

Spooked!

How not to prevent violent extremism

Arun Kundnani

Spooked!

How not to prevent violent extremism

By Arun Kundnani

2009

ISBN 978-0-85001-056-5

© Institute of Race Relations, October 2009

The Institute of Race Relations (IRR) was established as an independent educational charity in 1958 to carry out research, publish and collect resources on race relations throughout the world. Today, the IRR is at the cutting edge of research and analysis on issues such as community cohesion, multiculturalism, the impact of anti-terrorist legislation on human rights, deaths in the custody of the police and prisons, racial violence and the human rights of those detained or removed under immigration laws. Its work covers Britain, Europe and race relations internationally.

Institute of Race Relations

2-6 Leeke Street
London WC1X 9HS
UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7837 0041

Fax: +44 (0)20 7278 0623

Email: info@irr.org.uk

Web: www.irr.org.uk

Arun Kundnani is the editor of *Race & Class* and the author of *The End of Tolerance: racism in 21st century Britain* (London, Pluto Press, 2007).

The IRR would like to thank Natasha Dhumma, Liz Fekete and Rebecca Wood for conducting a number of telephone interviews and Just West Yorkshire for assistance with organising the roundtable discussion event.

The IRR would also like to especially thank all those who participated in the interviews and roundtable discussion which formed the basis for this report.

This publication was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Trust.

Download more copies of this report at www.irr.org.uk/spooked

Contents

1. Key findings	6
Recommendations	7
2. Introduction	8
3. A note on methodology	9
4. The Prevent programme	10
The Prevent programme and local authorities	12
Box 1: Prevent at the Foreign Office	12
Fig. 1: Areas in England with most Muslims and most funding	13
Fig. 2: How the counter-terrorist system sees the Muslim population	13
Fig. 3: Correlation of Muslim population and Prevent budget by local authority	14
Fig. 4: Assessment criteria for NI35, the national indicator on ‘Building communities resilient to violent extremism’	16
Community development and counter-terrorism	17
Contest 2	20
Box 2: A ‘brief history’ of ‘international terrorism’	21
5. Discrimination and division	23
Other extremisms?	24
Rejecting Prevent	25
6. Mapping and surveillance	28
Box 3: The regionalisation of intelligence gathering	30
Schools as sources of information	32
Box 4: From multi-agency policing to multi-agency surveillance	32
The Channel programme	33
7. Conclusions	35
Moderates and extremists	35
Box 5: the Research, Information and Communications Unit	38
Hearts and minds	39
References	42

1. Key findings

- The Prevent programme, with a budget in 2008/9 of £140 million, is a part of the government's counter-terrorist strategy which focuses on mobilising communities to oppose the ideology of violent extremism. With the revised counter-terrorist strategy published in March 2009, the focus of Prevent widened to promoting shared values as well as opposing violent extremism.
- The government claims Prevent is 'communities-led' but Prevent funding has not been driven by a decision-making process in which local agencies identify their own needs and access central government funds accordingly. Rather, local authorities have been pressured to accept Prevent funding in direct proportion to the numbers of Muslims in their area – in effect, constructing the Muslim population as a 'suspect community'.
- Prevent decision-making lacks transparency and accountability. Decisions are taken behind closed doors rather than in consultation with the voluntary and community sector. Rather than engaging local people democratically, many local authorities seem to take the view that decisions over Prevent are best made away from public scrutiny.
- In its early stages, most local authority-based Prevent work has been 'targeted capacity building of Muslim communities', focusing particularly on young people, women and mosques. This has led many participants to believe that deprived communities with many needs have effectively been told that their voluntary sector organisations can only access the resources to meet these needs if they are willing to sign up to the Prevent programme, which brings with it the danger of alienating the very people who need to be won over.
- Prevent has undermined many progressive elements within the earlier community cohesion agenda and absorbed from it those parts which are most problematic. Initially, Prevent funding allowed some projects to continue doing progressive cross-community work. But, more recently, Prevent, with its focus on a single group, has undermined this aspect of the cohesion agenda. Often the relationship between a local authority and its Muslim citizens is conducted through the very same 'community gatekeepers' which the community cohesion agenda had identified as being problematic and divisive.
- There is strong evidence that a significant part of the Prevent programme involves the embedding of counter-terrorism police officers within the delivery of local services, the purpose of which seems to be to gather intelligence on Muslim communities, to identify areas, groups and individuals that are 'at risk' and to then facilitate interventions, such as the Channel programme, as well as more general police engagement with the Muslim community, to manage perceptions of grievances.
- Prevent-funded voluntary sector organisations and workers in local authorities are becoming increasingly wary of the expectations on them to act as providers of information to the police. The imposition of information sharing requirements on teachers and youth, community and cultural workers undercuts professional norms of confidentiality. Moreover, it will be impossible to generate the trust that the government sees as one of the aims of Prevent if there is any suspicion that local services have a hidden agenda.
- There is a perception that the government is sponsoring Muslim organisations on the basis of theological criteria – for example, holding Sufis to be intrinsically more moderate than Salafis. Such an approach runs counter to the secular separation of 'church' and state, even though such a separation is itself upheld by the government as a marker of 'moderation' which Muslims should aspire to.
- The atmosphere promoted by Prevent is one in which to make radical criticisms of the government is to risk losing funding and facing isolation as an 'extremist', while those organisations which support the government are rewarded. This in turn undermines the kind of radical discussions of political issues that would need to occur if young people are to be won over and support for illegitimate political violence diminished. The current emphasis of Prevent on depoliticising young people and restricting radical dissent is actually counter-productive because it strengthens the hands of those who say democracy is pointless.

- The underlying assumption of the Prevent programme is that the government needs to combat extremism through a ‘battle of ideas’ which aims at isolating ‘mainstream Muslims’ from a global insurgency. A form of ideological campaigning for ‘British values’ and ‘moderate Islam’ has come to be seen as a matter of national security. Notions of multiculturalism are seen as a threat to this campaign. But such a campaign ends up constructing a false image of Britain’s Muslim citizens.
- The minutes of all decision-making meetings in the local authority, local strategic partnership or Prevent Board should be published along with exact details of what has been funded, which organisations are carrying out the work, what funds they have been allocated and how it will be evaluated.
- The government should refrain from any attempt to promote particular interpretations of Islam. The interpretation of Islam is a matter for Muslims themselves and the government should not promote particular sectarian or theological interests over any other through ‘targeted capacity building’.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ‘Extremism’ is a vague concept that is easily exploited to demonise anyone whose opinions are radically different. The real issue is support for, or use of, illegitimate violence to achieve political ends. As a first step, there needs to be a recognition that this is a problem across all communities and takes many forms, including white racist violence.
- Teachers and social, youth and cultural workers must have the integrity of their professional norms protected against the expectation that they become the eyes and ears of counter-terrorist policing. To turn public services into instruments of surveillance only serves to alienate young people from institutional settings that would otherwise be well-placed to give them a sense of trust and belonging.
- The specific needs of different communities for local services and community development should be recognised as valid in their own right and met on their own terms. Muslim citizens should not be forced into accepting a discriminatory and divisive counter-terrorist programme as a condition for enjoying their rights to access basic services.
- The focus of Prevent work on all areas with significant numbers of Muslims is discriminatory and counter-productive. Instead, central government funding should be available to any local area which, through a genuine process of local decision-making, independently identifies a need to win individuals away from support for illegitimate political violence.
- The government should be open to other interpretations of violence which emphasise its political rather than religious dimensions.
- Solutions aimed at young people will be most effective and fair if:
 - Young people are empowered to engage politically and contribute to society, not made to feel that their opinions have to meet with official approval. The creation of spaces for genuinely open discussion about difficult political issues is crucial.
 - The impact of racism, Islamophobia, social exclusion and everyday violence on the well-being of young people is recognised. The terrors that young people experience in their everyday lives involve bullying, taunting, victimisation and harassment from peers at school, local gangs, police, the media and, in some cases, members of their own families.
 - The police are kept separate from empowerment work with young people. There should be no obligations on teachers and youth workers to share information with the police, beyond the basic requirements of child protection and prevention of specific criminal acts.

2. Introduction

The government describes its Preventing Violent Extremism programme (hereafter 'Prevent') as 'a community-led approach to tackling violent extremism'.¹ It believes that by selectively directing resources at 'moderate' Muslim organisations to carry out community development and 'anti-radicalisation' work, it can empower them to unite around 'shared British values' to isolate the 'extremists'. With hundreds of millions of pounds of funding, the Prevent programme has come to redefine the relationship between government and around two million British citizens who are Muslim.² Their 'hearts and minds' are now the target of an elaborate structure of surveillance, mapping, engagement and propaganda. Prevent has become, in effect, the government's 'Islam policy'.

So far, public discussion of Prevent has focused on the question of whether the programme is too soft on non-violent 'extremists' (who are said to clandestinely benefit from the funding stream) and the question of value for money (whether the money is being wasted on 'feelgood' projects which do little to actually prevent violent extremism). Our research set out to address those questions but also to ask: what is the general impact of Prevent funding at community level; what, in practice, is the definition of extremism in Prevent-funded projects; does Prevent funding foster cohesion across communities or exacerbate inter-communal conflicts and divisions; how do Prevent programmes interact with local democracy; how does the Prevent programme view Muslim communities; and whether the Prevent programme involves non-police agencies in intelligence gathering. Our research focused on local authorities in England that have received Prevent funding and voluntary sector organisations in those areas. We carried out thirty-two interviews with Prevent programme workers and managers in local authorities, members of local Prevent boards, voluntary sector workers engaged in Prevent work and community workers familiar with local Prevent work. We also organised a roundtable discussion in Bradford to explore the issues raised in the interviews in more detail and submitted freedom of information requests to local authorities.

What we found was that there are strong reasons for thinking that the Prevent programme, in effect, constructs the Muslim population as a 'suspect community', fosters social divisions among Muslims themselves and between Muslims and others, encourages tokenism, facilitates violations of privacy and

professional norms of confidentiality, discourages local democracy and is counter-productive in reducing the risk of political violence.

Moreover, there is evidence that the Prevent programme has been used to establish one of the most elaborate systems of surveillance ever seen in Britain. We also examined the general framework of the Prevent programme and found the underlying assumptions of a 'hearts and minds' approach to be themselves problematic.

These concerns have been largely ignored in the published literature, with the important exception of the An-Nisa Society's *Prevent: a response from the Muslim community* report of February 2009.³ Yet, as a result of these concerns with Prevent, for the first time in twenty years there is a significant trend of voluntary sector organisations refusing local authority funding on the grounds of principled objections. Prevent has come to be perceived as an integral part of an authoritarian counter-terrorist system that violates the human rights of Muslims through disproportionate arrests (less than a seventh of those arrested under anti-terrorist legislation since 9/11 have gone on to be convicted),⁴ through the control order regime,⁵ and the emerging evidence that the UK intelligence services have been operating a secret interrogation policy which facilitated the torture of British citizens by foreign agencies.⁶ If the objective of Prevent is to win the trust of Muslims in Britain, its failure cannot be overstated.

It goes without saying that there is a real and ongoing risk of terrorism within Britain. It is not the purpose of this report to downplay the seriousness of that danger or the difficulties involved in intercepting potential acts of violence. These difficulties notwithstanding, it remains vital to apply democratic and human rights standards to counter-terrorism programmes, not least because, in the long term, this is an essential precondition of ensuring community support. This report is therefore part of the essential project of researching, discussing and campaigning on the role of the police and security services in counter-terrorism, a project which should not shy away from taking a critical stand for fear of giving succour to extremists. The stated aim of the government's counter-terrorist strategy is to enable people to 'go about their lives freely and with confidence'.⁷ The question we pose here is whether freedom and confidence for the majority can be enabled by imposing a lack of freedom and confidence on a minority – in this case, the Muslim population of Britain.

3. A note on methodology

This report is the result of a six-month research project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The research draws on existing policy and academic work, freedom of information requests, a programme of interviews and a roundtable discussion. During the course of the project, thirty-two interviews were conducted with Prevent programme workers and managers in local authorities (6), members of local Prevent boards (10), voluntary sector workers engaged in Prevent work (10) and community workers familiar with local Prevent work (6). Half of these interviews were conducted face to face, with the rest done by telephone. Respondents were guaranteed confidentiality in order to encourage a frank expression of views. In selecting interviewees, we were interested in speaking to people with experience and knowledge of Prevent projects, rather than established community leaders. All except five of the interviewees were Muslim; half were women. Among those interviewed, there were a range of perspectives on Prevent, from those who were refusing to work on Prevent projects as a matter of principle, to those who were engaged in Prevent projects but with significant concerns, to those who were reasonably positive about the way the Prevent programme had been designed and implemented. The interviewees were spread across the following towns, cities and areas of

England: Birmingham, Bradford, Brent, Enfield, Islington, Leicester, Newcastle, Oldham, Preston, Reading, Rochdale, Walsall, Wakefield, Wellingborough and Wycombe. In July, a roundtable discussion event with twenty-four participants was held in Bradford to explore in more detail some of the issues that had been raised in the interviews.

As a result of the haze of confusion surrounding the Prevent programme, conspiracy theories and speculative rumours tend to circulate, especially among communities in the areas that Prevent has focused on. Such an atmosphere is disempowering and we do not wish to add to it. We have attempted to conduct this research in an evidence-based manner, providing sources for the claims made wherever possible. On occasion, information has been passed to us by individuals who, for understandable reasons, wish to remain anonymous. The credibility of the information will therefore be harder for the reader to assess but we have, as far as possible, only reproduced such claims where they can be confirmed by other sources. We hope that other individuals and organisations will, along with ourselves, continue the investigative work begun in this research project so that the Prevent programme will be subject to a much greater degree of critical scrutiny and be required to become more transparent in its operations.

4. The Prevent programme

The Prevent programme, with a budget in 2008/9 of £140 million, is a part of the government's counter-terrorist strategy which focuses on mobilising communities to oppose the ideology of violent extremism. Despite the government's claim that it is communities-led, the allocation of Prevent funding to local authorities has not been driven by a decision-making process in which local agencies identify their own needs and access central government funds accordingly. Rather, local authorities have been pressured to adopt Prevent in direct proportion to the numbers of Muslims in the area – thereby constructing the Muslim population as a 'suspect community'.

Local authorities have used Prevent funding, in its early stages, to carry out 'targeted capacity building of Muslim communities', focusing particularly on young people, women and mosques. But serious problems arise when deprived communities with many needs consider that their voluntary sector organisations can only access the resources to meet these needs if they are willing to sign up to a counter-terrorism agenda. With the revised counter-terrorist strategy published in March 2009, the focus of Prevent widened to promoting shared values as well as opposing violent extremism.

In 2004, the government launched what *The Times* described as 'one of the most ambitious government social engineering projects in recent years'. Alongside the legislative and policing aspects of Britain's domestic counter-terrorism programme, it was decided there should be an attempt to win over the 'hearts and minds' of young Muslims in Britain away from the 'extremist narrative'. The aim was to reduce the circulation of 'extremist ideas' and tackle the widespread discontent and disaffection which 'extremists' were thought to exploit. This was to be achieved by strengthening the hand of 'moderate Muslim leaders' through government contact and targeted capacity building. As a senior civil servant explained: 'We did the same in Northern Ireland in the 1980s when, as well as deploying police and troops on the streets, we had a massive programme of investment in the local community, raising living standards. We also set about bridge-building with the Catholic community.'⁸

The fact that the 7/7 bombings in London were carried out by 'homegrown' terrorists increased the prominence of this broadly 'hearts and minds' approach. The Preventing Extremism Together taskforce, which was initiated by the government in the wake of 7/7 and was made up of a relatively wide cross-section of Muslim community representatives, made sixty-four recommendations in its November 2005 report, including a demand for a public inquiry into the 7/7 attacks. Its key argument was that ultimately the solution to extremism lay in tackling a series of issues that affected Muslim communities: inequality, discrimination, deprivation and foreign policy.

In April 2007, the government launched its Prevent programme, with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) publishing *Preventing Violent Extremism: winning hearts and minds*, which set out 'a community-led approach to tackling violent extremism'.⁹ The ideas first aired three years earlier had by now evolved into a new strategy summed up in the dictum that 'communities defeat terrorism'. Counter-terrorism's 'hard' side of 'emergency' police powers needed, it was said, to be complemented with the 'soft' side of community engagement and this meant a series of initiatives at the local level, involving both the voluntary and statutory sectors. The overall counter-terrorist strategy – known as **Contest** – was thus made up of a series of distinct strands:

- **Pursue** – stopping terrorist attacks through detection, investigation, prosecution and other sanctions;
- **Protect** – protection of infrastructure, crowded places, the transport system and border controls;
- **Prepare** – mitigating the impact of attacks through strengthening the response of the emergency services, and so on;
- **Prevent** – stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.¹⁰

However, the form which the Prevent programme's community engagement was to take turned out to be quite different from what the Preventing Extremism Together taskforce of

2005 had anticipated. The government's advice to local authorities involved in the Prevent programme stated that:

Preventing violent extremism in the name of Islam must, first and foremost, be about winning the struggle for hearts and minds. Winning hearts and minds will take significant efforts by Muslim communities to tackle the pernicious ideology being spread by a small minority of extremists, and will mean local Muslim communities taking a leadership stance against sophisticated campaigning and extremist messages. Our aim is to support that through targeted capacity building.¹¹

This suggested that the focus of Prevent would not be on inequality, discrimination and deprivation but on an ideological campaign that selected Muslim organisations would be empowered to carry out on behalf of the government.

Also in early 2007, a new department within the Home Office, the **Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism** (OSCT), was formed, with the aim of setting the general parameters of the UK's Contest counter-terrorism strategy, within which the police, the intelligence services and other agencies would operate. The creation of the OSCT was designed to overcome departmental boundaries and encourage cross-government working on counter-terrorism. In May 2007, the administration of a number of matters related to the criminal justice system was removed from the Home Office to the new Ministry of Justice, freeing the Home Office itself to make counter-terrorism a higher priority. Charles Farr, said to be a former senior diplomat, was seconded from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in July 2007 to head the OSCT with a staff of 100 civil servants that was expected to increase to over 200 within a couple of years.¹²

Later that year, the OSCT defined the objectives of the Prevent strategy as:

- 'challenging the violent extremist ideology and supporting mainstream voices;
- disrupting those who promote violent extremism and supporting the institutions where they may be active;
- supporting individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism;

- increasing the resilience of communities to violent extremism; and
- addressing the grievances that ideologues are exploiting.'

These objectives were to be supported by two 'cross-cutting streams' which were 'key enabling functions' in delivering the strategy:

- 'developing understanding, analysis and information; and
- strategic communications.'¹³

The design of the strategy rested centrally on the notion that the work of 'countering violent extremist ideology' would 'rarely be done directly by government' but rather by Muslim communities themselves, supported in this work through 'targeting capacity building'.¹⁴ Embedding this ideological campaign within communities themselves would, it was hoped, provide for a far more effective rejection of 'the ideology of violent extremism' and isolation of the 'apologists for terrorism'.¹⁵

In 2007, the **Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund** (PVEPF) was established by the DCLG with a modest £6 million budget to support seventy priority local authorities in England in meeting these objectives. The DCLG also distributed £650,000 to nineteen organisations through a Community Leadership Fund (CLF) which was designed to enable local and national organisations to complement the work being undertaken by local authorities.

In April 2008, the amount of money being spent on Prevent increased significantly. The PVEPF money distributed by the DCLG to seventy local authorities developed into a three-year £45 million area-based grant which, by 2010, will be distributed among ninety-four local authorities.¹⁶ An increase to this budget of £7.5m was announced in August 2009.¹⁷ A further £5.1 million is being distributed over the same three-year period through the CLF strand.¹⁸ Along with other smaller funding streams, this means that the total money spent on Prevent by the DCLG from April 2007–11 is likely to be £80m. It is expected that, by April 2011, over £61.7 million will have been provided to local authorities for Prevent work.¹⁹

As well as the DCLG, other government departments are also funding Prevent work. In 2009/10, the Home Office's OSCT is providing £5.6 million of direct funding to the **National Offender Management System** to operate a 'counter-extremism programme'

with offenders, and the **Youth Justice Board** is getting £3.5 million to deliver local Prevent work through Youth Offending Teams. The OSCT also directly funds a number of its own projects on intervention with ‘at risk’ individuals. Its Prevent Central Unit has funding for 2009/10 of £8.5 million.²⁰ **Police forces** have also received a large amount of funding to carry out Prevent work. As part of their Prevent delivery plan, which was launched in 2008, they have recruited 300 new staff across twenty-four forces to work alongside the national and regional counter-terrorism policing structure and with neighbourhood policing teams.²¹ They have also received £1.2 million from the Home Office to co-ordinate their work with schools, colleges and universities.²² The **Department for Children, Schools and Families** and the **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills** also have funding available to support their Prevent work in educational institutions.²³ Likewise, the **Department for Culture, Media and Sport** is engaged in its own Prevent work. Finally, the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office** has a substantial Prevent programme with funding of £400 million over 2008–2010 (see Box 1). Across all of these departments, the total Prevent budget in 2008/9 was over £140 million.²⁴ In March 2009, it was anticipated that by 2011 the total Prevent budget would have increased by a further £100 million.²⁵

THE PREVENT PROGRAMME AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The focus of this report is the involvement in the Prevent programme of local authorities and

voluntary sector organisations in England. Of particular interest, therefore, is the £51 million which will have been delivered by 2011 as DCLG area-based grants to local authorities. Examining the government’s allocation of Prevent funding through these grants might be expected to reveal which areas in England are considered to be ‘at risk’ of radicalisation. A correlation of the local authority areas which have received Prevent funding against the 2001 census shows that, in fact, every area with more than 2,000 Muslims has been allocated funding through DCLG area-based grants. Figure 1 shows the nineteen local authorities which are receiving the largest amount of funding from 2008/9 to 2010/11 along with the nineteen local authority areas with the largest numbers of Muslims according to the 2001 census.

Figure 3 plots the amount allocated for every local authority area in England that received funding against the population of Muslims in that area according to the 2001 census. There is a strong correlation between the amount of Prevent funding provided and the number of Muslims in that area.

This indicates that DCLG Prevent funding has not been allocated to areas according to identifiable risks of violent extremism but in direct proportion to the numbers of Muslims in an area. Moreover, it implies that the allocation of Prevent funding has not been driven by a decision-making process in which local agencies identify their own needs and access central government funds accordingly. Rather, the more Muslims in an area, the more DCLG Prevent money it has had, irrespective of any other factors. The underlying assumption seems to be that the Muslim population as a whole

Box 1: Prevent at the Foreign Office

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has a substantial Prevent programme ‘to counter extremists’ false characterisation of the UK as being a place where Muslims are oppressed’.²⁶ This work has funding of £400 million over 2008–2010. It includes, for example, facilitating visits by delegations of British Muslims to Muslim-majority countries and a ‘dedicated team of key language specialists’ working ‘to explain British policies and the role of Muslims in British society, in print, visual and electronic media’ across the Muslim world.²⁷ The FCO is also undertaking a programme entitled ‘Bringing foreign policy back home’ which involves ‘explaining’ foreign policy

to Muslims in the UK. Since March 2008, FCO officials have taken part in forty-five events, including in Tower Hamlets, Birmingham, Bradford and Glasgow, designed to discuss foreign policy with British Muslims and ‘challenge myths often peddled by violent extremists’.²⁸

In addition, the FCO has paid £520,000 to an organisation called Deen International, headed by Khurshid Ahmed, the chair of the British Muslim Forum, to produce a public relations campaign in Pakistan.²⁹ The campaign, entitled ‘I am the West’, involves television commercials featuring prominent British Muslims.³⁰

Fig. 1: Areas in England with most Muslims and most funding

Nineteen areas in England with the most Muslims according to the 2001 census		Nineteen areas in England with the largest Prevent DCLG area-based grants 2008/9–2010/11	
Birmingham	140,033	Birmingham	£2,413,000
Bradford	75,188	Bradford	£1,425,000
Tower Hamlets	71,389	Tower Hamlets	£1,349,000
Newham	59,293	Newham	£1,197,000
Kirklees	39,312	Kirklees	£893,000
Manchester	35,806	Manchester	£817,000
Waltham Forest	32,902	Waltham Forest	£817,000
Brent	32,290	Brent	£741,000
Ealing	31,033	Ealing	£741,000
Leicester	30,885	Leicester	£741,000
Redbridge	28,487	Redbridge	£741,000
Hackney	27,908	Hackney	£741,000
Luton	26,963	Luton	£665,000
Blackburn with Darwen	26,674	Blackburn with Darwen	£665,000
Enfield	26,306	Enfield	£665,000
Haringey	24,371	Haringey	£665,000
Oldham	24,039	Oldham	£665,000
Sheffield	23,819	Sheffield	£665,000
Camden	22,906	Camden	£665,000

needs to be ‘targeted’ in relation to violent extremism, rather than specific groups or localities, and irrespective of the views of local ‘stakeholders’.

The head of OSCT, Charles Farr, has given his own account of how the Prevent programme conceives of its target population:

There is a group of people that have been radicalised and are committed to violent extremism and the only solution to that group of people in this country is criminal investigation and prosecution. There is a much larger group of people who feel a degree of negativity, if not hostility, towards the state, the country, the community, and who are, as it were, the pool in which terrorists will swim, and to a degree they will be complicit with and will certainly not report on activity which they detect on their doorstep. We have to reach that group because unless we reach that group they may themselves move into the very sharp end, but even if they do not they will create an environment in which terrorists can operate with a degree of impunity that we do not want. ... That is to a degree what Prevent is all about.³¹

Combining these comments with what we know about the distribution of DCLG fund-

ing, it seems that the Prevent programme is interested in three population groups, which can be conceived of as making up a layered pyramid, of a kind commonly seen in counter-terrorist literature – see Figure 2. The top layer of the pyramid corresponds to those actively engaged in preparing or supporting violent extremism. The middle layer is a ‘much larger group of people’ who are extremist sympathisers. The lowest layer of the pyramid corresponds to the entire population of Muslims. As one moves from the top of the pyramid to the bottom, the focus shifts from the Pursue strand of detection, investigation, arrest, detention,

Figure 2: How the counter-terrorist system sees the Muslim population

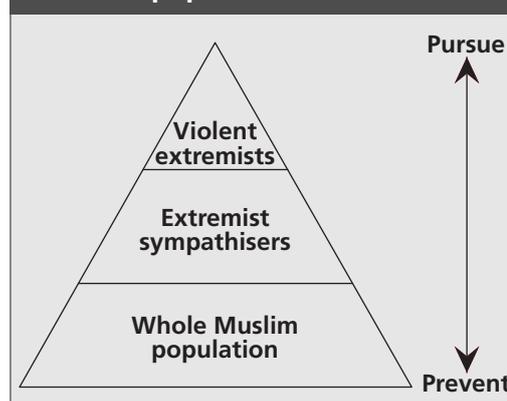
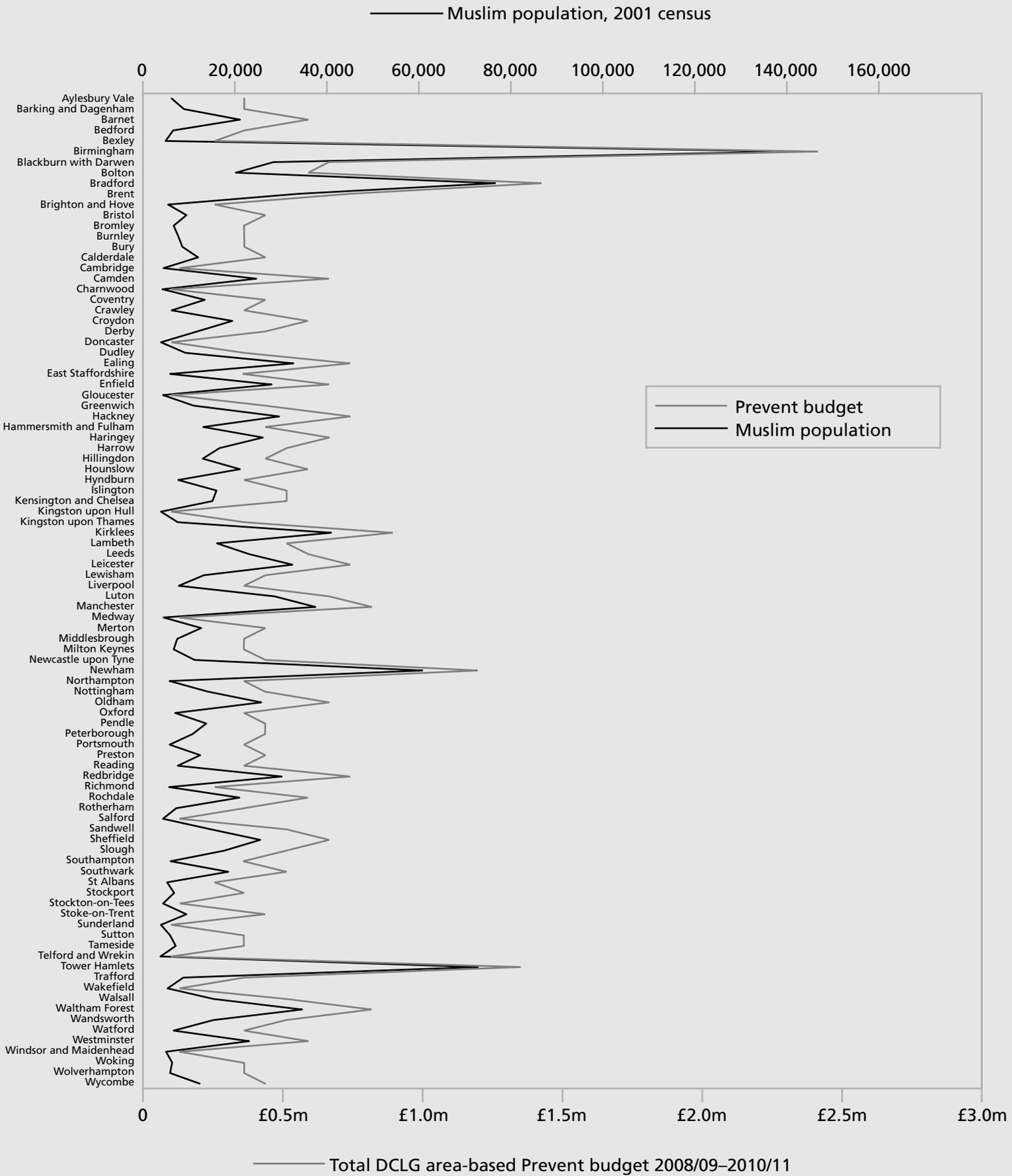


Fig. 3: Correlation of Muslim population and Prevent budget by local authority



prosecution, control orders and so on, to the Prevent strand, which is focused on direct ‘interventions’ with those in the middle layer and on winning over the ‘hearts and minds’ of those in the bottom layer to actively identify and challenge those in the middle and top layers. This explains why the ‘hearts and minds’ programmes that the DCLG is funding local authorities to carry out are targeted at all areas with a Muslim population of over 2,000 persons.

The problem with attempting to mobilise all these Muslims against ‘extremism’ is that it, in effect, constructs Muslims into a ‘suspect community’, in which the failure of Muslim individuals or organisations to comply with this mobilisation makes them suspect in the eyes of the counter-terrorist system and shifts them from the pyramid’s bottom layer of ‘mainstream Muslims’ to the middle layer of ‘extremists’.³² However, Muslims may want to avoid participating in the government’s Prevent programme for a number of reasons which have nothing to do with support for political violence. The Prevent programme is, as shown in chapter 6, integrated with a policing agenda which makes the allocation of the programme to every area with more than 2,000 Muslims amount to a form of profiling that is inconsistent with commitments to racial and religious equality.

In theory, the decision to adopt the DCLG’s Prevent programme in a particular area is supposed to be taken by the **Local Strategic Partnership** (LSP), a forum led by the local authority in which representatives of local stakeholders – likely to include the police, business and the voluntary and community sectors – come together to discuss, plan and co-ordinate work. The DCLG’s Prevent grants are generally administered by the equalities, diversity or social inclusion departments in local authorities, which will then draw in a range of local partners across the voluntary and statutory sectors to carry out the Prevent work. A framework known as the **Local Area Agreement** (LAA) and National Indicator set provides central government with a mechanism by which it can steer how Prevent funds are used locally. LAAs are action plans that set out what improvements central government expects LSPs to make in an area over a three-year period. LAAs contain up to thirty-five targets drawn from a National Indicator set of 188 indicators on various social problems, one of which is related to preventing violent extremism and is known as **NI35**. For each indicator that an LSP adopts, a target must be agreed. Meeting LAA targets leads to rewards for the local authority in the form of additional central government funding which is not tied to the meeting of

targets. Moreover, all local authorities are required to report publicly against all 188 indicators, regardless of whether or not they are included in its LAA. NI35 therefore dictates how Prevent money will be used by LSPs even if it is not designated as a target in the LAA. LAAs became statutory in 2007 across all local authority areas in England. There is also a statutory ‘duty to involve’ local people in the decision-making process of setting the priorities. In theory, the priorities and targets in the LAA should reflect the concerns and aspirations of local people, as expressed through the LSP. Thereafter, a further negotiation is supposed to take place between the LSP and the Government Office for the region.

Progress on NI35, the national indicator on ‘Building communities resilient to violent extremism’, is assessed and scored on four factors, listed in the left column of Figure 4. For each of these, maximum points is obtained by achieving the description in the right column.

As of May 2009, the areas which have adopted NI35 as a designated target in their LAAs are Calderdale, Derby, Leicester, Birmingham, Dudley, Peterborough, Barnet, Haringey, Harrow, Hounslow, Lambeth, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Westminster, Buckinghamshire, Reading, Slough and Gloucestershire.³³

A number of our interviewees argued that, contrary to the rhetoric of its being ‘community-led’, the DCLG’s Prevent programme has, in practice, been driven by central government rather than by locally perceived needs. This observation is consistent with the finding that there is a strong correlation between the level of DCLG Prevent funding and the numbers of Muslims in a particular area. Many interviewees spoke of the problems with central government pressuring local areas to adopt the Prevent programme in this way. The manager of a community organisation in the north of England who sat on an LAA Board said that, in practice, the decision-making process takes place ‘behind closed doors, with representation from Black and Minority Ethnic communities marginalised’. The introduction of Prevent was never properly discussed: ‘The chief executives of the local authority drove it through – which means that the usual processes of consultation and accountability were bypassed. It was presented as a *fait accompli*.’ When this person raised her concerns about the process, she was sidelined. ‘An underdeveloped and vulnerable voluntary sector is easily pressured into uncritically accepting government programmes,’ she says. ‘And many Black and Minority Ethnic organisations have bought into the Prevent agenda

Fig. 4: Assessment criteria for NI35, the national indicator on 'Building communities resilient to violent extremism'

Understanding of, and engagement with, Muslim communities.

A self-sustaining, dynamic and community driven engagement which takes place on a number of different levels and in a number of different ways, with innovative approaches to communication and engagement of all groups. Sophisticated understanding of local Muslim communities is used to drive policy development and engagement

Knowledge and understanding of the drivers and causes of violent extremism and the Prevent objectives.

Strong understanding of the Prevent objectives and the drivers of violent extremism, as well as of the interfaces with related policy areas. Full use of local, national and international research, guidance and expertise on the agenda, including good information sharing between partners. Good understanding of local circumstances and drivers.

Development of a risk-based preventing violent extremism action plan, in support of delivery of the Prevent objectives.

Risk-based and strategically focused action plan with strong links to the knowledge and understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, the Prevent' strategy and to extensive consultation with communities and local partner agencies. Agenda effectively 'mainstreamed' through consideration of existing service delivery and policies, alongside the development of specific actions, projects and capabilities. Awareness of agenda throughout partner organisations. Full range of activities across all strands of the Prevent strategy. Innovative actions, projects and capabilities clearly identified. Strong evidence of multi-agency approach to deliver across a broad range of partners and agencies, including synergies with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and other bodies.

Effective oversight, delivery and evaluation of projects and actions.

Strong tried and tested monitoring mechanisms which allow highlighting and resolution of issues, track progress and ensure consistent delivery of projects and actions within timescale, to the required standard and budget constraints. Oversight group with appropriate skills and seniority in place and actively involved in monitoring. Professional and extensive evaluation of project against agreed objectives, which has real impact on development of future projects. Strong audit arrangements and sophisticated risk management in place.³⁴

due to the need for sheer survival. The sector has been forced to make these compromises.³⁵ A local authority worker in another part of the north told us that 'the voluntary sector has not been consulted and does not have the resources or experience to respond to these issues'.³⁶

Another worker in the north said: 'When the Prevent agenda first started, people asked why this city was being targeted. Basically, it was not seen as a local issue but an issue put on the agenda by national government. I spoke to a city council official working in community cohesion and he told me: "We didn't have a choice. We were just told that we had to do work on Prevent. We don't want to make a problem around this. We have the money and we should use it."³⁷ In one area of London, a youth service manager working on a Prevent-

funded project told us that 'the grassroots are not consulted' and that 'local authorities and councillors are too scared to criticise central government even if they disagree with it'.³⁸

Among interviewees, there was a widespread feeling that the NI35 and LAA assessment framework was a means of influencing local communities to adopt the Prevent programme over other priorities. A member of an LSP in the Midlands was concerned about the whole decision-making process in relation to Prevent: 'Were local authority chief executives pressurised by central government to go for Prevent, against the needs of local communities? Who actually agrees LAAs? Who is represented in them? In effect, they are dictated by central government. It all seemed unreal and random. What were the postcodes that were

supposed to be at risk? Since we weren't being told what the problem was, how could we know the solution?'³⁹

According to a local authority manager in the Midlands:

There is strong pressure on the local authority to sign up to Prevent. They didn't adopt NI35 but they still have to report on it. So it is frustrating to them when individuals raise criticisms and hold the agenda back. The Government Office and the police are driving the agenda and putting a lot of pressure on us but the local authority, which is generally made up of 'checkbox people', has no competency to deal with it. We have no information from the police as to whether there is actually a problem of extremism in this area. I want to do evidence-based work on the underlying issues of housing, drug-dealing, and so on – all the issues that lead to Muslims being an underclass. I also want to widen it to the far Right. But as soon as I say something critical about Prevent, I get called by management, police or a representative from the Government Office. There's scare-mongering if you raise questions. They say: 'When something does happen ...', implying you're the one who's going to be responsible.⁴⁰

One local authority worker in the north noted that 'NI35 is problematic in that it restricts the focus to extremism in Muslim communities'.⁴¹ Another wondered why a National Indicator has never been established for achieving racial equality.⁴²

Apart from local authorities, other agencies have also experienced government pressure to become involved with Prevent and focus on areas in England defined as 'high risk' but which are actually no more than areas with significant numbers of Muslims. A 2007 communication from a government department to an arms-length body requested its engagement in Prevent and identified as targets 'the areas of highest Muslim population (a rough and ready proxy for risk of radicalisation)'.⁴³

Because of the way in which local authorities have been pressured to adopt Prevent, there is often a serious lack of transparency in the decision-making process and in the nature of the services provided. A member of a local Prevent board told us that: 'Early on, there were a lot of questions being asked about funding, who was getting it, what it was for. There was a lack of transparency. Reforms were promised to make the process more open but key individu-

als still run the project as if it's their money'.⁴³ A local authority worker in the Midlands found it 'hard to find out what national government is funding locally'.⁴⁴ And someone involved in Prevent decision-making in the Midlands told us: 'Funding decisions have already been made and potential partners agreed in advance'.⁴⁵ This was a concern shared by many other interviewees.

Workers on Prevent projects often felt unsure as to what they were really getting involved in. One manager of a Prevent-funded youth project in London told us that 'as workers, we do not get told what Prevent is really about'.⁴⁶ To varying degrees, we also found that workers on Prevent projects were reluctant to inform the people they worked with of the nature of their funding. The manager of a youth project in the north told us: 'The work we do would be discredited, doors would be shut in our face, if people knew that we were Prevent-funded. If asked, we make no secret of it, but we don't mention it otherwise, as people will then misinterpret what our intentions are'.⁴⁷ Another youth project manager said: 'A lot of people are having to hide the Prevent name because of perceptions of young people – we kept it hidden for some time.' In the Midlands, we were told that: 'With a lot of projects, young people don't know where the money's coming from. It's often difficult to know if it's Prevent'.⁴⁸

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

How has the Prevent money been used in practice? Broadly, we have identified the following categories of work:

- Targeted capacity building of Muslim communities
- Police 'community engagement'
- Channel programme and other direct de-radicalisation interventions
- Supporting counter-terrorism in institutional settings such as schools, colleges, universities and prisons
- Communication campaigns with domestic and overseas audiences

The last four of these categories will be examined at various points in other parts of this report. But it is the first – targeted capacity building – that has been the main use of the DCLG's Prevent grants to local authorities and

is the focus of the rest of this section.

A number of interviewees believed that a large part of what local authorities actually do with Prevent money is community cohesion and community development work. In some cases, there is a perception that this has happened because local authorities have not really been competent to carry out projects that involve directly challenging extremists and so, by default, have fallen back on what they know about – community development. A local authority worker in the north of England told us that this was happening in his area with the council feeling that if it was going to be forced to take on the Prevent programme, it might as well ‘take the money in order to do community cohesion and social cohesion work’.⁴⁹ What generally seems to have happened is that the money has been used to support straight-forward community work with Muslim women, young people and Imams. According to government guidance issued to ‘local partners’ in 2008, Muslim women and young people are key constituencies to recruit as part of Prevent work: ‘Women can be a particularly effective voice as they are at the heart not only of their communities but also of their families, while peer-to-peer conversations between young people are often an effective means of communication.’⁵⁰

The manager of a youth work project in the north of England told us that all of the Prevent projects he had seen ‘were “bread and butter” youth training, community engagement, consultancy work or advocacy work’. He noted that: ‘If you take the Muslim focus out of it, this is all straight out of a community development book.’⁵¹ For example:

- **Newcastle** has received £437,000 from the DCLG over three years to do Prevent work. It has used the money on awareness training sessions on Islam and to produce a DVD resource for schools on Islamophobia, among other work.
- **Enfield** has received £310,000 from DCLG over two years. The major projects it has commissioned are a mentoring scheme in schools (£156,606), youth training and engagement (£130,000), English-language teaching and lectures at the Jalalia Jamma Mosque (£54,557), support for the Edmonton Islamic Centre (£40,000), inter-faith workshops run by Faith Matters (£30,074), the Shoot a Ball Not a Gun basketball project (£25,983), a programme empowering women against extremism and a multi-faith workshop run by the Bangladesh Welfare Association of Enfield

(£23,531), the Edmonton Eagles Boxing Club (£16,340), mosque improvements and an intergenerational project run by the Muslim Cultural Society of Enfield (£12,000), an ‘Enfield Speaks’ film project (£12,000) and a mentoring scheme run by Somali Young People Against Crime (£10,000).⁵²

- **Wakefield** spent its £90,000 PVEPF money on women’s empowerment, youth work, developing mosque governance and a DVD project on celebrating diversity in schools.⁵³ Its Prevent work continues with football, cricket and music events designed to bring young people together, information sessions for young people on Islam and a theatre project on extremism.
- **Islington**, which has been allocated £513,000 from the DCLG over three years, has, among other work, funded training for Imams, youth work with Muslims who have been in prison, youth work with the Somali community and outreach work through an Arab community organisation.
- **Walsall** has also been allocated £513,000 from the DCLG over three years. Its action plan includes Imam training, capacity building for mosques, a drama programme for young people to discuss extremism, and training for local authority workers on Islam and cultural awareness.⁵⁴
- **Dudley** council has passed £277,000, which amounts to all of its current DCLG Prevent funding with the exception of £27,000 to cover commissioning costs, to the British Muslim Forum (BMF). The BMF is a national Muslim organisation chaired by Khurshid Ahmed, a Labour councillor in Dudley and chair of the LSP. The BMF is, in turn, commissioning a number of Prevent projects locally.⁵⁵ The BMF has also received £48,023 to work with mosques in Sandwell and Wolverhampton. This has involved training thirty-six Imams on ‘Britishness’ through fact-finding missions to the British Museum and Whitehall.⁵⁶

As one local authority manager in London noted: ‘Three years earlier, this work would have been funded as community cohesion. However, the target is now solely Muslims.’⁵⁷ A voluntary sector worker in the Midlands told us: ‘A lot of Prevent projects are just recreational activities that don’t change anyone’s views on anything.’⁵⁸ On the other hand, a

youth worker in the north thought that: ‘People are more and more burying their true feelings on issues like Afghanistan and Iraq. We need to be able to reach these people and educate them. Sport is a good way of doing this.’⁵⁹ Another in the same city said: ‘What we are getting is touchy-feely community cohesion projects. They merely give the illusion that some kind of work is going on to prevent violent extremism.’⁶⁰ Someone involved in Prevent in the Midlands told us: ‘You could argue any project could be to do with preventing violent extremism, including local leisure activities.’⁶¹

A point made by a number of people in the voluntary sector was that important work was becoming increasingly reliant on Prevent funding, despite counter-terrorism being an inappropriate label to attach to it. The manager of a youth work project in the north told us that previously his organisation used to be ‘funded through charitable trusts but we were forced to use Prevent money, even though we didn’t want to, when other sources dried up. As youth workers, we believe in soft outcomes, such as empowerment, rather than something like preventing extremism. We would prefer to fund this work through charitable trust funding rather than Prevent.’⁶² The manager of a women’s project in the Midlands said: ‘All the doors to obtaining funding for work with Muslim women were shutting and all the signposts were pointing to Prevent.’⁶³

What of the areas that are considered key targets for the Prevent programme?

- **Bradford**, which has not designated NI35 as a target, has been allocated £1.425 million over three years by the DCLG Prevent programme. Its key projects include the Future Leaders project – based at the Islamic Cultural and Educational Association at Madni Jamia Masjid, which is training 500 young people on leadership skills – and work with the Bradford Council of Mosques to build the capacity of Imams, increase safety in buildings and engage in interfaith work. Local authority managers in Bradford consider the Prevent tag an unfortunate label and prefer to see their approach as based on ‘engaging communities to build capacity and cohesion’.⁶⁴
- In **Tower Hamlets**, which has designated NI35 as a target and has a £1.3 million Prevent budget from DCLG over three years, twenty-eight projects have been selected for funding. The ones with the largest sums are: work with Somali ex-offenders and community leaders run by the Ocean Somali Community Association,

Tower Hamlets Somali Organisation Network and Al Huda Mosque (£100,000), detached youth work with the Brick Lane Youth Development Agency (£95,000), interfaith and empowerment work with the Council of Mosques (£75,000), schools work run by Ebrahim College (£60,000), development of an internet-based de-radicalisation programme by Bold Creative (£60,000) and building capacity of Muslim families to resist violent extremism (£50,000).⁶⁵

- Lastly, in **Birmingham**, which is the largest recipient of Prevent money and has also designated NI35 as a target, work has been undertaken across five key themes: reclaiming Islam, media, women, young people and cross-cutting projects. The £525,000 Birmingham received through the PVEPF was used to fund eleven mosque projects on young people, women, the media, teaching Imams English and developing management structures in mosques, as well as funding criminal records checks on all staff at madrassahs. The £2.4 million which Birmingham has been allocated from DCLG over 2008/9–2010/11 is being used for ten new projects, including extending the governance work with a further thirty mosques, incorporating citizenship studies as part of the curriculum in madrassahs, youth inclusion work, media workshops, a Muslim women’s forum, mentoring with young people, youth work with Somalis and an Archives and Heritage project which seeks to inform young Muslims about the intertwining of British and Muslim history.⁶⁶

Finally, money has been allocated directly from the DCLG to voluntary sector organisations rather than via local authorities. In 2008/9, £8.5 million was provided in this form, of which the largest part was the **Community Leadership Fund (CLF)**.⁶⁷ The first round of CLF money, amounting to £650,000, was distributed to nineteen organisations in 2007/8. The largest beneficiaries were the British Muslim Forum (£150,000 to improve governance in mosques and capacity building), Common Purpose (£65,000 for training ‘young leaders’) and the Sufi Muslim Council (£53,000 for training Imams and capacity building). The following year, the CLF budget increased to £5.1 million over three years. Thirty-two projects were funded nationally to complement the work being funded through local authorities. The projects were in five categories: building capacity of Muslim organisations and communities, supporting Muslim

young people, supporting Muslim women, building capacity of Muslim religious leaders and supporting local forums against extremism and Islamophobia. Major beneficiaries in 2008/9 were again the Sufi Muslim Council (£150,000), the British Muslim Forum (£125,000) and Common Purpose (£65,000).⁶⁸

As well as encouraging local work with Muslim young people and women, the DCLG has also established two national groups of 'representatives' of these categories. Launched in October 2008, the **Young Muslims Advisory Group** is made up of twenty-three Muslims aged 16–25 from across the UK. It held a national youth conference in March 2009.⁶⁹ The **National Muslim Women's Advisory Group** was launched in January 2008 as a group of nineteen women to 'act as ambassadors for Muslim women at grass roots and represent their views and concerns to Government'.⁷⁰ It works on issues of civic participation, theological understanding and the identification of role models. The manager of a Muslim women's organisation told us that 'the government is creating a tier of "representatives" through organisations such as these because it wants to be seen to do something. But it's all a smokescreen to distract from the underlying political issues that cause extremism'.⁷¹ The manager of another Muslim women's organisation who is a member of the National Muslim Women's Advisory Group said: 'When I started, no one wanted to know about Muslim women. Now, there is finally all this investment. Yet despite the money being available, it is being wasted on work that isn't going anywhere'.⁷²

There is no doubt that the need for community development among Muslim populations is great. But there are serious problems when deprived communities with many needs find that their voluntary sector organisations believe that they can only access the resources to meet these needs if they are willing to sign up to a counter-terrorism agenda. This is particularly so when that agenda brings with it an element of surveillance – a problem we shall examine in chapter 6. As one interviewee noted, it is counter-productive for the government to relate 'to Muslims only through a counter-terrorism label rather than as citizens through mainstream policies'.⁷³ Another noted that 'community development and counter-terrorism are fundamentally different and have different objectives'.⁷⁴ Moreover, if organisations are forced to accept Prevent money to survive, in spite of the concerns of the communities they work with, then there is a danger of the whole exercise being undermined. The

manager of a Prevent-funded youth work project in London told us:

Engaging young people is great but they are very critical of the government so winning their hearts and minds is contradictory. I am ashamed to say where the money is coming from. I get questions from young people about why it's called Preventing Violent Extremism. The government is investing money in trying to get trust but young people don't trust the government. They expect that they will be stopped at airports. Investing money in communities appears contradictory if you don't listen. Workers themselves are becoming disillusioned. It makes us feel like hypocrites.⁷⁵

CONTEST 2

In March 2009, the government published a revised counter-terrorism strategy, written by the OSCT, known as 'Contest 2'. The new strategy signalled a commitment to a much more overt campaign of challenging not just 'violent extremism' but 'extremism' in general. This was a response to two public criticisms which had been made of the Prevent programme as it had been implemented to date: first, that the criteria determining who was entitled to access funding were too loose so that groups which were 'extremist' but not engaged in criminal violence could get funding; second, that much of the work being funded was of little relevance to actually reducing the risk of 'extremism' and that there needed to be more of an emphasis on direct challenges to 'extremist' ideas rather than general community development work.

As a result of these criticisms, the government was able to be more explicit in stating exactly what it wanted the Prevent programme to do. Thus the key shift in Contest 2 is the government's attempt to lead British society in overtly challenging 'views which fall short of supporting violence and are within the law, but which reject and undermine our shared values and jeopardise community cohesion'.⁷⁶ The Contest 2 programme claims to 'have no intention of outlawing these views or criminalising those who hold them'.⁷⁷ Instead, it wants these views to be actively opposed by non-government agencies, particularly Muslim organisations, so that 'the ideology which sustains terrorism will be subject to greater challenge in and by communities in this country, notably but not only by British Muslims, making it harder for terrorists to operate here and to recruit people to their cause'.⁷⁸

Box 2: A 'brief history' of 'international terrorism'

With the publication of Contest 2, the OSCT has included as part of its counter-terrorism strategy document 'a detailed account of the history of the threat'.⁷⁹ This is the first time that the government has decided to publish its own account of the history of 'international terrorism', which it traces back to 1968. 'The first modern international terrorist incident,' this official history claims, took place 'when a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) hijacked an Israeli commercial flight from Rome'.⁸⁰ The next key moment in this history is the early 1980s, when a 'militant Islamist ideology', initially with only a domestic agenda, emerged in Egypt and Afghanistan.⁸¹ But this militant Islamism soon had a

'growing influence' which was 'seen elsewhere, notably in the first intifadah in the Occupied Territories from 1987 onwards'.⁸² This trajectory then leads to the formation of al Qaida in the late 1980s in Afghanistan.⁸³ In this rendering, as some commentators have noted, a whole range of movements involving Arabs or Muslims, including an uprising by Palestinians which was dominated by secular nationalist politics, is merged together to form an idea of Islamist 'international terrorism'. The political context to international terrorism is minimised,⁸⁴ and political violence by Muslims is implicitly taken to be a cultural problem located within Islam's failure to properly transition to modernity.⁸⁵

As part of its Contest 2 strategy document, the OSCT has included a 'brief history' of the threat to the UK from 'international terrorism' (see Box 2).

In a speech on 25 February 2009, the then communities minister Hazel Blears clarified what the new approach to 'extremism' would involve. Those who do not espouse violence but who do not share 'core values' will be directly confronted, she said, because 'extremism' was contributing 'to an environment which makes violence more acceptable or justifiable, makes individuals more susceptible to committing acts of violence'. She went on to define extremism as a 'belief in the supremacy of the Muslim people, in a divine duty to bring the world under the control of hegemonic Islam, in the establishment of a theocratic Caliphate, and in the undemocratic imposition of theocratic law on whole societies'. This 'ideology', she said, is rooted 'in a twisted reading of Islam' and challenging this ideology requires 'moral clarity' in relating to 'organisations and individuals with whose views we disagree vehemently, who, for example, have unacceptable attitudes towards women, Jews, or gay and lesbian people'. There is a need for 'a clear dividing line between what we consider acceptable, and what we consider beyond the pale'. She then described a kind of sliding scale of acceptability with ministerial contact offered as a form of reward:

With groups which call for or support terrorist acts there is no room whatsoever for debate, only vociferous opposition. With groups which do not call for terrorism, but which have an equivocal attitude on core values such as democracy,

freedom of speech or respect towards women, there is some scope for limited engagement. An important part of any engagement will be to challenge those views that the Government considers unacceptable. With other groups or coalitions, which on the whole accept core values and reject extremism, but which have some internal dissent about these principles, there is scope for broader debate in public – especially where this would encourage men and women standing up for core values, and help them carry the day inside the organisation. And with those groups taking a genuine lead, ministers can make visits, share platforms, debate in public. The stronger the group's example, the stronger the case for ministerial involvement at a high level, all the way up to the prime minister.⁸⁶

Suggesting that there was a danger of excessive tolerance of diversity impeding this programme, she said that: 'This country is proud of its tradition of fair play and good manners, welcoming of diversity, tolerant of others. This is a great strength. But the pendulum has swung too far.'⁸⁷

Another version of which views would be considered extremist was given by OSCT head Charles Farr. He spoke of 'views in some quarters here that western culture is evil and that Muslims living in this country should not engage with western cultural organisations, for want of a better term, with western culture itself'. He goes on: 'There is nothing violent about that and it is not necessarily going to lead to terrorism, but it does seem to me to be unreal for this or any other government not to

say that they are going to challenge that, and that is no more nor less than what this Government is now saying.⁸⁸

This point was illustrated when, on the eve of the publication of the Contest 2 strategy document, the government wrote a letter to the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) stating that unless its deputy general secretary Daud Abdullah resigned, it would sever relations with the organisation.⁸⁹ Abdullah had recently signed the so-called Istanbul declaration which called for Muslims to resist the blockade of Gaza. The public rift with the MCB was a symbolic matter; it had long since fallen out of favour with government. But the government's distancing of a major Muslim organisation sent a signal that, as one interviewee noted, 'the crunch was now coming for all sorts of organisations which had received Prevent funding in the past'.⁹⁰ Much of the community development work that had been funded in the past would now have to involve itself in the explicit promotion of 'British values' and the rejection

of 'anti-western' views. A community activist put it like this:

With the Contest 2 agenda, it makes it impossible for us to continue the sort of work with young people we have been doing, for example theatre work, which is now considered too much of a 'softly softly' approach. When we did a play about a young person who becomes radicalised, we had a panel event afterwards, with discussion and young people asking questions. But the Contest 2 agenda instructs people what is right or wrong in a more directive way. It tells young people 'you will not disagree', 'you will support British troops', that sort of thing. There is no room for us to let young people explore their anger in the way that they need to. With Contest 2, we can't even listen to what young people tell us – as we have a duty to report it.⁹¹

5. Discrimination and division

Prevent is discriminatory in its sole focus on Muslims, with other communities involved only insofar as it is necessary to support the core objective of a 'hearts and minds' campaign among Muslims. Prevent has undermined progressive elements within the earlier community cohesion agenda and absorbed from it those parts which are most problematic. Often the relationship between a local authority and its Muslim citizens is conducted through the very same 'community gatekeepers' which the community cohesion agenda had identified as being problematic and divisive. Muslim organisations which reject the Prevent programme – for legitimate reasons – are regarded with suspicion.

For many interviewees, a key issue was the relationship between Prevent and other policy agendas, in particular community cohesion. Community cohesion has had a number of meanings since it was introduced as a policy programme following the riots in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in the summer of 2001. The government rhetoric with which it was associated at birth indicated that it was a declaration of the end of multiculturalism and an assertion that Asians, Muslims in particular, would have to develop 'a greater acceptance of the principal national institutions' and assimilate to 'core British values'.⁹² At a local level, it has been associated with projects involving cross-cultural contact, inter-faith dialogue and twinning of schools, all aimed at bridging the gaps between communities and overcoming fragmentation. While government rhetoric often mistakenly presented this fragmentation as the result of an over-tolerance of diversity which allowed non-white communities to 'self-segregate', others managed to use the language of cohesion for more progressive local projects that united across communities to address shared issues of deprivation. As we have noted, on occasion, Prevent funding has allowed some projects to continue doing work of this kind 'under the radar' – at least in the early stages.

One youth service manager told us that, for a couple of years, he was able to 'exploit the tension between community cohesion and Prevent' to develop a Prevent-funded project that brought together Muslim and non-Muslim young people to work on democratic empowerment. However, given the Prevent programme's near exclusive focus on Muslim communities, this has proved increasingly difficult. 'We were lucky that we were in there from the start when parameters were not set – which we could exploit. But I'm not sure how long you can continue with that. Things are becoming more rigid. It seems to be more target-driven as the local authority gets to understand more about what pressures central government can apply. There are too many

issues now.'⁹³ Someone active on a Prevent funding board in the Midlands told us that 'since the police have got involved, the emphasis is more on actual Prevent rather than community development and cohesion'.⁹⁴

The manager of a youth project in the north observed that: 'Prevent goes against the community cohesion and racial equality agendas because it ends up reinforcing single group contact. The main impact of Prevent is not what the government intended it to be. It is the further marginalisation of the Muslim community, a re-emphasised focus on Muslims, which has changed the perception of them in non-Muslim communities.'⁹⁵ In this sense, Prevent is the opposite of community cohesion even if, in order to make it more palatable, it has sometimes been presented as the same. What is clear is that Prevent has largely displaced the community cohesion agenda; the amount of money and commitment pouring into Prevent dwarfs the resources that ever went into community cohesion. As one community worker in the north told us: 'Prevent is taking over the whole public policy arena – community cohesion and racial equality are subservient to it.'⁹⁶

While cross-community work in the name of cohesion has suffered, the ideas of 'shared values' and Britishness – also a powerful strand within the community cohesion agenda – have been strengthened by Prevent, especially since the publication of Contest 2. In this respect, Prevent has absorbed from the community cohesion programme the part which was most alienating to many Muslims, what is seen as a one-sided demand to assimilate to ill-defined values of Britishness. A youth service manager in London told us: 'The push for Britishness causes alienation. We become the "other". We need to be studied, managed, contained. Every conference we go to on Prevent frames things this way.'⁹⁷

One of the consequences of focusing significant resources on one group has been the creation of animosity across other groups. A

community activist in the Midlands told us: ‘Other communities – Hindus, Sikhs, the Black community – are upset that Muslims are getting all this money, even if Muslims themselves don’t want to be put in this situation or be labelled. I have had councillors from other communities saying it is unfair. So, in this way, Prevent reinforces negative attitudes. It does not help to bring about good relations or community cohesion.’⁹⁸ Similarly, another community activist said: ‘With the second round of Prevent funding, people were saying: “Look the money only goes to Muslims. Why do you have to be violent extremists to get money?”’⁹⁹ A local authority worker in the Midlands told us that, through Prevent, ‘a mishmash of cultural and religious identity politics was playing out’ as different groups compete for funds. Existing ethnic divisions are thus being worsened. ‘Communities are becoming more insular.’¹⁰⁰ Others in the Midlands and London told us that local authorities are trying to keep local Muslim community leaders happy by slicing up the available money to all the local groups. This meant that ‘communities are fragmented in competition over pots of money for projects that are tokenistic’.¹⁰¹

OTHER EXTREMISMS?

Many interviewees asked why there was not a wider programme of preventing extremism across all communities. The Contest 2 strategy document states that: ‘Because the greatest threat at present is from terrorists who claim to act in the name of Islam, much Prevent activity takes place in and with Muslim communities. But the principles of our Prevent work apply equally to other communities who may be the focus of attention from violent extremist groups.’¹⁰² We have been unable, however, to document any practical Prevent work in the community that is not directed in some way at Muslim communities; and we have been unable to find any examples of work that focuses substantially on far-Right extremism.

A youth service manager in London said that staff training had included a mention of far-Right extremism. However, she added that: ‘While they say extremism refers to all communities, in practice it is all Muslims.’ She noted that, despite the social exclusion affecting some white communities in her area, there had been no engagement with them in the way that Muslims had been focused on.¹⁰³ A voluntary sector worker in the Midlands said: ‘People feel that Prevent is aimed only at the Muslim community and is labelling them. If you look at the government’s guidance, you will see there is just a cursory paragraph which talks

about preventing all forms of extremism. This is all very well but, in real life, money is only going to the Muslim community. That is not right. The money should tackle all forms of extremism, like the BNP for instance.’¹⁰⁴

In Birmingham, the council’s Prevent delivery plan states that there is a cross-community problem of extremism but then focuses in practice on Muslims:

Arguably terrorism affects all the communities across Birmingham, but it is the Muslim communities who will be engaged with regards to the Prevent agenda. This is because Muslim communities are most vulnerable to radicalisation, and the agenda seeks to provide support to the people and groups who are making a positive contribution to this agenda.¹⁰⁵

A local authority worker noted that, while police officers engaged in Prevent work talk about the threat of far-Right extremism, ‘nothing practical’ is proposed in relation to it.¹⁰⁶ Someone involved in Prevent told us that: ‘There are no projects on the far Right. The issue was aired but it was blocked. The idea of bringing together work on far-Right and Muslim extremists and looking at the problem as a whole was dropped.’¹⁰⁷

In Bradford, the city council presents its Prevent programme as adopting a ‘whole community approach’ that focuses not only on the Muslim community but also on right-wing extremism in white communities and even on ‘animal rights extremists’ in rural areas.¹⁰⁸ However, the bulk of the projects funded are to do with engaging young Muslims, Muslim women and mosques. We were also told by managers at the city council that the Prevent budget in Bradford is about ‘building capacity within Muslim communities so that they can contribute to the agenda positively’. But it needed to be done in such a way that other communities also felt it included them: ‘If you just give this money to Muslim communities, you fuel the far-Right perception that Muslims get priority.’¹⁰⁹

We were repeatedly told by interviewees across England that they were unaware of any work being done on far-Right extremism. A voluntary sector worker in the Midlands told us: ‘To my knowledge, there is no work being done on white racist extremism. It’s a massive gap. It would be good to do it because then Prevent wouldn’t be focused on one community. While all the Prevent stuff is going on, the BNP is growing quietly and effectively.’¹¹⁰ A youth project manager in the north told us: ‘I

am not aware of any Prevent projects that look at extremism in non-Muslim communities.¹¹¹ Another interviewee stated: 'Prevent should deal with all sections of the community – not just Muslims. But there are no projects that define extremism to include far-Right extremism. I wonder as to the legitimacy of this in terms of race relations legislation. I find it so discriminatory. Why is one section of the community being targeted?'¹¹² Elsewhere in the north, a local authority worker told us: 'The main criticism of Prevent has been that it has focused only on the Muslim community rather than the BNP.'¹¹³

In recent months, there has been growing concern about the dangers of far-Right extremism.¹¹⁴ In July, Neil Lewington of Berkshire was convicted of preparing a campaign of racist terrorism after chemicals for making firebombs were discovered in his home.¹¹⁵ The summer of 2009 has also seen activity by the far-Right English Defence League, which has marched through Birmingham with the slogan 'deport all Muslims'.

In August 2009, updated guidance for local Prevent partners was published by the OSCT.¹¹⁶ This update seemed to signal a shift in emphasis in Prevent work. It noted a desire to learn from feedback that a restriction of activities to Muslim communities discourages some groups from involvement and that bringing communities together is an important part of challenging violent extremism.¹¹⁷ While the new guidance recognises that 'violent far right groups' should also be taken seriously, the measures to be taken on this will be separated from Prevent, resourced separately and, presumably, take a very different form.¹¹⁸ John Denham, the new secretary of state for communities and local government, indicated, however, that the Prevent strategy would be adjusted and partially renamed to include a focus on white racist groups. This was seen as an acknowledgement that the current policy has alienated many Muslims.¹¹⁹

It remains unclear what form this shift in emphasis will take in practice. We have already seen that, in order to make them more palatable, some local authorities have felt the need to present their Prevent programmes as working across communities to create 'cohesion'. Others have sought to avoid the Prevent tag altogether in order to gain acceptance. Brent, for example, rebranded its Prevent programme two years ago as 'Building a stronger and united West London: working with Muslim communities'.¹²⁰ Whatever the wording, so long as the projects funded are actually directed

at Muslims, with other communities involved only so far as it supports the core objective of a 'hearts and minds' campaign among Muslims, the fundamental problem of a discriminatory agenda will remain.

REJECTING PREVENT

For many community organisations, the introduction of Prevent funding programmes has fuelled local tensions within the voluntary sector as different groups wrestle with the issue of whether to engage with the programme, often in the face of strong pressure from local authorities to accept money and strong pressure from the community to refuse it. There is a growing trend for organisations in the community and voluntary sector to reject Prevent funding as a matter of principle. The manager of a voluntary sector organisation in the north told us that:

We decided not to apply for Prevent funding as the whole philosophy is against that of our organisation. Our objectives are connecting people for improved community relations, not to focus on the Muslim community, which we feel would have a negative impact on relations. Other organisations have used Prevent funding; some mosques have taken advantage of the money by enhancing their resource libraries for Muslim communities. But once people start disseminating information on where the money is really coming from, people felt they could not get involved.

The main impact of Prevent in this area has been the divisiveness that has been created. This is true of organisations within the voluntary sector, which have scarce resources and have had to adapt their activities in order to attract these funds, and at a community level too, where it has created friction between different communities. What essentially happens is that advocates of the government's position are created. Influential Muslims are able to claim that they are better equipped to deal with these issues than others, so they should be given the money. The government says: 'Okay but ensure that you say extremism is wrong. And you must teach people to accept our values and obey the law. And you must tell the world that it is okay to be a Muslim here and that you accept things the way they are.'

Those who have not engaged with Prevent projects are really those working in those organisations which believe in freedom of choice; advocates, like myself, of listening to each other, challenging each other's beliefs and opinions, talking about what we feel is right and wrong and then being free to practice as we wish. This has isolated us. Those who have benefited from this are those Muslim leaders who have now been established as gatekeepers of the community but who just form part of the propaganda machine for the time being.

Also, it gets Muslims talking about the negative aspects relating to their communities: the premise of Prevent is that it needs to get Muslims to talk about extremism. Young Muslims are picking up on this and so it doesn't work; they are aren't interested in getting involved with the buying of Muslims to work against Muslims. This will only lead to more extremism. It has created mistrust and organisations like ours are consequently devalued. Our organisation is now under scrutiny because we are opposed to getting involved with the Prevent agenda. We have since been locked into a battle with the council.¹²¹

The manager of a youth project in the north, which had previously worked with Prevent funding but had then decided not to, told us:

Young people have responded to these projects with a large degree of animosity. There is actually a stigma that is now attached to those that accept Prevent funding, that it is dirty money. But money talks at the end of the day. We have worked on numerous Prevent projects in the past but we are going to consciously move away from Prevent now because we have become increasingly unhappy with the wider agenda. We know that now we're stopping, we will suffer financially. We will lose about forty per cent of our income but there are more important things than money.¹²²

Some argued that it was 'missing a trick not to take Prevent money and use it to promote peace and well-being across all communities and give people a sense of belonging'. The manager of one youth work project in the north told us: 'We've had our fair share of criti-

cism, of people saying, "why have you taken the money", but our answer is that the money is benefiting the community. This pot of money is a huge level of support from government.'¹²³ Others felt that there needed to be a balance between the opportunity to build capacity, which the Muslim community and voluntary sector had never had, and the dangers associated with accepting Prevent funding. Still others felt that, by engaging with Prevent, they had a voice within the system and could try to change it from within. On the other hand, some felt that true power to bring about change came from refusing the money and remaining independent.

In another example, the Lancashire Council of Mosques was divided over whether to accept the money. A representative of the organisation told us: 'We had some reservations and so we raised questions with civil servants and senior police. Most people were satisfied with the answers, so we engaged with the process.' But this engagement became untenable after Contest 2 was introduced. 'That irritated people a lot – the criteria and the perceptions all seemed to label Muslims as terrorists. The criteria defining extremism were in fact central tenets of Islam. The attitude was to blame the whole Muslim community. We decided we would not tap into funding. Many other mosques took a view that it was better to use public money than let someone else waste it. But we have never received any money. All sorts of groups have taken money instead. It is a waste of public money.'¹²⁴

A community activist in the north told us:

I have been arguing that we shouldn't take this money because it demonises Muslims. In other words, it's saying there's a problem with our religion. The Prevent strategy takes the Islamic faith as problematic. How can you accept money that tarnishes your religion? Even people who take the money and use it for good things, they are propagating the idea of Islam as being the cause of extremism. It has created tensions and friction in the community between those who have taken the money and those who have not. Hence there is a lot of secrecy: people don't want others in the Muslim community to know that they are sitting on boards and working with the police through Prevent. Even those who were advocates, when they saw Contest 2 and the community discussions and public meetings, they withdrew.¹²⁵

Another community activist said:

Our organisation has been placed between a rock and a hard place. With Prevent, we were used as service deliverers rather than strategic partners. If we could have been seen as shaping the agenda we could have acted as a broker with the community. Instead, we are being told what to do. This made things very difficult for us with other community groups. If we are not careful, our standing within the community falls. The main impact of Prevent work locally has been greater mistrust of the police. It's impacted all the wrong way. And there is more reluctance on the part of the Muslim community to engage at all.¹²⁶

A worker in the voluntary sector in the north 'decided not to get involved in Prevent because it reinforces the association with Islam and terror, and it implies an acceptance of responsibility'. Moreover, he noted that 'conflicts between Muslims are arising out of this – it's

polarising. Those who take the money are seen as complicit with the government agenda and are sell-outs. Those who don't are seen as borderline extremists.'¹²⁷ The manager of a voluntary sector organisation in the Midlands told us: 'We had no option but to apply for Prevent funding because of other sources drying up, leaving us in a poor financial situation. But lots of people won't touch this money with a bargepole. People in the Muslim community have held press conferences saying that the money should go back to the government.'¹²⁸

For many, working on the Prevent programme has taken its toll on a personal level. One community activist told us: 'The Prevent work was so stressful and it caused us a lot of personal anguish. All my family were affected. We are happy not to be involved any more.'¹²⁹ Another told us: 'Working on Prevent has been draining mentally. We have had arguments among ourselves. We've lost sleep over it. We can smell the stench of Islamophobia. A difficulty for Muslim professionals is that we are expected to leave our identity behind in a professional environment.'¹³⁰

6. Mapping and surveillance

There is strong evidence that Prevent-funded services are being used to gather intelligence on Muslim communities; to identify areas, groups and individuals that are 'at risk' and to then facilitate interventions, such as the Channel programme, as well as more general police engagement with the Muslim community; and to manage perceptions of grievances. A significant part of the Prevent programme is the embedding of counter-terrorism police officers within the delivery of other local services. The implication of teachers and youth, community and cultural workers in information sharing undercuts professional norms of confidentiality.

In a *Panorama* programme broadcast on 16 February 2009, BBC journalist Richard Watson reported a source 'at the heart of the government's counter-terrorism work' as saying that some Prevent projects were actually being used 'to trawl for intelligence' and that 'many intelligence analysts are already in place'.¹³¹ In response, the OSCT stated that 'any allegation that Prevent projects are a cover for spying on people is completely untrue'.¹³² However, as we show below, there is strong evidence that Prevent-funded services are being used by counter-terrorist police for information gathering and that the line between the Prevent strand and the investigative Pursue strand of the Contest strategy is being blurred in a way that is wholly counter-productive.¹³³

It is entirely appropriate that the police and intelligence services have placed a number of Muslim individuals under surveillance. It is also right that channels should be made available for other professionals such as youth workers and teachers to provide information to the police if there are reasons to believe that an individual is involved in criminality. Moreover, police intelligence might appropriately be shared with other agencies in order to target the delivery of services. What is at issue is whether professionals providing non-policing local services, such as youth workers and teachers, should be expected to routinely provide information to the counter-terrorist police not just on individuals who might be 'at risk' of committing a criminal offence but also on the political and religious opinions of young people, and the dynamics of the local Muslim community as a whole.

Our research suggests that a major objective of the Prevent programme is, in fact, the fostering of much closer relationships between the counter-terrorist policing system and providers of non-policing local services precisely to facilitate these kinds of flows of information on individuals whose opinions are considered extreme and on the local Muslim population in general. This elaborate 'mapping' of Muslim communities is then used not just for the

investigation of criminal activity but also to identify areas, groups and individuals that are 'at risk' of extremism. The evidence that this is the case consists of:

- 1) *The fact that Prevent-funded voluntary sector organisations and workers in local authorities are becoming increasingly aware of the expectations on them to act as providers of information to the police.*

The manager of a youth project in the north told us:

More and more pressure is being placed on our organisation to collude with police needs. We have had a host of requests from the police to collude with them, for example asking us for names of people at meetings and things like 'oh, can you just have a conversation with ...' calls. When we refuse, we have been told by the police that 'you are standing in our way' and they have tried to undermine our organisation. We have been threatened but we have refused to share the beliefs, views and opinions of people we work with.¹³⁴

A youth project manager in London told us: 'If there are specific individuals at risk you would support them anyway out of a duty of care. But the local Prevent Board is asking for a more general map of Muslim communities. I make confidentiality promises to young people, which I won't break unless it is a matter of child protection or a criminal act.'¹³⁵ Another youth project manager in London said:

You're supposed to report back information to the Prevent Board, such as mapping movements of individuals. You have to provide information if an individual is at risk. But you also need to give information about the general

picture, right down to which street corners young people from different backgrounds are hanging around on, what mosques they go to, and so on. There is probably a perception that these are benign procedures and it is an extension of a general attitude that already exists, for example in the mapping of anti-social behaviour.¹³⁶

One youth worker in the north said that when, on the grounds of professional confidentiality, he refused to give the police the names of the young people he worked with and information about their religious and political views, he was himself questioned by the police as to his own views.¹³⁷

In at least one case, the pressure on youth workers to become information providers is alleged to have escalated into serious mistreatment by intelligence service officers. In May 2009, allegations emerged of intimidation by MI5 agents in Camden. Five Muslim youth and community workers accused MI5 of waging a campaign of blackmail and harassment in an attempt to recruit them as informants – the men were given a choice of working for the security services or facing detention and harassment in the UK and overseas. Three of the men say they were detained at foreign airports on the orders of MI5 after leaving Britain on family holidays.¹³⁸

In Birmingham, a worker on a youth project, funded by the local authority but not through Prevent, attracted the attention of the intelligence services as a result of his acquaintance with another person who was later convicted of material support to the Taliban. However, this youth worker was himself innocent of any criminal activity and, despite being under surveillance, no evidence against him emerged. In spite of this, it seems that the intelligence services sought to undermine the project where the youth worker was based. A file was submitted to the local authority alleging a series of minor misdemeanours by the youth worker in his work. These would not normally have resulted in his dismissal but, because of the atmosphere of suspicion created around the project, the youth worker lost his job. At the time of writing, the worker is pursuing a case for wrongful dismissal at an employment tribunal.¹³⁹

In another case, Prevent funding was approved for a youth centre aimed at

Muslims in a northern town. The centre was to provide sports, keep fit, recreational facilities and careers advice, as well as religious guidance that aimed at providing a counter-extremism narrative. The bid also recommended the inclusion of free IT facilities as it was ‘good for monitoring which websites people were visiting’ and ‘intelligence gathering’ was stated as one of the rationales for the centre.¹⁴⁰

Many interviewees were unclear as to who had access to the data they collected in their Prevent work. A person involved in Prevent work in the Midlands said: ‘Depending on who you ask, there are different answers to the question of information sharing. I think there is a serious issue around data gathering on participants. Young people won’t be aware of what is being collected on them – there isn’t any accountability. Even organisations don’t know how data will be used. This is a common concern among potential participants.’¹⁴¹ Another person involved in Prevent in the Midlands told us:

The perception is that the government is trying to collect information on Muslims in the UK – demographic information that goes beyond the census data – things like, who are the leaders of the Muslim community. The NI35 indicator means that each local authority has to mark itself on how well it is doing in its collection of data (in terms of population, sect, ethnicity, names, and so on). No other community is having such data collected on them in this way. Most of the data collected is about innocent people. To give you one example, if a Prevent project is successfully funded then the project leaders are subjected to security checks. I can understand this. A local authority does not want to be embarrassed. But now, in some local authorities, the police are saying that anyone who applies under Prevent should be subjected to a security check, which means that even if you don’t get funding, you will be subject to an information gathering process and a security check. I have told the police that this is counter-productive. This is what happens when the police have too great an influence.¹⁴²

In London, the manager of a voluntary sector organisation told us: ‘To start with, there was less pressure. Now it is much more

about surveillance. We were told it is not about surveillance – but it says it is about “identifying risks”. Who is using this information? How is it being used? The real agenda is to mainstream surveillance across all local authority departments. In the absence of a statutory requirement against Islamophobia, this will feed people’s prejudices.¹⁴³

A community worker in the north said of Prevent-funded projects that: ‘Any information that they consider sensitive, they have to give it over to the police. Not just for crimes about to be committed but names and telephone numbers of individuals in the community. Youth workers have been told that they have to give information and phone numbers of individuals they are working with. Agencies have to capitulate or lose funding and be put under a lot of pressure. In a context of voluntary sector organisations with low capacity, shortage of funding and an unwillingness to be assertive, you get complicity.’¹⁴⁴ An individual involved with Prevent in the Midlands pointed out that ‘youth workers get frustrated as projects turn out to be police data-gathering exercises’.¹⁴⁵ One manager of a youth work project in the north took the

view that, in relation to surveillance: ‘If you’ve done nothing wrong, you’ve got nothing to worry about.’ He added that: ‘There is concern about people’s details being passed on. I could not give guarantees that information would not go to the security services.’¹⁴⁶

As a number of respondents pointed out, the imposition of information sharing requirements on teachers and youth, community and cultural workers undercuts professional norms of confidentiality and trust.

- 2) *The fact that **Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs)** are being introduced to facilitate the systematic flow of information between counter-terrorist police officers and Prevent-funded local service providers.*

Managers of Prevent-funded services such as youth services are obliged to sign ISAs and follow the protocols listed. The ISA for one local authority area that is a focus of Prevent work states that its aim is to clarify the circumstances under which ‘personal and sensitive information’ can be shared, for example with the police, in compliance with human rights and data protection legislation. However, compliance is taken as being near-

Box 3: The regionalisation of intelligence gathering

Counter-terrorist intelligence gathering in Britain has long been carried out by both the police and MI5 (also known as ‘the security service’ and based at Thames House, London). Each police force’s Special Branch has historically had as its primary function the carrying out of ‘covert intelligence work in relation to national security’ and has acted as the local eyes and ears of the security state. In relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland, MI5 and the mainland Special Branches developed a close working relationship, with MI5 setting priorities for the police’s work.¹⁴⁷

Since 9/11, intelligence-gathering activities have expanded dramatically. Funding on counter-terrorism and intelligence has increased from £1 billion in 2001 to an expected £3.5 billion by 2010/11.¹⁴⁸ Between 2001 and 2008, MI5’s staff almost doubled in size to about 3,500 and, for the first time, it established regional offices in population centres other than London. Its staff is expected to rise to 4,000 by 2011, with a quarter working away from London in the eight new regional offices.

Police forces have also consolidated their regional counter-terrorism resources. In London, the Metropolitan Police’s Special Branch (SO12) and Anti-Terrorist Branch (SO13) were amalgamated in 2006 into a new Counter-Terrorism Command (also known as SO15). Counter-Terrorist Units (CTUs) have also been established in recent years in forces outside London – in Greater Manchester Police, West Midlands Police and West Yorkshire Police – to work alongside MI5’s eight regional offices. There are also Counter-Terrorist Intelligence Units in Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Sussex Police, Essex Police, Derbyshire Constabulary and South Wales Police. Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Officers based in these new regional counter-terrorism units have been recruited to co-ordinate intelligence gathering. These officers are also central to developing the more intricate working relationship with local authorities that Prevent requires. The number of police officers deployed on counter-terrorism work has risen since 2003 from 1,700 to 3,000.¹⁴⁹

automatic: the ISA simply states that intelligence gathering is a 'legitimate public expectation', 'in the substantial public interest' and 'in the interests of national security'. Under the ISA, information collected can be shared for the purposes of, among others, the 'identification and prioritisation of supported action ... of individuals of concern' and 'the tracking of identified people through outreach and other related services'. Information will also be used to identify 'priority areas or priority groups (of people) with the greatest need for intervention'. Services funded by Prevent provide 'a structured environment whereby information on particular people or groups can be brought together'. The kind of information to be shared includes what the Data Protection Act defines as 'sensitive personal data', such as: 'information concerning racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or other similar beliefs, physical/mental health or conditions, sexual life, alleged or committed offences, proceedings, disposal or sentence concerning any alleged or committed offences'.

The effect of these kinds of information sharing arrangements is to draw a whole range of services into the counter-terrorist system, not only by facilitating the flow of information about individuals and communities from public services to the police but also by briefing public and voluntary sector managers on 'restricted' information from the police, obliging them to keep this information secure and private, and enabling its use in targeting resources. Regular briefings to local authorities and explanation of the 'risks' in an area by the police are seen as key ways of building confidence and overcoming the concerns of local authorities on the Prevent programme. To this end, the Association of Chief Police Officers has issued guidance to encourage police forces to share sensitive information with local authority chief executives.¹⁵⁰

The greater use of ISAs seems to be a response to the concern expressed last year by an Audit Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary report that: 'Clearly defined information sharing protocols are required to enable the briefing of a wider audience. This should improve understanding of local vulnerability and encourage intelligence flows from local and neighbourhood levels.'¹⁵¹ As part of the attempt to deepen the involvement of local service providers in the gathering of intelligence,

there seems to be a willingness to make a certain amount of restricted information about local perceived risks available beyond those who have been formally vetted. This is seen as a strategy to encourage all local authority services to become potential information sources: 'Some of the best local information may be gathered at neighbourhood level by the street cleaners, wardens and housing officers. They may see or hear things that are a departure from the normal routine, but may not understand the relevance to violent extremism or know who to pass it on to in the most effective way.'¹⁵²

- 3) *The fact that a briefing on Prevent prepared for the Association of Chief Police Officers in March 2008 states that one outcome of the police's involvement in Prevent is the 'improved ability of the Police to develop intelligence in key areas of highest risk' through the greater 'community engagement' it enables.*¹⁵³

As part of its Prevent work, the police are building links with community organisations and local schools. The aim of these links is to encourage flows of information to the police and to manage perceptions of 'grievances'. Schools, youth projects and women's groups are seen as key organisations to target as part of this 'community engagement'. This might be done, for example, by organising cricket, boxing and football matches between police and local Muslim youth teams. And there is a need to continually improve 'knowledge of communities and how they function both in a social and religious context'.¹⁵⁴ The document notes that this engagement process should be supported by 'neighbourhood mapping' which 'involves taking a range of information about communities in order to enhance understanding of their needs and the dynamics within a community and to target the engagement process'.¹⁵⁵ Another police document reveals that there is an effort to acquire knowledge about local Muslim 'community representatives' who might potentially be engaged with. They must be seen to be plausible representatives of their community, not just knowledgeable about it, and there needs to be an awareness that these representatives might have an 'agenda'.¹⁵⁶ The manager of a youth work project in the north told us that: 'It is the police who have undoubtedly benefited from Prevent projects, as they have managed to increase their profile within communities. They have increased their resources and been able to steamroll their idea of commu-

nity engagement throughout. But they don't seem to understand that their engagement fails because they do not have legitimacy and trust within the community.¹⁵⁷

- 4) *The fact that, across England, new teams of officers have been recruited to counter-terrorism units in police forces to foster close relationships with local service providers as part of the Prevent programme.*

West Midlands Police's Community Engagement and Intelligence Team, for example, is responsible for maintaining a comprehensive knowledge of local communities, key contacts and emerging community issues. Twenty-three Security and Partnership Officers have been recruited and trained 'to forge links with the Muslim community' as part of the Prevent strategy.¹⁵⁸ Lancashire has twelve community engagement officers 'to promote trust and confidence' in relation to Prevent, working closely with local authorities, schools, women and religious groups.¹⁵⁹ Essex police has created a similar three-person community engagement team.¹⁶⁰

- 5) *The fact that, in at least one area, the Prevent programme is directly managed by the counter-terrorist police.*

A West Midlands Police counter-terrorism officer has been permanently seconded to the equality and diversity division of Birmingham city council to manage its Prevent work. He is supported by two workers, a young persons' development officer and a researcher/analyst, whose posts are directly funded by the OSCT.

SCHOOLS AS SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In October 2008, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) published *Learning Together To Be Safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism*, which gives practical advice for schools in England on 'equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to challenge extremism'.¹⁶¹ It requests that staff monitor pupils for the 'warning signs' of extremism and offers guidance on detecting 'trigger points' in children who are vulnerable to radicalisation. It recommends that schools 'form good links with police and other partners to share information'.¹⁶² The purpose of such links is that

Box 4: From multi-agency policing to multi-agency surveillance

The practice of embedding police intelligence gathering in the delivery of other local services was pioneered in Northern Ireland. In the early 1980s, there was a push for this practice to be adopted in British cities. With the re-organisation of policing under Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Kenneth Newman (who had previously served as chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary), not only was there an increase in police powers brought in through new legislation but there was also an effort to incorporate social and welfare agencies into the policing process. Although this was presented as a supportive form of 'community policing', information gathering was integral to this approach. The aim was to extend the police's 'influence and tentacles of surveillance ever wider into the community, its schools and social and political institutions, and even the family'.¹⁶³ This meant 'a greater degree of intervention on the part of the police in the social services, in education, in planning, in areas that have been the preserve of local government and local authorities'.¹⁶⁴ This new approach of co-ordinated working with

social agencies was reflected in the 1982 Police Bill which, in its original version, proposed a power to search confidential records held by professional persons.¹⁶⁵ As future cabinet minister Paul Boateng wrote at the time, without proper accountability, 'there are very real dangers to civil liberties' which could 'lead all too easily to a police state' in which 'the proper professional distinctions between the roles of social workers, probation officers, local government workers, teachers and policemen, become confused'.¹⁶⁶ Campaigns for police accountability in the early 1980s led to some diminishing of these dangers and the power to search records was dropped by the time the Police Bill became law, as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984. Nevertheless, the idea that social agencies co-ordinate their work with the police took hold and led to 'multi-agency' partnerships between the police and the local authority becoming common practice. Now, in the name of counter-terrorism, the extent to which police forces have integrated themselves into local service delivery is much greater.

schools can ‘help local authorities and police understand tensions affecting their pupils. Schools will observe or hear how communities are feeling, may witness an event that has happened, or be aware that something might happen. In all these three types of situation, information from schools is important to help the local authority or police gain a whole community view and so protect young people from harm or causing harm.’¹⁶⁷

How then are teachers to spot potential risks? The DCSF toolkit endorses advice from the Quilliam Foundation thinktank about behaviours that ‘could indicate a young person is being influenced by extremists and developing a mindset that could lead them to accept and undertake violent acts’. The indicators listed include: expressions of political ideology such as support for ‘the Islamic political system’, a focus on scripture as an exclusive moral source, a ‘conspiratorial mindset’, seeing the West as a source of evil in the world and literalism in the reading of Muslim texts.¹⁶⁸ The Quilliam Foundation is also backing up this advice with its Radicalisation Awareness Programme training for teachers and other local authority workers on how to spot the signs of extremism. The danger with this is that radical religious and political opinions become mistaken for terrorist indoctrination – especially given the potential problems with the Quilliam Foundation’s definition of ‘extremism’ (see chapter 7).

In at least one further education college, it was reported that the names of individual students had been passed to the police because of the views they expressed in a session that was meant to encourage discussion about political issues.¹⁶⁹ These students were then allegedly passed through the Channel programme (see below). Police documents listing the individual schools that are ‘of interest’ in another city in England reveal that many are primary schools. Police community engagement officers will be seeking to build links with these schools to establish flows of information. In addition, counter-terrorist police officers are telling schools that they need to be informed if a student says something ‘extremist’.

As one interviewee noted: ‘Prevent is moving towards a focus on thought crimes, especially with the schools toolkit targeting children. How will teachers be trained in this? What will be the effect on children for the rest of their life?’¹⁷⁰ Another interviewee noted that:

Teachers need to be equipped to deal with controversial issues of extremism. Educationally there is nothing to support

teachers in discussion of difficult choices. Teachers tell us we don’t know how to deal with these issues. It’s about building an ethos and capacity in schools to deal with foreign policy issues, and so on. No one believes that controversial discussions can occur without opening up a whole mindset of global injustice and perceptions of grievance. There needs to be a right to protest and children need to be helped by teachers to do that effectively without bringing the police into the school.¹⁷¹

The government’s Prevent toolkit for schools locates itself within the broad context of citizenship education. But as Javid Akram and Robin Richardson have written, a well-meaning commitment to engaging with young people as citizens is undermined by the danger that, in practice, schools will be seen as ‘too closely associated with the wider Prevent agenda to have the capacity to win the trust and commitment of teachers, parents and communities, and of young people themselves’.¹⁷² While many school heads are following the government’s agenda, some others, it should be noted, are refusing to engage with the police on counter-terrorism except in cases where there is an identifiable danger of criminality.

THE CHANNEL PROGRAMME

The Channel programme provides for a series of actions that can be carried out to ‘support’ young people who, through schools or other agencies, are identified to the counter-terrorist police as being ‘at risk of extremism’. The government describes Channel as ‘a community-based initiative which uses existing partnerships between the police, local authority and the local community to identify those at risk from violent extremism and to support them, primarily through community-based interventions’.¹⁷³ The project was established in April 2007 to provide parents, teachers and youth workers with training to recognise the warning signs of ‘terrorist grooming’ and establish a mechanism for intervention. After being piloted in Preston and Lambeth, the project has expanded to a total of eleven areas; another fifteen are planned.¹⁷⁴ According to the Association of Chief Police Officer’s lead spokesperson on terrorism, Norman Bettison, 200 children, some as young as 13, had been identified as at risk of extremism by the Channel programme in its first eighteen months of operation and subjected to some form of intervention.¹⁷⁵ From the Blackburn area alone, eighty people have been referred

through Channel. The OSCT spent £1 million on the Channel programme in 2008/9.¹⁷⁶

In its initial phase, the Channel programme was classified and it remains the case that very little is known about it. One person who has been involved in working with young people referred through Channel believed that it was merely identifying ‘naughty Muslims’ rather than genuine cases. Someone else who works with young people referred through the police said: ‘Badly behaved young persons who happen to be Muslim or who have said something in anger then become known to the system as “at risk”’. One hundred per cent of the time so far, there has just been the usual issues with young people, so we refer them to relevant services on issues such as drugs and alcohol, literacy and numeracy, or bereavement.’

A community worker in the north told us:

Channel is based on the idea of community organisations handing over young

people to the police – the last time we did that was after the Bradford riots of 2001. The first generation elders said, ‘we’ll do the right thing and hand those young people over to the police’. But what happened was disproportionate sentences. After that precedent, the trust was shattered. Even the elders now don’t trust the police – the ‘war on terror’ has damaged community relations.¹⁷⁷

A person involved with Prevent in the Midlands told us: ‘Channel has been imposed on the council Prevent Group despite community objections. A Channel Board has been established and those on it have to be criminal record and counter-terrorism checked – but the people on it don’t have the skills to recognise extremism. Because I raised concerns about it, my manager said to me, “I hear you’re not co-operating with Channel.”’¹⁷⁸

7. Conclusions

For Muslim organisations that are able to present themselves as ‘moderate’, significant financial and symbolic resources are being offered by central and local government. The danger is that the distinction between ‘moderate’ and ‘extremist’ is flexible enough to be exploited by government to marginalise those who are critical of its policies. And the use of government funding to promote particular interpretations of religious texts is potentially dangerous. One effect of Prevent is to undermine exactly the kind of radical discussions of political issues that would need to occur if young people are to be won over and support for illegitimate political violence diminished.

MODERATES AND EXTREMISTS

A key aspect of Prevent is the cultivation of ‘moderate Muslims’ through ‘targeted capacity building’ and government backing. The aim is to elevate ‘moderate Muslims’ to becoming the strongest voices in Muslim communities, able to lead a campaign of promoting ‘shared values’ and isolating the ‘extremists’. For Muslim organisations that are able to present themselves as ‘moderate’, significant financial and symbolic resources are being offered by central and local government. Our interviewees identified three potential problems which arise when such an approach is put into practice:

- 1) *The terms ‘moderate’ and ‘extremist’ are at times defined in practice by the degree to which Muslims support or oppose central government or local authority policies.*

The stated aim of Prevent funding is to empower those Muslim organisations which are best placed to prevent individuals from becoming terrorists. The government has decided that the best way to do this is to fund and support those which can be categorised as ‘moderate’. The danger is that the distinction between ‘moderate’ and ‘extremist’ is flexible enough to be exploited by government to marginalise those who are critical of its policies. According to many of our interviewees, in practice, funding and support is often allocated and withdrawn from organisations depending on whether they align themselves with local and central government, and their policies. The general atmosphere promoted by Prevent is one in which to make criticisms is to risk losing funding and face isolation as an ‘extremist’, while those organisations which echo the government’s own political line are rewarded with large sums of public money. What this suggests is that Prevent is being used to cultivate politically loyal community leaders

rather than support communities in leading a drive against terrorism.

The cultivation of community leaders has a long history within multicultural politics in Britain. The ‘ethnic representatives’ who began to enter the town halls, particularly following the urban violence of the early 1980s, were often seen by local government as the surrogate voices for their own ethnically defined communities. Different ethnic groups were pressed into competing for grants for their areas and the result was that communities became fragmented and divided. Within this system of town hall politics, the religious conservatism of many Muslim ‘community leaders’ was considered an asset, rather than a ‘fundamentalist’ threat. When Islam became politicised in Britain in the late 1980s, the search was on for new Muslim leaders who would be considered safe by the government. Eventually the government encouraged the formation of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) as a representative body of ‘moderate Muslims’.

With the launch in this decade of wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, the MCB’s position became more fraught. Grassroots pressure forced it to resile from its initial acquiescence in the 2001 Afghan occupation, and it argued forcefully that the war on Iraq would increase terrorism. With the launch of Prevent, which required ‘partners’ in Muslim communities, the need for a national organisation of ‘moderate Muslims’ who could deliver the counter-extremism message was never greater. At the same time, the MCB was increasingly criticised as itself an ‘extremist’ organisation and, in the summer of 2006, then communities minister Ruth Kelly announced that the MCB would no longer be favoured by government as the leading ‘representative’ of Muslims in Britain. Instead, the newly formed Sufi Muslim Council (SMC) was held up as a

genuinely moderate alternative. Yet, because straightforward political motives for the shift were disavowed, it appeared that the government was expressing a theological preference for Sufism over other trends. The SMC received £203,000 of Prevent funding from the DCLG over the next two years to establish itself as a 'community leader'.

More recently, the Quilliam Foundation (QF), established in April 2008, has come to be seen by central government as the leading 'moderate Muslim' organisation, one whose counter-extremism message is closely aligned to its own. QF co-director Ed Husain believes that political issues such as the Iraq war are not all that relevant in explaining terrorist attacks in Britain. Rather, the root problem is the politicisation of Islam and the solution is the creation of an apolitical western Islam. The total amount of public money received by QF is not known but it is reported to be over £1 million.¹⁷⁹ In addition, its 'radicalisation awareness programme' (RAP) has become a significant vehicle for promoting its analysis of extremism across the public sector, especially in schools. Launched in November 2008, RAP training had been provided to 400 public sector workers by April 2009.¹⁸⁰ Between May and July 2009, RAP courses were delivered to the Government Office of East Midlands, Coventry City Council, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the UK Border Agency and 'Imams in the Midlands'.¹⁸¹ In Wakefield, QF provided three one-day RAP training sessions for the police and forty-seven council employees (such as youth workers, teachers and social workers) in March 2009.¹⁸²

There has been, in recent years, a growing sense that the existing national and local structures of representation through 'ethnic community leaders' have outlived their usefulness. But, with Prevent, central government and local authorities are relying on those same structures for reliable 'partners' in counter-terrorism work. In Bradford, for example, the Council of Mosques – an umbrella organisation formed over twenty-five years ago and a longstanding 'gate-keeper' organisation to Bradford's Muslims – is seen as well suited to carry out Prevent work. 'We're not looking for new organisations to spring up', says a local authority worker. And to bypass established organisations would mean 'a period of chaos'.¹⁸³ A local authority worker in the Midlands told us that the allocation of Prevent funding has

been a 'nod nod thing' involving 'jobs for the boys'. 'A lot of patriarchal politics is being played out and there is a real issue of community leaders. Who has the right to be a community leader? Where does gender fit in? Some savvy and well-connected Muslim groups just take money and do what they want with it because they are friends with the right people. This is where corruption and divisions set in.'¹⁸⁴ Another interviewee asked: 'Who are these people claiming they represent the community? We had never heard of them prior to the funds' availability. It's a money-making exercise. The projects they do are very suspect. The end objectives are difficult to measure. It's bordering on fraud. It should be about genuine grassroots community organisations, with a solid track record of community work and engaging young people. What is worse is that our local authority, despite being aware of the concerns, still awards funds to these groups, over genuine bids.'¹⁸⁵

Organisations which have refused to work on Prevent projects, been critical of it, or withdrawn from it because of concerns over the issues it raises, have themselves been branded as 'extremists'. This has been a pattern in a number of different areas (see chapter 4). In Reading, for example, the Reading Muslim Council (RMC), a community network which cuts across different ethnic groups in the city, had initially engaged in a Forum Against Extremism and Islamophobia that had been set up in the wake of the 7/7 bombings, becoming a leading partner along with the police and the local authority.¹⁸⁶ However, as the Prevent programme developed, the RMC felt that consultation with community organisations and assessment of what actual benefits the work was bringing was giving way to a focus on attracting funding for the sake of it. The RMC learnt more about NI35 and, as a result, it decided to oppose its adoption in Reading. A member of the RMC alleged that these concerns about NI35 were ignored by the local Prevent steering group. The government apparently saw Reading as an area of 'good practice' and wanted its Prevent work to be tied to the NI35 target. Reading's Prevent steering group was then, we were told, reorganised as a tiered structure with local Muslim community organisations only represented on the lowest 'delivery' tier. Around the same time, the local branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is opposed on principle to engaging in the British democratic process, started a

'Preventing Violent Extremism Crisis Group' to campaign against Prevent. The RMC, on the other hand, was making its concerns known within the structures of local accountability and trying to bring about the kind of community consultation that local policy-making is supposed to involve. When the RMC, out of frustration, decided to withdraw from the Prevent agenda, it says that it was itself branded as an 'extremist' organisation by other local agencies and lumped together with the local Hizb ut-Tahrir branch. Eventually, the Council persuaded other community leaders to sit on the Prevent delivery group instead. A member of the RMC said: 'In the face of criticisms, the Council has gone back to the traditional gatekeepers. But there is a massive problem of uninformed consent and so-called consultations are really just one big blag. People don't understand the policies they are being consulted on.'¹⁸⁷

- 2) *The category of 'moderate Muslims' is at times defined theologically, leading to the potential danger of government sponsorship for its preferred religious trends.*

Extremism is seen by the government as a 'twisted reading' or a 'misreading' of Islam that justifies terrorism.¹⁸⁸ To counter this extremism, the Prevent programme seeks to identify and empower 'moderate Muslims' who can offer an alternative reading of Islam. For example, the government is backing roadshows of 'mainstream Islamic scholarship' to tour Britain to 'counter extremist propaganda' and 'denounce it as un-Islamic'.¹⁸⁹ This project, run by the Radical Middle Way organisation, has received £358,500 from the DCLG in 2008/9.¹⁹⁰ A number of interviewees were supportive of this kind of work. However, others felt that the use of government funding to promote particular interpretations of religious texts is potentially dangerous, irrespective of the theological merits of any such interpretation. As a community worker in the north put it: 'The state is directly intervening in a faith. The mosque scholars and Imams have always been independent and this is the basis for their moral authority. We are now shifting to the model of state sponsorship.'¹⁹¹

Prevent funding has been widely used to incorporate 'mainstream mosques' into the orbit of local authority funding, professionalising them and making them partners in the wider Prevent programme. Many interviewees felt that a process of reforming

mosques was necessary but they were concerned that, if this process was driven by local authority funding, there would be a loss of independence. An interviewee in the Midlands told us: 'It's good that mosques are having better structures and governance. But announcements of political demonstrations after Friday prayers are now more difficult because of the fear that funding will be jeopardised.'¹⁹²

Most local authorities funded to do Prevent work by the DCLG have included some kind of engagement with mosques as part of their programme. In particular, 'moderate' mosques are being encouraged to engage with young people and win them over, an area in which they are seen as weaker than 'extremists' at present. In Walsall, for example, the Prevent action plan includes training for Imams 'to identify individuals who show signs of misinterpreting the Quran'.¹⁹³ In Bradford, the Council of Mosques has been supported by Prevent funding of £80,000 from the DCLG's community leadership fund in 2008/9 to develop a teaching resource for madrassahs known as *Nasiha*.¹⁹⁴ Much of the resource is an impressive attempt to introduce key religious concepts. There is a perception, however, that, on occasion, the resource might appear too eager to interpret the original Islamic sources as having meanings useful to the Prevent programme. For example, verses are interpreted as meaning that: 'The root cause of extremism, racism and bullying is hatred – and all three can destroy a community. ... Hatred can also lead to arrogance and anti-western sentiments – again this is not what Islam teaches.'¹⁹⁵ Another verse is interpreted as meaning: 'We have to communicate with our local authorities and get involved in electing suitable leaders for our regions.'¹⁹⁶

One interviewee noted the need for 'good sources of information on questions of women in Islam, on Islamic history, and so on'. But, she added, 'in modern societies, governments shouldn't tell people what to believe'.¹⁹⁷ The manager of a voluntary sector organisation in the Midlands was concerned that: 'Within this work, people are trying to impose their version of Islam. But when you bring in a particular interpretation, you should bring in all interpretations and include every other school. No government has the right to tell people what their religion is – so we should avoid using religion and theology in this work.'¹⁹⁸

Moreover, a community worker in the north said that, in some contexts, agencies are deploying a distinction between ‘extremist’ and ‘moderate’ that is straightforwardly sectarian and theological: for example, Salafis are classed as ‘extremists’ and Sufis are classed as ‘moderates’, or Deobandis are classed as ‘extremists’ and Barelwis are classed as ‘moderates’.¹⁹⁹ It is worth noting that the Quilliam Foundation, one of the government’s key partners in the Prevent programme, arguably promotes adherence to what it regards as the traditional scholarship of Sufi preachers as an antidote to extremism.²⁰⁰

The perception that the government is sponsoring Muslim organisations on the basis of theological criteria – for example, holding Sufis to be more favourable than Salafis – runs counter to the secular separation of ‘church’ and state, even though such a separation is itself upheld as a marker of ‘moderation’ which Muslims should aspire to. As Asma Jahangir, the United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, pointed out in her 2008 report on the UK, ‘it is not the Government’s role to look for the “true voices of Islam” or of any other religion or belief. Since religions or communities of belief are not homogenous

Box 5: The Research, Information and Communications Unit

In June 2007, a new department within the Home Office’s OSCT was established, known as the Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU). Its role in relation to Prevent is to provide advice and guidance to ‘local authorities, people working on community cohesion projects, local police, neighbourhood policing teams’²⁰¹ on how to implement effective communication strategies in order to challenge the ‘ideologies behind violent extremism’.²⁰² According to Charles Farr, the head of the OSCT, this advice is ‘useful when they are, for example, with a Muslim community organisation or in another community forum’.²⁰³

One of the ways in which the RICU does this is by sending out a weekly newsletter providing ‘background to topical news stories and issues that resonate in communities’. What this means in practice is a list of current issues that Muslims are thought to be concerned about, along with the key points of the government’s ‘narrative’ on these issues, so that local authorities can effectively communicate these points in their work. The RICU has also held a series of workshops throughout England to promote counter-terrorist ‘strategic communications’ with local authorities.

In September 2007, the RICU produced a guidance document for use in Prevent programmes that outlined its recommended approach to ‘communicating effectively with community audiences’. Its purpose was to clarify the ‘topline’

counter-terrorism messages that the government wanted to communicate as part of its ‘hearts and minds’ strategy. The document emphasised that implying specific communities are to blame for terrorism is counter-productive and that it is better to speak of ‘the values that we all share’ and that ‘we all need to work together to tackle the terrorist challenge’. The document aimed to show how language can be used to create an ‘inclusive’ basis that is able to draw ‘mainstream Muslims’ into counter-terrorism work and isolate the ‘extremists’ from the rest of the Muslim community. But, importantly, this message needs to be communicated without mentioning the ‘Muslim community’ as the target of this message – because this would itself be alienating and imply that the Muslim community was somehow responsible.²⁰⁴

The RICU also has programmes attempting ‘to gauge changing attitudes in Muslim communities towards key tests and issues of terrorism’, not just through commercial polling companies but also through its own ‘more rigorous’ programmes.²⁰⁵ It has commissioned research on the identity of young Muslims, how young Muslims use the internet, media consumption of British Muslims and the impact of different counter-extremism messages on domestic and foreign Muslim audiences. Other RICU studies have examined the reach of Islamist blogs, the credibility to Muslims of different voices and a series of studies of attitudes to Britishness and terrorism.²⁰⁶

entities it seems advisable to acknowledge and take into account the diversity of voices. ... The contents of a religion or belief should be defined by the worshippers themselves.²⁰⁷

In addition, there is a risk of discovering extremists where none exist, if an interpretative framework based on the simple binary of 'moderate' and 'extremist' is imposed on the complex and dynamic picture of Muslim religious life. For example, since the 1990s, a major trend among young Muslims has been identification with the global *ummah* as a third way alternative to either assimilating into what many perceive to be a hostile society or following their parents' religio-cultural traditions, which are bound up with South Asian languages, poetry and 'folk' practices such as reverence for holy men or *pirs*. The emphasis is thus on purifying oneself from these cultural 'accretions' which are seen as contaminating the Islamic message. This 'return' to the original Islamic texts and a global version of Islam is often seen as a Salafist precursor to 'extremism' although it is more likely to lead to new kinds of positive engagement with British society.²⁰⁸

- 3) *The terms 'moderate' and 'extremist' are at times defined by the degree to which Muslims declare an allegiance to Britishness or the West, which confuses counter-terrorism with an attempt to reshape cultural identity.*

The Contest 2 counter-terrorist strategy document indicates that the government's definition of 'extremist' includes those who 'reject and undermine our shared values'.²⁰⁹ Hazel Blears's March 2009 speech introducing Contest 2 argued further that promoting a positive idea of British culture as a set of shared, liberal values is now seen as central to preventing violent extremism.²¹⁰ She added that, in order to promote this 'counter narrative' of Britishness, current liberal tolerance of diversity needed to be diminished so that the defence of British values can be pursued without impediment.²¹¹ As we noted in chapter 4, the OSCT sees the rejection of western culture as something that should be challenged as part of the Prevent programme.

A number of interviewees highlighted the danger that such an approach risks confusing counter-terrorism with a quite different project of reshaping the cultural identities of Muslims to be more pro-western. Interviewees spoke of such an approach causing 'alienation' as it makes judgements on the

opinions and attitudes of a very wide group of Muslims in, ironically, a most illiberal way. Some organisations have withdrawn from the Prevent programme as this cultural aspect has become more prominent (see chapter 4). In practice, this approach to preventing violent extremism is counter-productive as it ends up expecting Muslims in general to mobilise around notions of Britishness imposed from above, thereby alienating the very people that need to be won over.

HEARTS AND MINDS

The basis for this theological and cultural approach to preventing violent extremism is twofold. First, there is the idea that terrorist radicalisation is rooted in a religio-cultural rejection of western modernity. Second, is the idea that such rejection needs to be combated by a government-led 'battle of ideas'.²¹² This 'battle of ideas' has become an increasingly prominent aspect of counter-terrorism in recent years. The 'war on terror' that was led by the US and UK governments following 9/11 initially had two separate dimensions, one broadly domestic and involving policing – the use of 'emergency' powers under anti-terrorist legislation to detain and deport 'suspected terrorists' outside of the normal procedures of criminal law – and the other a foreign policy of launching wars of 'humanitarian intervention' to 'export democracy' to regions which were thought to produce terrorism. The enemy was defined as 'evil individuals' and 'rogue states'. But in recent years, a new way of thinking about counter-terrorism has become dominant, which sees the enemy as insurgents attempting to win a base of support among Muslim populations and engaged in a conflict that therefore has both military and political dimensions. It is not seen as a clash of civilisations so much as a battle within the Islamic world between 'moderates' and 'extremists', each trying to win over 'mainstream Muslims'. The appropriate strategy therefore involves not only 'hard power' (military force and coercive policing) but also 'soft power' (a 'battle of ideas' to prevent violent extremism) and, rather than speak of a 'war on terror', it is more appropriate, on this new view, to speak of a 'long war' of global counter-insurgency.²¹³ The government sees the emergence of an inter-linked global insurgency as the real threat represented by al Qaida: 'At various moments Al Qa'ida and its associates have made the transition from terrorism to insurgency, notably in Iraq and Afghanistan. As insurgencies they have posed a

different and a wider threat to the UK and its interests than their forebears.²¹⁴

The terrain on which this ‘battle of ideas’ is to be fought is thus the attitudes and opinions of mainstream Muslims in Britain. The possibility of anti-western ‘extremists’ winning over mainstream Muslims to their cause comes to be seen as a strategic challenge to British national security. The danger here is that British Muslims become, in the imagination of the counter-terrorist system, no longer citizens to whom the state is accountable but potential recruits to a global counter-insurgency that is threatening the state’s prospects of prevailing in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. This international dimension means that the attention focused on this ‘extremism’ is of a completely different kind to that focused on, say, right-wing extremism, which is taken to be no more than a public order threat. What emerges is a determination that the problem can only be fully addressed if Muslims take it upon themselves to do more, to actively mobilise against the ‘extremists’, and that therefore more pressure should be brought to bear upon Muslims in general and their community organisations.

The central problem with this ‘battle of minds’ strategy is that, despite all its efforts to map and survey Muslims in Britain, it ends up creating a false image of Britain’s Muslim citizens. The dichotomy between ‘moderate’ and ‘extremist’ does not correspond to the ways in which Muslims actually live their lives and the extent to which ordinary Muslims are caught up in an ideological struggle between competing versions of Islam is hugely overstated. An al Qaida-type ideology does not constitute a viable alternative belief system for all but a tiny number of individuals in Britain. To believe otherwise is to conceive of Muslims as living in a moral universe that is separate from the rest of the population. Not only is this inaccurate but it also stigmatises Muslims as morally retrograde. Moreover, interviewees argued that it ignores other analyses of radicalisation which focus less on religio-cultural ideology and more on terrorism as a manifestation of a political conflict over western foreign policy or as part of a general problem of youth violence. The French scholar of Islamism Olivier Roy, has, for example, recently argued that the ‘process of violent radicalisation has little to do with religious practice, while radical theology, as salafism, does not necessarily lead to violence’.²¹⁵ He adds that to promote a ‘moderate’ Islam against al Qaida’s ‘bad Islam’ would actually be counter-productive as it elevates al Qaida’s narrative to a religious phenomenon.²¹⁶

Finally, many interviewees were concerned that one effect of a ‘battle of ideas’ approach

was to undermine exactly the kind of radical discussions of political issues that need to happen if young people are to be won over and support for political violence diminished. The manager of a voluntary sector organisation in the north told us that: ‘Speaking out can lead to people being defined as an “extremist”. This leads to a vague but strong sense of victimhood in the community as they feel targeted and this encourages people to hunker down, which is both isolating and disempowering. Prevent is then perceived as just another stick to beat them with and creates a sense of being under siege.’²¹⁷ A person involved with Prevent in the Midlands said: ‘A good organisation should be able to say to young people, “What are your feelings on the Middle East?”, without putting them in a corner as “extremists”. My concern about the current approach is the emphasis on depoliticisation. Actually, you should want to politicise young Muslims, to get them to engage democratically and have a voice.’ Another said: ‘The idea of legitimate dissent is being restricted. There is an idea of a model Muslim. It seems to be less about preventing violence and more about a palatable Muslim community.’²¹⁸ As Birmingham councillor Salma Yaqoob has written:

By denying the legitimacy of democratic opposition to Government foreign policy from Muslims, and by promoting and recognising only those Muslims who toe the line, Government policy is serving to strengthen the hands of the genuine extremists; those who say that our engagement in the democratic process is pointless or wrong. The danger of this approach is that it serves to squeeze the democratic space for dissent within the Muslim community. If Muslim organisations are reluctant to provide the space for sensitive discussions for fear of extremist’s accusations, where are these young people to go? Where will their views and concerns get an airing? The answer is obvious. They will be expressed in private and secret, with the genuine extremists keen to provide listening ears and simplistic solutions.²¹⁹

This suggests that the dictum that ‘communities defeat terrorism’ is correct. But for this to happen in a way that is genuinely ‘community-led’, a fundamentally different approach is required. As the An-Nisa Society put it in its report on Prevent, the starting point for this different approach would be to ‘cease dealing with the whole Muslim community through the prism of anti-terrorism’.²²⁰ A genuinely

communities-led approach to counter-terrorism would treat Muslims as citizens with their own ideas, their own definition and understanding of the problem. The manager of a voluntary sector organisation in the Midlands said: 'The causes of extremism are a whole host of things. But the ability to contribute to Britain is a big factor. Everyone should be able to contribute to this society and feel a sense of belonging. What we need to do is to create spaces for people to reason and explore who they are. We need independent thinking.'²²¹ The manager of a youth project in the north told us:

Young people are always being told not to be angry but it should be OK to be angry as long as you express yourself in an effective way. The outcomes we should be after are being able to articulate an argument, to be able to link with people from different communities. But under Prevent we are forced to define our outcomes in terms of how many people have gone through a political conversion from 'extremist' to 'liberal'.²²²

And Salma Yaqoob has written:

What I would do is use the money to have genuine debate, not pushing a line but having an open discussion. That's the best way to challenge violent extremist rhetoric. You can't shy away from radical political criticism. We must create the

space within the community where our young people feel free to speak openly about how they feel as young Muslims growing up in a country where their identity is constantly contested. The best antidote to the appeal of extremism is to create a model of critically engaged citizenship. That will only happen when more young Muslims engage in the political process and are confident and assertive about expressing their concerns, irrespective of whether it offends the Government or not.²²³

As so many interviewees noted, this kind of empowerment of young people needs to start with the experiences of young people themselves rather than a state-centred agenda. Issues such as racism, Islamophobia, social exclusion and everyday violence are likely to be central. The terrors that young people experience in their everyday lives involve bullying, taunting, victimisation and harassment from peers at school, local gangs, police, the media and, in some cases, members of their own families.²²⁴

In the end, community participation cannot be faked and, in democratic societies, genuine trust can only come from the bottom up. So long as the government persists in a programme of imposing on its own citizens an ideological war over 'values' that is backed up with an elaborate web of surveillance, that trust will not be forthcoming. And those on the receiving end of such a programme will remain 'spooked' by fear, alienation and suspicion.

References

- 1 *Preventing Violent Extremism: winning hearts and minds* (Department for Communities and Local Government, April 2007).
- 2 The 2008 Labour Force Survey suggests that there are 2.4 million Muslims in Britain, the overwhelming majority of whom are British citizens. Richard Kerbaj, 'Muslim population "rising 10 times faster than rest of society"' *The Times* (30 January 2009).
- 3 Khalida Khan, *Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) & Prevent: a response from the Muslim community* (An-Nisa Society, February 2009).
- 4 Alan Travis, 'Two-thirds of UK terror suspects released without charge', *Guardian* (13 May 2009).
- 5 Victoria Brittain, 'Besieged in Britain', *Race & Class* (Vol. 50, no. 3, January 2009).
- 6 Ian Cobain, 'The truth about torture', *Guardian* (8 July 2009).
- 7 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare: the United Kingdom's strategy for countering international terrorism* (March 2009), p. 4.
- 8 Robert Winnett and David Leppard, 'Britain's secret plans to win Muslim hearts and minds', *The Times* (30 May 2004).
- 9 *Preventing Violent Extremism: winning hearts and minds*, op. cit.
- 10 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 11.
- 11 *Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund: guidance note for government offices and local authorities in England* (Department for Communities and Local Government, February 2007), p. 5.
- 12 Michael Evans and Richard Ford, 'New anti-terror chief is building elite team', *The Times* (30 August 2007).
- 13 *The Prevent Strategy: a guide for local partners in England: stopping people becoming or supporting terrorists and violent extremists* (HM Government, 2008), p. 16.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 15 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 84.
- 16 *Delivering the Prevent Strategy: an updated guide for local partners* (Home Office, August 2009), p. 25.
- 17 'Local authorities receive fresh cash injection to tackle extremism', Department for Communities and Local Government press release, 28 August 2009.
- 18 House of Commons, *Hansard* (23 April 2009), Column 878W.
- 19 *Delivering the Prevent Strategy*, op. cit., p. 25.
- 20 Home Office Freedom of Information Request 12172.
- 21 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 13.
- 22 *Delivering the Prevent Strategy*, op. cit., p. 26.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 24 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 12.
- 25 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 16.
- 26 'Countering international terrorism: the battle of ideas', MI5 Security Service, <<http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/the-battle-of-ideas.html>>, last accessed 1 October 2009.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 *Delivering the Prevent Strategy*, op. cit., p. 18.
- 29 <<http://www.deenininternational.co.uk/what-we-do.htm>>, last accessed 28 August 2009.
- 30 'Pro-West ads to target extremism', *BBC News* (23 February 2009), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7905487.stm>, last accessed 8 September 2009.
- 31 Home Affairs Committee, *Project CONTEST: the government's counter-terrorism strategy: ninth report of session 2008-09* (House of Commons, 7 July 2009), p. Ev 29.
- 32 Christina Pantazis and Simon Pemberton, 'From the "old" to the "new" suspect community', *British Journal of Criminology* (Vol. 49, no. 5, 2009); Paddy Hillyard, *Suspect Community: people's experience of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts in Britain* (London, Pluto Press, 1993).
- 33 'LAA Targets Matrix' (Government Office for London, May 2009).
- 34 NI 35 – Building Communities Resilient To Violent Extremism, Assessment Framework.
- 35 Interview 17, 28 April 2009.
- 36 Interview 2, 28 April 2009.
- 37 Interview 29, 17 April 2009.
- 38 Interview 5, 30 April 2009.
- 39 Interview 27, 17 December 2008.
- 40 Interview 9, 4 August 2009.
- 41 Interview 2, 28 April 2009.
- 42 Interview 12, 10 June 2009.
- 43 Interview 21, 4 August 2009.
- 44 Interview 18, 18 August 2009.
- 45 Interview 11, 5 June 2009.
- 46 Interview 5, 30 April 2009.
- 47 Interview 19, 27 August 2009.
- 48 Interview 11, 5 June 2009.
- 49 Interview 29, 17 April 2009.
- 50 *The Prevent Strategy: a guide for local partners in England*, op. cit., p. 17.
- 51 Interview 22, 3 April 2009.
- 52 Freedom of Information Request, Enfield Council, 6 August 2009.
- 53 Freedom of Information Request, Wakefield Council, 1 April 2009.
- 54 'Building resilience – priorities for action: delivering the Prevent strategy in Walsall 2008/09–2010/11' (Walsall Council, August 2009).
- 55 Freedom of Information Request, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, 26 August 2009.
- 56 Taxpayers Alliance, *Council Spending Uncovered: the Prevent strategy* (September 2009).
- 57 Interview 7, 5 May 2009.
- 58 Interview 11, 5 June 2009.

- 59 Interview 25, 9 June 2009.
- 60 Interview 12, 10 June 2009.
- 61 Interview 21, 4 August 2009.
- 62 Interview 19, 27 August 2009.
- 63 Interview 16, 11 June 2009.
- 64 Interview 30, 28 April 2009.
- 65 Freedom of Information Request, Tower Hamlets Council, 23 July 2009.
- 66 Simon Ellery, 'Extreme measures', *Guardian Society* (28 January 2009), p. 3.
- 67 House of Commons, *Hansard* (23 April 2009), Column 872W.
- 68 'Empowering community leaders', Department for Communities and Local Government press release, 17 March 2009; House of Commons, *Hansard* (23 April 2009), Column 878W.
- 69 'Young Muslim Advisory Group's first national youth conference', Department for Communities and Local Government press release, 21 March 2009.
- 70 'Gordon Brown launches the Muslim Women's Advisory Group', Department for Communities and Local Government press release, 31 January 2008.
- 71 Interview 15, 26 June 2009.
- 72 Interview 16, 11 June 2009.
- 73 Interview 14, 26 June 2009.
- 74 Interview 21, 4 August 2009.
- 75 Interview 5, 30 April 2009.
- 76 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 13.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 78 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 80 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 81 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 83 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 84 Jonny Burnett and Dave Whyte, 'Embedded expertise and the new terrorism', *Journal for Crime, Conflict and the Media* (Vol. 1, no. 4, 2005).
- 85 Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the cold war and the roots of terror* (New York, Three Leaves Press, 2004), p. 61.
- 86 Hazel Blears, 'Many voices: understanding the debate about preventing violent extremism', lecture at the London School of Economics, 25 February 2009, <<http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/manyvoices>>, last accessed 26 February 2009.
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 *Project CONTEST: the government's counter-terrorism strategy*, op. cit., p. Ev 26.
- 89 Paul Bignell, 'Government shuns Muslim Council over link with Hamas', *Independent on Sunday* (22 March 2009).
- 90 Roundtable discussion, 1 July 2009.
- 91 Interview 3, 3 April 2009.
- 92 *Community Cohesion: a report of the independent review team*, chaired by Ted Cante (Home Office 2001), p. 19.
- 93 Interview 7, 5 May 2009.
- 94 Interview 21, 4 August 2009.
- 95 Interview 22, 3 April 2009.
- 96 Interview 12, 10 June 2009.
- 97 Interview 5, 30 April 2009.
- 98 Interview 8, 19 June 2009.
- 99 Interview 3, 3 April 2009.
- 100 Interview 18, 18 August 2009.
- 101 Interview 5, 30 April 2009.
- 102 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 13.
- 103 Interview 5, 30 April 2009.
- 104 Interview 8, 19 June 2009.
- 105 *Building Resilience to Violent Extremism: delivering the Prevent strategy in Birmingham* (Safer Birmingham Partnership, April 2009), p. 8.
- 106 Interview 18, 18 August 2009.
- 107 Interview 21, 4 August 2009.
- 108 Interview 30, 28 April 2009.
- 109 Interview 30, 28 April 2009.
- 110 Interview 11, 5 June 2009.
- 111 Interview 25, 9 June 2009.
- 112 Interview 20, 8 June 2009.
- 113 Interview 29, 17 April 2009.
- 114 Vikram Dodd, 'Police fear far-right terror attack', *Guardian* (6 July 2009).
- 115 Sean O'Neill, 'White supremacist Neil Lewington guilty of "non-British" bomb plot', *The Times* (16 July 2009).
- 116 *Delivering the Prevent Strategy*, op. cit.
- 117 'Local authorities receive fresh cash injection to tackle extremism', Department for Communities and Local Government press release, 28 August 2009.
- 118 *Delivering the Prevent Strategy*, op. cit., p. 38.
- 119 James Kirkup and Tom Whitehead, 'Strategy to tackle extremists to focus on white racists', *Telegraph* (10 August 2009).
- 120 Jennifer Crook, 'Why words matter in the fight against terrorism', *Guardian Society* (14 October 2008).
- 121 Interview 23, 24 April 2009.
- 122 Interview 22, 3 April 2009.
- 123 Interview 25, 9 June 2009.
- 124 Interview 24, 8 June 2009.
- 125 Interview 20, 8 June 2009.
- 126 Interview 3, 3 April 2009.
- 127 Interview 12, 10 June 2009.
- 128 Interview 26, 10 June 2009.
- 129 Interview 3, 3 April 2009.
- 130 Interview 9, 4 August 2009.
- 131 'Panorama: Muslim First, British Second', BBC One, 8.30pm, 16 February 2009.
- 132 Stephen Rimmer, 'Allegations made in the Panorama programme "Muslim First - British Second" on Monday 16 February', statement from the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism, 17 February 2009.
- 133 Yahya Birt, 'Promoting virulent envy? Reconsidering the UK's terrorist prevention strategy', *RUSI Journal* (Vol. 154, no. 4, August 2009).

- 134 Interview 22, 3 April 2009.
- 135 Interview 5, 30 April 2009.
- 136 Interview 7, 5 May 2009.
- 137 Roundtable discussion, 1 July 2009.
- 138 Robert Verkaik, 'Exclusive: how MI5 blackmails British Muslims', *Independent* (21 May 2009).
- 139 Interview 31, 7 September 2009.
- 140 Roundtable discussion, 1 July 2009.
- 141 Interview 11, 5 June 2009.
- 142 Interview 8, 19 June 2009.
- 143 Interview 15, 26 June 2009.
- 144 Interview 12, 10 June 2009.
- 145 Interview 11, 5 June 2009.
- 146 Interview 25, 9 June 2009.
- 147 Frank Gregory, 'An assessment of the contribution of intelligence-led counter-terrorism to UK homeland security post-9/11 within the "contest" strategy', in Paul Wilkinson, ed., *Homeland Security in the UK: future preparedness for terrorist attack since 9/11* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2007), p. 185.
- 148 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 16.
- 149 Jenny Percival, 'New strategy will train shop and hotel managers to tackle terrorist threats', *Guardian* (24 March 2009).
- 150 Alan Travis, 'Anti-terror plan hampered by distrust, report warns', *Guardian* (8 November 2008).
- 151 *Preventing Violent Extremism: learning and development exercise: report to the Home Office and Communities and Local Government* (Audit Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, October 2008), p. 5.
- 152 *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- 153 Association of Chief Police Officers (Terrorism and Allied Matters), *Police PREVENT Strategy – partners briefing* (27 March 2008), p. 9.
- 154 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 155 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 156 'Tackling extremism and radicalisation within and across communities', Thames Valley Police (2009).
- 157 Interview 22, 3 April 2009.
- 158 *Building Resilience to Violent Extremism: delivering the Prevent strategy in Birmingham*, op. cit., p. 20; *Annual Review 08/09* (West Midlands Police, 2009), p. 4.
- 159 <<http://www.lancashire.police.uk/about-us/departments/counter-terrorism/community-engagement-officers-ceos>>, last accessed 30 August 2009.
- 160 Gina Marsen, 'Terror battle steps up with civilian sources', *Southend Echo* (20 August 2009).
- 161 *Learning Together To Be Safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism* (Department for Children, Schools and Families, October 2008).
- 162 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 163 Lee Bridges, 'Policing the urban wasteland', *Race & Class* (Vol. 25, no. 2, Autumn 1983), p.32.
- 164 Paul Boateng, 'The police, the community and accountability', in *Scarman and After: essays reflecting on Lord Scarman's Report, the riots and their aftermath* (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1984), p. 158.
- 165 Bridges, 'Policing the urban wasteland', op. cit., p.39.
- 166 Boateng, 'The police, the community and accountability', op. cit., p. 158.
- 167 *Learning Together To Be Safe*, op. cit., p. 13.
- 168 <<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/violentextremism/quilliam>>, last accessed 6 May 2009.
- 169 Interview 4, 11 September 2009.
- 170 Interview 6, 4 August 2009.
- 171 Interview 1, 4 August 2009.
- 172 Javid Akram and Robin Richardson, 'Citizenship education for all or preventing violent extremism for some? Choices and challenges for schools', *Racial Equality Teaching* (Vol. 27, no. 3, July 2009).
- 173 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 13.
- 174 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 175 Mark Hughes, 'Police identify 200 children as potential terrorists', *Independent* (28 March 2009).
- 176 'House of Commons written answers', *Hansard* (22 July 2008), Column 1376W.
- 177 Interview 12, 10 June 2009.
- 178 Interview 9, 4 August 2009.
- 179 Richard Kerbaj, 'Government gives £1m to anti-extremist think-tank Quilliam Foundation', *The Times* (20 January 2009).
- 180 *Progress Report 2008–09* (Quilliam Foundation, April 2009), p. 14.
- 181 'Quilliam's quarterly e-update: May–July 2009' (5 August 2009).
- 182 Freedom of Information Request, A/14.21.1691, Wakefield Council, 19 August 2009.
- 183 Interview 30, 28 April 2009.
- 184 Interview 18, 18 August 2009.
- 185 Interview 13, 16 December 2008.
- 186 'Reading against violent extremism programme 2008–11' (Reading 2020 Partnership).
- 187 Interview 6, 4 August 2009.
- 188 Blears, 'Many voices', op. cit.; Jacqui Smith, 'Our shared values – a shared responsibility', speech to the International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence, 17 January 2008.
- 189 Gordon Brown, 'Statement on national security', 28 October 2007; 'Countering international terrorism: the battle of ideas', op. cit.
- 190 House of Commons, *Hansard* (23 April 2009), Column 872W.
- 191 Interview 12, 10 June 2009.
- 192 Interview 32, 25 June 2009.
- 193 'Building resilience – priorities for action: delivering the Prevent strategy in Walsall 2008/09–2010/11', op. cit.
- 194 House of Commons, *Hansard* (23 April 2009), Column 878W.
- 195 Nasiha, *Loving Humanity and Avoiding Hatred*, p. 12.
- 196 Nasiha, *Community Work and Elections*, p. 4.
- 197 Interview 14, 26 June 2009.
- 198 Interview 16, 11 June 2009.
- 199 Interview 12, 10 June 2009.
- 200 Similarly, the RAND Corporation, the leading

- US thinktank on military affairs, argues that western governments should fight a 'battle of ideas' against Islamist extremism in Europe by empowering 'Traditionalists' and 'Sufis', who are the 'natural allies of the West'. Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Benard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle, *Building Moderate Muslim Networks* (Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation, 2007), p. 74.
- 201 *Project CONTEST: the government's counter-terrorism strategy*, op. cit., p. Ev 21.
- 202 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 88.
- 203 *Project CONTEST: the government's counter-terrorism strategy*, op. cit., p. Ev 21.
- 204 *Counter Terrorism Communications Guidance: communicating effectively with community audiences* (Home Office Research, Information and Communications Unit, 2007).
- 205 *Project CONTEST: the government's counter-terrorism strategy*, op. cit., p. Ev 26.
- 206 <http://www.spinprofiles.org/index.php/Research,_Information_and_Communications_Unit>, last accessed 29 August 2009.
- 207 Asma Jahangir, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief: mission to the United Kingdom* (United Nations, 7 February 2008), p. 21.
- 208 Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new ummah* (London, Hurst, 2004).
- 209 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 87.
- 210 Blears, 'Many voices', op. cit.
- 211 Her argument echoed that of an influential article published in 2008 by the Royal United Services Institute, which saw a 'mis-placed deference to "multiculturalism"' as a significant handicap in Britain's fight against Islamism. Gwyn Prins and Robert Salisbury, 'Risk, threat and security: the case of the United Kingdom', *RUSI Journal* (Vol. 153, no. 1, February 2008), p. 23.
- 212 According to the MI5 website, radicalisation is a cultural rejection of modernity, rooted in the misinterpreting of globalisation and modernisation as western impositions: "Those already predisposed to be suspicious of the West can seek to portray these changes as a deliberate attempt to replace traditional structures with Western models'. This leads to a 'simplistic, but virulent anti-Westernism', fuelled by perceptions of double standards in foreign policy, particularly in relation to Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan, and 'discrimination, social exclusion, and lack of opportunity'. In other words, radicalisation is seen as the politicisation of a cultural problem – the failure to adjust to modernity. It follows from this that a 'counter narrative' should involve a political defence of the cultural values that underlie British liberal democracy. 'Countering international terrorism: tackling radicalisation', MI5 Security Service, <<http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/tackling-radicalisation.html>>, last accessed 1 October 2009.
- 213 John Mackinlay, 'Counter-insurgency in global perspective – an introduction', *RUSI Journal* (Vol. 152, no. 6 December 2007); David J. Kilcullen, 'Countering global insurgency', *Journal of Strategic Studies* (Vol. 28, no. 4, August 2005).
- 214 *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare*, op. cit., p. 36.
- 215 Olivier Roy, 'Al Qaeda in the West as a youth movement: the power of a narrative', MICRO-CON Policy Working Paper 2, Brighton, 2008, p. 2.
- 216 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 217 Interview 17, 28 April 2009.
- 218 Interview 21, 4 August 2009.
- 219 Salma Yaqoob, 'Government's PVE agenda is failing to tackle extremism', *Muslim News* (28 November 2008).
- 220 Khan, *Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) & Prevent*, op. cit., pp. 29–30.
- 221 Interview 16, 11 June 2009.
- 222 Interview 19, 27 August 2009.
- 223 Yaqoob, 'Government's PVE agenda is failing to tackle extremism', op. cit.
- 224 Catherine Louise Alexander, "'Growing pains'? Fear, exclusion and citizenship in a disadvantaged UK neighbourhood', in Rachel Pain and Susan J. Smith, eds, *Fear: critical geopolitics and everyday life* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008).

**INSTITUTE OF
RACE
RELATIONS**

2009