PATHWAYS TO PREVENTION?
EVALUATING THE UNITED KINGDOM’S APPROACH TO COUNTER-RADICALIZATION

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts
in Security Studies

By

Seth D. Rosen, B.S.

Washington, D.C.
April 12, 2010
Pathways To Prevention?
Evaluating the United Kingdom’s Approach to Counter-Radicalization

Seth D. Rosen, B.S.
Thesis Advisor: Justine A. Rosenthal

Abstract

In the wake of the July 2005 London bombings, the British government implemented a preventive counterterrorism strategy focusing on countering radicalization in Muslim communities. Through the ambitious and controversial Prevent strategy, 82 localities in the United Kingdom are now delivering community-based social programs to help stop people from becoming violent extremists. Many nations are looking to Prevent as a potential template and are eager to learn from the British experience. To develop a model for effective counter-radicalization approaches, I traveled to the UK to interview government officials, police officers, Muslim community activists, mosque leaders, and academics knowledgeable about Prevent. From my 38 interviews, two key factors emerged as critical to enhancing the efficacy of government counter-radicalization efforts: The existence of 1) tailored intervention programs targeting those at-risk of radicalization and 2) programs that boost the capacity of Muslim faith leaders. My research then aimed to assess how Prevent has performed in these areas. This study finds that the targeted interventions and faith capacity building programs being delivered under Prevent represent a promising start and fit the model of effective counter-radicalization approaches identified by the interview set. However, significant challenges remain to having the necessary expertise, training, and participation of Muslim organizations to deliver successful intervention and faith leader programs. The UK’s approach has had its fair share of challenges, setbacks, and criticism. This paper concludes that the Prevent strategy would be more effective if it was re-oriented to prioritize programs in these two areas.
# Table of Contents

I. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1  

II. Preventing Violent Extremism Strategy and Goals .............................................. 2  

III. Research Plan and Methodology ...................................................................... 5  

IV. Findings and Paper Structure ......................................................................... 8  

V. Causes of Islamist Radicalization in the UK ..................................................... 16  

VI. Importance of Targeted Interventions ............................................................... 21  

VII. Targeted Interventions in the UK ................................................................... 25  

VIII. Shortcomings of British Islamic Institutions .................................................... 36  

IX. Importance of Supporting Faith Leaders and Institutions .............................. 40  

X. Faith Capacity Building Programs in the UK ..................................................... 42  

XI. Policy Implications ............................................................................................ 50  

XII. Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 57  

Appendix A: Interview Data Set ............................................................................ 60  

Appendix B: Interview Data Set By Occupational Category ................................. 63  

Bibliography ............................................................................................................. 64
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Findings From Interview Data Set .................................................. 9

Table 2: Targeted Interventions Are Essential for Counter-radicalization Efforts?............. 63

Table 3: Training Faith Leaders Is Essential for Counter-radicalization Efforts?.............. 63

Table 4: Support of Muslim Communities Is Essential for Counter-radicalization Efforts?..63

Table 5: Do Muslim Communities Distrust the Prevent Strategy?.............................. 63
“A small sum spent on prevention is better than a fortune spent on a cure.”
-Osama bin Laden, April 15, 2004 audiotape broadcast by al-Jazeera

I. INTRODUCTION

By all accounts, Shehzad Tanweer lived the conventional life of a teenager growing up in Leeds, England. He worked at his father’s prominent fish-and-chips shop and excelled at cricket. A popular student who drove a red Mercedes and had a penchant for designer clothes, Tanweer was described by classmates as “friendly, mature and modest.”

He studied sports sciences at Leeds Metropolitan University for two years before dropping out. Though he became more religiously observant once he quit school, friends said they saw no drastic changes in his behaviors or attitudes. Tanweer appeared to be an ordinary British Muslim youth, well-adjusted but searching for a career path while living with his parents. Yet on July 7, 2005, Tanweer blew himself up on the Circle Line of the London Underground between the Liverpool and Aldgate stops — part of a 4-person suicide operation that killed 52 people.

What shocked the British public and government officials was not only the ghastly success of the July 7 operation, but the biographies of the perpetrators. Three of the four young men seemed to be well-integrated into British society, with Mohammad Sidique Khan, the ringleader, having worked as a learning mentor for children with special needs. There was little in Tanweer’s background — no personal trauma, no criminal record, and no overt cause for individual grievances with the British government — to suggest he would be susceptible to radicalization or capable of such wanton bloodshed. Yet it was now painfully clear to all that

---

2 Ibid, p.17, 18.
something caused al-Qa’ida’s ideology and narrative to resonate deeply with a small cohort of alienated and/or vulnerable young Muslims.

In the wake of the July 2005 London bombings, British politicians and security officials reassessed the nation’s counterterrorism efforts. Determining the factors that made these young men aggrieved enough to kill fellow British citizens became an immediate priority. Questions abounded: Why was an affable and educated young man like Tanweer attracted to the world view and methods of al-Qa’ida? Could the government play a role in averting radicalization of youth in similar situations? And how could local authorities empower Muslim activists and faith leaders to tackle violent extremism in their own communities?

The British government concluded that the traditional strategies of monitoring, pursuing, and apprehending terrorists were insufficient to meet the new challenge posed by al-Qa’ida-influenced violent extremism. Instead, the government decided it also had to address the root causes and underlying local drivers of terrorism in the United Kingdom (UK), particularly by working to counter radicalization in Muslim communities and to identify those susceptible to violent extremist messages. A prevention strategy became seen as a necessary complement to the existing suppression approach. As then-Home Secretary Jacqui Smith explained, the rationale for the strategic shift is that the UK “can neither arrest our way out of the problem nor protect ourselves to the point where the threat disappears.”

II. Preventing Violent Extremism Strategy and Goals

In October 2007, the British government unveiled its revised “Preventing Violent Extremism” strategy (commonly shortened to “Prevent”), featuring five key pillars: challenging violent extremist ideology and supporting mainstream voices; disrupting those who promote

---

violent extremism and supporting places where they operate; supporting individuals vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists; increasing the resiliency of communities; and addressing the grievances that violent extremists exploit. The British government supplemented its new strategy with significant resources: activities and programs under the Prevent umbrella totaled £140 million in 2008/2009, and local governments are being allocated £52.5 million between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011 to deliver their own, community-generated programs. This year, 82 localities are implementing hundreds of Prevent projects, ranging from study circles at mosques to youth sporting and cultural activities to community counterterrorism exercises to one-on-one mentoring interventions.

The Prevent strategy is a groundbreaking, albeit controversial, approach to government counter-radicalization efforts. Counter-radicalization can be defined as the systematic effort by an individual, organization, or government entity to prevent the acceptance of extremist beliefs that lead an individual to advocate, support, or facilitate ideologically-based violence. The emphasis is on preventing violent extremism, rather than "curing" or "eradicating" violent extremist beliefs and/or associations, which is the realm of de-radicalization. The development of the UK’s Prevent strategy - one of the four strands of the government’s larger counterterrorism strategy called CONTEST - represented a sea change in the way the nation’s security apparatus viewed the prevention of terrorist attacks. Stopping terrorist activity has

6 For practitioners, however, this is sometimes an academic distinction, as they may be attempting to simultaneously inhibit the radicalization process in a targeted group and get those already radicalized in that group to abandon their violent extremist beliefs.
7 Prevent is led across the UK government by the Home Office’s Office of Security and Counter Terrorism, and is delivered by a range of different agencies, including, among others, the Departments for Children Schools and Families and Business Innovation and Skills. The Department for Communities and Local Government Prevent
traditionally been the purview of law enforcement agencies and security services, which disrupt plots and dismantle cells through tactical and operational countermeasures. The UK’s prevention strategy, on the other hand, aims to stop people from becoming violent extremists and supporting terrorists in the first place.\(^8\) Through a wide variety of community-based social programs, it seeks to undercut the local drivers of extremism, challenge al-Qa’ida’s narrative, and steer vulnerable people away from radicalizing forces and individuals. The strategy’s long-term goal is to help foster communities that are resilient against the ideology and messages of violent extremism. In essence, the Prevent strategy is about going “upstream” to identify the sources of radicalization and intervene early before the behaviors manifest themselves later in a violent fashion.\(^9\) Prevent is meant as not just a mechanism to engage those at risk of – or in the process of – being radicalized, but an alternative tactical option for law enforcement to suppressive or covert measures.\(^10\)

Yet the goals of the Prevent strategy mean reducing violent extremism cannot be solely the domain of government agencies. Ultimately, policymakers recognize, Muslim communities have to be the lead actors and take ownership of the Prevent agenda for it to be successful and durable. “The solution has to belong to communities,” Hazel Blears, the former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, said in December 2008. “We need to give people the confidence and the skills to stand up to those who seek division and violence.”\(^11\) The government’s hope is that with the benefit of programs, funding, training, and support, Muslim

---

\(^9\) Heal, Tony, “Extremist Disengagement in the UK: Context, Scope, Methods and Results,” April 2009, p.4 (government document provided to author).
\(^10\) Author interview with Richard Moore, Chief Inspector of the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit’s Prevent Department, January 8, 2010 in Birmingham, UK.
community groups and activists will be better positioned to challenge violent extremist ideas and provide alternative pathways for alienated Muslim youth to voice their grievances. “At the end of the day, this is something the government can’t do,” says Sabin Khan, a community advisor in the Home Office’s counterterrorism division.12 “But if we don’t have Prevent pushing communities, it will be years before Muslim communities get where we need to be.”

III. RESEARCH PLAN AND METHODOLOGY

The complexity, diversity, and newness of the UK’s Prevent strategy make a comprehensive and authoritative evaluation a significant challenge. In fact, the UK, as its counterterrorism officials acknowledge, has not yet developed a systematic method for measuring progress and outcomes.13 Nevertheless, the Prevent strategy has been in place for nearly three years and a preliminary analysis of its strengths and weakness, benefits and limitations, is important. A number of think tank and research reports on the Prevent agenda have been released over the past 15 months; and a House of Commons Committee investigation on the subject allowed organizations, local governments, and researchers to weigh in on the strategy in a public forum. While these reports add to the public knowledge and debate on Prevent, they are policy papers who come to their conclusions based on second-hand observations and personal opinions. Additionally, these reports tend to focus on Prevent’s reputed effects on Muslim communities, or the benefits and disadvantages of engaging certain Muslim groups. They rarely say much about the efficacy of the counter-radicalization programs being delivered in communities.

For example, some prominent Muslim critics of Prevent, including the Muslim Council of Britain and the An-Nisa Society, have written that the strategy alienates Muslims by ensuring that all government engagement with Muslims communities is done through the prism of security issues.\textsuperscript{14} On the other end of the spectrum, critics such as Shiraz Maher and Martyn Frampton of the Policy Exchange think tank have written that through Prevent, the government is funding and legitimizing non-violent radicals who oppose pluralism, and that the UK’s efforts are marginalizing "true" Muslim moderates.\textsuperscript{15} The Communities and Local Government Committee in the House of Commons added to this debate with a March 2010 report calling the Prevent strategy’s “single focus” on Muslim communities “unhelpful,” and adding that the government’s approach “is contentious and unlikely ever to be fully accepted in its existing form by those it is most important to engage.”\textsuperscript{16}

With this paper I hope to make a more rigorous contribution to the nascent body of literature on government counter-radicalization approaches and the Prevent strategy. To identify the factors that have helped and hindered the effectiveness of Prevent, I traveled to the UK for nine days in January 2010. There I met with national counterterrorism policymakers, local government officials, police officers, Muslim community activists, mosque leaders, academics, and research analysts who are involved in developing and/or delivering Prevent programs, or study the topic professionally. In total, I conducted 38 interviews in-person, on the phone, or over email with individuals who work directly on Prevent (See Appendix A for complete list of

\textsuperscript{14} For more on this point of view, see An-Nisa Society, “Memorandum from An-Nisa Society (PVE39),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009; Kundnani, Arun, “Spooked! How Not to Prevent Violent Extremism,” Institute of Race Relations, October 2009; and Muslim Council of Britain, “Memorandum from Muslim Council of Britain (PVE32),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009.
interview subjects). By drawing on the insights, knowledge, and expertise of those responsible for implementing Prevent programs, I sought to distinguish the variables that are potentially critical to enhancing Prevent’s prospects for success. Interview subjects were chosen for their general knowledge about the Prevent strategy and programs. They were not selected to ensure expertise on pre-screened variables. Interview subjects were given the opportunity to identify best practices for counter-radicalization approaches and to discuss what has and has not worked under the Prevent strategy. Several interviews conducted by the author were not included in the data set because they were too narrowly focused on a particular Prevent program not germane to the larger focus of this study.

The data set is composed of interviews with eight law enforcement officials involved in counterterrorism; eight national government officials who work on the Prevent strategy and programs; eight local government officials and service providers responsible for Prevent in their communities; six Muslim community activists and mosque leaders; five academics who study radicalization or Muslim integration issues; two foreign government experts on counterradicalization; and one Member of Parliament. From the findings of the interviews, I sought to develop a model for effective government counter-radicalization efforts. My research then aimed to assess how the Prevent policies and programs have performed in these areas. The results will be discussed in the subsequent section.

First, a few caveats. The data gathered through this qualitative approach will inherently be imperfect, as it relies on the impressions, judgments, and biases of those intimately involved in the Prevent strategy. The make-up of the interview set also impacts the study’s findings, as government and law enforcement officials represented a higher proportion of interviews than

---

17 Several of the mosque leaders also referred to themselves as community activists, so the two occupations are combined into one category for the purpose of this study.
Muslim community activists and mosque leaders. This is a reflection of the fact that government and law enforcement officials were more comfortable discussing radicalization and Prevent issues with an unknown researcher. More than a dozen Muslim community activists and mosque leaders declined to partake in interviews for this study, while only a handful of government and law enforcement officials turned down interview requests.

Furthermore, the success of counter-radicalization programs is intrinsically difficult to determine because it is so hard to pinpoint whether participants adopt violent extremist ideology. Yet the subject matter is important enough to warrant this type of qualitative analysis at this time, even with its innate limitations. While several European countries have begun implementing preventative counterterrorism programs, the UK has undertaken the most ambitious approach. Because Western governments are still evaluating how to inhibit violent extremism in their Muslim communities, few models have been developed and tested. Academics, policymakers, and front-line service providers are all struggling to identify best practices to counter the drivers of radicalization. Many nations, including the United States, are looking to the Prevent strategy as a potential model and are eager to learn from the British experience. Hopefully this paper will add to the scholarship on counter-radicalization and serve as a springboard for more extensive research on the subject.

IV. FINDINGS AND PAPER STRUCTURE

From my 38 interviews, three factors emerged above all others as essential to enhancing the effectiveness of government counter-radicalization efforts. A large number of interview subjects, representing an array of professions and viewpoints, singled out these three areas as
particularly important during our conversations. Together they represent a potential model of effective government counter-radicalization. They are the existence of:

1) Individually tailored intervention programs targeting those at-risk of, or moving toward, radicalization.

2) Programs that boost the capacity of Muslim faith leaders and institutions, and help create a cadre of homegrown imams.

3) Muslim communities generally supporting and taking the lead on community-based programs.

For the first factor, 27 interview subjects said targeted intervention programs were vital to increasing Prevent’s chances of success, two disagreed, and the remaining nine said they were not qualified to provide an expert opinion (See Appendix A for complete list of interview responses).18 For the second factor, 25 interview subjects said faith capacity programs were critical, zero said they were not important, and 13 said they were not qualified to make a judgment.19 For the third factor, 29 interview subjects explicitly discussed the importance of support from Muslim communities, zero stated that it was not an essential factor, and nine did not address the issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted Interventions Are Essential</th>
<th>Training of Faith Leaders Is Essential</th>
<th>Active Support of Muslim Communities Is Essential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Findings From Interview Data Set

18 Some imams, academics, and government officials interviewed said they did not know enough about personalized intervention programs to provide an informed judgment on whether they would increase the effectiveness of counter-radicalization efforts.
19 Similarly, some counterterrorism officials, police officers, academics, and politicians felt they could not weigh in on the importance of this area and said that any answer provided would be based on second-hand information or intuition, rather than personal knowledge.
Other potentially important variables mentioned in multiple interviews included the existence of: community cohesion activities for Muslim youth, such as cultural and recreational programs; educational activities and programs on Islam; expertise among, and training of, local authorities responsible for delivering counter-radicalization programs; leadership development and training for Muslim activists and youth; a change in government foreign policy away from what are perceived as pro-Israel and pro-U.S. stances; programs that directly challenge violent extremist ideology and narratives; and an end to government engagement with non-violent radicals. It is important to note that a few people interviewed said that government counter-radicalization programs could not work under any circumstances and that the Prevent strategy should be abandoned.

Appendix B provides a more detailed breakdown of responses on these three factors according to the five main occupations of the interview set: law enforcement authorities; national government officials; local government officials; Muslim community activists/mosque leaders; and academics. It is worth noting briefly some of the more interesting findings from the interviews. All eight law enforcement authorities, six of the eight local government officials, and five of the six Muslim community activists/mosque leaders stressed the importance of targeted interventions. Meanwhile, two of the academics said it was not an important factor, with the other three agreeing that it was. For the second factor, seven of the eight local government officials and six of the eight law enforcement authorities said faith capacity building programs were critical. Finally, all eight national government officials, five of the six Muslim activists/mosque leaders, and six of the eight local government officials highlighted the importance of support from Muslim communities.

The remainder of this paper will focus on examining the importance of the first two factors. Due to space constraints and the data limitations of this study, an in-depth analysis of the third factor – Muslim communities supporting and taking the lead on Prevent programs – will be

---

20 With the others saying there were not qualified to provide an opinion.
saved for future research projects. Anecdotal evidence suggests there is significant distrust and suspicion in Muslim communities about the intent of the Prevent strategy and the way it is being delivered. Interview subjects stated that this suspicion arose from fears that Prevent programs in communities were being used to spy and gather information on participants. Of the 24 interview subjects who assessed the degree of mistrust and suspicion of Prevent in Muslim communities, 19 stated there was a “high”, “good”, or “fair” degree of mistrust, four said there was “some” or “mild” degree of mistrust, and one said that was “little.”

However, gauging the true level of support in Muslim communities for Prevent programs would be extremely difficult without conducting my own detailed survey of the Muslim populace in the UK. While the Home Office appears to have conducted some polling on the topic, it has not been released to the public. Moreover, measuring the participation rates of prominent Muslim community organizations in Prevent programs would necessitate a time consuming survey by a researcher living in the UK.

**Paper Structure**

The first task of this paper will be to determine why the two selected variables – interventions targeting those at-risk of radicalization and boosting the capacity of faith leaders and institutions – are critical to increasing the effectiveness of government counter-radicalization approaches. To do so, the paper will draw upon the interview data set and the theories of Islamist radicalization in the UK. Prevention strategies cannot be created in a vacuum; to work, they must be tailored to directly counteract the reasons that individuals become violent extremists and the

---

most likely pathways to radicalization. This paper accepts and builds upon the “conflict of identity” theories—espoused by Oliver Roy,Quitinan Wiktorowicz, and Tufyal Choudhury, among others—to verify and supplement the evidence from the interview data set concluding that these two factors are important.

In brief, this theory contends that a powerful “conflict of identity” among young British Muslims has created a demand for answers about their place in society and about religious matters that are not being addressed through traditional religious and social means. At the same time, there exists a supply of violent extremist ideology that seeks to fulfill this demand. Finally, the emergence of a real or perceived frustration or grievance produces a “cognitive opening” and a “religious seeking” process that enables an individual to consider and then accept the violent extremist narrative. Therefore, to thwart the radicalization process, the focus should be on finding measures that can restrict the “cognitive opening” by making vulnerable individuals resilient to extremist messages and helping alienated people find alternative positive identities.

This paper, drawing on findings from the interview set, will argue that these goals can best be accomplished through personalized intervention programs—provided by either local authorities or community groups—that address and counteract the particular factors pushing someone toward radicalization.

Next, the paper will use the interview data set and underlying theory to make the case that boosting the capacity of Muslim faith leaders and institutions is important to Prevent’s prospects. Scholars like Tufyal Choudhury have argued that the ongoing appeal of violent

---

24 Findings based on consensus of 27 interview subjects who identified targeted interventions as crucial to increasing usefulness of counter-radicalization approaches.
extremist groups reflects a failure of traditional religious institutions to connect with young British Muslims. This partly due to the fact that most British imams are foreign-born, speak little English, and have great difficulty relating to the struggles of being a young Muslim in Britain. A 2007 survey by Chester University for the BBC found that only 8 percent of imams preaching in British mosques were born in the UK, 45 percent had been in the UK for fewer than five years, and 6 percent spoke English as a first language. This paper will argue that helping British Muslim communities develop their own, English-speaking imams who can challenge violent extremist ideology is a key element to preventing radicalization. Youth who can confide in a local imam about personal problems, foreign policy concerns, or the violent extremist messages they encounter are likely to be less receptive to radicalization or recruitment.

The second task of this paper will be to analyze whether the Prevent strategy has prioritized these two factors and to evaluate progress to date in implementing programs in these areas. From the findings of the interview set and a review of Prevent documents, it is clear that UK policymakers recognize the importance of these two variables and have developed and delivered targeted interventions and faith capacity building programs. Some of these programs are making a genuine difference in communities. For example, the Channel project – now operating in 28 sites across the UK – is a structured process enabling local authorities, statutory agencies, and police units to identify and assist people vulnerable to violent extremism through

---

26 The survey size was 300 mosques. Of those who were foreign-born, about 50 percent came from Pakistan, 20 percent from Bangladesh and 15 percent from India. Six percent had arrived in the UK in the preceding year and 23 percent had lived in the UK for more than a decade. “Ban Foreign Language Imams - Peer,” BBC News, July 6, 2007.
27 Consensus view of 25 interview subjects who highlighted the need to boost the capacity of Muslim faith leaders in the UK and develop homegrown imams in order to prevent radicalization in youth.
personalized programs. Additionally, the Department of Communities and Local Government and local governments across the country are implementing a total of 53 imam training and mosque governance projects that have assisted more than 300 Muslim faith leaders.

This study finds that the targeted interventions and faith capacity building programs being delivered under the Prevent strategy represent a promising start and fit the model of effective counter-radicalization approaches identified by the interview set.

However, based on the interviews conducted, it appears that progress in developing targeted interventions and faith capacity building programs has lagged behind the growth of some other Prevent areas. According to a government survey, the vast majority of the more than 275 “Pathfinder” Prevent projects funded in the 2007/2008 financial year focused on community cohesion, citizenship issues, and building understanding of different faiths; few were designed to assist individuals and groups vulnerable to radicalization. A separate report from the UK’s Audit Commission found that “most councils and police services are not yet providing tailored support, through targeted Prevent approaches, to people who are at risk of, or moving towards, extremism.” When asked to identify the primary beneficiaries for “Pathfinder” projects, localities reported that 61 percent were geared toward Muslim communities writ large,

---

29 Author interview with Rachel Winny, Department of Communities and Local Government, March 26, 2010.  
31 The audit also found that councils had little time to consult with community groups, insufficient guidance on how to use funds, and a lack of community intelligence on vulnerable people. These shortcomings led many councils to use the funding to maintain existing projects, pay for projects already in the pipeline, or to improve community engagement. Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Constabulary, “Preventing Violent Extremism: Learning and Development Exercise,” Report to the Home Office and Communities and Local Government, October 2008, p.13, 17.
percent for the general public, 20 percent for “at-risk” individuals, and only 3 percent for those who justified or glorified violent extremism.32

These figures demonstrate the inherent tension within the Prevent strategy between prioritizing short-term, focused programs that can steer individuals away from radicalization and long-term, community-wide programs that build resiliency in the larger population. Local authorities are more familiar and comfortable with developing broader community cohesion projects, such as cultural, recreational, or educational activities.33 “Are there a lot of projects around supporting vulnerable individuals right now? No, that is something local authorities are struggling with,” says Waqar Ahmed, a Prevent advisor for the Government Office for the West Midlands.34 “They don’t necessarily have the confidence or understanding to drive that conversation with their communities.” Similarly, the interview set and a review of Prevent programs made clear that policymakers are, at times, struggling to develop and deliver imam training projects. “When it comes to British imams and mosques, there is a gap in everyone’s knowledge,” says Caroline Cooke, who heads the Department of Communities and Local Government’s Faith Capacity team.35 “There’s a lot we don’t know about the community … and a lot of the assessments out there are based on anecdotal stories.”

As this paper will discuss in more detail, significant challenges remain in regards to having the necessary expertise, training, and participation of Muslim community organizations to deliver successful intervention and Muslim faith leader programs. This paper will conclude by

33 Author interviews with Waqar Ahmed, a Prevent advisor for the Government Office for the West Midlands; Mike Gillespie, head of the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism’s Prevent unit; Raff Pantucci, an analyst with the International Institute for Strategic Studies; and Paul Chandwani, who works in the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism’s Prevent unit.
34 Author interview, January 8, 2010, Birmingham, UK
35 Author interview, March 16, 2010, via phone.
arguing that the Prevent strategy would be more effective if it was re-oriented to prioritize programs in these two areas.

V. CAUSES OF ISLAMIST RADICALIZATION IN THE UK

Before discussing the causes and processes of Islamist radicalization in the UK, it is first helpful to outline the disposition of the Muslim population in Great Britain. The number of Muslims is estimated to be about 2.4 million, up from the 1.6 million figure released by the 2001 census. A combination of immigration and higher birthrates explains the significant jump over the past decade, with the Muslim population rising 10 times faster than the rest of British society. Approximately 60 percent of the nation’s Muslims claim Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage, with the first ones immigrating as guest-workers during the economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s. Though the British government believed these newcomers would return to their homeland after several years labor, most stayed and brought over their families. Decolonization triggered a second wave of immigrants, who established tightly-knit ethnic communities and, at times, shunned assimilation. As has been much-discussed elsewhere, Britain adopted a policy of multiculturalism, which enabled — some would argue encouraged — these communities to remain culturally distinct from their “British” neighbors.

The Muslim population in Britain is disproportionately young, with one in three Muslims under the age of 16, compared with one in five for the population at large. Many of these

---

37 Ibid.
youth, the children or grandchildren of immigrants, are grappling with what it means to be a Muslim in a Western, secular democracy. Because there is limited theological guidance or cultural experience about how best to live as a Muslim minority in the West, communities are being forced to, in the words of French scholar Oliver Roy, “reinvent” what makes them Muslim.\textsuperscript{41} It is a struggle for some to reconcile the tenets of their faith with the cultural permissiveness of wider society. In essence, they are trapped between two worlds: the tradition-bound Islam of their parents and a secular, unfettered mainstream culture that often misunderstands or is directly hostile to Islam.\textsuperscript{42} This dislocation can produce a crisis of identity in Muslim youth. Disaffection from mainstream society can be the result of myriad factors, some of them overlapping. For example, personal experience with racism or “Islamophobia” can produce a profound sense of alienation. “If there is no racism in the west, there is no conflict of identity,” Omar Bakri Mohammed, the former leader of the British extremist group Al-Muhajiroun, told scholar Quintan Wiktorowicz.\textsuperscript{43} Socio-economic factors can also breed frustration. Muslim youth who are underemployed or perceive that their economic aspirations are being blocked may feel aggrieved.\textsuperscript{44}

One the other hand, some Muslim youth of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent feel disconnected from the culture of their parents, who come from a vastly different social milieu of South Asian cities and villages. This produces a deep generational chasm, as British-born youth have difficulty relating to the lifestyle, attitudes, and cultural experiences of their foreign-born

\textsuperscript{41} Roy, Oliver, p.18
\textsuperscript{42} Wiktorowicz, Quintan., p.88.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, p.91.
\textsuperscript{44} According to a 2005 study, 35 percent of Muslim children in the UK grow up in households where no adults are employed, compared to 17 percent of all children. British Muslims also earn less than their non-Muslim counterparts. The Pew Global Attitudes Project found that 61 percent of Muslims in the UK take home less than £20,000 a year, compared to 39 percent of the total population. See Spalek, Basia and Imtoual, Alia; and “Muslims in Europe: Economic Worries Top Concerns About Religion and Cultural Identity,” Pew Global Attitudes Project, July 6, 2006.
parents.\textsuperscript{45} For youth in the British Pakistani community, the \textit{biradari} system – a clan and support network that dictates social interactions and practices – seems especially restrictive and outdated.\textsuperscript{46} The Islam of the older generation also does not always translate well to the British context. Peter Mandaville argues that the religious texts, teachings, and customs that parents impart do not speak to the issues and challenges Muslim youth face on a daily basis living in a secular society.\textsuperscript{47}

Those Muslim youth who feel alienated from both mainstream society and the traditional Islam and culture of their parents typically engage in a search for a new identity. This exploration process is usually spurred by a crisis that causes the individual to question their accepted beliefs. There is no single pathway and the crisis can be of a personal, economic, social/cultural, or political nature. This produces, according to Quintan Wiktorowicz, a “cognitive opening,” where the individual becomes receptive to new belief systems.\textsuperscript{48} For some, the “cognitive opening” is complemented by a “religious seeking” process, with the individual searching for theological answers and religious meaning to their outstanding identity questions.\textsuperscript{49}

At this juncture, the individual may come across the messages and narrative of al-Qaida and like-minded extremists. This can happen in several ways. The individual, as part of the “religious seeking” process could hunt for violent extremist literature and videos on the Internet. Or, more likely, he will be exposed to extremist ideas through existing social networks.\textsuperscript{50} Of course, violent extremist recruiters are not idly waiting around for those experiencing this crisis.

\textsuperscript{45} See Roy, Oliver, p.118 - 122.
\textsuperscript{46} For additional information on the \textit{biradari} system, see Lewis, Philip, p. 46-48
\textsuperscript{47} Mandaville, Peter, \textit{Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma} (London, UK: Routledge, 2004), p. 121-122.
\textsuperscript{48} Wiktorowicz, Quintan, p.20.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, p. 21, 86.
\textsuperscript{50} Information from author interviews with Munir Zamir and Hanif Qadir, on January 10, 2010 and March 11, 2010, respectively. Both men belonged to extremist organizations when they were younger and now collaborate with, and provide advice to, the UK government on targeted interventions of people vulnerable to radicalization.
of identity to find them. As Wiktorowicz emphasizes, these activists will seek out vulnerable individuals through public events and personalized outreach to facilitate the “cognitive openings.” A particularly useful device is outrage and “moral shock.” Violent extremist recruiters and activists frequently show images of Muslims being killed abroad to spur dialogue about the conflict between Islam and the West. They will then follow up with interested parties and tailor messages to the individual’s particular circumstances, concerns, and sources of alienation. Violent extremist recruiters frequently equate the problems or discrimination an individual is experiencing at work, school, or in the neighborhood to the oppression Muslims are experiencing at the hands of Western forces in Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Many of those experiencing a “cognitive opening” and undertaking “religious seeking” will not, of course, become radicalized. However, a small subset of vulnerable or alienated Muslim youth will accept and internalize al-Qaida’s worldview and aspirations. Tufyal Choudhury believes this is most common among those who lack religious literacy or education about the true meaning and messages of Islam. Those that are radicalized find a “positive protest identity” in violent extremism, according to Oliver Roy, that is empowering and fills a personal void. Adopting this belief system connects them to a religious community – the ummah – that transcends national and local identities. While before they may have viewed themselves as an isolated individual living London or Manchester, now they see themselves as part of a powerful global movement. Basia Spalek argues that this new religious identity provides a rigid theological framework to resolve the conflict between, and ambiguity about,

---

51 For more on how activists can foster cognitive openings through individual outreach, see Wiktorowicz, Quintan, p.92-94.
52 Ibid, p.92.
53 Interviews with Zamir and Qadir.
54 Choudhury, Tufyal, p.21.
55 See Roy, Oliver, p.309, 314-315.
being British, Pakistani, and Muslim. It also supplies these young men with an Islamic posture, theological backing, and a perceived moral high ground to critique their parents’ traditional culture, Philip Lewis, one of the premier scholars of British Islam, said in an interview.

It is worth examining briefly the background of some British Islamist terrorists to demonstrate how the crisis of identity, “cognitive opening,” and “religious seeking” processes helps explain the radicalization of British youth. In 2008, researchers Benjamin and Jon Cole produced a study of 54 British citizens or residents convicted over the past decade of undertaking or preparing terrorist violence, or who died in suicide bombings. The Coles found that many of these individuals experienced family problems, including estrangement from relatives, right before they were radicalized – one of the key facilitators of a “cognitive opening.” Richard Reid, the failed December 2001 shoebomber, quit school at 16 and subsequently lived by himself in a hostel after his mother, her new partner, and his brother moved to another town. He soon got involved in gangs and crime and was sent to prison, where he converted to Islam. Saajid Badat, who trained in an al-Qaeda camp and was supposed to detonate a bomb on a plane at the same time as Reid, had a falling out with his father as a teenager and then moved on his own to London, where he became radicalized. Similarly, Germaine Lindsay, one of the July 2005 bombers, was left alone at 16 when his mother moved to the United States for a man. Two of the plotters of the failed July 21, 2005 bombing on the London transportation system were also

57 Author interview, March 2005, via phone. Interview not included as part of interview data set.
radicalized after falling out with their families and living with friends or being placed in state social services.\textsuperscript{62}

As previously mentioned, violent extremists will use “moral shock” as a device to trigger interest in radical ideas and widen the “cognitive opening.” For example, Omar Sheikh, a well-educated British citizen who was arrested and convicted in Pakistan for the murder of journalist Daniel Pearl, was introduced to violent extremist messages after watching films about the suffering of Muslims in Bosnia in the 1990s at the London School of Economics.\textsuperscript{63} The majority of the convicted British terrorists in the Coles’ study grew up in traditional, religious families, and then eschewed Islam as teenagers to live secular lives before discovering a rigid and extremist interpretation of the faith.\textsuperscript{64} This chain of events demonstrates the central role that “religious seeking” plays for those experiencing a crisis of identity. For example, the “Yemen 8” cell, convicted in 1999 of plotting to attack UK targets in Yemen, had only recently “returned” to Islam before embarking on their failed mission.\textsuperscript{65} And Shehzad Tanweer, the London bomber discussed at the beginning of this paper, adopted extremist beliefs after he dropped out of school.

\textbf{VI. IMPORTANCE OF TARGETED INTERVENTIONS}

If one accepts this conflict of identity theory and “cognitive opening” process as a sufficient explanation for the causes and manner of Islamist radicalization in the UK, as this paper does, then one can begin to identify prevention factors that would be most likely to inhibit this process. Building on these prevention factors, one can then determine government policies and specific programs that could be implemented to thwart radicalization. Policymakers seeking

\textsuperscript{62} Cole, Jon and Cole, Benjamin, p.29.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid, p.32.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, p.35.
\textsuperscript{65} “Terrorists or Tourists,” The Guardian, February 9, 2002.
to design counter-radicalization programs must recognize at what stage they are best positioned to intervene. For the foreseeable future there will continue to be vulnerable Muslim youth who are provoked by a personal, familial, social, or political crisis to question their belief systems and search for new sources of inspiration and meaning. Many of the sources of frustration and grievance – such as perceptions of discrimination, deprivation, and blocked social mobility – are unlikely to disappear any time soon. These are larger social cohesion issues that have to be addressed by wider government and civil society efforts, and are beyond the narrower purview of counterterrorism and counter-radicalization work. It is also important to note that many Muslims in the UK will continue to feel aggrieved by British foreign policy, which some view as inimical to Muslims overseas.

Government or community-based counter-radicalization approaches will have minimal impact on directly addressing the crisis of identity in British Muslim youth in the short-term. Therefore, the focus should be on finding measures that can restrict the “cognitive opening”; make vulnerable individuals resilient to extremist messages; provide other pathways to empowerment; and help individuals find alternative positive identities. The evidence from the interview data set suggests that personalized intervention programs are the most effective way to accomplish these goals and help prevent the fulfillment of the radicalization process. As previously mentioned, 27 interview subjects said targeted intervention programs were vital to increasing the effectiveness of counter-radicalization efforts, two disagreed, and the remaining nine said they were not qualified to provide an expert opinion. This sentiment was particularly strong among the law enforcement officials interviewed, with all eight supporting this argument (See Appendix B for additional information). Similarly, five of the Muslim community activists/mosque leaders mentioned that targeted interventions are important, with one not
knowing enough about the approach; and six local government officials concurred, with two
saying they did not have the expertise to weigh in.

Colin Mellis, who helped develop Amsterdam’s counter-radicalization interventions
program, explains the overarching logic of such targeted efforts: “We have people looking to
arrest them, prosecute them, follow them, and tap their phones. But let’s see if we can turn
people away from the jihadi ideology from a curative approach rather than a repressive or
general prevention approach.” 66

Violent extremist networks and al-Qaida recruiters preying on vulnerable individuals
tailor their approach to the specific circumstances of those they are pursuing. 67 Every
recruitment pitch is different. Therefore, successful counter-radicalization efforts should be
personalized to address the particular issues producing the individual’s sense of alienation or
vulnerability to extremist ideas. Hanif Qadir, who was recruited to join al-Qaida after September
11, 2001 and now runs an organization that tries to prevent the radicalization of Muslim youth in
London, explains that effective counter-radicalization approaches use some of the same methods
that extremist recruiters utilize. “First, you need to find out what the driver (of vulnerability or
alienation) is and what are his individual desires and habits. Then you can start to build a project
around him. The idea is to get them into an environment where they become vulnerable to our
messaging, rather than the extremist messaging.” 68

Based on the interviews with law enforcement and government officials, it appears that
the best way to achieve this is for governments or community groups to create an evaluation and
case work process that first identifies someone vulnerable to radicalization and then directs that
person into a tailored intervention program. The strength of such a process is that it assesses the

66 Author interview, March 10, 2010, phone interview.
67 Assertion is from author interviews with Munir Zamir, Hanif Qadir, and Colin Mellis, among others.
68 Author interview, March 11, 2010, phone interview
particular reasons why someone is susceptible to extremist forces and messages, and then determines what is needed to steer that person down a different path.\textsuperscript{69}

Governments and community groups can develop two broad categories of interventions: societal/diversionary and ideological/rehabilitative.\textsuperscript{70} According to interview set, the first category tends to be the best approach for lower-level cases and those at-risk of radicalization. These individuals may simply require someone or some activity that “binds” them to mainstream society and makes them resilient against the violent extremist messages they are receiving.\textsuperscript{71} This could take the form of one-on-one mentoring or participation in cultural, recreational, or educational activities.\textsuperscript{72} The goal would be to help them build a positive identity and undermine the potency of violent extremist narratives. “Most of these cases are good kids who have just lost focus and direction and listen to extremist voices. But many of them can easily be moved the other way if you give the kids an alternative and a purpose in life that makes them feel part of society,” says Usama Hassan, a part-time imam in Leyton, a London borough, who has advised the UK government on counter-radicalization.\textsuperscript{73}

Ideological/rehabilitative interventions would be better suited for individuals already on the pathway to radicalization or those who have adopted violent extremist ideology.\textsuperscript{74} Work in these cases would focus explicitly on refuting al-Qaida’s interpretation of Islam and discrediting its methods. The best forum would likely be a series of intensive counseling sessions with religious authorities or former radicals, the people who possess the knowledge, credibility, and influence to get through to the person being radicalized. “The goal is to challenge whatever

\textsuperscript{69} Information from author interview with Colin Mellis, Geri Ellis, and Marc Collins, among others.
\textsuperscript{70} See Heal, Tony p.5, for more on intervention categories
\textsuperscript{71} Meah, Yousiff and Mellis, Colin, “Recognising and Responding to Radicalisation: Considerations for Policy and Practice Through the Eyes of Street Level Workers,” p.34.
\textsuperscript{72} The next section will provide real-world examples of such projects.
\textsuperscript{73} Author interview, January 10, 2010, London, UK
\textsuperscript{74} Point made in author interviews by Tariq Khaliq, Prevent coordinator for Birmingham’s Youth Offending Service; Geri Ellis; Marc Collins; Richard Moore; Munir Zamir; Colin Mellis; and Hanif Qadir, among others.
extremist view they have and offer them a mainstream view,” says Thariq Khaliq, who is a Prevent coordinator for Youth Offenders Services in Birmingham.75 “These people have a limited map of the world and you want to try to expand that map.” The next section will describe the types of targeted intervention work ongoing as part of the Prevent strategy, attempt to evaluate the programs in comparison to the ideal model suggested by the interview data set, and identify some of the outstanding challenges encountered.

VII. TARGETED INTERVENTIONS IN THE UK

One of the pillars of the Prevent strategy is supporting people vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment. The revised 2009 counterterrorism strategy document states that susceptibility to violent extremism may be the result of “the absence of positive mentors and role models, a crisis of identity, links to criminality, exposure to traumatic events, or changing circumstances.”76 Policymakers, therefore, are implicitly accepting that the development of a “cognitive opening” may be an essential part of the radicalization process and for some people. The UK’s policy guidelines for Prevent make clear that local governments should have intervention structures in place that can identify and refer people at risk of being radicalized; assess their situation; and then guide them to “interventions aimed at addressing the individual’s needs and vulnerabilities.”77 In an interview, the head of the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism’s Prevent Unit, housed in the Home Office, emphasized this priority: “I would want us to be explicitly focused on … individuals who, for whatever reason, appear to be vulnerable to violent extremism, the same as we are interested in people being drawn into gangs, crime, and

75 Author interview, January 9, 2010, Birmingham, UK
drug use. These statements demonstrate that Prevent strategy and national policymakers recognize the importance of personalized intervention programs. The remainder of this section will seek to assess how the national and local governments have done in accomplishing these objectives.

In February 2007, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) launched a new Prevent program – called the Channel project – to “work in partnership with communities to reduce or manage the risk associated with people exhibiting radicalized behavior.” Channel was modeled off a Dutch program, named Information House, which used a local, case management approach to guide youth susceptible to radicalization into intervention programs. There, a dedicated case management team would evaluate referred individuals and provide advice on programs best suited to counteract the radicalizing forces in that person’s life. Channel was initiated in two sites in 2007, added another nine by March 2009, and expanded to 28 by the end of last year.

Channel serves as mechanism for local authorities, statutory agencies, and police units to partner to assist people who have been exposed to violent extremist ideas or are heading down the path toward radicalization. It has three primary functions: acting as a focal point in a community for intervention referrals; assessing cases; and, through a multi-agency panel, recommending interventions. Participating localities create a Channel panel typically comprising representatives from the police, probation and prison services, local government, school system, social services, and health services. Initial referrals are usually made to a police coordinator, who conducts a risk assessment and determines whether there should be a genuine concern about the

---

78 Author interview with Mike Gillespie, January 6, 2010, London, UK.
79 October 2008 government document provided to author.
80 Meah, Yousiff and Mellis, Colin, “Recognising and Responding to Radicalisation: Considerations for Policy and Practice Through the Eyes of Street Level Workers,” p.33,34.
81 Author interview with Mark Collins, head of ACPO’s Prevent deliver unit, January 7, 2010, London, UK.
person. They do so by interviewing the person who made the referral, as well as relatives, teachers, social service providers, or others who might have insight on whether the individual is genuinely vulnerable to radicalization. If so, the case is passed to the inter-agency Channel panel, which determines the most suitable intervention and what agency will take lead in delivering programs for the individual. By having representatives of different local departments working together to assess each case, the Channel panel is able to devise a tailored curriculum for the individual that draws on the talents and resources of multiple service providers. It is important to note that because the identified individual has not committed any crimes, all the intervention work has to be done on a voluntary basis.

For those merely at risk of radicalization, a lower-level intervention program is created. In many ways, these interventions are similar in nature to what a government or organization would do to guide a vulnerable youth away from gang, drugs, or criminal involvement. This can take many forms. Enrolling them in career training or skill development classes seeks to boost their self-esteem and provide a new alternative pathway. For example, as part of an intervention in one Channel site, an individual was placed in a computer skills course and worked with a career counselor. The counselor helped him find a job, and after subsequent monitoring sessions he was deemed no longer a threat to become radicalized.

One-on-one mentoring sessions through Channel provide positive role models to emulate. In Birmingham, a Channel referral was matched up with a slightly older mentor from the same background who was a successful professional. Thanks in part to that person’s work with the

---

82 Author interview with Mark Collins and Geraldine Ellis.
83 Author interview with Marc Collins.
85 Author interview with anonymous Channel Coordinator #2; three Channel coordinators interviewed asked that their names and locations be withheld in order to discuss sensitive and classified information about the program.
86 Author interview with Geraldine Ellis, Channel coordinator for Birmingham, January 8, 2010, Birmingham, UK.
mentor, the individual applied to and was accepted into a college in the city. Once at college, that person continued to work with the mentor and a community police officer who specializes in Prevent issues. Involvement in cultural, religious, recreational, or community service programs also help Channel participants build a positive alternative identity and enable them to form new social networks, interview subjects said. At another Channel site, the panel contracts with a local community organization to provide such interventions. The organization delivers a program that includes a combination of sports/recreational activities, personal development work, and leadership courses. In other cases, the Channel process creates programs that help participants re-engage with family or peer networks with whom they have become estranged.

If the referred individual demonstrates psycho-emotional issues, the Channel panel arranges counseling sessions or mental health services. For example, at one Channel site an individual with Asperger’s syndrome was referred because he was making repeated positive comments about violent extremism and was seen as at risk of radicalization. The individual began receiving professional mental health support and was later deemed no longer vulnerable to radicalization.

For those individuals in the process of being radicalized or who have accepted al-Qaida’s messages and world views, the lower-level, societal interventions may have little impact. Instead, a more targeted ideological intervention is required, which focuses explicitly on challenging and discrediting the extremist narrative and ideology, multiple interview subjects said. These efforts seek to de-legitimize violence and get the individual to find more constructive avenues for

87 Author interview with anonymous Channel Coordinator #3.
89 August 2009 government document on the Channel program provided to author.
90 Author interview with anonymous Channel Coordinator #3.
91 Point made in author interviews by Tariq Khaliq, Prevent coordinator for Birmingham’s Youth Offending Service; Geri Ellis; Marc Collins; Richard Moore; Munir Zamir; Colin Mellis; and Hanif Qadir, among others.
expressing their frustrations and grievances. Ideological interventions cannot be delivered by someone with a general background in supporting vulnerable individuals; they have to be performed by a Muslim with a deep knowledge of not only al-Qaida ideology, but extremist recruitment tactics, says Munir Zamir, who was a member of extremist organizations in the 1990s and now delivers targeted interventions for local authorities. “When it comes to the hardcore cases, you have to convince them you have enough credence about ideological views to engage with them, and then use your ideological credence to de-program what they believe,” Zamir says.

Many people on the path to radicalization mistrust authority figures and are reluctant at first to engage intervention specialists on a serious basis, adds Zamir, who at the end of 2009 had led 20 interventions, six of which were high-level cases. To break down barriers, Zamir says he draws on his professional understanding of the radicalization process and his own experiences in extremist groups. He uses stories from his background to point out the flaws in al-Qaida’s ideology and the drawbacks of being involved in radical organizations. “In order to impact someone who sees offensive jihad as their personal obligation, you have to be quite serious and match the methods, credibility, appearance and lingo of the person who gave them the extremist understanding in the first place,” he adds. However, someone is not going to abandon their views of al-Qaida or the acceptability of violence in a day or a week. The process, Zamir says, is a long journey and it can take months or even years of dedicated work to truly break through to an individual. There is no such thing as instant success.

92 Author interview, January 10, 2010, London, UK.
Evaluating Channel and Identifying Challenges

As of December 2009, Channel programs had received, since their inception, about 430 referrals of individuals vulnerable to Islamist extremism, with more than 200 of those actually steered into intervention programs. Mark Collins, who leads the Prevent delivery unit of ACPO, which has responsibility for Channel, says that no one who has participated in a Channel intervention program has been arrested on terrorism-related offenses. This is a clear metric of success for the Channel program. Some Channel intervention success stories were highlighted in the previous section. However, it is difficult to determine in some cases what impact Channel interventions have had, especially for the higher-level, ideological interventions. UK officials involved with Prevent readily concede this point. “One of the hardest things of (Channel) is evaluating success. Ultimately, there’s no way to know for sure if someone adopts extremist ideology,” unless they get involved in supporting or plotting a terrorist attack, a Home Office official said. While the UK government has produced a classified audit of the Channel program, it is still struggling to develop a systematic way of measuring the program’s outcomes and progress. Zamir, who conducts ideological interventions, notes that at times it can be difficult to ascertain whether the person he is working with is truly absorbing his messages or just playing along. “I could sit in a channel engagement, say what you need to hear and walk away without changing my mind,” he adds.

Channel participants have not committed a crime and partake in interventions voluntarily. They are free to stop at any time. Therefore, some Channel coordinators view a high

93 Information from author interview with Marc Collins, ACPO Prevent official.
95 Author interview with Home Office official who requested anonymity, January 6, 2010, London, UK.
96 Author interviews with Home Office officials, January 6, 2010, London, UK
97 Author interview with Zamir.
participation rate as a measure of success in of itself. One coordinator boasted that in the 10 months Channel has been operational at his site, no one approached about an intervention has refused to participate. That alone is a form of progress, the coordinator said, as it ensures the government will, at minimum, have the opportunity to engage the vulnerable person and place them in supportive programs. Mark Collins, of ACPO, echoed that sentiment: “You can never say for sure that this person won’t have extremist views anymore. But you can say that through the Channel process, you have given them some mainstream thinking and countered the ideology they have received previously.”

However, it is important to highlight some of the Channel program’s potential drawbacks. There is a possibility that the higher-level, ideological interventions could produce a backlash and push the individual further down the path of radicalization, several of those interviewed, including some supporters of Channel, said. Channel interventions have the potential to serve as a radicalizing agent, Munir Zamir says. By having someone who works on behalf of the government tell the individual that their interpretation of Islam is incorrect, one could unwittingly reinforce al-Qaida’s narrative that the West seeks to subjugate the “true” Islam, he adds. Furthermore, the person could feel like they are being spied upon, increasing their anger toward the government. Tim Stevens, a scholar at King’s College, believes the Channel program is “divisive” because it “exceptionalizes sectors of the community,” further alienating them from mainstream society.

Any thorough assessment of the Channel program has to recognize these risks. But based on the interviews conducted, it appears that Channel is an effective framework for delivering

---

98 Author interview with anonymous Channel Coordinator #1.
99 Author interview.
100 Author interview.
targeted interventions. “What can be said is Channel has definitely given them guidance and skills to improve this lives and strengthen their resilience to all forms of violent extremism,” says a Channel site coordinator.\(^\text{102}\) Furthermore, the UK Audit Commission stated in a report on *Prevent* that the Channel program “presents significant opportunities to divert vulnerable individuals away from violent extremism.”\(^\text{103}\) Those responsible for the program say they do not expect that every participant will come to reject violent extremist ideology in the short-term. For some, it will take a long time and persistent intervention programs to close the “cognitive opening,” create alternative positive identities, or become immune to extremist narratives. Others who have adopted extremist ideas may never abandon those beliefs and, instead, interventions focus on getting these individual to view violence and the support of violence as illegitimate means of accomplishing their goals.

The local government and law enforcement officials interviewed said that a real advantage of the Channel program, is that it gets police, education, and service providers in the same room talking about the best way to help a vulnerable person. This type of collaboration and communication is critical to ensuring those at risk of radicalization get the type of targeted assistance they need.\(^\text{104}\) For example, officials said that a panel’s ability to identify someone experiencing mental health issues and to place them in support programs has turned out to be a major benefit of the program.\(^\text{105}\)

This study concludes that through the Channel process, the UK government has created a sustainable and effective mechanism for creating programs to help address the particular reasons why a person is susceptible to radicalization. The Channel program fits the model of effective

\(^{102}\) Author interview with Channel Coordinator #2.


\(^{104}\) Author interview with, among others, Geri Ellis; anonymous Channel coordinators; and Thariq Khaliq.

\(^{105}\) Author interview with Marc Collins.
counter-radicalization approaches that the interview set, especially Muslim community activists, local government officials and law enforcement authorities, identified.

However, the interviews conducted for this paper revealed that despite the progress made, the Channel program faces a number of obstacles that have impeded its impact to date. First, there are questions about the level of expertise and knowledge of the front-line staff working on Channel referrals, evaluations, and interventions. A mature understanding of the radicalization process and violent extremist ideology is a prerequisite for conducting evaluations, says Hanif Qadir, who was recruited by al-Qaida and now conducts counter-radicalization interventions in London. He believes that many of those involved with Channel do not have the background to identify youth most vulnerable to violent extremism. “To be brutally honest, a lot of the people are well meaning and doing good work but don’t have a clue how to tackle these issues. This isn’t the job for the person who doesn’t have the knowledge and many [government workers] are not tuned in enough,” Qadir adds. Munir Zamir also has qualms about the skill set of some of the local providers. “I’m a bit concerned about the base-level knowledge of practitioners in agencies around radicalization issues. There is a complete lack of operational awareness with frontline staff of what they are looking for and why they are looking for it.”

Local authorities delivering Channel interventions are well aware of the need to have more service providers with expertise on radicalization and to bring more Muslims with knowledge of these issues on board, says Richard Moore, the Chief Inspector of the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit’s Prevent division. To improve the knowledge of front-line service providers about radicalization, the Home Office has initiated an ambitious training program. The goal is to give hundreds of thousands of health care providers, youth workers,
prison and probation officers, and teachers a better understanding of how to spot someone who may be vulnerable to violent extremism. The approach is similar to the safeguard training already required for those who work with youth, where service providers learn how to identify someone who is vulnerable to drugs, crime, gangs, or domestic abuse, says Paul Chandwani, a training delivery specialist with the Home Office’s Office of Security and Counter Terrorism. Making sure staff know how to refer individuals to their local Channel process – if one exists – is part of the new training package.

But some of those interviewed are skeptical that this large-scale training initiative will have any impact on getting vulnerable youth into intervention programs. Thariq Khaliq, the Prevent coordinator for the Youth Offenders Service in Birmingham, likens this approach to preparing for a natural disaster by training thousands of people in first aid instead of bringing in lots of doctors. To Khaliq, prevention work of this nature is a specialization, and he believes local governments should create teams of specialists if it wants the Channel interventions process to be more effective.

The second major challenge for the Channel program is the question of support in Muslim communities. As mentioned earlier in this paper, of the 24 interview subjects who explicitly analyzed the degree of mistrust and suspicion of Prevent in Muslim communities, 19 stated there was a “high”, “good”, or “fair” degree of mistrust, four said there was “some” or “mild” degree of mistrust, and one said that was “little.” Many of the interviewees said it is likely that Channel sites are not getting as many referrals as they could be because of concerns in Muslim communities about the intent of the program. A report by the UK Audit Commission

109 Author interview with Paul Chandwani, a training delivery specialist with the Home Office’s Office of Security and Counter Terrorism, January 6, 2010, London, UK
110 Ibid.
111 Author interview, January 9, 2010, Birmingham, UK
described the Channel program as “a high risk strategy” because it “has the potential to result in mistrust and suspicion.” Abid Raja, an officer in the Muslim Contact Unit of London’s Metropolitan Police Service, says that the government’s lack of long-standing engagement with, and understanding of, Muslim communities has created a trust deficit. The result is that Prevent is “undoubtedly now considered a dirty word in the communities and is seen as a subterfuge or smoke screen for something more unpleasant,” he adds. Because of this, Raja says, many Muslim families, community activists, and youth workers are reluctant to bring individuals vulnerable to radicalization to the attention of the Channel program. Abdullah Faliq, a trustee of the prominent East London Mosque, is personally supportive of government intervention efforts. But he thinks the Channel program has been undermined by a pervasive disinclination among Muslims to pass information along to a local panel that is led by the police. “It is seen as a spying thing and ploy for youth workers to get information about students showing signs of radicalization,” he adds.

Another factor that has hindered the program’s progress, some Channel coordinators say, was the ad hoc nature in which it was initiated at sites. Because the program was started in two localities and soon expanded to 28 sites, some feel that the program was not properly developed at a national level before being implemented widely. “There is also a feeling at times that this is still nationally being developed/considered … and it would have been better to have a more coherent national vision at the outset or at least at the stage we are implementing this,” said a Channel site coordinator. Some Channel coordinators interviewed also felt that they did not

---

113 Author interview, January 13, 2010, London, UK
114 Author interview, January 12, 2010, London, UK
115 Information based on author interviews with several Channel site coordinators, who asked to remain anonymous.
116 Author interview with anonymous Channel site coordinator #3.
have enough information and training at the beginning. “At the onset there was little guidance,” a different site coordinator said. Recently, however, the preparation for Channel coordinators has improved, interview subjects said. A Channel booklet of best practices has been produced and recordings of interventions and a data capture process has enhanced the understanding of those running local programs, said the site coordinator who felt there was little initial guidance.

One final issue of concern to some interviewees is the apparent disconnect between the Channel program and local Muslim faith leaders. This paper has touched briefly on the important role imams can play in preventing the radicalization of Muslim youth, and the topic will be discussed in great depth in the next section. All four of the Channel site coordinators interviewed agreed that it is important for imams – who are seen as credible and influential voices in communities – to play a role in high-level, ideological interventions. Yet only one of those four sites had a formal relationship or agreement with a local imam to provide assistance with interventions.

VIII. SHORTCOMINGS OF BRITISH ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS

As pointed out earlier in this paper, the “religious seeking” process is one way that Muslim youth experiencing a crisis of identity encounter and become receptive to violent extremist messages and ideas. These individuals are searching for theological answers to questions about their identity and the challenges Muslims face living in a secular society. Tufyal Choudhury contends that the ongoing appeal of violent extremist groups reflects, in part, a failure of traditional religious institutions and organizations to connect with young British

---

117 Author interview with anonymous Channel site coordinator #2.
118 Ibid.
Muslims. Choudhury believes that radicalized youth in the UK tend to lack the requisite religious literacy and education to resist violent extremist interpretations of Islamic doctrine. This is partly due to the fact that most British imams are foreign-born, speak little English, and have great difficulty relating to the struggles of being a young Muslim in Britain. The Quilliam Foundation, a “counter-extremist” think tank, noted in a 2009 study that imams in the UK are “ill-equipped to address the real concerns and everyday experiences of young British Muslims.”

A 2007 survey by Chester University for the BBC found that only 8 percent of imams preaching in British mosques were born in the UK, 45 percent had been in the UK for fewer than five years, and 6 percent spoke English as a first language. And a 2008 poll conducted by the Quilliam Foundation found that only 3 percent of imams in UK mosques were born in the country and 92 percent had trained abroad. The lecture during Friday prayers is the most important sermon of the week, and is intended as a time for the imam to address pressing community issues. But the Quilliam poll found that 44 percent of mosques do not conduct the Friday lecture in English, 47 percent alternate weeks between English and a second language, and only 9 percent always conduct it in English.

The imams who come from abroad often possess a limited understanding of British society, values, and culture, let alone what it is like to grow up in a modern British city. “The issue is that the majority of imams in this country come from South Asia and from a very different mindset and culture, and, unfortunately, they actually import a lot of that with them,”

---

119 Choudhury, Tufyal, p.6.
120 Ibid.
122 The survey size was 300 mosques. Of those interviewed, about 50 percent of were from Pakistan, 20 percent from Bangladesh and 15 percent from India. Six percent had arrived in the UK in the preceding year and 23 percent had lived in the UK for more than a decade. “Ban Foreign Language Imams - Peer,” BBC News, July 6, 2007.
123 The survey size was 254 mosques. Dyke, Anya Hart, p.11.
says Mohammed Afzal, who oversees an imam training project in Dudley.\textsuperscript{125} These imams tend not to speak out about political or social matters in Britain, focusing more on rituals and traditions than political activism.\textsuperscript{126} Therefore, Muslim youth who are politically conscious and want to know more about how Islam applies to the germane political issues of the day often get disillusioned by the mosques and seek guidance elsewhere.\textsuperscript{127} “The job of the imam is to channel that anger and those grievances constructively through dialogue,” says Usama Hassan, a part-time imam in the London borough of Leyton who was involved in radical groups when he was younger.\textsuperscript{128} “Many young people want to go to the imam to ask for advice, but can’t communicate with them. The wisdom and maturity that elders can pass on isn’t getting across.”

Furthermore, the nature of Islamic instruction in madrasas alienates some younger mosque members. A great deal of time is usually spent on memorizing the Qu’ran in Arabic without translation, leaving many young, English-speaking Muslims ignorant of the text’s true messages.\textsuperscript{129} This rote memorization and text-driven approach to education does not equip young people with the skills to relate and apply religious concepts to their environment.\textsuperscript{130}

In contrast to imams, violent extremist recruiters consciously compose their approach and messages to appeal to curious or impressionable youth. First, these radicalizers always know English, as many of them British born. Because they grew up in the same neighborhoods, went to the same schools, and have had similar experiences, they can literally and figuratively speak the same language as the people they are targeting. They can relate to the sense of dislocation and marginalization that young Muslims, in the midst of a crisis of identity, are experiencing.

\textsuperscript{125} Author interview, March 16, 2010, via phone.
\textsuperscript{126} Lewis, Philip, p.103-104.
\textsuperscript{127} Wiktorowicz, Quintan, p.99-100.
\textsuperscript{128} Author interview, January 13, 2010, London, UK
\textsuperscript{129} Lewis, Philip, p.43.
\textsuperscript{130} Mohammed Afzal, who oversees the imam training project in Dudley, made this point in author interview.
Having undergone a similar religious search themselves, they can pinpoint the precise messages needed to widen the “cognitive opening” and make someone more receptive to al-Qaida’s narrative.\textsuperscript{131}

For those “religious seekers” disillusioned by the traditional, apolitical Islam preached in mosques – or unable to engage local imams because of a communication barrier – English-speaking radicals can fill a void. Violent extremists offer themselves as religious guides or “sacred authority” who can provide answers to the theological questions of youth.\textsuperscript{132} They interpret the texts and symbols of Islam in a way that British youth can grasp. Violent extremists provide a simple and compelling framework for understanding how to live as a young Muslim in a “hostile” secular society.

Moreover, while imams preaching in UK mosques tend to be stolid and austere, extremist preachers and recruiters are usually dynamic speakers. Like leaders of other social movements, they attract followers not only on the power of their ideas, but the persuasiveness of their personalities. For example, Omar Bakri Mohammed, who founded the extremist organization al-Muhajiroun and was barred from re-entering Britain after the July 2005 bombings, is charismatic, charming, and the consummate salesman.\textsuperscript{133} He was an accessible leader for his young disciples and took the time to get to know his followers on a personal basis, staying long after speeches to shake hands with all those who attended. He would proudly boast of his ping pong prowess and challenge supporters to matches. His sermons dealt with issues applicable to everyday life in the UK and he stressed the connections between religion and politics. He used humor as an effective tool to get through to the teenagers and twenty-somethings who attended his lectures. “The Sheikh is so funny,” said Noor Uddin, the nom de guerre of one of Bakri’s

\textsuperscript{131} Point made by Munir Zamir, Hanif Qadir, and Usama Hassan in interviews.
\textsuperscript{132} Wiktorowicz, Quintan, p. 26, 101.
\textsuperscript{133} Observations based on author interviews with Bakri and al-Muhajiroun members in London in March 2005.
followers in his early 20s, following a sermon in East London in 2005. “Sometimes I can’t even hear what he’s saying cause I’m laughing too hard.”

IX. IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING FAITH LEADERS AND INSTITUTIONS

There are two ways that a government can combat the volume and potency of violent extremist messages and ideas: reduce the existing supply and help produce an alternative supply. The former approach is one of the five pillars of the Prevent strategy – disrupting those who promote violent extremism. The Terrorism Act of 2006 served as the first step in restricting the ability of violent extremists to propagate their message, by making dissemination of terrorist propaganda and publications a criminal offense. The government also published a list of “unacceptable behavior” that would lead to the deportation of non-citizens, including publishing or preaching anything that justified terrorism. The stringent laws have been effective at isolating some of Britain’s most notorious extremists. For example, several prominent members of the radical group al-Muhajiroun were sentenced to prison terms in April 2008 for inciting violence through their preaching. Under the auspices of these new laws, local police are now staking out street corners, parks, and other public venues where extremists gather. Furthermore, British intelligence agencies are working with the private businesses to shutdown jihadi Web sites that promulgate extremist messages.

Equally important is the latter approach of creating an alternative supply to counter violent extremist ideas. Governments can achieve this – and help bridge the generation gap in

134 Author interview following speech by Bakri at Collingwood Hall community center in East London in March 2005.
135 For more on supply concept, see Meah, Yousiff and Mellis, Colin, p.27-30.
mosques – by developing a homegrown cadre of imams, boosting the capacity of faith institutions, and enhancing the skill set and visibility of faith leaders; 25 interview subjects said such an approach was critical to enhancing the effectiveness of government counter-radicalization efforts, while zero said it was not important, and 13 said they were not qualified to make a judgment. Imams can play a pivotal role in answering questions during the “religious seeking” phase and help people understand the true messages of Islam. By providing those at-risk of radicalization with correct interpretations of Islamic texts, imams can decrease the chances that violent extremist narratives and explanations will resonate.140

However, this will require imams who not only speak English but also understand the problems and challenges British youth confront; they need to be able to speak fluently and credibly about the political, cultural, and social issues that are most pressing to Muslim teenagers and twenty-somethings. In other words, they need to possess many of the same skills and characteristics as the affable extremists trying to recruit impressionable youth.141 The goal would be for youth in every community to feel comfortable talking with a local imam about personal problems, foreign policy concerns, or the extremist ideas they encounter. “If you had young people who felt more a part of the mosque, then they are less likely to go to Internet cafes or street corners where they become more vulnerable to extremism. They need to know there are people they can talk to in the mosque if there are other people trying to radicalize them,” says Caroline Cooke, who heads the Department of Communities and Local Government’s Faith Capacity team.142

140 Insight based on author interviews with, among others, Usama Hassan; Colin Mellis; Mohammed Afzal; Rachel Winny, who works on faith leader programs for the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG); and Caroline Cooke, head of CLG’s faith capacity team.
141 Point made in interviews with Mohammed Afzal, Usama Hassan, and Hanif Qadir.
142 Author interview, March 16, 2010.
X. FAITH CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS IN THE UK

From the very beginning, the Prevent strategy has emphasized the importance of increasing the number of English-speaking imams attuned to British society to the overarching objective of preventing radicalization. Hazel Blears, the former Secretary of State for CLG summarized the government’s views on the role faith can play in the Prevent agenda: “Far from being part of the problem, faith can be part of the solution. Research suggests that it is often those people with the weakest understanding of faith who are the most susceptible to extremist messages.”¹⁴³ Yet policymakers have also recognized that the UK government has a lot of work to do in this area if it wants to achieve its objectives. One of the first Prevent documents, in April 2007, stated that “more urgently needs to be done to ensure that imams can connect with all parts of society, particularly young people.”¹⁴⁴ The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) has stated that a developed religious identity may provide protection from radicalization. Therefore, imams and mosques “could create positive environments to debate issues and present alternative explanations, but they are not yet doing so.”¹⁴⁵

While the UK government does not want to influence what is being preached in mosques or how imams receive religious training, the Prevent strategy has insisted that the government should provide support for faith leaders and institutions. Two objectives have been set forth in this arena: The first goal is to help imams to take a more active role in their communities and to tackle violent extremism. The objective is to “unlock the potential” of imams and push them to

engage with youth and to challenge extremist ideas.\textsuperscript{146} “The people who have the most credibility in countering al-Qaida’s messages are the imams. So we are trying to reach out to those who provide theological advice and guidance and empower them,” says Rachel Winny, who oversees faith leader programs for the CLG.\textsuperscript{147} To accomplish this, the \textit{Prevent} strategy calls for the establishment of training programs to assist foreign-born imams in learning English or increasing their proficiency, and to help grow a crop of British-born imams. Leadership development courses are designed to equip imams with the skills and confidence to challenge violent extremist narratives and recruitment methods.\textsuperscript{148} Local governments and civil society organizations are also urged to work with foreign-born imams to increase their understanding of British society and values, including through cultural programs outside the mosque that give them a chance to interact with British youth. The long-term goal is for communities to no longer need to bring imams without English skills from abroad because there are ample British-born and trained imams available.

The second objective is to build the capacity of mosques to ensure they are hostile environments for violent extremists but also more effective service providers and community organizers.\textsuperscript{149} Local authorities are seeking to collaborate with mosque leaders who are not imams to help them create spaces that are more inviting environments for young people. “These institutions can provide an antidote to extremism if they take an essential role in their communities,” says Rehan Haidar, who works with Islamic institutions through the CLG.\textsuperscript{150}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{147} Author interview, March 26, 2010, via phone.
\bibitem{148} Ibid, p.7.
\bibitem{149} Cooke, Caroline, “Strengthening Faith Capacity in Muslim Communities,” Department of Communities and Local Government; Author interview with Rehan Haidar, who works with Islamic institutions at the CLG, March 26, 2010, via phone.
\bibitem{150} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
Under the *Prevent* strategy, this entails governance projects, leadership training, and working to improve standards in Islamic institutions.\(^{151}\)

Faith capacity building programs are funded and administered in one of two ways under *Prevent*: by the CLG or by local authorities using grants from the national government. This section will first describe the CLG’s faith training efforts and then look at programs sponsored by local governments. In total, around 300 imams have participated in CLG-sponsored training programs. One way the CLG funds faith building programs is through its Community Leadership Fund, which, as of September 2009, had allocated £2.7 million pounds to 62 community projects for 2007/2008 and 2008/2009.\(^{152}\) Of those, 10 involved training imams in some capacity, with a total of 100 imams participating in programs.\(^{153}\)

For example, the Luqman Institute received a grant to build a pilot imam training program to help senior imams “realize their leadership potential and responsibility in the issue of tackling and speaking out against extremism.”\(^{154}\) Twenty imams participated in the 2008/2009 fiscal year in an eight-course, eight-month program. Additionally, a civil society organization named Demos ran a project that brought imams and young people together for a series of workshops to develop action plans and a toolkit for how the two groups can better engage. A total of 32 imams and 96 young people participated.\(^{155}\) Several other projects have either recently started or will be launched in coming months. For instance, the Rahabar Trust started a 13-week media training and communication skills course for Muslim faith leaders in August, with 10 participating in the first group. And London Metropolitan University is set to begin an imam


\(^{152}\) CLG document of mosque and imam projects provided to author; The TaxPayers’ Alliance, “Council Spending Uncovered II: No.5: The Prevent Strategy,” September 8, 2009;

\(^{153}\) Author interview with Rachel Winny.

\(^{154}\) Document on CLG’s Community Leadership Fund projects provided to author.

\(^{155}\) All project information from CLG Community Leadership Fund document provided to author.
training course in April 2010, with 12 imams spending one weekend a month on campus for classes in English, human rights law, and understanding British culture.156

The CLG supports several other projects that boost the capacity of faith leaders outside of its Community Leadership Fund. The department has partnered with the prestigious Al Azhar University in Cairo and Cambridge University to create a pilot training program for British imams. The first class of nine imams, all British citizens, is receiving theological instruction at Al Azhar and taking practical skill courses at Cambridge, as well as participating in interfaith events and meeting with young people.157 Additionally, the CLG funded a Faith Community Development Qualification program to enhance the skills of faith workers of all religions to better serve their congregations. Around 200 imams and mosque leaders have participated. CLG is also conducting a review of Muslim faith leader training to get a better understanding of the imam training services across the country and to identify the gaps that CLG could help fill. The review is set to be completed in April 2010. Finally, CLG is exploring how to put together a short-term training program on British society, politics, and institutions for imams arriving in the country.

As noted above, local authorities are also using designated Prevent money to fund community-based training and development programs for imams. No definitive list of Prevent-funded capacity building projects for imams exists, according to the CLG. “We don’t know how many imams are being trained nationally. We do need to strengthen our links with the local authorities in charge of Prevent,” says Rachel Winny, CLG’s coordinator for faith leader training.158 But based on a review of Prevent documents, it appears that at least 20 such

156 Ibid.
157 All information on CLG projects come from author interview with Rachel Winny and CLG document on imams and mosque projects provided to author.
158 Author interview.
programs are either being delivered or will be rolled out in the coming months. The most mature and celebrated of these programs is the Black Country Imams project, which is working with 25 foreign-born imams from three localities to enhance their English skills, supply them with the confidence to be community leaders, and learn how to interact better with youth.159

Because the Black Country project is seen as the most developed imam training program, it is worth exploring in more detail.160 The project began in 2008 with nine imams meeting twice a week for English language classes and courses on how to be a teacher, done in partnership with a local college. Now, 25 of the 32 imams in the Dudley area participate in the program, representing a range of dominations. The program expanded to include courses on an array of subjects important for someone responsible for advising a faith community, including public speaking, child protection, and communication technology. Classes have focused on British culture and project coordinators have taken the imams to museums, cricket matches, and football games. “Our program doesn’t just teach them English language skills, but tries to equip them with the cultural norms of this country,” says Mohammed Afzal, who coordinates the project for the Dudley local government. “It’s a whole package. We take the imams to places they never would have gone or never realized the significance of.”161

The project places a particular emphasis on how the imams can better reach out to, counsel, and mentor young members of their congregations. “We must remember that imams are great theologians but often lack the communication skills to effectively answer the queries of our young people, and through this project we hope we can address this issue,” says Imam Hashmi, 159 Information on Black Country Imams project comes from author interview with Mohammed Afzal, who coordinates the project for the Dudley local government , March 16, 2010, via phone . 160 Assertion based on interviews with CLG officials who work on faith capacity building programs. 161 Author interview.
of the Dudley Central Mosque.\textsuperscript{162} The “golden rule” of the project is that doctrinal or theological matters of faith are never discussed, Afzal says. But the imams regularly debate how to combat violent extremism more effectively inside and outside the mosque. The sharp increase over the past year in terrorist attacks in Pakistan, where many of the imams are from, has motivated the participants to speak more frequently about extremism to their congregations, Afzal adds.

Though quantifying the success of such a program is always challenging, Afzal points out that more than three-quarters of the imams in the area attend on a weekly basis and that the original members are still participating. Furthermore, Afzal adds, if you walk into these imams’ mosques, you can now hear sermons in English, something that was unthinkable two years ago.

Now the paper will examine the second government objective – boosting the capacity of mosques. The CLG has provided at least £200,000 to the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB), which was is an independent, community-led body that aims to promote good governance in mosques.\textsuperscript{163} MINAB has more than 600 member mosques and training institutions, and is now developing workshops and self-certification assessments for its members.\textsuperscript{164} However, the organization has yet to get involved in any imam training projects. Of the 62 projects funded through CLG’s Community Leadership Fund, five, including MINAB, have been directed at improving the capacity of mosques. One of the other projects is run by an organization called Urban Nexis, which seeks to enhance the management skills of mosque leaders through training programs. Between 2009 and 2011, the program aims to work with 35 mosques and Islamic organizations.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{164} Cooke, Caroline, “Strengthening Faith Capacity in Muslim Communities,” Department of Communities and Local Government.
\textsuperscript{165} CLG document on Community Leadership Fund.
More mosque governance projects are occurring at the local level, with at least 21 such programs taking place across the country.\textsuperscript{166} For example, a project in Ealing, outside London, conducts workshops with mosque committee leaders on improving mosque governance, fundraising, and building stronger relationships with public bodies.\textsuperscript{167} In Birmingham, a private consulting firm is paid with Prevent funding to help area mosques improve their governance procedures. Almost 50 area mosques have now participated in workshops and training sessions, says Karl George, who runs the program.\textsuperscript{168}

\textbf{Evaluating Faith Capacity Building Programs and Identifying Challenges}

The data and programs enumerated in the previous section demonstrate that policymakers have devoted significant attention and resources through the Prevent strategy to building the capacity of Muslim faith leaders. This fits the model of effective counter-radicalization approaches that the interview set, especially local government and law enforcement officials, identified. About 300 imams have participated in training programs sponsored by the CLG, with 20 projects administered by local authorities having trained an unknown number of imams. In total, approximately 53 programs for imams and mosque leaders are being implemented across the country. The success of the Black Country Imams project is evidence that well-crafted, local programs can attract high levels of participation from imams and can make a difference in local mosques.

However, many of those interviewed for this study said that the development of projects boosting the capacity of Muslim faith leaders lags behind the growth of other types of Prevent programs. With more than 2,000 mosques in the UK, it appears the programs underway are only

\textsuperscript{166} CLG document on imams and mosque projects provided to author.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{168} Author interview, March 26, 2010, via phone.
reaching a fraction of the imams and mosque that could benefit from training and development courses. “Unfortunately, not enough of these programs are going on. We are the only place in the country where we have the imams from a whole area learning together around a table,” Mohammed Afzal says about the Black Country Imams project.\(^\text{169}\) The rest of this section will examine some of obstacles inhibiting the development of more faith capacity building programs.

One big challenge, according to the head of the CLG’s faith capacity team, is skepticism in Muslim communities about the benefits of having the government involved in religious affairs.\(^\text{170}\) Some imams and mosques simply do not believe the government should play any role in working with faith leaders. Others are concerned that accepting money from the government to develop programs or even participating in government projects will damage their credibility with their congregation. “If a mosque takes money from the government, people ask why they are taking that money. It doesn’t seem right to them,” says Abdullah Faliq, a trustee of the East London Mosque.\(^\text{171}\)

Suspicious about the intentions of the Prevent agenda and fears that programs are used to spy on Muslims have also caused some mosques and imams to eschew participation in training programs, CLG officials say. A number of mosques have declined to partake in governance projects or even register as a charity with the UK’s Charity Commission because of concerns that it would lead to greater government surveillance of congregations, says Rehan Haidar, who works on engagement with Islamic institutions for the CLG.\(^\text{172}\) “Prevent has become tainted and mosques are looking at with suspicion, no doubt,” adds Tassaddaq Hussain, the community development director of the Green Lane Mosque in Birmingham. “Even mosques that want to

\(^{169}\) Author interview.

\(^{170}\) Author interview with Caroline Cooke.

\(^{171}\) Author interview, January 12, 2010, London, UK.

\(^{172}\) Author interview.
apply for funding possibly wouldn’t now.” Mohammed Afzal says that one of the Black Country Imams project’s biggest challenge was “the prevent strategy itself,” and that it took him nine months to convince imams to set aside their perceptions about Prevent and give the program a shot.

Another issue is the question of whether community organizations and faith groups have the expertise and capacity to create their own training and governance programs. MINAB would be an ideal clearinghouse for such programs, CLG officials say, but despite having 600 member mosques the organization is still in the developmental stage. Those interviewed who work on faith leader programs said there is still a need for a better understanding of what effective imam training and mosque governance programs should look like. “There’s a general paucity of best practices and good case studies. This hasn’t been particularly well documented,” adds Rehan Haidar of CLG. In response, CLG initiated a review of Muslim faith leader training programs to close the knowledge gap.

XI. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

With a UK parliamentary election scheduled for May 6, 2010 – and the two main parties calling for budget cuts – Prevent is receiving greater scrutiny than ever before. Leaders in the opposition Conservative Party say that if elected they will thoroughly review all Prevent programs before agreeing to continue the funding levels after the current cycle ends in 2011. From the opposition’s point of view, Prevent has funded some worthwhile projects but has “clearly been loosely focused,” Chris Grayling, a Conservative MP and shadow Home Secretary,
says in an interview. “We are not going to go on paying for things that make no difference,” if the Conservatives win the election, Grayling adds. “The Prevent program should be carefully structured; it shouldn’t be just ‘here is some money.’” The Labour government, at the national and local levels, is invested heavily in the outcome of the Prevent strategy. Millions of pounds, hundreds of jobs, and an untold number of reputations are on the line. Officials working on the Prevent strategy are striving to identify successful program areas and ways to improve the approach. This section will outline some of the main schools of thought on the future of Prevent and then, based on the interviews and research collected, make some concrete policy recommendations.

A prominent point of view, especially among some academics and Muslim civil society organizations, is that the Prevent agenda has caused more harm than good by stigmatizing Muslim communities and engendering further alienation and mistrust. The implication of Prevent, they say, is that simply being a Muslim makes one prone to violent extremism and a risk to wider society. Therefore, the entire prevention strategy should be scrapped and counterterrorism work should return to the traditional domains of law enforcement and intelligence, these critics contend. According to the Muslim Council of Britain, an umbrella group of more than 500 Muslim organizations, the Prevent strategy has been “counter-productive” and become the government’s “central policy tool” for engaging Muslim communities. In essence, these critics say, it has “securitized” the interaction between Muslims and local governments, ensuring that engagement of all kinds returns to discussions of

176 Author interview, January 13, 2010, London, UK
177 Point made in Tower Hamlets, “London Borough of Tower Hamlets (PVE44),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, 12/18/09
178 Point made in author interviews with Tim Stevens, with King’s College’s Centre for Science & Security Studies, January 12, 2010, London, UK; and Tahir Abbas, professor at Birmingham University, January 9, 2010, Birmingham, UK.
179 Muslim Council of Britain, “Memorandum from Muslim Council of Britain (PVE32),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009.
terrorism. The result has been increased suspicion of government motives and fears of spying. “It’s been sold as a security mechanism or framework aimed at a problematic communities or elements of them,” argues Tim Stevens, with King's College Centre for Science & Security Studies. “It has been extremely damaging and created divisions.” The An-Nisa Society contends that Prevent has actually increased Islamaphobia by convincing white, working-class communities that British Muslims receive special treatment, funding, and capacity building programs.

This school of thought also posits that Prevent has unhelpfully conflated counterterrorism work with community cohesion projects. To rectify this, the Institute of Community Cohesion says, the next British government should “de-couple” the two areas, and have preventative projects be removed from the counterterrorism domain and placed under a more robust community cohesion strategy. Abdullah Faliq, a trustee with the East London Mosque, echoed this sentiment in an interview: “Don’t call the programs “preventing violent extremism” because it puts up barriers and creates suspicion. It would be good to re-brand it as social cohesion programs.” Central to this new approach, proponents add, would be a greater emphasis on tackling the socio-economic inequalities that produce grievances in Muslim youth.

At the other end of the spectrum, some conservative critics excoriate the Prevent strategy because they believe it empowers non-violent radicals and does not enough focus on promoting

---

180 Point made in author interview with Tahir Abbas.
181 As previously noted, for more on spying concerns see Kundnani, Arun, “Spooked! How Not to Prevent Violent Extremism,” Institute of Race Relations, October 2009; and Khan, Khalida, “Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) & Prevent: A Response from the Muslim Community,” An-Nisa Society, February 2009.
182 Author interview.
184 Institute of Community Cohesion, “Memorandum from Institute of Community Coehsion (PVE15),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009.
185 Author interview, January 12, 2010, London, UK.
186 See An-Nisa Society, “Memorandum from An-Nisa Society (PVE39)”; Institute of Community Cohesion, “Memorandum from Institute of Community Coehsion (PVE15).”
shared British values. For example, Shiraz Maher and Martyn Frampton, writing for the Policy Exchange think tank, argue that the premise of Prevent is fundamentally flawed because some projects work through political Islamists who don’t believe in the British political and social systems.\textsuperscript{187} Prevent “is thus underwriting the very Islamist ideology which spawns an illiberal, intolerant and anti-Western world view.”\textsuperscript{188} The report calls for greater oversight of those whom local authorities and police departments fund and engage. On a somewhat similar note, the Quilliam Foundation posits that Prevent is in “disarray” and that “some money allocated for Prevent has actually undermined national cohesion through promoting separatism and thereby preventing the creation of a British identity based on shared universal values.”\textsuperscript{189} In response, Quilliam’s leaders believe Prevent programs should be re-tooled to more explicitly challenge extremist ideology and promote liberal, democratic values in Muslim communities. Similarly, the House of Commons committee argued in its March 2010 report that the government should focus more Prevent projects on “encouraging participation in democratic means of debate.”\textsuperscript{190}

A third school of thought, a form of middle ground, is that Prevent is built upon a fundamentally sound approach but has become too wide ranging and needs a re-focusing. The British government set out to do too much with Prevent and began delivering programs to an ever expanding circle of people further and further back up the radicalization chain, says Raff Pantucci, with the International Institute for Strategic Studies.\textsuperscript{191} Pantucci and those with similar views contend that Prevent funding should be used strictly on projects that challenge violent extremist ideas or that work with individuals who have been exposed to violent extremist ideas or that work with individuals who have been exposed to violent extremist

\textsuperscript{187} Maher, Shiraz and Frampton, Martyn, “Choosing Our Friends Wisely: Criteria For Engagement with Muslim Groups,” Policy Exchange, 2009, p.4-5
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid, p.5.
\textsuperscript{189} Quilliam Foundation, “Memorandum from Quilliam (PVE16),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009.
\textsuperscript{190} House of Commons, Communities and Local Government Committee, “Prevent Violent Extremism: Sixth Report of Session 2009-10,” p.67
\textsuperscript{191} Author interview, January 12, 2010, London, UK.
recruiters or messages; cultural, recreational, and inter-faith programs – the softer side of the Prevent work – should be delivered under separate community cohesion agendas. A House of Commons Committee stated in a March 2010 report that “all community cohesion work and work focusing on shared values should be decoupled from the Prevent agenda.”\textsuperscript{192} In interviews, some senior government officials acknowledged that many projects under Prevent are really geared toward social cohesion issues rather than counter-radicalization work. “It’s difficult to deny that some things that have the Prevent label on them now belong in a community cohesion context,” says Mike Gillespie, the head of the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism’s Prevent division. “If a project ends up with a Prevent label attached then it should have Prevent objectives.”\textsuperscript{193}

Based on the research and interview data set conducted for this paper, several concrete policy recommendations can be made. This paper found that two factors are critical to enhancing the effectiveness of government counter-radicalization efforts: 1) individually tailored intervention programs targeting those at-risk of radicalization and 2) programs that boost the capacity of Muslim faith leaders and institutions. Building on this finding, this paper recommends that the Prevent strategy be reoriented and re-balanced to focus on programs in these two vital areas. Community cohesion projects – such as interfaith dialogues; educational activities; or cultural, social, or recreational programs intended to build resiliency in Muslim communities – should not fall under the Prevent domain. As an independent evaluation of Birmingham’s initial Prevent programs stated, it is “clear that violent extremism will not be addressed by focusing on community cohesion, as (Prevent) needs both a targeted approach and

\textsuperscript{193} Author interview, January 6, 2010, London, UK
theological approach.\textsuperscript{194} National officials should work to ensure that local authorities prioritize their Prevent funding, resources, staffing, and attention on developing and delivering programs that support people vulnerable to radicalization and boost the capacity of Muslim faith leaders.

The Channel program has proven to be a successful mechanism for referring individuals vulnerable to radicalization into a structured process, evaluating their situation, and placing them in personalized intervention programs. It should be enhanced and expanded to other communities where violent extremism has taken root. When creating new Channel sites, ACPO and national policymakers need to ensure that those running Channel locally receive adequate instruction and training packages before the program becomes operational.\textsuperscript{195} Furthermore, local authorities, school offices, and health service providers need to be brought on board from the very beginning. In existing sites, the Channel program should be resourced and staffed properly. The Home Office and CLG, working with ACPO, should consider developing a dedicated team of specialists in radicalization and counter-radicalization issues in every locality where Channel operates. This group of experts would need experience working with vulnerable youth and possess an in-depth knowledge of al-Qaida’s messages and recruitment techniques.\textsuperscript{196} Moreover, all Channel sites should set up agreements with local imams and, if possible, former radicals who can supply higher-level, theological interventions. At the national level, ACPO, the Home Office, and CLG should work to create a national network and database of imams, Muslim community activists, and former radicals who could consult on local interventions or help deliver them.

\textsuperscript{195} Point emphasized by Channel Coordinators #2 and #3 in author interviews.
\textsuperscript{196} Thanks to Thariq Khaliq, the Prevent coordinator for Birmingham’s Youth Offending Service for proposing this concept.
There is a limit to what governments can do to prevent radicalization in communities; ultimately, Muslim organizations, activists, and faith leaders need to take the lead, as they have the credibility and social contacts to make the most difference. Local authorities should continue working to establish relationships with organizations and individuals who have the capability and expertise to provide personalized interventions. Targeted intervention projects should have top priority when local authorities determine how to disseminate Prevent grants. Such an approach will likely require local authorities to take a chance on funding new groups and individuals. The benefits are worth the risks if the individual is determined to have credibility on radicalization issues and has the capacity to deliver programs. Local authorities will have to ensure that adequate monitoring and accountability procedures are in place.

Just as important, a greater emphasis and focus in the Prevent strategy should be made on assisting faith leaders, building the capacity of mosques, and forming a homegrown cadre of imams. Some progress has been made to date in these areas; as previously mentioned, approximately 53 projects have been developed to train imams and improve mosque governance and more than 300 imams have participated in CLG-sponsored training programs. The national and local governments should be applauded for this start. However, the progress to date pales in comparison to the size of the problem. There are an estimated 2,000 mosques in the UK, but only 8 percent of imams were born in the UK and 45 percent have been in the UK for fewer than five years.\(^\text{197}\)

First, the CLG should work to expand its partnerships with Cambridge and London Metropolitan Universities to develop more robust imam training programs, and should explore whether Islamic seminaries in the UK would be interested in government funding to enhance their efforts. Next, the CLG and the Home Office should consult directly with local authorities

about the possibility of replicating the successful Black Country Imams project in communities across the country. While some local authorities will not possess the expertise to deliver such a program – and imams in some areas may be resistant – it is important to reach out to civil society organizations that may have the capacity to create language and cultural skills training.\textsuperscript{198} Localities that already have mosque capacity building projects should be able to build on those existing relationships and add imam training programs. Additionally, CLG and local authorities with Muslim faith leader programs need to leverage the progress already made. They should use imams who have completed training programs as “ambassadors” who can help other localities establish similar projects and convince fellow imams to participate. Again, this approach will work best if Muslim organizations and activists take the lead. As a non-government body, the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) is well positioned to play a leadership role in building the capacity of faith leaders. The government should work with MINAB and its 600 member mosques to develop imam training and mosque governance programs that can deployed across the country.

XII. CONCLUSION

In May 2008, 22-year-old Nicky Reilly, a Muslim convert who suffered from Asperger’s syndrome, entered the busy Giraffe restaurant in Exeter and headed for the bathroom. There he tried to assemble a homemade bomb with caustic soda, a chemical from a dry cleaner, and nails, with the intent of becoming a suicide bomber.\textsuperscript{199} But the device prematurely detonated and Reilly, who was immediately arrested, was the only one injured. Reilly was a well-known figure

\textsuperscript{198} Thanks to Mohammed Afzal of the Black Country Imams project for discussing the need to replicate his program.
\textsuperscript{199} Morris, Stevens and Bowcott, Owen. “Urged on by al-Qaida: The “vulnerable” convert to Islam who tried to blow up a restaurant,” \textit{The Guardian}, October 16, 2008.
in his town of Plymouth. He had been in and out of the mental health services system since the age of nine, and had been hospitalized as a teenager for stabbing himself in the leg.\(^{200}\) Reilly converted to Islam soon thereafter, in 2004, and became a regular at the Islamic Centre of Plymouth and Cornwall. While he seemed like an inquisitive and devout Muslim to those at the centre, Reilly had become radicalized over the Internet and was in contact with two violent extremists who encouraged him to attack military targets.\(^{201}\) His doctor became so worried about his expressed desire to become a terrorist that the doctor approached the police. But the planned meeting never happened.\(^{202}\)

Could Reilly have been prevented from entering the Giraffe restaurant that fateful day in May 2008? The entire premise of the Prevent strategy is based on the belief that the local government and community groups could have stopped Reilly from committing a violent act. A personalized program could have given him the resiliency to ignore radicalizing message on the Internet and helped him deal with his mental health issues, Prevent officials believe. Or perhaps a local Muslim faith leader could have been approached about counseling Reilly when he began receiving violent extremist messages. If the Channel program had been in place some years ago, there’s a good chance Reilly wouldn’t be serving 18 years in prison, says Mark Collins, who leads Prevent work for ACPO.\(^{203}\) “All the dots were there and there were umpteen opportunities to intervene,” Collins says. “But the mental health services and education services never sat together and said this guy is a threat and we need to do something about it. There wasn’t a process where all the key agencies could have highlighted that.” Without Channel, the doctors

\(^{201}\) Ibid; Morris, Stevens, “Nicky Reilly: From BFG to Failed Suicide Bomber,” The Guardian, October 1, 2008.
\(^{202}\) Bowcott, Owen, “Life sentence for inept bomber who targeted restaurant.”
\(^{203}\) Author interview with Mark Collins.
and police did not have a structured way to share information on Reilly, and his case fell through the cracks.

For the immediate future, there will continue to be a small cohort of alienated, aggrieved, or vulnerable youth like Reilly experiencing a crisis of identity and attracted for their own reasons to the ideas and world view of al-Qaida. With the Prevent strategy, the UK has undertaken an ambitious and controversial effort to inhibit the radicalization of these individuals. The approach has had its fair share of challenges, setbacks, and criticism in the first three years. But based on the research and interviews conducted for this paper, it appears that selected projects are making a genuine difference in communities. The targeted interventions and faith capacity building programs being delivered represent a promising start and fit the model of effective counter-radicalization approaches identified by the interview set. This paper finds that the Prevent strategy would be more effective if it was re-oriented to prioritize programs in these two areas.
## Appendix A: Interview Data Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Subject</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Targeted Interventions Are Essential</th>
<th>Training of Faith Leaders Is Essential</th>
<th>Active Support of Muslim Communities Is Essential</th>
<th>Muslim Communities Distrust Prevent Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbas, Tahir</td>
<td>Birmingham University, Professor</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afzal, Mohammed</td>
<td>Dudley Council, Prevent Official</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed, Waqar</td>
<td>West Midlands Government Office, Prevent Advisor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon, James</td>
<td>Quilliam Foundation, Head of Research</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandwani, Paul</td>
<td>Home Office, OSCT, Prevent Unit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel Coordinator #1</td>
<td>Channel Coordinator</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel Coordinator #2</td>
<td>Channel Coordinator</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel Coordinator #3</td>
<td>Channel Coordinator</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins, Mark</td>
<td>ACPO, Prevent Delivery Chief</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooke, Caroline</td>
<td>CLG, Head of Faith Capacity Team</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawbarn, Nat</td>
<td>Home Office, RICU, Assistant Director</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis, Geri</td>
<td>Birmingham Channel Coordinator</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evans, Ryan</td>
<td>King’s College London, Researcher</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faliq, Abdullah</td>
<td>Trustee of E. London Mosque</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, Karl</td>
<td>KgISS Principles/Birmingham Mosque Project</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillespie, Mike</td>
<td>Hone Office, OSCT, Head of Prevent Unit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayling, Chris</td>
<td>Conservative Party MP</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haidar, Rehan</td>
<td>CLG, Faith Capacity Team, Islamic Institutions</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan, Usama</td>
<td>Community Activist, Part-time Imam, London</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoque-Habib, Habib</td>
<td>Tower Hamlets Council, Prevent Officer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hussain, Tassadaq</td>
<td>Green Lane Mosque, Birmingham</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaliq, Thariq</td>
<td>Birmingham Youth Offending Service, Prevent Lead</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan, Sabin</td>
<td>Home Office, OSCT, Community Advisor</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyall, Marc</td>
<td>ACPO, Prevent Delivery Unit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mellis, Colin</td>
<td>Dutch Counterterrorism Official</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore, Richard</td>
<td>West Midlands CTU, Prevent Department Chief</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantucci, Raff</td>
<td>International Institute for Strategic Studies, Analyst</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qadir, Hanif</td>
<td>Active Change Foundation, Program Director</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raja, Abid</td>
<td>Detective, Muslim Contact Unit, London</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashid, Nargis</td>
<td>Birmingham City Council, Prevent Officer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem, Amjad</td>
<td>Cordoba Foundation, Communication Director</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevens, Tim</td>
<td>Researcher, King's College London</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas, Iona</td>
<td>CLG, Community Engagement Manager</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Embassy Official</td>
<td>US Embassy Official in London</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Colvin</td>
<td>Birmingham, Prevent Coordinator</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams, Gemma</td>
<td>Birmingham City Council, Prevent Officer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winny, Rachel</td>
<td>CLG, Faith Capacity Team, Faith Leaders</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamir, Munir</td>
<td>Community Activist, Fida Management</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Interview Data Set By Occupational Category

### Table 2: Targeted Interventions Are Essential for Counter-radicalization Efforts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Law Enforcement Authorities</th>
<th>National Government Officials</th>
<th>Local Government Officials</th>
<th>Muslim Community Activists/Mosque Leaders</th>
<th>Academics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Training Faith Leaders Is Essential for Counter-radicalization Efforts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Law Enforcement Authorities</th>
<th>National Government Officials</th>
<th>Local Government Officials</th>
<th>Muslim Community Activists/Mosque Leaders</th>
<th>Academics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Support of Muslim Communities Is Essential for Counter-radicalization Efforts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Law Enforcement Authorities</th>
<th>National Government Officials</th>
<th>Local Government Officials</th>
<th>Muslim Community Activists/Mosque Leaders</th>
<th>Academics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: Do Muslim Communities Distrust the Prevent Strategy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Law Enforcement Authorities</th>
<th>National Government Officials</th>
<th>Local Government Officials</th>
<th>Muslim Community Activists/Mosque Leaders</th>
<th>Academics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY

UK Government Documents:

Birmingham City Council, “Memorandum from Birmingham City Council (PVE 25),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009.


Department of Communities and Local Government, “Memorandum from Communities and Local Government (PVE63),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009.


Parliamentary Testimony and Speeches:


Denham, John, “Speech by Communities Secretary John Denham at the National Prevent Conference,” December 8, 2009.


Institute of Community Cohesion, “Memorandum from Institute of Community Coehsion (PVE15),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009.


Muslim Council of Britain, “Memorandum from Muslim Council of Britain (PVE32),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009.
Quilliam Foundation, “Memorandum from Quilliam (PVE16),” for Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, December 18, 2009.

**Books:**


**Journal Articles and Research Reports:**


The TaxPayers’ Alliance, “Council Spending Uncovered II; No.5: The Prevent Strategy,” September 8, 2009


News Articles:


