IMPLEMENTING PREVENT:
FROM A COMMUNITY-LED TO A GOVERNMENT-CENTRED APPROACH

A consultation for London Assembly and MOPAC

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Summary and recommendations:

This report argues that the current Prevent strategy's centralised and top-down deployment markedly reduces local capacity to find tailored solutions that make sense in for a given community. The strategy's move away from community engagement to a centralised approach is not likely to assemble the necessary resources, partners and stakeholders to address the above concern. This is in part due to a fixation on ideology and religiosity as a proxy measure for 'radicalisation'. There is little evidence that ideology and religiosity lead to a propensity for political violence. This gap makes community partnership in delivering Prevent difficult and hotly contested. This focus on ideology will alienate useful partners that have the reach, penetration and information to actively challenge extremism. Further, the fixation on 'ideology' and 'non-violent extremism' will alienate Muslim communities who under the previous Prevent agenda were able to access spaces to express dissenting voices. The danger today is that these spaces will be suffocated, along with space for dissenting voices.

In particular, the approach taken in the current strategy is centralised, focused on disrupting extremists and runs the risk of deteriorating the healthy liberal public sphere crucial to countering violent, extremist views. Local actors can play an important role by pushing to incorporate Muslim voices in the process and review of Prevent.

While making Prevent leaner and more focused is commendable, this review has not been done in dialogue with Muslim communities. Rather, the strategy was redeveloped through centralised decision-making structures.

In essence, the move in the strategy is one away from addressing radicalisation through communities, securitising them instead of treating them as partners and leaders. Where Prevent implementation was previously conducted in partnership with the local Muslim community, the new strategy clearly sees Muslim organisations and institutions as targets and recipients of training without any capacity on their own to challenge extremist views rather than equal stakeholders in countering-terrorism.

Key Recommendations

- Encourage the Metropolitan Police Service to focus Channel referrals on clear cases of illegal, violent speech and use alternative measures such as working with families for cases of 'non-violent extremism' or deviation from 'British values'.
- During the commissioning process for the CTLP, ensure that the Local Authority representative has consulted with various community groups from all faith groups and is able to represent their voice and ensure that the CTLP commissioning process benefits from a balanced approach.

- Encourage the Metropolitan Police Service to engage with and be aware of the dynamics of Muslim communities and work with them to tackle anti-Muslim hate and intra-Muslim tensions, viewing them as real partners and not through a simple securitisation agenda.
- Local authorities should engage with groups critical of Prevent without funding them. Their views should be taken seriously when planning Prevent projects alongside a diversity of other voices.
- Ensure that safe spaces for young people to voice their opinions are available without fear of referral to Channel.
- Universities must have clear policies about speakers but also err on the side of freedom to debate and challenge, teaching students how to challenge views in a nuanced and critical manner.
- The pool of authorised Prevent providers must be widened to more diverse voices to produce local solutions. Local authorities should be able to work with a variety of partners to provide balanced and effective training to any individuals tasked with exercising the Prevent duty.

I. Introduction

The Prevent strategy has a significant impact on community policing and counter-terrorism in London. The strategy was initially deployed in 2007 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), outlined in a report titled *Preventing violent extremism: winning hearts and minds*. The strategy was communities-focused, evidenced by the types of projects funded under the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Pathfinder Fund and the projects funded after 2007 under Prevent. Since the change in government in 2010, the Home Office, led by Theresa May MP, significantly revised the strategy. The Prevent strategy in 2011 is more risk-based and heavily reliant upon police resources. Further, it is being delivered by the Home Office and not DCLG.

It is necessary for police, government, and public authorities to challenge and counter violent extremism, but in the Prevent strategy's current form, community leadership is secondary to an approach led by the government. Rather than engaging communities, the strategy fixates on ideology and deviance from 'British values' to identify so-called 'extremists' for police and governmental intervention. This policy perspective is based on a theorisation of radicalisation as a religious and political process rather than one related specifically to violence. Instead of understanding the decisions a terrorist makes to take violent action, the strategy seeks to use religiosity, political beliefs, and specific interpretations of Islam as a proxy for approval of political violence. This has led the strategy to identify 'extremism' as both violent and non-violent and presents serious concerns to civil liberties and blurs the lines between religious conservatism and violent extremism.[1]

Little evidence is available for the theory that Islamism ultimately leads a person to political violence; the picture is likely more complicated:

> 'Most British Muslim groups came out of youth movements originally attached to Islamist organisations. These groups, almost unanimously, expressly support the development of an indigenous, British Muslim identity…[the suggestion] that all types of an undefined "Islamism" leads to terrorism resonates with a McCarthyism of the past'.[2]

The designation of certain groups as Islamists or 'non-violent extremists' presents a political risk to the strategy by alienating community partners.

[1] See Klausen, J. (2010). "British Counter-Terrorism After 7/7: Adapting Community Policing to the Fight Against Domestic Terrorism". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35:3, p. 403-420; Spalek, B and MacDonald, L Z. (2010). "Terror Crime Prevention: Constructing Muslim Practices and Beliefs as 'Anti-Social' and 'Extreme' through CONTEST 2". *Social Policy and Society*, 9:1, p. 123-132.

[2] Hellyer, H. (2008). "Engaging British Muslim Communities in Counter-Terrorism Strategies". *The RUSI Journal*, 153:2, p. 10.

While the Prevent strategy acknowledges that community-led Prevent delivery has positive outcomes, the approach has been to regulate and centralise the groups that local authorities work with.[3]

We argue that the current strategy's centralised and top-down deployment markedly reduces local capacity to find tailored solutions that make sense for any community. This, we believe, creates barriers by excluding useful partners that can sustain Prevent work in the future. In particular, after the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the establishment of a Prevent duty, we have seen the erosion of the ownership local governments have over the implementation of Prevent.

While there are positive contributions that a Prevent programme can make—some of these are detailed in our case study on Tower Hamlets below—we feel that the step away from local solutions will impede attempts to prevent violent extremism.

The current implementation of the Prevent strategy identifies Muslims as the segment of the population most 'at risk' of terrorism,[4] leading some to claim that the strategy constructs Muslims as a 'suspect community'.[5] The recent shift in the strategy to a safeguarding framework in the Prevent duty may be a welcome change. However, the strategy's continued prioritisation of Muslims (despite mentions of far-right extremists) will not assuage the frustrations articulated by Muslim communities that have led to alienation and disengagement.[6] Given that the Prevent strategy is intended to counter terrorism and extremism where the government perceives that the greatest risk exists, it needs to ensure that Muslim voices are taken seriously when articulating concerns regarding how communities are affected by the implementation of the strategy. In general policing (assessed in the British Crime Survey), Muslims were likely to report a higher level of positive attitudes toward the police than non-Muslims.[7]

Prevent and other counter-terrorism policing measures, such as stop-and-search under Section 44 (now discontinued) and Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000 necessarily involves a level of racial profiling that has affected trust between Muslims and the

[3] See point 6.64 in HM Government. (2011). Prevent *Strategy*. London: The Stationery Office, p. 35. What is concerning is that there is no evidence in the strategy as to which groups are considered extremist and why, outside of the notion that they do not stand up to British values, for which it appears the government is the arbiter. This is not circumscribed by law but rather defined by the Prevent strategy itself. While we agree that extremists—those that support violence and the separation of Muslims from British society—must not receive funding,, non-violent groups may be able to make a positive contribution and their engagement in Prevent work could make a useful contribution even if they disagree with a particular political position. In fact, the Prevent strategy recognises this point with regards to organisations overseas: 'the criteria for funding are different from criteria for engagement (such as contact and dialogue). There may be cases where the Government judge that there is a need to engage with groups or individuals whom it would never choose to fund' (6.67, p. 35). This is made with explicit reference to groups overseas, but should as well be taken seriously at the domestic level as well.

[4] HM Government. (2011). Prevent *Strategy*. London: The Stationery Office

[5] Kundnani, A. (2009). *Spooked!: How not to prevent violent extremism*. London: Institute of Race Relations; Pantazis, C and Pemberton, S. (2009). "From the 'Old' to the 'New' Suspect Community." *British Journal of Criminology*, 49, p. 646-666.

[6] See Abbas, T and Siddique, A. (2012). "Perceptions of the processes of radicalisation and de-radicalisation among British South Asian Muslims in a post-industrial city*". Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 18:1, p. 119-134; Hussain, Y and Bagguley, P. "Securitized citizens: Islamophobia, racism and the 7/7 London bombings". *The Sociological Review*, 60, p. 715-734; Lakhani, S. "Preventing Violent Extremism: Perceptions of Policy from Grassroots and Communities". *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 51:2, p. 190-206.

[7] Hargreaves, J. (2015). "Half a Story? Missing Perspectives in the Criminological Accounts of British Muslim Communities, Crime and the Criminal Justice System". *British Journal of Criminology*, 55:1, p. 19-38.

police.[8] This impact is likely limited; in fact, an ACPO study finds a diversity of opinions in Muslim communities about Prevent.

Young Muslim men hold a lower level of confidence in the police than others in the British Crime Survey (at a level similar to other young men),[9] but otherwise, Muslims are relatively positive about the police. The authors do find that top-down approaches are less likely to lead to successful outcomes, claiming 'increasing direct community participation…is affording a more nuanced set of responses to particular risks, threats, and vulnerabilities'.[10] All the same, some qualitative research that explores counter-terrorism policing directly[11] points to frustrations among Muslim communities regarding counter-terrorism policing.[12] A high level of trust lends credence to the notion that Muslim communities can work positively with police to counter violent extremism.

However, the strategy's move away from community engagement to a centralised approach is not likely to assemble the necessary resources, partners and stakeholders to address the above concerns.[13] Further, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 establishes the Prevent strategy under statutory law (see Part 5). The CTS Act also establishes the Prevent duty, which significantly affects how local authorities will manage their commitments to implement Prevent.

The London Assembly and MOPAC have an opportunity to implement the Prevent strategy in a way that can have positive outcomes by learning from past experiences nationwide that stress the value of community engagement. However, the 2011 Prevent strategy fixates on ideology and religiosity at the expense of understanding propensity for violence. It is based on a highly particular set of models and theories of 'radicalisation' briefly reviewed in the next section. The strategy's current fixation on ideology runs the risk of alienating and excluding potential partners that have the penetration and information needed to actively challenge extremism. Local actors pushing to incorporate Muslim voices in the process and review of Prevent can mitigate these problems to an extent.

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[8] Spalek, B. and Lambert, R. (2008). "Muslim communities, counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation: A critically reflective approach to engagement". *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 36, p. 257-270.
[9] Innes, M, Roberts, C and Innes, H. (2011). *Assessing the Effects of Prevent Policing: A Report to the Association of Chief Police Officers*. Cardiff: Universities' Police Science Institute, p. 7.
[10] *ibid*., 10.
[11] The report by Innes, et. al. above uses British Crime Survey (BCS) data which does engage in deep qualitative research, some of which has found that some Muslims do harbour deep frustrations with police services (evidenced in note 12). For methodological details on BCS question, see Innes, et. al., (2011), p. 51.
[12] See, for example, Awan, I. (2012). "'I Am a Muslim Not an Extremist': How the Prevent Strategy Has Constructed a 'Suspect' Community". *Politics & Policy*, 40:6, p. 1158-1185; Awan, I. (2012). "The impact of policing British Muslims: a qualitative exploration". *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 7:1, p. 22-35; Choudhury, T and H Fenwick. (2011). "The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities". *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology*, 25:3, 151-181; Thomas, P. "Between Two Stools? The Government's 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Agenda". *The Political Quarterly*, 80:2, p. 283.
[13] O'Toole, T, Jones, S, DeHanas D N, and T Modood. (2013). "Prevent after TERFOR: Why local context still matters". *Public Spirit*, 16 December 2013.

2. Radicalisation theories and the Prevent strategy

Theories of radicalisation are at the foundation of the logic of the Prevent strategy. In this section, we provide an overview of 'canonical' theories of radicalisation and a literature review on radicalisation that challenges the assumptions made by the Home Office in the Prevent strategy.

Mark Sageman, one of the leading scholars on radicalisation and a former CIA analyst, stated in a 2013 interview that 'the notion that there is any serious process called "radicalisation", or indoctrination, is really a mistake'. Sageman, in the same interview is dismissive of a 'conveyor belt' process (described below), stating that the idea that non-violent extremists' political discourse leads to terrorism is 'nonsense'.[14] The fundamental premise of the 2011 Prevent strategy is unfortunately that a discrete radicalisation process exists. This is based on a number of studies—Sageman's included—that posit a clear and observable 'radicalisation' process despite recent evidence suggesting otherwise.

Theories of 'radicalisation'

Three studies are widely cited in the literature on radicalisation and terrorism: an NYPD study that establishes the 'conveyor belt' theory, Mark Sageman's seminal discussion on networks and terrorism, and Quintan Wiktorowicz's ethnographic study of al-Muhajiroun. These theories significantly influenced counter-terrorism strategies globally.[15]

In this section, we briefly describe the contributions, merits, and problems with these theories of 'radicalisation'.

The authors of the NYPD study, Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt, provide a linear model of radicalisation, characterised as the 'conveyor belt' theory.[16] They argue that Muslim populations are specifically at risk because 'enclaves of ethnic populations that are largely Muslim' sow 'the seeds of radical thought'.[17] A few years later evidence of this policy appeared: the American Civil Liberties Union and academics reported that the NYPD had disproportionately targeted Muslim-Americans for surveillance and data collection.[18]

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[14] Hasan, M. (2013). "Woolwich Attack: Overreacting To Extremism 'Could Bring Back Al Qaeda' Ex CIA Officer Warns". Huffington Post Politics (website). Accessed 3 June 2015.

[15] See Vallis, R., Y. Yang, and H. Abbass. (2007). 'Disciplinary Approaches to Terrorism: A Survey', Defence and Security Applications Research Centre (DSA), Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra: Unpublished manuscript; Silke, A. (2004). Research on Terrorism: Trends, Achievements & Failures. London: Frank Cass; Franks, J. (2009). "Rethinking the Roots of Terrorism: Beyond Orthodox Terrorism Theory–A Critical Research Agenda". Global Society, 23:2, p. 153-176; and Jackson, R. (2007). "The core commitments of critical terrorism studies". European Political Science, 6, p. 244-251.

[16] Kundnani, A. (2015). A Decade Lost: Rethinking Radicalisation and Extremism. United Kingdom: Claystone.

[17] Silber, M. and Bhatt, A. (2007). "Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat". New York: New York Police Department, p. 24.

[18] Patel, F. (2011). *Rethinking Radicalisation.* New York: Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law. See also Bazian, H. (2012). "Muslims – Enemies of the State: the New Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO)". Islamophobia

However, while 'radical thought' somehow lives among 'Muslims' in Silber and Bhatt's perspective, it is only when an individual identifies with 'Salafi' ideology that they will eventually become a terrorist.

Studies following Silber and Bhatt use empirical methods and the examination of large datasets to extrapolate trends and factors that contribute to radicalisation.[19]

These offer more nuanced approaches than the above but still have significant shortfalls in addressing decisions to engage in violence, focusing rather on factors related to ideology. The main idea in Silber and Bhatt's study is that 'Salafi' ideology lives among Muslim communities, and when an individual identifies with this ideology, they will become a terrorist or approve of violent extremism. While the Prevent strategy of 2011 is more nuanced (see points 8.16 and 8.17), both focus on ideology rather than the conditions that lead an individual to violence.

Mark Sageman provides a significantly more sophisticated account of radicalisation but still relies on 'Salafism' as an ideological position that may lead to terrorist sympathies. Sageman uses network theories to argue that violent radicalisation occurs within small groups 'where bonding, peer pressure, and indoctrination gradually changes the individual's view of the world'.[20] This is a useful contribution because ideology ('indoctrination' in Sageman's formulation) is one factor alongside non-discursive ones, including bonding and peer pressure. This suggests that networks and social milieu are equally important in the process by which an individual comes to accept violent forms of extremism. However, Sageman points to specific milieu such as Salafi Muslim communities that are ideologically problematic. While Sageman has usefully drawn our attention to non-ideological and emotive factors, the propensity for terrorism is located within a particular *interpretation* of Islam at the expense of asking what drives an individual or group to acts of violence.

Quintan Wiktorowicz, in his well-known book *Radical Islam Rising* reflects on his ethnographic research of al-Muhajiroun. He argues that the group uses outreach, demonstrations, information about Islam, and even exploit personal crises in order to make an individual more receptive to their message of radical ideology.[21] In doing so, he argues for radicalisation as a process of 'cognitive opening' that renders individuals amenable to radical ideology particularly when they are in the face of 'deteriorating economic conditions, political repression, and cultural alienation'.[22] The focus on British values and extremism might amplify the sense of political repression and cultural alienation that recruiters such as some al-Muhajiroun activists feed on.

Studies Journal, 1:1, p. 163-206; American Civil Liberties Union. (n.d.). "Factsheet: the NYPD Muslim Surveillance Program". <https://www.aclu.org/national-security/factsheet-nypd-muslim-surveillance-program>. Accessed 3 June 2015.

[19] Gartenstein-Ross, D. and Grossman, L. (2009). Homegrown Terrorists in the US and UK: an Empirical Examination of the Radicalization Process. United States: Foundation for the Defense of Democracy; McCauley, C. and Moskalenko, S. "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism". Terrorism and Political Violence, 20:3, p. 415-433.

[20] Sageman, M. (2008). Leaderless Jihad. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 84.

[21] Wictorowicz, Q. (2005). Radical Islam Rising. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., p. 92-93.

[22] *ibid.*, p. 206.

While it is necessary to challenge these views, disrupting extremists before they spread ideas rather than challenging them in open debate might contribute to this cycle. For this reason, we stress that disruption should be a practice circumscribed by the law, reserved for violent extremists only, and conducted in consultation with the communities impacted.

The terms 'extremism' and radicalisation are highly contested and varied at local scales. As mentioned at the start of this section, Mark Sageman himself rejects radicalisation as a useful concept (in 2013 after the publication on the 2011 Prevent strategy). It is unfortunate that the Prevent strategy uses ideology as a primary factor, defining 'extremism' as opposition to 'British values'. The Prevent strategy assumes that if particular 'extremist' ideologies, milieu, and recruitment networks are proscribed, 'radicalisation' will not occur. This may compromise the critical input communities can provide if they are deemed 'extremist' or 'too radical' even if they reject the use of violence for political ends.

In fact, some evidence suggests that disengagement with non-violent groups that do not adhere to the 'muscular liberalism' of 'British values' is counter-productive.[23] A project in Lambeth, STREET (Strategy to Reach, Empower, and Educate Teenagers) lost funding after a briefing paper leaked to Charles Farr (Director of the Home Office's Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism) in 2010 'flagged up' organisations that '[shared] the ideology of terrorists'[24] despite the fact that some of these organisations were doing useful work in addressing and preventing radicalisation.[25] Charles Farr wrote in a letter after the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich,

> Some of the blame has to be levelled at the new [coalition] government, they revised the agenda and cut funding to STREET, a credible outreach project assisting and guiding black converts and Muslim gang members. Ostensibly one of the Woolwich perpetrators were known to them... I strongly believe had their programme been operational the Woolwich incident could have been averted.[26]

Rachel Briggs suggests that the government's 'muscular liberalism' might cause the Prevent strategy to eschew partnerships with crucial community organisations because they do not adhere to the state's subjective and narrow definition of 'British values'.[27]

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[23] HM Government. (2011). *op. cit*. On page 108, 'extremism' is defined as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.' For more details on this point, please see O'Toole, T, Jones, S, and D N DeHanas. (2012) "The New Prevent: Will it Work? Can it Work?". *Arches Quarterly*, 5:9, p. 56-62.

[24] Ahmed, NM. (2013). "UK's flawed counter-terrorism strategy". Le Monde Diplomatique Blog. December 2013.

[25] Barclay, J. (2011). "Strategy to Reach, Empower, and Educate Teenagers (STREET): A Case Study in Government-Community Partnership and Direct Intervention to Counter Violent Extremism". Policy brief. Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation.

[26] Ahmed, NM. (2013). *op. cit*.

[27] Briggs, R. (2010). "Community Engagement for counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom". *International Affairs*, 86:4, p. 971-981.

Radicalisation is itself highly contested.[28] The short literature review on approaches to extremism below explains factors beyond religiosity and ideology that lead to radicalisation.

These studies overwhelmingly demonstrate that radicalisation–an ambiguous, changing, and hotly contested term[29]–is easily misinterpreted when ideology because the primary focus.

Beyond 'radicalisation'—approaches to extremism

Numerous scholars—Mark Sageman, a former CIA analyst and influential terrorism scholar—suggests that 'radicalisation' as a concept is highly contested.[30] Academic explorations of radicalisation and terrorism have provided useful insights into approaching the question of extremism through policy. Among the most important areas to examine are the social conditions and networks that encourage individuals to accept violent methods for political change. Currently, online networks play a major role in encouraging young people to engage with ISIS.[31] Approaches inspired by network theories, with Sageman as a starting point, are helpful in encouraging us to explore how global circuits of 'information' create 'echo chambers' that serve as 'criminogenic environments'.[32]

In terms of policy and the new Prevent duty, for example, a group of young people frequenting extremist Twitter accounts or websites might be considered 'at risk' of radicalisation and may be referred to Channel, should a local authority's Prevent panel deem it appropriate. However, in a liberal democracy, it is problematic to punish individuals for exercising their rights to freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly, even online; finding the balance around policing networks of extremists and fundamental freedoms is a significant challenge to local authorities and the Prevent policy can significantly benefit from input from different communities. Network theories are also relevant to offline interactions, with proximity to elites within terrorist networks having an important effect.[33]

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[28] O'Toole, T., Meer, N., Dehanas, D., Jones, S., and T. Modood. (2015). "Governing through Prevent? Regulation and Contested Practice in State-Muslim Engagement". *Sociology*, DOI: 0.1177/0038038514564437 (published online before print).
[29] Neumann, P. (2013). "The Trouble with Radicalization". *International Affairs*, 89:4, p. 873-893.
[30] See Heath-Kelley, C. (2012). "Counter-Terrorism and the Counterfactual: Producing the 'Radicalisation' Discourse and the UK PREVENT Strategy". *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 15, p. 394-415; Richards, A. (2011). "The problem with 'radicalization': the remit of 'Prevent' and the need to refocus on terrorism in the UK". *International Affairs*, 87:1, p143-152; Githens-Mazer, J and Lambert, R. (2010). "Why conventional wisdom on radicalization fails: the persistence of a failed discourse". *International Affairs*, 86:4, p. 889-901.
[31] Edwards, C and Gribbon, L. (2013). "Pathways to Violent Extremism in the Digital Era". *The RUSI Journal,* 158:5, p. 40-47; Saltman, E M and Smith, M. (2015). *'Til Martyrdom Do Us Part': Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon*. London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue; HM Government. (2013). *Tackling Extremism in the UK: Report from the Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism*. London: Cabinet Office; Saltman, E M and Russell, J. "White Paper-The Role of Prevent in Countering Online Extremism". London: Quilliam Foundation.
[32] See Neumann, P. (2013). "Options and Strategies for Countering Online Radicalization in the United States". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 36:6, p. 436; and Kirby, A. (2007). "The London Bombers as 'Self-Starters': A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30:5, p. 415-428. See also Sutherland, E. and Cressey, D. (1947*). Principles of Criminology, 4th ed*. Chicago: Chicago University Press in Neumann, P., op. cit., p. 436.
[33] McCauley, C. and Moskalenko, S. *op. cit*., p. 419-420.

This is again an area where partnership, rather than alienation will be effective in supporting counter terrorist policing. Finally, networks have an important part to play in helping an individual identify and reinforce a particular ideology or set of beliefs. This opens a potential to reinforce the validity of political violence.[34]

While network thinking is useful in exploring how terrorists and violent extremists communicate and recruit, it does not sufficiently explain why or how an individual decides that violent action is an appropriate course. Some studies have attempted to address this by interviewing convicted terrorists and at-risk young people.[35]

This research noted that Silber and Bhatt's 'conveyor belt' theory falls short of describing radicalisation. Bartlett and Miller found that non-violent radicals are much more likely than terrorists to study theology while terrorists practised a 'pamphlet' version of Islam.[36] Similarly, Aly and Striegher give an example of a would-be terrorist that decided against a violent attack *after* meeting Osama Bin Laden.[37] These two cases demonstrate that 'ideology' is much more fluid than canonical models of radicalisation suggest and that simply being involved in 'radical' discursive communities does not necessarily result in a commitment to political violence.

Approaches to radicalisation that focus on questions of identity are less-researched but possibly more fruitful in understanding propensity to violence. Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen explores a distinct 'French sociology' approach from thinkers Gilles Kepel, Farhad Khosrokhavar, and Olivier Roy that view radicalisation as a process by which 'individuals seek to reconstruct a lost identity in a perceived hostile and confusing world'.[38] Identity politics have been reviewed in radicalisation literature. For example, King and Taylor explain that discrimination and managing a hybrid identity can lead to radicalisation, though they note that an 'innumerable' amount of people manage these tensions without becoming violent extremists.[39] This suggests that identifying with a politics that challenges the Prevent strategy's definition of 'British values' does not equate to support for violence.

The current Prevent strategyfixates on ideology as the central component in determining an individual's propensity to engage in violent extremism. The brief review above demonstrates that networks and ideological 'echo chambers' play a part in support for the use of political violence.

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[34] Wickham, C. (2004). 'Interests, Ideas, and Islamist Outreach in Egypt' in *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 232 in Gunning, J. (2009), op. cit., p. 168. See also Daalgard-Nielsen, A. (2010), *op. cit*., p. 802.

[35] Bartlett, J. and Miller, C. (2012). "The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference Between Violent and Non-Violent Radicalization". *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24:1; Slootman, M. and Tillie, J. (2006). *Processes of radicalisation. Why some Amsterdam Muslims become radicals*. Amsterdam: Institute for Migrations and Ethnic Studies, University of Amsterdam.

[36] Bartlett, J. and Miller, C. (2012). *op. cit*., 9.

[37] Aly, A. and Striegher, JL. (2012). "Examining the Role of Religion in Radicalization to Violent Islamist Extremism". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35:12, p. 849-862

[38] Dalgaard-Nielsen, A. (2010). "Violent radicalisation in Europe: What we know and what we do not know". *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33, 797-814.

[39] King, M. and Taylor, D. (2011). "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence". *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23:4, p. 602-622.

Further, other factors are reviewed such as identity and social exclusion. However, there is no clean process between engagement in an ideological milieu and the use of political violence. This is a gap in terrorism research; and delivery of Prevent should be conscious of the fact that the primary focus must remain on countering those who believe violence is the correct way forward; rather than scrutinise Muslims for their beliefs or ideologies even when they do not integrate into 'British values' (as are narrowly defined in the Prevent strategy).

3. Implementation of Prevent in London: Tower Hamlets

This section reviews the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and its implementation of Prevent.[40] Despite the growing literature on the Prevent strategy constructing Muslim communities as 'suspect' in security discourse,[41] very few studies have explored the local dynamics of Prevent implementations in the UK.[42] According to Floris Vermeulen, author of one of the few academic studies of Prevent in the borough, 'the community as a whole [seemed] to have large input in this process [implementing Prevent over 2008-2011], which probably lowers the stigmatizing effect on this form of suspect community'.[43]

Following the release of an updated Prevent strategy in 2011, the majority of Prevent funding has been distributed through the Home Office.[44] Since then, projects are clearly oriented towards disrupting violent and non-violent 'extremist' voices and engaging Muslims in 'theological interventions' based on determinations made by Prevent boards and the police.

These changes in the Prevent strategy's implementation in London demonstrate that after the 2011 policy shift, Prevent delivery and decision making will increasingly be delivered by the Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) at the Home Office,[45] which will play a major role in selecting which organisations get funded and collect intelligence on risks at a distance from communities.

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[40] Due to time constraints on the consultation response, the author was not able to make further FOI requests. This could be completed as part of further research into the effectiveness and failures of the Prevent strategy in London. There is very little information available, in FOI requests or otherwise, that makes Prevent action plans in London's borough readily available for projects taking place after 2011. Tower Hamlets and Lambeth have provided detailed responses, but other boroughs, such as Greenwich, have responded with virtually all information redacted. The lack of transparency and public scrutiny of Prevent further hampers the programme's efficacy as it is extremely difficult to make evidence-based arguments on how the policy can be improved. The information in this section comes from the FOI response from Tower Hamlets, FOI 11218. A 2008-2011 action plan is included, as are action plans from 2012-2015, which form the basis of the evidence presented in this section.

[41] Pantazis, C. and Pemberton, S. (2009), *op. cit.*; Githens-Mazer, J and Lambert, R. (2010), *op. cit*.

[42] See for example O'Toole, T., DeHanas, D., and T. Modood. (2012). "Balancing tolerance, security and Muslim engagement in the United Kingdom: the impact of the 'Prevent' agenda". *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 5:3, p. 373-389; Spalek, B., El Awa, S., and L. McDonald. (2008). *Police-Muslim Engagement and Partnerships for the Purposes of Counter-Terrorism: an examination*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham and Lewicki, A., O'Toole, T., and T. Modood. (2014). *Building the Bridge: Muslim Community Engagement in Bristol*. Bristol: Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship, University of Bristol.

[43] Vermeulen, F. (2014). "Suspect communities—Targeting Violent Extremism at the Local Level: Policies of Engagement in Amsterdam, Berlin, and London". *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 26:2, p. 297.

[44] HM Government. (2011). *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[45] *ibid*., p. 30.

The establishment of a statutory Prevent duty in 2015, when combined with this approach may further strain existing negative perceptions in response to previous incarnations of the strategy. However, incorporating community voices into this implementation may help to mitigate this gap.

The London borough of Tower Hamlets has been a Prevent priority borough since its inception. It received Prevent Pathfinder funding for 2007 and since then has received a significant amount of funding:

- 2007/2008: £98,200[46]
- 2008/2009: £365,000
- 2009/2010: £450,000
- 2010/2011: £534,000

After 2011, a number of discrepancies regarding funding seem to emerge in the Tower Hamlets borough Prevent plans and budgets. In response to an FOI request, the borough reports that £22,008.85 was in the budget in 2011/2012, £66,136.11 in 2012/2013, £292,375.27, and £363,498.47 allocated in 2014/2015.

However, these numbers are much lower than those reflected in Tower Hamlets' action plans, which report the following levels of funding:

- 2012/2013: £267,885
- 2013/2014: £445,137
- 2014/2015: £519,665

Data from 2011/2012 is missing 'due to substantial delays in the Home Office funding'. Below, we focus on the numbers above, reflected in the borough's action plans provided in response to an FOI request, as they refer to an itemised budget used to distribute Prevent funding to relevant activities in the borough.

Over 2008 to 2011, projects were overwhelmingly community focused. As the 2008-2011 action plan explains,

> The approach we took in bidding against the fund was to propose a range of small scale projects that could be tied to the Government's objectives while fitting comfortably with broader efforts already underway to support local community development. Officers were particularly mindful of the need to avoid specifying projects that might in any way alienate the local community and of the need to acknowledge issues that were outside local government control, including the role of foreign policy as a grievance to young people.[47]

[46] There is some discrepancy in this figure. It is claimed to be £98,200 in the letter response from the borough in the FOI, but in the action plan for 2008-2011, it reads £99,200 on page 11.
[47] 2008-2011 Action Plan, p. 14. In Tower Hamlets FOI response 11218.

Projects funded during this period were often community-oriented, looking to develop forums and spaces for discussion that challenged extremist views.

A wide range of Muslim community organisations took Prevent funding and developed useful spaces for Muslims to engage.

This funding engaged a diverse group of partners, delivering media training, support, and debate training led by the Cordoba Foundation, a Muslim Youth Council established by the London Muslim Centre, and work supporting various mosques for capacity building projects and interfaith work.[48]

According to a report by the Tavistock Institute, these programmes were successful in addressing some of the structural causes of terrorism in the borough. The Tavistock Institute found that these programmes helped increase Muslim and non-Muslim understandings of Islam, giving young people the theological support needed to make intelligent interpretations of theological positions.[49] Safe spaces that allowed for discussions of grievances and challenges, including issues such as foreign policy, social concerns, and hate crime, helped young people 'vent frustrations, ask questions, [and] develop critical thinking' skills—the very skills and spaces necessary to challenge extremist views.[50] Support for young people facing socioeconomic exclusion was also delivered through Prevent by providing a range of services including education, social and sporting activities that can prevent youth from turning to criminality and gang association.[51] The Tavistock Institute explains 'that in Tower Hamlets the Prevent programme adopted a community-based "bottom-up" design, which was found to be both appropriate and necessary for the local context in the borough'.[52]

While the Tavistock Institute's individual evaluation of the Tower Hamlets Prevent implementation shows that a community-oriented approach can have useful impacts in dealing with the broader context of crime and violent extremism, these lessons and findings have not been taken seriously in iterations of the borough's action plans around Prevent after 2011. As Prevent did in Bristol, the Tower Hamlets approach created safe spaces for Muslims to air their views, develop skills in critical thinking to counter violent extremism by including Muslims in the 'political opportunity' structures.[53]

[48] 2008-2011 Action Plan, p. 14-15. In Tower Hamlets FOI response 11218.
[49] Iacopini, G., Stock, L., and Junge, K. (2011). *Evaluation of Tower Hamlets Prevent Projects*. London: The Tavistock Institute, p. 33.
[50] See See Bartlett, J and Birdwell, J. (2010). *From Suspects to Citizens: Preventing Violent Extremism in a Big Society*. London: Demos.
[51] Iacopini, G., et. al. (2011). op. cit., p. 34-35.
[52] *ibid*., 20.
[53] Lewicki, A., et. al. (2014). op. cit.

After the publication of the 2011 Prevent strategy, funding priority was shifted from community-led organisations to police and security-led approaches due to the perception that Prevent funding used for 'wider objectives of promoting integration and community cohesion' in fact 'created the impression that the Government was supporting cohesion projects only for security reasons', impeding the strategy's efficacy.[54] While making Prevent leaner and more focused is a positive approach, it should be done in conversation with communities rather than through centralised decision-making structures.

In essence, the move in the strategy is one away from addressing radicalisation through communities, securitising them instead of treating them as partners and leaders. This reprioritisation will negatively impact the implementation of the Prevent strategy in Tower Hamlets (as elsewhere in London). Further, the fixation on 'ideology' and 'non-violent extremism' will alienate members of Muslim communities who under the previous Prevent agenda were able to access spaces to express dissenting voices. The danger today is that these spaces will be suffocated, along with space for dissenting voices.

The 2014/2015 Tower Hamlets action plan shares almost no projects with similar profiles to those explained in the Tavistock Institute report. The new approach—a post-2011 approach—is almost entirely 'top-down' and leaves very little space for Muslims (or other communities) to provide input. This is a hard security approach, prioritising intelligence gathering and Channel referrals with leadership from central authorities. This modified Prevent apparatus is intended to work in lockstep with the new Prevent duty to identify individuals at risk of becoming terrorists.

The projects listed in the Tower Hamlets 2014/2015 action plans demonstrate shifts in the implementation of the Prevent in the borough. The strategic objectives for 2014/2015 are summarised below:

- 'Target social, peer and educational support and advice to individuals identified as at risk of involvement in extremist activity and violence'.
- 'Strengthen community leadership to enable key individuals and organisations to challenge/disrupt extremist ideology'.
- 'Strengthen positive networks and institutions to increase their capacity to challenge extremism and violence and disrupt networks and organisations which are sympathetic to extremism and terrorism'.

In the previous action plan, the objectives and expected outcomes were significantly different. Between 2008 and 2011, objectives included 'understanding' and engagement with Muslims communities, capacity building on the PVE agenda, and building 'resilience' in communities and for 'vulnerable' individuals.

[54] HM Government. (2011). *op. cit.*, p. 30.

There is a clear discursive shift in the organisation of implementation priorities in the borough towards 'disrupting' and 'challenging' individuals at risk of 'extremist activity'.[55]

Many of the community-led projects used in Tower Hamlets in previous years gave Muslims an actual political stake in the implementation of Prevent measures. This has shifted in the new strategy to what might be perceived as a highly prescriptive and patronising one: where communities have had a stake in implementing Prevent activities, they are now the recipients of safeguarding and prevention training filtering down from central authorities to the problematised 'communities'. These shifts are evident upon examination of the changes in the Tower Hamlets Prevent Delivery plan. Indeed, their strategic objectives have changed almost entirely toward intelligence gathering, procuring Channel referrals, and safeguarding where the previous strategy worked with community organisations to open space for young people and others to express themselves and their grievances. The new policy is decidedly more invasive and could compromise 'safe spaces' that were established previously and used to gather intelligence and Channel referrals of individuals who do not share the Prevent policy's designation of 'British values'. The table below explains the shifts in the Prevent policy and the impact on Tower Hamlets project delivery plan.

Table 1: Summary of Tower Hamlets PVE projects 2008-2011, 2014/2015[56]

Objective	Deliverables 2008-2011	Deliverables after 2011 update of Prevent strategy (based on 2014/2015 plan)
Understanding of, and engagement with, Muslim communities.	• Produce a local community database of local contacts with key leaders and influencers. • Develop partnership with local Council of Mosques. • Enhance local mosque capabilities with a focus on women's issues and young people. • Conduct research on deaf Muslims and other groups and their views on PVE. • Establish deradicalisation programmes to help young people understand the PVE agenda and work with police.	

[55] See 2008-2011 Action plan, in Tower Hamlets FOI response 11218.
[56] Summarised from 2008-2011 action plan and 2014/2015 action plan enclosed in Tower Hamlets FOI response 11218.

Target social, peer, and educational support and advice to individuals identified as at risk of involvement in extremist activity and violence.		• e-CAF assessments of vulnerable young people should be completed upon referral to a panel responsible for sending referrals and managing safeguarding strategies. • Work with faith organisations to increase capacity to implement safeguarding policies. • Implement adult safeguarding boards. • Commissioning London Tigers—a crime intervention group that encourages young people to avoid crime to play football instead[57]—for 'theological intervention services'.
Effective development of an action plan to build the resilience of communities and support of vulnerable individuals.	• Put on the 'Dangerous Ideas Tour' which allowed young people to express themselves and engage in political discussions at a youth club. Discussions included topics such as the heritage of the borough's Bangladeshi community and the life and thought of Malcolm X. • The police team was responsible for delivering advice and encouraging individuals to sign up to a charter regarding the internet and extremism. • Establishing an anti-Muslim hate crime reporting centre was a priority. • £12,000 spent on developing a locally tailored schools toolkit on countering extremism. • Focus placed on countering extremist messages encouraging Muslims not to vote. • £120,000 spent on increasing capacity to work with and identify young people at risk of radicalization, run via the Youth Offenders Team and NOMS. • Developed a local women's forum	

[57] Find details on London Tigers at < http://www.londontigers.org/community-cohesion-safety/>.

	and media and literary project engaging women in the arts. • Developed platforms to discuss grievances at local universities. • Implemented a local referral board.	
Strengthen community leadership to enable key individuals and organisations to challenge/disrupt extremist ideology.		• 'Faith Associates' to deliver safeguarding training for Imams and Islamic school teachers. • Pushing a 'No Place for Hate' campaign run through the police. • Disruption of extremist speakers from being active at events. • Work with partners to prevent extremists from managing premises.
Oversight and knowledge capacity building on the PVE agenda.	• A tri-borough 'East London Alliance' was developed for risk assessment and information sharing across boroughs. • Evaluation of PVE in Tower Hamlets was delivered. • Use of 'Operation NICOLE' to reach out to communities and explain why terrorism arrests were necessary. • Provision of media training for the Muslim community in the borough.	
Strengthen positive networks and institutions to increase their capacity to challenge extremism and violence and disrupt networks and organisations which are sympathetic to		• £500 spent to disseminate Prevent teaching materials. • Recruit a qualified to teacher to organize activities for Year 9 pupils. • Production of resources aimed to support teaching staff facilitate discussions and lessons to develop critical thinking in relation to extremism, 'conspiracy theories' and 'politically sensitive' topics. • Recruitment of a Prevent advisor for parents.

extremism and terrorism.		• Recruitment of a Youth Offending Team practitioner. • Provision of radicalisation awareness training. • Provision of Workshops to raise awareness of Prevent (WRAP). • Campaigns to prevent people from donating to extremist organisations. • Closure of 'dawah' stalls run by extremists. • Disrupt unregistered street funding collection by extremists. • Disruption of Muslims Against Crusades and al-Muhajiroun through by-laws and criminal law enforcement.

The chart above shows clear and obvious shifts in Prevent funding priorities. As the post-2011 priorities demonstrate, there is almost no community-oriented or community cohesion work done. The new strategy takes a few different approaches: centralisation, training provision, and police-led 'disruption'.

The 2014/2015 budget plan clearly demonstrates that after 2011 the agenda involves a greater level of centralisation around Prevent implementation, reducing the local authority's role in coordinating and designing Prevent. Instead, we see police-run campaigns, such as 'No Place for Hate', dissemination of pre-set school packs and educational materials, doubling down on safeguarding, and focusing funding on resources that will funnel at-risk individuals into Channel are seen as the main priority.

In particular, training provision is highly centralised in the new policy. The Workshop to increase awareness of Prevent (WRAP) is a script produced by HM Government.[58] In previous years (to 2011), boroughs and local authorities had more power to adjust these campaigns to the local context, for example by spending £12,000 on developing a locally-tailored school pack on Prevent. The move away from relying on the arts to engage young people in counter speech and relying on the educational system is evident in the demand for lesson plans that teach critical thinking in relation to 'conspiracy theories' and 'politically sensitive' topics (though no mention of critical thinking in other avenues, such as towards the government, is made).

[58] This script is not readily available at www.gov.uk. It is available at the following link, < http://ashe-essex.org/item/download/535_792971b85e183265a091fac9e7904d24.html>. A facilitator's workbook also appears to have been published, available here at the following link, < http://ashe-essex.org/item/download/532_4d1a8c38ed9f8d801119c21a97f0aaff.html>.

Where training was (at least in the project plans) conducted in partnership with the local Muslim community, the new strategy clearly sees Muslim organisations (and institutions) as targets and recipients of training without any capacity on their own to challenge extremist views, rather than equal stakeholders in countering terrorism. This is a patronising and top-down approach to Muslim communities. Not only will this deepen mistrust and alienation, such an approach will exclude crucial voices in helping in the development of more effecting counter-terrorism policy.

Finally, the new policies have resulted in a funding agenda that focuses on the *disruption* of 'extremist' activities, determined by the 2011 Prevent strategy's definition of 'extremism' as opposition to 'British values'. This includes, in the 2014/2015 delivery plan, Prevent officers responsible for preventing extremist speakers from speaking at events, preventing extremists from managing premises, development of a 'safer giving campaign' to prevent charity being provided to extremist organisations, the closure of 'dawah' stalls run by extremists, disruption of unregistered street collections from extremists, and countering existing extremist groups through law enforcement mechanisms. Where previously funding was used to open safe spaces for airing grievances, frustrations, and challenges to the status quo—the very essence of a democratic public sphere—the funding is now oriented towards silencing voices 'determined' as extremist.

These policies have been in place since 2011, updated with new protocols such as the CTLP (Counter-Terrorism Local Profile), Workshops for raising awareness of Prevent (WRAP) and the 'Prevent duty', established in 2015 as the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 established the Prevent strategy in law.

4. Impacts of policy changes on Prevent in London

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 enshrined a number of changes to the Prevent strategy in law. It, perhaps most controversially, establishes the Prevent duty on all public authorities to have 'due regard' to individuals at risk of radicalisation. Arguably, this is a leaner, more focused Prevent strategy. However, the centralising of the Prevent agenda around safeguarding, training provision, treatment of Muslim communities as targets for intervention rather than stakeholders, and use of police to disrupt extremists potentially risks further alienating and frustrating Muslim communities.

Counter-Terrorism Local Profiles

There is a dearth of information on Prevent implementation, making oversight extremely difficult. The CTLP (Counter-Terrorism Local Profile) exacerbates this opaque process; it is a restricted document authored by the police and only available to specific stakeholders.

In it, the government and the Home Office's National Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism, a police officer and the local Prevent board are responsible for the production of the CTLP, as well as working on a multi-agency basis.[59] Elected officials will be able to see the document only at the discretion of the CTLP owner and should be ratified by a regional Gateway Group.[60] The CTLP owner is usually the Head of the force Special Branch/CT Branch.[61] To commission the document, it is required that the CTLP owner, a Basic Command Unit representative, a Local Authority representative are present. The Home Office recommends the involvement of the Force Prevent lead, Police Authority, and 'other partners' including the Community Safety Partnership.

Given that the CTLP is a Restricted document and is a top-down measure for analysing and categorising terrorism risks in a local area, it is crucial that the London Assembly and MOPAC work to ensure that Local Authority representatives consult with communities about the PVE implementation in the borough prior to the commissioning of the CTLP and represent their interests in the commissioning process. This could be in the form of a call for written consultations encouraging community members and local organisations to inform representatives of the local authorities what concerns they have and can be a useful way of incorporating Muslim voices into the CTLP process.

Prevent duty

The CTLP will presumably be a starting point for the local authority to engage with the Prevent duty as the CTLP would provide the basis for understanding radicalisation in the local area. All statutory authorities are expected to 'demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalization in their area, institution or body'.[62]

Authorities will be required to 'demonstrate evidence of productive co-operation, in particular with local Prevent coordinators, the police and local authorities' as well as Community Safety Partnerships.[63] Finally, statutory authorities are required to implement training in the Prevent duty, which is 'widely available' from what would appear to be the Home Office (the wording of the guidance is extremely vague). Most of those exercising the Prevent duty will not be privy to the CTLP, but their work will be informed by it, most likely filtering down from the commissioning panel and informing the work of statutory authorities.

According to the specific guidance for local authorities, they are expected to 'use the existing counter-terrorism local profiles (CTLPs), produced for every region by the police, to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism'.[64]

[59] HM Government. (2012). *Counter-Terrorism Local Profiles: An Updated Guide*. London: Home Office, p. 11.
[60] *ibid*., p. 13.
[61] *ibid*., p. 29.
[62] HM Government. (2015). *Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales*. London: Home Office, p. 3.
[63] *ibid*., p. 4.
[64] *ibid*., p. 6.

The priorities of centralising Prevent and providing pre-set training along with disrupting 'extremists' are clearly established in the Prevent duty. The primary push is to use safeguarding policies as part of Prevent work: 'the duty is likely to be relevant to fulfilling safeguarding responsibilities' and local authority staff will be expected to ensure that referrals will be made to Channel where appropriate. Local authorities should ensure that 'publicly-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views'.[65] Schools, further, and higher education institutions are required to carry out their own risk evaluations around extremism.

The police will be required to use public order powers as well as municipal powers, by-laws, and safeguarding legislation in order to disrupt, proscribe, and counter extremism in local authority areas.[66] The police are the central component of the Prevent strategy, responsible for 'working alongside other sectors' and to 'play a galvanising role in developing local *Prevent* partnerships'.[67]

The police are responsible for engaging with multi-agency groups and sharing information from the CTLP where appropriate, supporting the implementation of a Prevent action plan, supporting local authority Prevent coordinators, organising the delivery of the Channel programme and by acting as a conduit for referrals with partners.[68]

The CTLP and the Prevent duty are two closely linked processes. The commissioning of the CTLP, as it is a restricted document, is highly opaque and the narrow group of stakeholders brought together is unlikely to ensure that the actual needs of Muslim communities—the main groups the strategy problematises as at risk of radicalisation—will be counted or understood. The 2011 changes to the Prevent strategy and its establishment as a statutory programme under the law in 2015 represents a regression in counter-terrorism strategy. The Home Office is enforcing a kind of 'muscular liberalism' based on a series of norms established in the Prevent strategy—which is a government document, not a piece of legislation—about 'British values'. By definition, anyone who does not ascribe to the Home Office's highly prescriptive sense of 'values' is potentially an extremist. The Prevent strategy, in its latest iteration, is extremely hierarchical, top-down, and centralised. This ignores previous successes in the implementation of Prevent around the country that incorporated Muslim communities as stakeholders in the strategy.

[65] *ibid*., p. 7.
[66] *ibid*., p. 25.
[67] *ibid*., p. 25.
[68] *ibid*., p. 26.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

In its current iteration, the Prevent strategy offers little possibility for local authorities to engage communities and effectively counter radicalisation. As demonstrated in section 2, the Prevent strategy excludes and isolates groups that do not fit into its narrow definition of 'British values'. By operating through a highly centralised approach to disrupting 'extremists', the Prevent strategy runs the risk of deteriorating the healthy liberal public sphere deemed necessary to opening counter-speech and debate that can challenge the intellectual basis of genuinely violent extremist opinions.[69] Instead, the Home Office has opted for a centralised strategy that seeks to disrupt and silence rather than debate and challenge; in effect, the freedom to debate has been curtailed.

There will be real repercussions in Muslim communities across the country and we expect that implementation of Prevent risks alienating communities that could make a positive impact in countering violent extremism. In particular, it is likely that the power will be used against non-violent extremists that express dissenting opinions that might fall foul of the prescribed set of 'British values' and involve possible referrals into Channel. A few cases like this might be enough to encourage Muslims to disengage entirely or distrust local authorities or other statutory authorities.

The Prevent programme has already been accused of intelligence gathering on Muslim communities[70] and counter-terrorism agendas are viewed with heavy skepticism from Muslim communities.

Very recently, Faith Matters reported on a questionnaire being circulated in the Buxton School in Waltham Forest intended to determine if Islamist ideology or non-violent extremist thinking was present among 11-year-old pupils as what may have been part of a Prevent project.[71] It is clear that the fixation on ideology has informed local responses to extremism. According to an independent education consultant, this is not the correct way forward: 'Some Muslim parents have been saying on Twitter that they will tell their children not to answer any questions at all. It's important that schools do explore pupils' multiple identities, but this project is tainted by the desire to spot the signs of extremism in primary school children'.[72] Focusing on spotting the *signs* of radicalisation and extremism thus feeds into cycles of mistrust and disengagement in institutions.

[69] Bartlett, J and Birdwell, J. (2010). *op. cit.*
[70] See, for example, Isakjee, A. and Allen, C. (2013). '"A catastrophic lack of inquisitiveness": A critical study of the impact and narrative of the Project Champion surveillance project in Birmingham'. *Ethnicities*, 13:6, p. 751-770.
[71] Faith Matters. "Circulating 'Cohesion' BRIT Questionnaire in Buxton School Raises Eyebrows**".** *Faith Matters.* 23 May 2015.
[72] Taylor, D. "Fury after primary pupils are asked to complete radicalisation-seeking surveys". *The Guardian*. 28 May 2015.

While we believe that the Home Office has centralised its power significantly, there are limited opportunities for London Boroughs and MOPAC to take responsibility to represent the voices of London's diverse Muslim communities. Our key recommendations are below:

- Encourage the Metropolitan Police Service to focus Channel referrals on clear cases of illegal, violent speech and use softer measures for cases of 'non-violent extremism' or deviation from 'British values'.
- During the commissioning process for the CTLP, ensure that the Local Authority representative has consulted with various community groups from all faith groups and is able to represent their voice and ensure that the CTLP commissioning process benefits from a balanced approach.
- Encourage the Metropolitan Police Service to engage with and be aware of the dynamics of Muslim communities and work with communities to tackle anti-Muslim hate and intra-Muslim tensions, viewing them as real partners and not through a simple securitisation agenda.
- Local authorities should engage with groups critical of Prevent without funding them. Their views should be taken seriously when planning Prevent projects alongside a diversity of other voices.
- Ensure that safe spaces for young people to voice their opinions are available without fear of referral to Channel.
- Advise all police officers to be extremely cautious before attempting to disrupt an event in order to prevent alienating communities. Universities must have clear policies about speakers but also err on the side of freedom to debate and challenge, teaching students how to challenge views in a nuanced and critical manner.
- The pool of authorised Prevent providers must be widened to more diverse voices to produce local solutions. Local authorities should be able to work with a variety of partners to provide balanced and effective training to any individuals tasked with exercising the Prevent duty.

These recommendations are limited because the power of non-security actors is highly limited in this new deployment of the Prevent strategy. The Prevent duty is highly prescriptive and the CTLP commissioning process is entirely opaque and open only to a rigid set of stakeholders outlined in Appendix 3 of the CTLP guidance.

The Prevent strategy represents a significant regression in counter-terrorism policing. Prevent—in spite of all its problems and shortfalls—when governed by communities, allowed for different approaches depending on the local priorities of the local authority. This variation allowed for more voices to articulate political stakes in the process.

However, since the new strategy in 2011, lessons about 'radicalisation' have been ignored with little attention paid to the salient critiques of the concept. It centralises the Home Office's power and focuses on safeguarding and Channel referrals that could damage successful projects that provided youth with 'safe spaces' for free discussion. It instantiates a kind of 'muscular liberalism' that seeks to silence and disrupt dissenting voices not due to 'violent' speech but if it represents an ideology that contradicts the narrow prescription of 'British values' established in the 2011 Prevent policy. The Prevent strategy demands a widespread duty in all statutory authorities to counter radicalisation based on a top-down approach, led by information produced by counter-terrorism officials that significantly reduces community input.

We believe that the highly contested nature of radicalisation and the Prevent programme in general presents challenges that are difficult for local authorities to mediate.[73] Its fixation on ideology over violence presents a significant risk to community cohesion when this informs the everyday concerns of employees and leaders in statutory authorities. Local government can play a small but crucial role in working to make the policy incorporate community voices and concerns despite the centralisation of power in the current Prevent strategy.

[73] O'Toole, T., Meer, N., Dehanas, D., Jones, S., and T. Modood. (2015), *op. cit.*