessment, they write down precent, partially present or not present, when referring to the ERG 22+ indicators.

*(Below is a picture of indicator that ERG 22+ use)*

## **Engagement**

- 1. Need to redress injustice and express grievance**
- 2. Need to defend against threat**
- 3. Need for identity, meaning, belonging**
- 4. Need for status**
- 5. Need for excitement, comradeship or adventure**
- 6. Need for dominance**
- 7. Susceptibility to indoctrination**
- 8. Political/moral motivation**
- 9. Opportunistic involvement**
- 10. Family or friends support extremist offending**
- 11. Transitional periods**
- 12. Group influence and control**
- 13. Mental health**

## **Intent**

- 1. Over-identification with a group or cause**
- 2. Us and Them thinking**
- 3. Dehumanisation of the enemy**
- 4. Attitudes that justify offending**
- 5. Harmful means to an end**
- 6. Harmful end objectives**

## **Capability**

- 1. Individual knowledge, skills and competencies**
- 2. Access to networks, funding and equipment**
- 3. Criminal history**
- + Any other factor**

*(Knudsen. 17.01.18. ((Lloyd & Dean, [2015](#), p. 46)*

Knudsen write that since 2011, the ERG has been used in prison in England and Wales. The two countries specifically use the ERG to assess terrorism offenders that has been sentenced under the TACT, as well as shorter versions of the ERG to asses' prisoners that has been sentenced for none terrorist acts. ERG is used to help with determine different things such as prisoner's security, bail and release as well as targeted interventions.

While the ERG is being utilized in England and Wales, Scotland has chosen to use the Violent extremism risk assessment tool (VERA 2R). Knudsen write that the ERG tool has

faced criticism by the royal collage of psychiatrists for lack of transparency to its source basis and also for the possibility of flawed methodology involved in its development.

### VERA 2R. (Violent extremist risk assessment)

For context this chapter will go into a deeper explanation of what VERA 2R as a risk assessment tool is and how it was developed. This chapter will also go into detail about challenge that VERA 2R possess and how countries like Sweden and Netherland use the tool in their counter terrorist measures. When referring to VERA 2R, the author includes the different types of VERA tools that have been updated over the years. VERA 2R is the latest updated version of the model (as of 2018), but in this master thesis the VERA 2R will simply be written as VERA.

Martin Herzog Evans wrote an article in the European journal of probation that there is less knowledge about the development of the VERA than about the development of the ERG 22+. Evans explain that publication show that VERA was developed in 2009 as a type of “guide” by Dr. Elaine Pressman, due to results from an examination of research findings on violence and prediction of violence, as well as discussions with experts within forensic clinicians. (*Evans. 2018. P.6*) This guide was later revised in 2010 due to feedback from experts and people with experience within law enforcement, corrections and forensic psychology. The risk assessment tool was developed due to an increase risk of violence motivated by idealistic, violent individuals.

Heide, Zwan and Leyenhorst write that there is an overlap between VERA and ERG 22+. The developers even going so far as to ask to try and work with ERG 22+ developers. The models were too different for such a collaboration to be a success and the developers focused on creating their own tools instead. A big difference is how the ERG 22+ is based upon casework rather than academic literature.

VERA 2R include a number of factors that are developed to better spot potential radicalization such as fear, status and a search for significancy. The 2R update also include no violence such as criminal history, personal history and mental disorders. These indicators have been identified as aggravators that might lead to radicalization and violent terror activities. (*Heide. Zwan. Leyenhorst. 2019. P. 13*) The VERA 2R now include 34 different factors separated on five smaller domains.

- *Attitude and ideology* which has seven risk components
- *Social context and intention* which also has seven components
- *History, action and capacity* which has six components
- *Commitment and motivation* which has eight components
- *Protective factors* which have six components

*(Vera-2r.nl, <https://www.vera2r.nl/>)*

While the VERA 2R assessment is taking place, the psychologist will mark down all 34 factors as either low, middle or high. The final results will not yield any numerical answer of the risk, but rather the basis of a general evaluation from the psychologist. In order to observe the results over time, the evaluation is recommended to be done a number of times through the prison sentence. As stated, the VERA 2R tool is intended to be used in prison and more specifically towards inmates that have been convicted of terror activities or extremism. The tool can also be used to help with the prevention of radicalization outside of prison as well as deciding which individuals that might be in the position where radicalization is likely to occur.

### Purpose and use of the VERA tool

In their paper on the ERG 22+ and VERA 2R tools, Heide, Zwan and Leyenhorst write about the purpose of the VERA tool and they state that it is used differently based upon what country that use it. The authors write that some states use the VERA for analyzing the risk before a prisoner is released, while other states use it for pre-trial. VERA can also be used to support an analysis of future violence and extremist activity as well as to identify the objective for management of extremist violence. *(Heide. Zwan. Leyenhorst. 2019. P. 16)* in the NUPI report on risk assessment tools, the authors Knudsen and Stormoen write that VERA was originally developed to consider and the possibility of violence from extremists, but developers of the VERA 2R claim that the tool can now be used for more purposes such as within prison care and even general discouragement of extremism. *(Knudsen. Stormoen. 2020. P. 12)*

## Netherland and implementation and use of VERA 2R

In Netherland, the practice when a new prisoner arrives is to decide where the prisoner is to be sent. Netherland has different types of prisons for different crimes. Certain prisons are required to use VERA systemically. Every prisoner that is suspected to be radicalized or terror activities will be tested. If the prisoner is considered a risk for society, they will be transferred into a special department while they wait for a date on their trial. While waiting, the prison psychologist will extract the information they need in order to use the VERA tool.

Knudsen and Stormoen write that the first assessments are done within six weeks and is used to find out which character or indemnity the inmate has. Either a criminal opportunist, a leader or a follower. Later the VERA 2R will try to find data on how receptive the inmate is of influence, their experience in combat, criminal records, vulnerability, level of anger and frustration and at last, the gender. All of these different factors are taken into consideration for eventual prison time and reintegration plan. It also helps to decide on what kind of work needs to be done in order to prevent a relapse into a radical mindset and prevention of radicalization within prison. Knudsen and Stormoen also specify that VERA 2R and the different “protective factors” that the tool uncovers, are of great importance when thinking of rehabilitation. (Knudsen. Stormoen. 2020. P. 14) Finally the authors write that during the writing of their report on Netherland and their use of VERA 2R, they have come to the conclusion that the risk assessment tool will not be implanted outside of prison.

## Sweden and their implementation and use of VERA 2R

Sweden has chosen to use the same risk assessment tools as Netherland. In her paper *preventing radicalization in prison*, Sara Christiansen compares the differences between danish and Swedish prison systems as well as how the two countries handle radicalization in prison. In her paper, Christiansen write that while Sweden has taken the use of VERA 2R, Denmark has chosen to not use any particular risk assessment tool in their prison system. Christiansen point out that there is no data on Denmark`s use of risk assessment tools as of 2018, leading here to believe that the danish are either not using such tools, or that they have disclosed it to the public. (Christiansen. 2017. P. 28)

Christiansen came to a conclusion during here research that during research and testing of different tools to assess the risk of radicalization, the VERA tool was closest to being accurate in risk assessment. Swedish researchers believed that the VERA tool was the closest tool to provide a well-rounded assessment of potentially dangerous individuals in prisons. The swedes have also been using a Swedish developed risk assessment tool named RMB-B. This generic tool was developed by the prisons them self and is used in similar ways to the VERA 2R tool. The interviewee will conduct an interview with 72 different questions within the span of a few hours. Two of the 72 questions are designed to reveal if the prisoner support or is in contact with people that support the use of violence for political, religious or ideological gains. *(Knudsen. Stormoen. 2020. P. 29) (Basra and Neumann 2020:28.)*

The RMB-B tool might be too generic, and according to Knudsen and Stormoen, it can't give enough information to uncover actual connection to radical groups, it is still a useful tool for uncovering vulnerabilities and protection that the prisoner might need in order to be rehabilitated while in prison. Usually there is one or more employee at the prison that has been given training and education in RMB-B. The larger issue with this tool is that while VERA 2R and ERG 22+ is specially designed to focus on terror related risk assessment.

While Sweden has seen relatively few acts of terrorism, the last 10 years has changed a lot. Sweden were victims of terror attacks in 2010 and 2017. Sweden is also the country with most foreign fighters per capita, according to the NUPI report. This led Sweden to find a risk assessment tool that was developed to suit their special needs, and in 2016 they adopted the VERA 2R model for their counter terror work. The European union also wanted Sweden to join a project where terror convicted inmates were registered in an EU database, that all members of the EU could access. The project name was DARE and its focus was as stated to develop a database as well as validating the VERA 2R tool. By joining the project, Sweden also accepted the use of the VERA tool which helped to build the database. *(Knudsen. Stormoen. 2020. P. 18)*

While VERA is of great use inside of prisons, there is little use for it when the prisoner has been released from jail. It is common for the Swedish prison system to begin on reintegration from an early point in the inmates' prison sentence, but this work is the same for extremists as with common inmates. Sweden also stand out amidst states such as the UK and Netherland as Sweden do not have a follow-up plan that is specialized for extremists. As of now



according to the NUPI report, this is something the government of Sweden is working on developing, as of 2020. A similarity with Netherland is that Sweden do not believe the VERA 2R model to be of any use outside of the prison system.

The choice of focusing on Sweden and their use of VERA 22R is due to the similarities between Sweden and Norway. Norway and Sweden also share similarities when it comes to how the prison system works. Sara Christiansen wrote about the similarities between Denmark and Sweden, but perhaps these systems are common in all of Scandinavia as well. A theory that this author has developed is that the VERA model might be more favorable for the Norwegian prison system, but Sweden chose to use the VERA model due to their commitment with the DARE project developed by the EU. Norway is not a member of EU, which could mean that Norway is more open to find other risk assessment tool, or to create their own like the UK did.

## Discussion

This part of the chapter will be broken down into smaller sub chapters. For a better and easier overview. The author has chosen to use each of the sub questions as the headline in order to answer them more clearly. Each sub chapter will answer the questions either with the collection data from literature and interviews with relevant people.

### A problem with definition

A challenge when writing about terrorism and radicalization is how there is no commonly accepted definition of terrorism. The term has over the years been politicised by different states and groups, making it a challenge to find a common definition that everyone can agree to. Article 3 of the UN deceleration of 2010 defined terrorism as “*Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them*» (UN human rights council. 2020)

While the UN have made effort to create a definition that many can understand and use themselves, consensus is difficult to make within communities of policy makers, scholars and states. This has in turn lead many to defeatism while other have begun to work overtime to conceptualize terrorism. (Saul. 2019. P. 35) In his chapter *Defining terrorism*, author Ben Saul write that the definition problem goes as far back as the late eighteenth century when trying to define the Jacobin reign of terror during the French revolution. After this, the term has been used loosely on state and none state actors depending on the viewpoint of the victims and offended. Saul explains that the definition is not limited to only rhetorically discredit political opponents. The author of the chapter specifies that there are normative differences such as religious views, ideologies and political views that differs when it comes to the view in licit and illicit use of violence.

While many would believe that the use of violence, and especially towards civilians, Saul remind his readers that many groups don't view all civilians as civilians and that some civilians even deserve attacks. Trough out time we have seen many such situations, from Israel attacking Palestinians, Vietcong labeling allies of the US as combatants or even the US seeing it as necessary for the war to drop two atomic bombs on Japan, killing thousands of civilians Japanese. Saul explained that after the 1960`s, transnational terrorist acts increased and was often done by liberation movements for a number of reasons such a resisting colonial powers (Saul. 2019. P.37) These attacks forced the international community to adopt a number of treaties that address common methods of terrorist violence, such as hijacking, kidnapping and attacks on diplomat, to name a few. While most of these treaties avoid mentioning terrorism, there are three treaties that have chosen to do so, namely terrorist financing, terrorist bombing and finally, nuclear terrorism. While none of the treaties have established a crime of terrorism, but Saul writes that the treaty of financing terrorism came close, in that it is criminal act to finance terrorism. The treaties them self, force states to criminalize certain acts for the court of law. Finally, Saul writes that "*a few new treaties require states to regard the offence as nonpolitical for the purpose of extraditions, but most do not require such*" (Saul. 2019. P.39)

The UN human right council write about the necessity for a proper definition of terrorism as it is essential for the protection of states, it can help to separate the difference between private and public violence and finally, help with the condemnation of violence on human rights.

While terrorism have a huge impact on human lives, it also impacts the economy of states that terrorist acts are committed. Often way more than people tend to realize, according to the UN.

The author of this master thesis chose to include the debate on defining terrorism as it is relevant to the subject of risk assessment. The intension of risk assessment tools is to counter terrorist attacks and violence, but how does one use such tools if the very definition of terrorism is not properly defined?

In their NUPI report on the use of special risk assessment tools, the authors Rita Knudson and Ole Stormoen talk about how the older tools for risk assessment of prisoners were too generic to pick up risks when interviewing terror convicted prisoners. On order for these prisoners to be convicted for a terror related crime, the state will need to have a clear policy and definition on terrorism. According to the Norwegian government, it is the criminal law of Norway specify that an act of terrorism is defined as an act to prevent functions of basic activities in society, create fear in the population or to force the government to act based upon threats of violence or fear. (*Regjeringen. No. 2021*) In other words, Norway use a specific definition in line with what the UN would define as terrorism.

### Can VERA and ERG 22+ be used outside of prison care?

In the chapter on VERA and ERG, the author explains what the risk assessment tools are and how they work. The research question was something that the author of this paper began to ponder on while reading on the different risk assessment tools and how they are used. When reading the NUPI report on VERA and ERG or the number of articles written by Elain Pressman, one begins to see the benefits of such tools. But a repeating trend with such tools is where they are utilized in society. ERG and VERA is utilized in prisons, in order to map out the level of radical mindset that a prisoner has. But finding data and research on the subject of using risk assessment tools outside prison, is a challenge.

In the literature review chapter, the author of this master thesis discusses how there is a lack of literature on the subject of how and if risk assessment tools can be used outside of prison. The discussion around risk assessment tools outside prison revolve mostly around violent risk

assessment and not on extremism. While the two tools have similarities in how the risk is being assessed, the differences are big enough that special tools for analyzing the risk of extremism was developed as a stand-alone tool.

In order to understand why the author of this thesis wish to implement risk assessment tools outside prison is due to the potential good it can do in other institutes, such as psychiatric care. A theory that this author has, is that by using such tools as the risk assessment tools on psychiatric patients or people that law enforcement or other institutes have received warnings of extremist or radical behavior. An example would be the recent case in Norway with the Kongsberg attack. Friends and family had been in contact with both the police and psychiatric care, due to the person acting more and more dangerously. (*Quist. 03.12.21*)

While the risk assessment tool does not fix every single problem that they are used for, they can still aid in assessing just how dangerous someone is. Through the use of interviews or “conversations” with an individual that has been reported as possible dangerous individual, then law enforcement or psychiatric care might be able to pick them up before they act out.

While studying literature on risk assessment tools, the author realized that it can be a challenge to conduct interviews with people suspected of being radicalized without the person refusing to either answer or leaving. While no literature seems to discuss this case, it seems like a logical issue that might explain the lack of risk assessment tools in other areas. An interview with an anonymous person reveals that it would also take a lot of time and resources to educate enough psychiatrists in order for enough institutes to utilize the risk assessment tool, such as VERA 2R and ERG 22+.

The person that was interviewed have extensive knowledge on the two risk assessment tools that this master thesis is discussing. The anonymous person also discusses how a big challenge with implementing such tools to, say psychiatric care facilities is, that these facilities have already problems with financial aid and staffing problems, meaning that there is just not enough money, or people available to handle all different reports of concern. According to research, as many as 85 percent of hospitals and institutes report that they are struggling to hire new psychiatrics within 2020 and 2021. (*Wærnes. 10.05.21*) With the lack of people that can use the risk assessment tools, with a lack of funding, and the issue of how individuals may not want to partake in the interviews/conversations, then one is able to see

why risk assessment tools cannot be used outside of prison care. At least not as the current situation in Norway is.

The sub research question is if VERA or ERG can be used outside of prison, and the answer can be somewhat of a challenge to answer. If you ask the question as a simple yes or no question, then the answer is yes. The risk assessment tools can and will aid if implemented and adapted for other institutions than prison. Institutes such as psychiatric care could benefit from using tools where the cases show potential for extremist violence. While some of the questions and ways of conducting the interview might need to be altered for the situation, there can still be cases where such tools are valuable. However, one must take into account that a number of factors are important for the tool to work properly. First off, the people using the tool need proper knowledge and education in using the risk assessment tools, something that will cost both time as well as money. Second is that the person being part of the interview would have to consent to being part of the conversation/interview. While the interviews true motives might need be revealed, the person that is suspected of being radicalized might either simply stop or they might not answer honestly, making it that much more challenging to get a good analysis of the risk that they pose.

Another expert on risk assessment tools agreed to be interviewed for this master thesis. As with everyone else being interviewed, the person will stay anonymous. During the interview, the topic of the research question came up, and why risk assessment tools have not been implemented outside prison. The person explained that implementing risk assessment tools outside of prison care is a challenge due to the difficulty of gathering data in an organized and structured way. The person specified that that with prison, there is no lack of access to people 24 hours a day, where the tool can be used. With other institutions, there are far less people to get access to. Another point the person made is the lack of people that fit the description of being a radicalized person with wishes to do harm. The anonymous person estimate that the number could be as low as one in a million, making it huge challenge to create a profile on violent extremists. The persons solution was to focus risk assessment tools on finding people prone to violence, rather than extremist violence, or better yet, use risk assessment tools for extremist violence with other tools and programs.

Looking at the discussions on what needs to be done in order for a risk assessment tool to be implemented elsewhere, one can understand why it has not been done yet. While the answer

to the question is yes, it still a lot of work to be done. Another point to make is that with the lack of literature written on the subject of risk assessment outside of prison, it is only speculation that the tool would benefit more than what is already being done within institutions such as psychiatric care. A suggestion for future research would be for someone with a background in psychiatric care to use risk assessment tools, in order to measure and collect data on how effective the tool is. When thinking about the challenges of doing research on such a subject, one might begin to see why there is little amount of literature. The ability to measure during research on such as topic as risk assessment tools, can be a challenge, as it is hard to copy the data, as individual people might produce different results. There is also the challenge of finding people that are relevant for the study, as there is a lack of people that are qualified for being part of the sampling pool. There is also the issue of education and the time and money that need to be spent to conduct the research, making it hard to create any new literature on the subject.

To conclude this sub chapter, it is possible to use the risk assessment tools outside of prison. The problem is that the tool is mainly developed for use in prison, where people are kept in place with no possibility of leaving. The tool requires that the people either answer sincerely or that the tool can be used over time to better analyze the risk that the person pose. Other institutions do not have the same level of authority and power as the prison care system, making the tool easier to use in prison than outside. Based upon what the anonymous researcher discussed during the interview, then a risk assessment tool that focus on analyzing the risk of violent extremism, is better suited for use within the prison care system, than outside, mainly due to how few cases of violent extremism that there is.

### What type of counter extremist work is already being done to stop potential extremism in Norway

This sub chapter will discuss what is already being done to prevent radicalization and terror in Norway. When the author refers to Norway, he refers to the Norwegian prison care and the tool they already use. This chapter will discuss how the situation is in Norwegian prison and what type of tool they use and strengths and weaknesses.

In 2019, Franc Orban wrote an article related to a report about the use of a mentor program to prevent radicalization in prisons. The project has now been implemented by the prison care system in Norway. Already in 2014, the criminal care system in Norway asked if it was possible to develop and implement a mentor program that was specially developed for inmates that was thought to be easier to recruit to extremist organizations. Particularly convicts of young age. While the project does not mention other prisoners serving time for criminal activities related to ideology or religion, such inmates were in theory also part of the focus group. Orban wrote that the project was facing a challenging decision during development. The developers were facing the option of focusing on ideological impact on prisoners while the second option was to prioritize absence of relapse into a life of crime after serving time in prison. (*Orban. 14.02.19.*)

The project chose to focus less on the ideological parts and more on rehabilitation, as well as making the participants in the project voluntary. The original plan for the project was for more governmental intuitions to share the responsibility of the mentor project. The mentors were also supposed to have a high degree of competence and should reflect the diversity of the Norwegian community with regards to gender, age, ethnicity and cultural background that was successfully integrated into society. Close friends and family were not intended to be mentors for the inmates.

The returning of foreign fighters created a lot of pressure on the Norwegian correctional service, and the department of justice chose to implement the mentor project nationally rather than regionally, as it was originally planned. A growing issue with the project emerged according to Orban. Bureaucratization halted the project as new priorities were added. Another issue was how the project was intended to be used in larger parts of Norway without more funds being added. Eventually the project went on to focus more on returning foreign fighters and violent Islamic extremism while other extremist groups such as the far right was down prioritized. All the new changes altered the original intension of the project, which was to stop radicalization of inmates in prison. (*Orban. 14.02.19*)

As of 2019, there are still regions in Norway that have not adopted the mentor project in their prison even though the mentor program is now part of the curriculum at KRUS. This is either due to lack of need or due to underfunding. But while there are issues with the project, inmates have come out to acknowledge that the project has been a success for them, stating

that building trust with the mentor and conversations with them have helped inmates handle the challenging time in prison as well as reflect on their actions before reintegrating into society. Orban finish his article by writing that such feedback as the inmates give, is reasons for why the project has relevancy, despite its problems.

Unlike for example Netherland, Norway do not have specific prisons for radical people. Instead of building specific prisons for such people, Norway spread their radical inmates over different prisons. KRUS explains that there are no special prisons or departments for such, meaning that every prison in Norway need to handle the risk of radicalization in their prison. Tore Bjørge is a professor at the university of Oslo, who leads the department in research on extremism (C-rex). Bjørge developed a model in 2011 to aid KRUS and the Norwegian correctional department in preventing crime and terrorist activities. Under is a list of nine important point that Bjørge wrote. Norm formation against the use of violence and terror acts. Deterrence through threat of punishment. Prevention of planned acts of terrorism. Incapacitation by removing the means of planning and acting out plans of terrorism. Protection of especially vulnerable targets by making act of terrorism more challenging and dangerous. Reduce the damaged done by acts of terrorism. Reduce the advantage and benefits of acts of terrorism. Reduce the cause and reason for wishing to act on radical ideological, political or religious views. Make the terrorist or terror group give up on their wish to do acts of terrorism (Make them quit) (*Tore Bjørge. 2011*)

KRUS also write about the use of risk assessment tool and mention VERA 2R and ERG 22+ as valid tools for the prevention of radicalization, or at least on how to spot potentials for radicalization. KRUS also mention that no such tool has yet to be implanted in Norwegian prison. As of now (2016) individual prisons need to develop and implement their own system for analyzing risks. The question is then if there is a particular reason for why prison care in Norway don't implement risk assessment tools, if they are aware of them. Using different types of tools for each prison can lead to issues where overlapping does not happen, meaning that certain prisons might be better at spotting risks of radicalization while other prisons do not pick up on it. This could potentially lead to certain prisons being more favorable for radical groups to recruit.

According to Silke, it is far more likely for prisoners to be radicalized in jail than to be influenced into more crime, even though there are fewer terrorists in jail than common



criminals. (*Stern. Pascarelli. 2020. P. 111*) Even the former leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became more radicalized while in an US lead prison in Iraq. This prison became a sort of terrorist university for the group that would become ISIS. In Stig Jarle Hansen and Stian Lids book on deradicalization, it is written that no one has the actual numbers of terrorists and radicalized people in jail. A study in 2011 estimated that between 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 and 2011, there were 119, 044 anti-terror arrests and 35,117 convictions spread over 66 different countries. (*Stern. Pascarelli. 2020. P. 113*) Such large numbers show only part of the real threat, as there might be a larger number of people now in 2021. The two authors of the chapter also discuss this, and even believe that the numbers have sharply increased over the last three years (2020).

With such numbers, the author of this master thesis sees it as interesting and relevant to see and discuss how other states stop radicalization in their prisons in comparison to how Norway and the mentor program works.

In Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka, the programs aim at aiding the radicalized prisoners with psychological, spiritual and cultural aid. Saudi Arabia think that many of the people joining terrorist organizations, do so due to a lack of money, and so families are compensated. Saudi Arabia do believe that psychological and vocational aid is of great help and continue to follow up on these people post release, often with being re-evaluated. Sri Lanka has chosen to follow the same path as Saudi Arabia but chose to focus more on aiding the prisoners to a “feeling of significance” as such feelings seemed to be a buffer against extremism. (*Stern. Pascarelli. 2020. P. 113*)

Germany follow similar practices with two deradicalization programs named VPN and EXIT. The VPN program follow similar routs as that of Saudi and Sri Lanka, in that it includes prevention and intervention service, even after the prisoner is released from jail. The program can continue for 12 months after the release. It also provides assistance with employment and housing. While the VPN is more targeted at religious extremism, the EXIT program seems to focus more on right wing terrorism. It too is a program implemented in prison and aim to aid the prisoner in education and employment. It also assists the staff of prisons with awareness training. Both the VPN and the EXIT program are flexible and adaptable enough to be used on different cases. (*Stern. Pascarelli. 2020. P. 116*)

The readers can quickly see the relations between the programs and the states. All three countries share a common value that the road to deradicalization comes through focusing on the mental wellbeing of the prisoner as well as to follow up on the prisoners after release. It is easy to also see the comparability between these programs and the mentor program in Norway. The argument for using these countries as examples is that there is a pattern in how effective deradicalization is being done. While the countries have different cultures and languages, they all follow a similar pattern in the way that they deradicalize. This strengthens the argument that what Norway is already doing to combat radicalization is effective.

During an interview the author of this thesis had, learned a lot more about the mentor program and its origins. The anonymous interviewee explained that the mentor program came from Denmark, and that Norway adopted the program back in 2016. Up until that year, Norway did not have any specific programs to aid their inmates. Franc Orban writes in the manual, on how Norway chose to develop their own model. This model would prioritize human relations, the development and maintenance of trust, and focus on good relations and conversations between the convict and the mentor. These values are also in line with what the prison care system wishes to practice. (Orban. 2015. P. 70) A key component in the mentor program is the ability to find competent mentors. Combine qualified mentors with prisoners that feel safe, feel progress and feel a sense of pride, will give the prisoner a higher chance of breaking free from milieus that would drag them back to a life of crime.

When the mentor program was still being developed, mentors were able to present information on the program as they were working. Not only mentors were given the chance to help, but the prisoners that was part of the program as well. The mentor's guidance was able to aid the prisoner in serving their time, as well as for them to accept their former life, and to take control and develop. (Orban. 2015. P. 71) Prisons where the program was implemented could also talk about positive effects of the program, as the participants showed development towards being more nuanced discussions, as well as being more future oriented.

*Following is a list of feedback that the prisoners told about mentors program during feedback. Help to feel normal. Aid in feeling less lonely. More aid to talk and discuss about anything. Aid and help to handle the time served in jail. Aid in everyday needs. (receiving reading materials, calendars etc. Aid in feeling heard and that the prison and system listen to the inmates. Aid in mastering of stress and anger. Aid with family relations (children,*

wife/husband, parents). Aid and assistance with theological practices. Aid in separating religion, politics and ideology. (Orban. 2019. P.65)

Such feedback as reported in the manual give clear arguments to how this program has relevancy in the Norwegian prison care system. The different comments that the prisoners make about feeling normal and how the mentor program help them separate between politics and religion are great indicators for progress towards being deradicalized. Finally, Orban recommend in his textbook, that the mentor program could be implemented in other groups and individuals that are in need of one-to-one aid. Either it being repeating members of gangs, or foreign people, waiting to be evicted from Norway. (Orban. 2015. P. 71)

In their textbook “Routledge handbook of deradicalization and disengagement” by Stig Jarle Hansen and Stian Lid, the two authors discuss a number of ways of handling deradicalization. In one of their chapters, the authors discuss if there even is a possibility to fully rehabilitate a terrorist. (Hanse. Lid. 2020. P 54.) The textbook mentions a short list of different approaches to deradicalization, with some methods such as push and pull factors, 3N theory and integrating perspectives. While this program can work if the goal is deradicalization, none of them work on changing the endorsement of terrorist ideology, meaning that there can still be a potential for the prisoner to retain their extremist views. (Hanse. Lid. 2020. P 63.) If the harmful views are still present when the prisoner is released whom is to say if they will act out again?

Stian Lid argue that local government can be a great tool in the work on deescalating and reintegrating violent extremists to society. Lid write about the use of different factors that the local government can use to sway radical members away from their milieu, such as welfare services that can aid with new opportunities for the person. However, such programs seem to be more relevant in first world countries such as Norway or Germany, where local government have enough resources to help out. (Hansen. Lid. 2020. P. 139) A challenge for the local government is to walk the fine line between aiding these people and keeping surveillance over them as well. Lid explain that many foreign fighters do not trust western government or the local government for that matter, as they think they are being tracked. For the local government to have any success, they need to build trust with the individual that they wish to help.

The anonymous professor stated in the interview that another large problem with the mentor program in Norway was the lack of people to mentor. What they stated is that the mentor program lacks the number of violent extremists to aid. The professor explained that there are mentors who does not have a person to mentor, as there are more mentors than people to aid. While this might seem as a positive development, as there are not enough people for the mentor program, but a large challenge is then to find out which people are in need of it? Another issue that the anonymous professor brought up during the interview is on how the mentor project is costly for the people being mentors.

In the interview he explains that being a mentor is a part time job that is combined with other work. An obstacle that some mentors face is that the work as a mentor, take up far too much time if combined with a second job, and that the personal expenses such as traveling would mean that a mentor would not earn enough to make it profitable for them to participate. If the mentors are not able to participate due to a lack of finances, then the mentor program as a whole will struggle. In his article, Franc Orban discuss how the mentor program was planned to be tested out regionally, but due to political pressure, and fear of possible violent actions from foreign fighters, the mentor program was spread out nationwide. Orban explain that the intension was for all Norwegian prisons to have one single tool for counter terrorism.

Something that must be pointed out when discussing the need for a risk assessment tool, is that these tools are by no means a magic fix to radicalization and prevention. While the tools themselves have shown to be effective in spotting the potential for violent extremist, the tools alone are not enough to stop extremism. The tools can instead be used as an added layer of safety when used next to other deradicalization programs, such as the mentor or EXIT program that Norway is already using. Based upon literature on the mentor program, and research on the EXIT program, one can argue that the risk assessment tools should not be changed with deradicalization programs but should instead overlap each other when it comes to counter terror work. The anonymous professor explains during the interview how Norway did discuss the implementation of the VERA 2R tool, some years back. In the end, Norway chose to not use the tool, as they did not have faith in that the tool would help any more than what was already being done. The professor explains that since the tool was inherently designed for use by trained psychiatrists, it was too costly and challenging to implement, but ultimately, they chose to make no decision at all.

Answering the question of what kind of counter extremist work is being done in Norway to stop violent extremism, then the answer is the mentor program. Based upon the literature on the mentor program and with the information received by interviewing the anonymous professor, it would seem that the mentor program is doing some of the work in regard to deradicalization of prisoners. Based upon the feedback given by both mentors and participants of the program, the mentor program really does aid the prisoners. Feedback from prisoners say that the program aids them in many of the issues that was bothering them while in prisons, but during the interview, the professor explained that he has tried to get in contact with some of the prisoners that was part of the mentor program. He explained that none of them were interested in answering questions that could give data on how much the mentor program actually works.

When it comes to showing actual results, then the mentor program has some problems. One factor for measuring the effect of the mentor program, is if the prisoners return to their extremist milieus, or if they commit more crime after being released from jail. The professor explains in the interview that the first indicator for a success is how the prisoner has no relapses, whatsoever, but another factor that the program view as a success is if the prisoner only relapse into committing nonviolent crimes. While this is not a full success, it shows that the issue might have been bad rehabilitation and not necessarily the mentor program. But the challenge is how to find out if the prisoner has actually been deradicalized. A person can still hold extremist views while still never act out with violent activities, but the mentor programs work is only in deradicalization, and according to the professor, there is little way of finding out just how effective the program is.

This brings us back to what this thesis is suggesting. With the use of a risk assessment tool that conducts multiple interviews during the period that the inmate serves time, one can be able to more accurately assess if the person has become deradicalized. By conducting an interview at the beginning of the prison sentence, a few more during the span of their sentence, and finally when the prisoner is about to be released. The professor explains that one of the reasons for why an SPJ tool is so effective at getting information on how radical the person is, is how even though the person is answering questions in a way they think will trick the psychiatrists, the answer will still come, eventually.

The professor tells “that during a conversation of say ten minutes, the radical person might be able to trick you by saying things that you want to hear. But during a conversation lasting for say two hours and over the span of multiple conversations, the mask will eventually slip, and they will reveal how radical they are”. The author of this master thesis suggests that using the risk assessment tool side by side with the mentor program. The risk assessment tools purpose is to analyze if the person is a risk of being radical and to use violence, and the mentor program deradicalize the person. By using risk assessment tools with the program, prisons can both deradicalize, and also make sure that the program has been effective.

### Do Norway need risk assessment tools?

*This sub chapter will discuss why Norway need risk assessment tools. The author has chosen to include information on what type of threats that Norway face, both outside and inside prison. By looking at different threats and factors for why these people either become radicalized as well as how the process work, the author will discuss through secondary analysis why Norway is in need of risk assessment tools, or if the need such tools at all.*

As mentioned earlier, states such as the Netherlands view prison to be a hotbed for radicalization. Franck Orban is a Norwegian professor at College of East Norway (Høgskolen I Østfold). He wrote a paper on violent extremism in prisons in Norway. In his paper, Orban write about how radicalization in Norwegian prisons is a familiar problem. Orban explain that certain radical groups in Europe such as ETA, IRA or FLNC view prison sentences as a necessary part of their ideological or religious goal. They also see the sentence as a way to form connections to other likeminded people and to even spread their worldviews to potential new members. Many of these people also wish to be viewed as political prisoners, rather than a common criminal.

KRUS write how poor prison conditions might further radicalization for the inmates. The argument KRUS makes is how people in already challenging situations, such as serving time, might be easier to influence with extremist ideas and values. Being placed in a confined area with different views might lead inmates into being converted for the benefits that follows, such as protection or a sense of worth. (KRUS. 2016. P.27) According to KRUS, a prisoner is

especially vulnerable to radicalization. This is due to what KRUS calls vulnerable factors. Due to a prison restriction, the likelihood of radicalization grows.

To be imprisoned can be viewed by many as unfair and could potentially lead the prisoner to think that he or she is being persecuted for their views or ideas, something extremist groups will take advantage of. Add the fact that prison guards have power and the inmates do not, and a volatile mix might result. Further reading state that there has been a new development where foreign fighter are now returning and are receiving veteran status in prison. These veterans can further develop radicalization with young new inmates. KRUS believe that this has correlations with how gangs operate when recruiting new members. (KRUS. 2016. P. 30) There is of course also the possibility that such veterans have been deradicalized from fighting, something that can be of great benefit in deescalating other inmates. KRUS state that this a factor that has no academic legitimacy as of now, as no research has been done on the subject, as of 2016.

Franc Orban write that there is also the concept of the “push and pull” factor. Orban state that many extremist groups use loopholes or underfunding of prisons to radicalize inmates. What he means by this is that organizations use their time in prison to “pull” new members closer to their ideology or group. This can even be done without the victim knowing it. Radicalizing new members can also be seen as a victory for the radicalizer as they gain fame or respect in their organization. This type of work is not limited to extremist groups or terror cells but is practiced by criminal organizations as well. The “push” part is when the members of the group radicalize the new inmates into “pushing” back at the prison guards, and later potentially at society through violence. (Orban. 2011. P. 17) Unfair treatment, segregation and exclusion can be factors for why new members might revolt against the prison staff. Orban and KRUS state such levels of radicalization only happens when the push and pull factor exist together with radical prisoners that wish to radicalize other. In the Norwegian prison system, it is important to see how the prevention work for radicalization is done. This part of the master thesis will discuss how the Norwegian prison care work to prevent radicalization and if this is effective.

Thomas Uglevik and Dominic Damsa wrote a paper in 2017 where they discussed the Scandinavian prison models and the benefits and cons of using such a system as the three countries have developed. In the paper *The pains of crimmigration imprisonment: Perspective*

of a Norwegian all foreign prison the two authors discuss that Scandinavian penal culture are exceptionally liberal and humane, something that is reflected and manifested in prison. According to the paper, the Scandinavian prisons are far better than those elsewhere. (Uglevik. Damsa. 2017. P.2) The paper explains this claim as due to human punishment, egalitarian welfare state prison and the prison is supportive, inclusive and focus on empowering prisoners to a life without crime after release. Yet even though Scandinavian prisons seem to score higher on such areas, there still exist forms of radicalization in prison as explained by Franc Orban. This relates to the research question of why Norway need risk assessment tools. Even though Norway has such great prison systems, deradicalization is as important as in other states. It also leads up to another research question of what type of risk assessment tool that Norway already has. If radicalization is a growing concern, then what actions have Norway taken to hinder this?

In the literature review, the author of this thesis mentions the PST report and how they argue that Norway is at risk of some form of extremist attack in 2021. While the small city of Kongsberg did experience violence, it is still as of now (December 10, 2021) no knowledge on if the attack was due to extremism or psychiatric problems. (Elgaaen. 22.10.2021) In an article written by journalist Kjetil Bortelid Mæland, it is described that PST warned about such an attack as what happened in Kongsberg. (Mæland. 14.10.21.) In the PST report, they warn about the possibility of lone actors committing violent actions. They also explain how stopping such actions are more challenging due to how such people operate. The report explain that it is more challenging to counter such actions due to such people often action alone and use knives and less conventional weapons that are hard to track. (Shala. 2021) By looking at the risk of radicalization in prison with the growing concern over extremist threats in Norway by the PST, then a solid argument for the implementation of risk assessment tools begin to form.

A report written by Tina Wilchen Christensen discuss a number of ways to handle the return of foreign fighter from ISIS, back to Norway. In her report, she discusses that Norway need to expect that there will be a number of different people with different levels of radicalization. While some just want to return back to a normal life, some might have PTSD or are aggressive. Some might even plan terror activities in Norway. The author of the report state that especially the last category of people needs to be evaluated through some form of risk assessment, while serving time in prison. Christensen recommend using either VERA 2R



or ERG 22+ in order to map out what level of risk these prisoners pose to society.

*(Christensen. Bjørgo. 2017. P. 81)*

While Norway do not use risk assessment tools, they already have counter terror measures. Through the use of different deradicalization programs, such as the mentor and EXIT program, Norway work to aid in making people leave radicalized milieus. When discussing if Norway need risk assessment tools in order to counter violent extremis, then one must also look into what work is already being done in Norway to counter such violence, to begin with. Tina Christensen ties many of the foreign fighter to former criminal background where they became radicalized *(Christensen. Bjørgo. 2017. P 82.)* This connection to criminal milieus shows that a risk assessment tool in itself is not enough, as one must combat the radicalization process as well. An argument that the author of this thesis make, is that in order to counter violent extremism, one must utilize more of these tools, as well as deradicalization programs, in order to prevent extremist activities.

By asking if Norway even need a risk assessment tool, one must look at what the different institutes on counter terror in Norway and how they perceive threats to Norway. Based upon what the PST, KRUS and other experts on the field of extremism and counter terror, the argument is clear that more is needed to combat extremism. While the risk assessment tools are no solution to all type of tools, they still aid in analyzing the potential for extremist violence, for the people that are put in prison. By looking at how radicalization work in Norway and especially inside Norwegian prisons, the author explain why Norway is in need of a form of risk assessment tool, as the dangers of radicalization creates a form of urgency to map out which inmates are in need of being part of deradicalization programs.

The author of this thesis sees it as a way of strengthening deradicalization in Norwegian prisons by implementing either VERA 2R or ERG 22+. The question of if Norway do need such tools, then the answer would be yes. Even with the use of different programs such as the Mentor program or EXIT, Norway is in need of another tool in order to spot potential risks. The author of this thesis will recommend one of the tools on the basis that a structural professional judgment tool (SPJ) will aid what is already being done to counter extremism in Norway.

Literature on the programs show that it aids in taking radicalized people out of milieus or aid them in becoming deradicalized while already in prison. With the use of a risk assessment tool, prisoner that are suspected of being radicalized, can be discovered and helped before they manage to radicalize other inmates, or exit the prison with violent plans. By combining these programs with the risk assessment tool, one is able to overlap each other in order to prevent more radicalization while also aid more people in need. This author recommends that further research on the cooperation between deradicalization programs and risk assessment tools should be conducted in the future.

## Conclusion

Would Norway benefit from adopting a risk assessment tool for violent extremism? Based upon interviews with experts and a great number of literatures, then the answer would be yes. Looking at what Norway is already doing in their prisons to deradicalize their inmates, then the assistance of another tool that will focus less on deradicalization, and more on analyzing the risk of violent extremism, will be of great benefits. This master thesis was written to find out if the use of risk assessment tools could aid what is already being done I Norway. By analyzing literature on risk assessment tools and how they work, and are used in different states, while also look at what Norway is already doing to hinder violent extremism, then this author has reached the conclusion that implementing a risk assessment tool will be beneficial.

Programs such as the mentor program will aid in deradicalization, but on its own, there is not much data on the results of how effective this program has been at deradicalization. With the additional help of a tool that's sole purpose is to spot the potential for radical violence, then Norwegian counter terror work will become more effective. While the risk assessment tool might be more beneficial to Norway when utilized in the prison care system, this author also sees the benefits that other institutions such as in psychiatric care. While there are a number

of factors that need to be set in place for the risk assessment tool to reach its full potential, with further research, this author sees how such tools can aid in the future.

The use of method triangulation was of great benefit in answering the research questions for this master thesis. The ability to use different type of methods that suited the research questions made it possible to view data and literature from a multitude of different angles. By combining interviews with secondary analysis, it was possible to go even deeper into detail on the different subjects that is counter terrorism and risk assessment. With a larger timespan and with no global pandemic, this author would have tried to either interview former participants of the mentor program, or someone that works as a mentor. It would also have been of great help to interview someone that works at a prison and has experience with the mentor program. While making the interviewees anonymous is great way to keep personal data and details secure, it also creates an issue where the interviewees validity and reliability is not as strong as if they were not anonymous, due to their background and expertise, but due to time limitation, this author was not able to get an approving from the Norwegian center for research data (NSD) intime of this thesis due date. With no pandemic, as well as more time to prepare for the requirements of handling data with regards to NSD`s rules, then the identities of the interviewees would not have been anonymous.

If this author would make a recommendation with regards to which of the two tools that Norway should adopt, then I would suggest adopting the VERA 2R tool. As mentioned in the chapter about the two risk assessment tools, the VERA tool could be of great benefit to Norway. The ERG tool is specifically developed for the UK, meaning that if Norway were to adopt it, then many new changes would have to be made in order to make it fit better with the Norwegian system. The ERG tool is developed by using case work, meaning that such cases might not even be relevant for Norway.

The VERA tool is developed by using academic literature on the topic. The argument is that such a tool seems to be more suitable to adopt for Norway, as the academic literature can be more relevant to Norway than what case studies can. The final reason for why this author suggest implementing the VERA tool is because of the data base that was developed for it. The DARE project that the EU developed could be of great benefit to Norway as well, due to the shared data base that all members of the project get access to. This could potentially mean

that Norway can adopt their tools and share data with other member states, making the tool an ever-evolving tool against extremism.

A final suggestion would be to conduct more research on the benefit of the VERA tool. While this thesis discusses and recommend the implementation of risk assessment tools in Norway, new research with a focus on the VERA tool can yield even more data on how effective risk assessment tools are, if combined with other deradicalization programs, such as the mentor program.

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