

Sound Public Governance and Preventing Violent Extremism

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Abstract

This article underlines the role of sound government practices to implementing any strategy directed at preventing violent extremism. It highlights measures that advantage a networked, collaborative approach which includes local government, and civil society in efforts to counter violent extremism. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part deals with various approaches to the concept of the state and its significance from the perspective of violent extremism; the second outlines sound public governance as a means for preventing violent extremism and a number of case studies of few countries and their experiences across the world for their programs in preventing violent extremism highlighting the state's role such as Germany, Poland, Sweden and Denmark.

The state has an important role in being a source of security for its citizens, in being a core of identity and belonging to its citizens and in being a provider of resources and services to its citizens. All these factors and roles determine whether the state is legitimate and is fulfilling its economic functions. This paper examines the relation between the power or weakness of the state to the implementation of any strategy combating violent extremism.

Keywords: Preventing, violent extremism, state, civil society, sound governance, culture of state, power

State's role in implementing violent extremism prevention strategy

Preventing violent extremism became a central focus for national and international efforts; more and more countries are experimenting with different strategies of preventing violent extremism. The UN Secretary-General Plan of Action, endorsed in 2016, calls for a comprehensive approach encompassing not only essential security-based counter-terrorism measures but also systematic preventive steps to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to radicalize and join violent extremist groups. In its resolutions A/RES/70/291 and A/RES/72/284 for the fifth and sixth biennial review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to consider implementing relevant recommendations from the Plan of Action, and to develop their own national and regional plans of action (UNGA, 2015).

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The rapid growth in research directed toward preventing violent extremism has resulted in a rich but fragmented body of literature spanning multiple disciplines. The research in VE cuts across a range of disciplinary approaches.

The body of literature addressing upstream preventing violent extremism has grown rapidly and is emerging from a multitude of fields and disciplines, including psychology, psychiatry, public health, education, social work, and criminology. The breadth of the literature base, and the many different frameworks and perspectives through which VE is addressed, means that rather than there being one conversation on VE, there are multiple conversations within and between different fields. Naturally, much of the psychology literature focuses on individual-level analysis, whereas from a public health or social work perspective, primary attention is given to community or societal level factors (Stephens, Sieckelinck, 2019).

Recent research shows that governance is key to countering violent extremism, but balancing immediate needs with long-term goals can be incredibly difficult in fluid conflict zones. Expert Todd Diamond in his document published by Chemonics indicates that researchers and practitioners have moved away from an approach that focuses exclusively on presuming that economic factors drive extremism (Diamond, 2018). Reinforcing effective governance that addresses grievances is now seen as a central pillar to addressing violent extremism.

Both short-term stabilization activities and longer-term institutional capacity building initiatives are designed to bolster state legitimacy, which is crucial to achieving governance reform.

An article published by Jstor "Perspectives on Terrorism" in 2016 argues that central government needs multiple, diverse local and civil society partners to mobilize the knowledge and resources needed to differentiate from case to case. It suggests that public administration research into governance networks offers a useful lens on the practical challenges, limits, and opportunities of working against violent extremism in such a broad coalition of actors (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2016).

Nevertheless, political debates, particularly in the wake of terrorist attacks, tend to concentrate on punitive measures and on the role and responsibility of central government.

This article emphasizes on sound governance practices as a means for preventing violent extremism. It highlights measures that advantage a networked, collaborative approach which includes local government, and civil society in efforts to counter violent extremism. A network is more likely to possess the necessary resources and expertise to tailor interventions to individual cases than any single agency of central government, no matter how competent the agency may be.

This paper underlines the contribution of the state in this effort being a key player whose role is indispensable in this regard.

The state has been a subject matter of many social and human sciences, such as sociology, philosophy, law, geography, economics, and history. It remains however, at the core of political studies and at the center of all its subfields i.e. political thought and theory, comparative politics, and international relations. It is not surprising therefore that political science was defined for a while as the science of a state.

The paper comprises two main parts. The first deals with various approaches to the concept of the state and its significance from the perspective of violent extremism; the second outlines sound public governance as a means for preventing violent extremism and a number of countries' experiences across the world for their programs in preventing violent extremism highlighting the state's role.

The first part consists of nine components about the concept of the state and its relation to violent extremism, namely, the state as a legal concept, the state as a set of interactions and values, the state and the society, the globalized state, the network state, the state power or weakness, the state as a source of security for its citizens, as the core of identity and belonging, and as a provider of resources and services.

The second part consists of two components: upholding the state's culture, and cooperation between the state institutions, the civil society, and citizens.

Part one: The concept of the state

The state is a modern concept. It became the legal unit according to which the United Nations system and its specialized agencies were established upon. Its behavior is governed by public international law and international humanitarian law (Schuett et Stirk, 2015). The most obvious impact of the state is the creation of a uniform "State Culture" through state policies.

All through history, several approaches developed to understand the state and define its functions. The paper presents below the major approaches, noting that they do not represent different or distinct alternatives to each other, but rather it is more appropriate to understand them as an expression of the development of political science in understanding the relationship between state and society.

I. The state as a legal concept

This approach is one of the oldest definitions of the state, according to which it is perceived as an abstract legal entity based on three pillars: people, territory, and government. 'People' refers to the population of the state who permanently live in its territory. 'Territory' means the area occupied by the state and bordered by the boundaries that demarcate it from other countries. Territory is the domain in which the state exercises its authority and implements its laws. 'Government' refers to a number of institutions which rule the country and administer its affairs.

Government institutions issue laws regulating all societal interactions (legislature), implement those laws and execute public policies (executive), and create a system of litigation to resolve disputes arising among the state's residents on one hand, and between them and state institutions on the other hand (judiciary). All citizens and residents in any state are subject to its laws and regulations. Besides these three pillars, some add 'international recognition'. However, the most likely view is that this pillar is not a condition for the establishment of the state, but rather a condition for exercising its role in external affairs (Buch, 2012).

In other terms, a state is established on two foundations: a moral one which refers to the link between a 'people' and a specific 'territory', and a material one which refers to a group of institutions which regulate social interactions between individuals and with other states. This concept of the state is based on the belief in the existence of a single source of political authority that exercises its competences over its territory and people. The authority of state institutions has an obligatory nature over all citizen and residents of the state.

II. The state as a set of interactions and values

This approach is derived from the behavioral contribution to social and political analysis, and to the new ideas put forth by system analysis and structural functionalism analysis. Structural functionalism studies structures in terms of their function(s) within the system.

Two authors discussed these ideas derived from “the concept of system”; the first one is Talcott Parsons who developed this concept in sociology in his book “The Social System” (Parsons, 1991) and the second one is David Easton who developed it in political science in his book “The Political System” (Easton, 1953). This approach focuses on interactions taking place within the system. The analysis suggests that any system has parties, which interact with each other in regular and continuous manner.

Structural functionalists argued that, historically, there have been four major challenges to political systems, and that the challenges have occurred in the following sequence (in the West): penetration and integration (state-building), loyalty and commitment (nation-building), Participation and Distribution (Political Science Notes, n.d.).

These trends agree that political interactions, which are called political culture, take place in a cultural place such as the framework or a set of values and norms associated with power and relations between those who govern, the state, and those who are governed, the society. The term “political culture” was developed by Gabriel Almond in the 1950’s and it refers to a sub-system of culture in a society. It encompasses values such as national identity, obedience, participation, obligation, and legitimacy among others (Almond, 2000).

III. The state and the society

Advocates of this trend believe that the state is not just a legal entity, nor is it merely a group of institutions and organizational structures. Its institutions do not exist and operate in a vacuum, but rather represent a framework for interactions between social and economic forces in society. It is an arena in which the actors’ interests, strategies, and ambitions converge and diverge.

The relations between state and society have been a matter of controversy; some argued the supremacy of the state over society while others defended the priority of society over the state; both positions were proven to be shortsighted and not reflecting reality. Indeed, the relationships between the two are not a zero-sum game, as there is a scheme of complex and intermingled relations between them. State institutions and policies are in constant interaction with social forces and market dynamics (Botelho, 2014).

State-society relationships cannot be approached as linear ones and are better understood from the perspective of mutual empowerment.

IV. The globalized state

Globalization has affected the old notion of the state and its pillars (territory, people, and government). Technological development increased interdependency between states. Most developing states gradually lost control over their economic and financial affairs, which represented a direct blow to the old concept of state and sovereignty. In his classic work “Six Books of the Republic” published in 1576, French philosopher Jean Bodin argued that controlling money, credit and fiscal policy were the three pillars of state sovereignty (Bodin, 1576).

Globalization had major impact on state economic/financial activities. It transferred the authority to decide on financial and monetary matters from the state to the global economic forces as a result of free capital flow and floating currencies through stock markets and plastic money. Giant transnational companies consider the world as one economic entity and plan their policies accordingly (Buchanan, 2012).

Legal rules and standards were also globalized and big powers insisted that state international commitments should have precedence on domestic law. They also made sure that investment disputes with developing countries should be settled through international arbitration and not according to national law (Daher, 2005). As a result, state sovereignty became under question and some authors suggested the idea of "incomplete sovereignty" (Lee, 2018).

There are those who argued that the decisive element in a "globalized state" is the intensity of economic interactions with its regions. For instance, the Japanese Kenichi Ohmae put forward in a 1993 article entitled "The Rise of the Region State" which is a new state based primarily on economic interactions and interests (Ohmae, 1993). Ohmae criticized the existing nation state on the grounds that it no longer represents an appropriate framework for economic and financial activities as existing state borders were not made to fit this function.

V. The network state

This view is based on the great progress in information and communication technologies and its application by different social and state institutions. It ensured free flow of data and information between larger number of individuals, groups, and official and civil institutions which is described by network society and the network state.

According to this view, the network society is based on transactions and networks created by national, regional and global parties; members of a network affect each other but not on equal footing. There are usually some actors which take initiatives and confront challenges, thus having more influence (Castells, 2000). As a result, the parties have different roles and contribution to the network, which lead to the marginalization and perhaps exclusion of certain parties.

There was a tension between the principle of sovereignty upon which state institutions were established and the new transnational realities. In particular, there has been a conflict between the principle of "non-intervention in domestic affairs" upon which the UN system is based and the new global values advocated by the US and Western countries such as human intervention and responsibility to protect. Issues of dispute included human rights, status of woman, and procedures of conducting elections (Kardaş, 2013).

From the above brief survey of major approaches and trends in understanding the state, it is obvious that state is a contested concept that is notoriously difficult to define. It is difficult to agree on its decisions, boundaries and functions.

The crisis results from the failure to establish a nation state (Hoyt, 1998). It is a crisis that is not limited to the legitimacy of the ruling elite, i.e. the acceptance of citizens to the rights of rulers to exercise the power to govern, but it also encompasses the legitimacy of the state itself, which is the acceptance of citizens to continue living with each other and having obedience to state authority. In the Arab world, there is further the rise of armed political opposition and radical or violent extremist organizations which challenges state authority. For instance, a number of Arab states experience civil or internal wars, wars by proxy and different forms of social and political fragmentation (Li, 2002).

ISIS managed to control wide areas for several years in Syria and Iraq in the name of "Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant".

Despite all of this, the state remains irreplaceable. The state is the main instrument for exercising governing and social control, and the only party that has the legitimate right to use force.

VI. The power/weakness of the state

States differ in terms of their power and capability, and in terms of the extent of efficiency of their political and economic institutions. Many international reports and indicators rank countries of the world according to the degree of efficiency and effectiveness of its institutions in a specific area such as global competitiveness, business performance, e-commerce, etc.

State power is a complex and multidimensional concept that is mainly based on state-society relations. The mutual relationship between state and society is the main factor for the state as a legal entity in having the socio-political state's characteristics and power. One of the most prominent researchers in this regard was Joel Migdal who developed the "state-in-society" approach which argues that a state represents the characteristics of its society and influences it in turn, as the state is not an entity imposed on society or exists in isolation from it, but rather each of them depends on the other and influences it. Joel Migdal in his work "Strong Societies and Weak States", indicates that the state in the West has been part of the natural landscape (Migdal, 1988). He stresses that, "while the state might occupy a privileged place in our collective thinking, its empirical reality in large parts of the world is (and will continue to be) much more complex". It is this kind of state-society interaction that lies at the root of the little understood problem of stateness.

This implies that there are some societies whose characteristics do not provide the conditions necessary for state building. These include socio-cultural fragmentation, hostile ethnic loyalties, and absence of unifying state symbols. However, there are societies whose characteristics reinforce state power such as existence of institutional traditions, cultural solidarity, and social cohesion.

State institutions and their regulatory framework influence social interaction and relations. This is because public policies cover broad areas of social, economic, cultural, and military security issues.

In this context, scholars investigated different types of states and configurations of state-society relations and what processes lead to weakening of states in the developing countries.

The importance of recognizing "weak" or "failed" states comes from the link between state weakness and Violent Extremism/terrorism. Weak states have come to be considered a security threat because they are seen as more susceptible to organized crime, violence, arms proliferation, the spread of infectious diseases, environmental degradation, and civil war (Szpak, 2014).

For instance, a "weak state" which is defined as a weak state is weak in its "core functions of providing security to its citizens (security gap), providing basic services to its citizens (capacity gap), and having legitimacy among its people (legitimacy gap)". Though used after the Cold War, the idea of weak states became salient post 2001, after the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Since, several governments and international organizations got involved in the task of recognizing states that are weak or failing (Dessouki, 2020).

The term "weak state" means a state that does not possess the necessary capabilities or will to fulfill the following four basic responsibilities: maintaining law and order internally and safeguarding borders of the state, satisfying basic economic and social needs of its citizens, encouraging an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable economic development, and having strong and

fair institutions which keep state legitimacy in the eyes of its population. Weak states have low or stagnant economic growth and weak governing institutions that are unable to implement policies or maintain autonomy due to corruption or conflict.

Weak states are distinguished from failed states by degree (Tyagi, 2012). Another popular term is “failed state” which refers to those states which are characterized by the inability to effectively control the state’s territory, the existence of weak institutions dominated by political or ethnic minorities, declining levels of government services provided to citizens, failure to achieve economic and social development thus leading to high rates of poverty and unemployment, as well as inability to develop feelings of national loyalty and belonging to the state. A failed state is the last phase of State collapse. “One is dealing with this phase when the erosion of the public, social and economic order, protracted internal armed conflicts, massive violations of human rights and humanitarian crises as well as fragmentation of the society lead to a clearly visible lack of any recognizable central authority” (Rotberg, 2003). State failure also contributes to increase in crime, and may turn into safe havens for terrorists.

The ISIS experience in Syria and Iraq indicated that when government agencies refrained from fulfilling or deviated from their obligations, military militias and extremist political organizations filled the gap. They issued legislations, established police and judiciary organs, imposed taxes, printed currency, etc.

To sum up, when the state fails to fulfill its basic functions, it becomes a haven for political instability, social chaos, corruption, organized crime and violent extremist activities. Thus, it may constitute a source of threat to the security and safety of its people as well as to neighboring countries. On the contrary, state power and its culture are the guarantors of social and political stability. The role of the state is an essential element in implementing any strategy for combating violent extremism, as argued in the following parts of the paper.

VII. The state as a source of security for its citizens

The most common definition of the state is the one proposed by German philosopher Max Weber signifying that the state is a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. The state is the only body which has the right to enact laws regulating the behavior of individuals and to punish them for their contravention. The state has the responsibility of implementing the laws on all individuals without discrimination or favoritism, protecting lives of its people and their properties, and maintaining public utilities such as infrastructure, education, and health. What is important in this regard is that citizens should be aware that they derive the security of themselves and their families from the state institutions and not from their affiliation to tribal, religious, or sectarian groups. It is equally important that they enjoy security and services provided by the state being its citizens.

VIII. The state as a core of identity and belonging

The State is a hub of belonging and identity. The concept of "citizenship" developed over the years to reflect the complex relationship between citizens and their state. It relates to more than a legal relationship between the individual and the state. It has far more layers including one's personal sense of belonging, for instance the sense of belonging to a community which he/she can shape and influence directly. It refers to legal, political, and cultural dimensions. It varies throughout history and across the world according to different countries, histories, societies, cultures and ideologies.

Legally, citizenship emphasizes the principle of equality before the law and equal opportunities irrespective of color, religion, gender, sect or any other consideration. Politically, it underlines the right for political participation and civic engagement. Only citizens have the right to vote and run for political elections and serve in the army. Citizenship is the cornerstone of the modern nation state and the basis for tolerance and equal rights in society (Dessouki, 2020).

Human beings usually possess multiple identities and what is important in this context is how the state manages the differences and conflicts related to multiple identities in its society. One of the best practices is the concept of power sharing associated with Arend Lijphert and his concept of “consociational democracy”. Lijphart began to theorize about the concept of consociational democracy in 1968 in his book “The Politics of Accommodation”. In his study, he deals with two variables: the social and political divides over issues of class, religion and state and the extent to which the political elites contained the accomplishment of democratic stability (Lijphart, 1968).

The challenge is how to properly manage pluralism and its resulting tensions and problems and how to work simultaneously to change it in a matter which enhances its unity, cohesion and solidarity. The state therefore has a vital socio-political function through which it seeks to achieve integration, interdependence, and complementarity going beyond existing divisions. Social cohesion is not only the outcome of noble ideas but rather the accumulative result of people working together in a context of shared interests and common goals. Thus, the “state culture” is the bond that brings individuals and groups together, especially in plural societies.

IX. The state as a provider of resources and services

This function is considered one of the most important tasks performed by the state. It is the responsibility of the state to plan for economic development, to enhance national resources, and to distribute goods and services to individuals. In other words, the state is responsible for “wealth creation” and “wealth distribution”. Any form of economic policies adopted by the state, it has a responsibility to provide a minimum level of economic and social services to its population. Essentially, its policies should create job opportunities, ensure minimum wages, and provide basic commodities and services at an affordable price for the average individual in all regions of the state. It also includes adequate housing, appropriate healthcare, public education, fair retirement schemes, and social care systems. State failure to provide basic services allows extremist groups to meet these needs and build support as a result. In a number of contexts, extremist groups have proven able to deliver services. The impact is two-fold: extremist groups gain support and legitimacy while the government and state structures lose credibility and support. This increases both the support for extremist groups and the potential for state failure. Some extremist groups want to improve the situation of the people. Other groups are more interested in retaining resources and power for themselves (RUSI, 2015).

Part two: Sound Public Governance as a means for preventing violent extremism: case studies

Global interest in preventing violent extremism policies has steadily grown since the first decade of the 21st century. The United Nations emphasized the role of good governance in preventing violent extremism. It called for investigating the reasons that drive individuals to embrace violent extremist ideas, and identifying that poor governance lead to the radicalization of individuals. It also

encouraged governments to be more inclusive and broaden the participation of different groups in society in the formulation of strategies for preventing violent extremism.

Promoting a sound public governance involves: emphasizing the crucial role of public sector governance for economic and social well-being; promoting the capacity of the government; reviewing the role of the state and its choice of policy instruments; improve the effectiveness and transparency of public service design and delivery, focusing in particular on innovation, trust and citizen engagement; and fostering balanced, inclusive growth that maximizes the potential of cities and regions as drivers of national performance (OECD, 2018a).

Sound public governance is a means to an end. The means includes: rules, processes, and interactions within the State, and between the State and citizens. The means enable governments to frame the exercise in the public interest of authority and decision-making in a way that reach an end that supports the proper anticipation and identification of challenges and in response sustains inclusive growth through improvements to general prosperity and individual wellbeing (OECD, 2018b).

An integrated approach to public governance is important since traditional approaches to policy-making are less and less effective and second, since complex policy challenges are not always addressed through integrated policy responses.

The lack of effective and inclusive policy making, leading to decreasing citizen's trust in government institutions and increasing political alienation that is a driver that push individuals into violent extremism.

Sound public governance is the combination of three interconnected elements. These elements are: "values" which are a key behavioral trait that guide public governance across all of its dimensions in a way that advances and protects the public interest; "enablers" which are an integrated nexus of practice that enables the correct identification of challenges and the implementation and evaluation of reforms; and "instruments and tools" which are a set of policy instruments and management tools for effective policymaking.

A key set of common enablers that effect effective governance and reform are: First, equitable and evidence-informed policy-making and managing decision-making effectively and efficiently in the public interest and preventing unbalanced influence; second, commitment, vision and leadership that ensures demonstrate the political will to endorse and pursue a policy or strategy at the highest political level; third, a whole-of-government co-ordination able to address emerging crosscutting, multi-dimensional policy challenges and the subsequent atomization of administrative structures; and fourth, change management and innovation able to Introduce and implement new ideas by reinforcing the strategic agility and forward-looking nature of the state as part of change management and innovation (OECD, 2018b) .

The sound governance practices falls under these circumstances: improper anticipation of challenges facing a particular community on prevention and proper tailoring of policy and service responses; the absence of active engagement with citizens and civil society at all points in the policy cycle.

This part reviews a number of countries' experiences in preventing violent extremism, which underlines the vital role of the state in formulating and implementing strategies of preventing violent extremism. The case studies refer to countries from a variety of geographical and cultural areas. Experiences of these countries are analyzed along the following areas of action: promoting the culture of the state, and cooperation between state, civil society, and citizens.

I. Promoting culture of the state:

Culture of the state is a unifying bond that transcends ethnic divisions and corresponding sub-loyalties in any society.

Germany established a new entity called the "Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution". Its main tasks are to monitor and analyse anti-constitutional activities by right- and left-wing extremists and extremist foreigners in Germany and to prevent espionage activities by other countries. The Office collects data related to activities that may comprise a threat to the founding principles of the state and its political system. These principles include democracy, the federal system, and peaceful coexistence in society, which are considered the pillars of the German Republic (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, n.d.).

In **Poland** the National Security Strategy of the Republic points on protecting and strengthening of the national identity as an important task of the State (Republic of Poland, 2014). This is implemented through cultivating a national culture as well as historical and generational continuity. Actions in this field focus on ensuring common and equal access to culture, activating social capital, consolidating patriotic attitudes and activating citizenship. The strategy worked on the development of civic and cultural education within the general curriculum, and supported the capacities of associations and non-governmental organizations engaged in this domain.

In **Switzerland** the Foreign Policy on Preventing Violent Extremism considers in its "Sphere of Action 4: Strengthening Good Governance, Human Rights and the Rule of Law", that Effective and transparent state institutions protect against injustice, marginalization and ultimately radicalization (FDFA, 2016).

As such the Swiss Strategy promotes good governance, a citizen-oriented environment in which civil society organizations, citizens and the media engage in exchange with state authorities, enhances transparency and the accountability of the public administration. It also offers support to initiatives aimed at ensuring equal access to the services of local authorities and establishing clear legal framework conditions.

Moreover, the Swiss Strategy highlights that to improve governance, social trust is to be enhanced by reinforcing the governance and democratic control of the armed forces, police and intelligence services. In this regard, Switzerland cooperates with political and educational institutions to identify current challenges, provide possible political and operational solutions to advise main stakeholders in the process of policymaking.

II. Cooperation between state, civil society, and citizens

Many countries have adopted policies and initiatives to enhance cooperation between governmental institutions and civil society bodies on one hand, and between these institutions and citizens on the other hand, the objective was to establish public-private partnerships and the mobilization of all capacities of state and society against violent extremism.

Canada's Countering Terrorism Strategy "Building Resilience Against Terrorism" aims at building individuals and community's resilience to violent extremist ideologies and societies resilience to possible terrorist attack.

As such, Canada established the Public Safety Canada's Community Resilience Fund (CRF) that provides financial assistance to organizations undertaking programming and research work addressing radicalization to violence. In addition, it established, the Public Safety's Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence (CCCEPV) that provides leadership in coordinating talent and expertise, mobilizing and supports community outreach and enhancing research in the area.

In addition, Canada had launched the "Kanishka Project" that provides research on terrorism related issues affecting Canada, such as preventing and countering violent extremism. The project funds projects and contribute to hosting a range of events bringing together officials, researchers, practitioners and community members to share knowledge on counter-terrorism.

Denmark, in its Prevention of Radicalization and Extremism Action Plan, considers the mobilization of civil society among its four key priorities acknowledging its role in engaging relevant stakeholders (The Danish Government, 2014).

It encourages closer collaboration between local authorities and civil society. The National Board of Social Services helps local agencies draw up strategies to involve civil society and offers skills enhancement and capacity building programs to local associations and experts to help them make a positive contribution to local communities. The Board also trains selected local authority employees in family-oriented parental coaching and set up networks for relatives in order to support families with young people who are vulnerable to radicalization.

Furthermore, the strategy promotes more dialogue and more outreach that is intensified by involving additional stakeholders in dialogue, including interest groups, associations, religious figures and other social networks. It extends to include people and groups who have insight into and are able to exert influence on extremist circles, including individuals and groups whose personal networks can help minimize the influence of radicalizers. In this perspective, the Strategy aims at preventing recruitment by providing greater support for dialogue with vulnerable groups who are at risk of radicalization.

Sweden's CVE Action Plan to Safeguard Democracy Against Violent Extremism highlights that the Collaboration between government authorities, county councils, municipalities and civil society organizations is vital to a collective, clear and effective agenda in the work to prevent violent extremism and terrorism (Government offices of Sweden, 2011). It focuses on organizing consultations involving representatives of various authorities, civil society organizations and experts from universities and research institutions with the aim of sharing knowledge and information.

In addition, the central government offers grants to civil society organizations to implement activities that can prevent violent extremism. The Action Plan highlights that civil society organizations from diversified fields of action can reach individuals and groups that have low level of trust in public authorities. They can offer flexible solutions adapted to the situation in a way that is contextually relevant addressing the factors of Violent Extremism in their communities.

Part three: Conclusion

Finally, the paper underlined the role the state and state institutions in implementing any strategy directed at preventing violent extremism. The previous pages demonstrate sound public governance as a means for preventing violent extremism.

When the state becomes the source of security for its citizens, and the protector of their lives and belongings, its institutions will become more legitimate. When a state fails in performing such a role, more people get marginalized and alienated; and society becomes a fertile ground for social fragmentation and violent extremism.

When the state fulfills its economic functions, citizens feel satisfied and their trust in state policies and ruling elites increases. The outcome is the enhancement of state legitimacy and the citizens' voluntary acceptance of its laws.

State institutions and policies are decisive elements in affecting relations with society and ensuring feelings of belonging, safety, and reassurance among its people. It can be a source of social cohesion, and the more cohesive and integrated a society is, the less susceptible its individuals will be to violent extremist ideas and willingness to act against the state. This situation enhances the ability of state institutions to combat violent extremism whether by security or social and cultural means.

It is difficult to conceive a successful strategy for preventing violent extremism in which the state does not perform a central role. This role may differ from one state to another depending upon factors such as cultural pluralism, ethnic diversity, form of government, and degree of stateness or statehood. But by all means, the role of the state is indispensable.

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