

A Critical Analysis of the 'Prevent Duty'

*Does 'Prevent Duty' positively or negatively affect
counter-terrorism efforts in the UK?*

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1. Introduction

On 28th April 2020, an article in the Guardian announced that the UK Government will attempt to delay a legally binding deadline for an independent review of Prevent, a programme which aims to stop people from becoming terrorists (Grierson, 2020). The review, which was first announced in January 2019, has been a source of controversy since the announcement of the chair, Lord Carlile, who was later forced to step down from the role amid accusations of biases towards the strategy (Grierson, 2020).

The UK Government introduced the counterterrorism strategy CONTEST and its four strands 'Prepare, Prevent, Protect, Pursue' in 2003. Prevent's purpose is to "safeguard and support vulnerable people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism"¹ (HM Government, 2018: 31). Part of Prevent is the Prevent Duty and Channel. The Prevent Duty is a statutory duty which requires staff members at schools, the National Health Service, prisons, local authorities and other public bodies to report individuals they suspect might be 'at risk' of radicalisation and extremism (HM Government, 2018: 35). Following, cases are evaluated and then, where appropriate, referred to Channel which offers support. "Support could include assistance with education or employment, health support or ideological mentoring" aimed at de-radicalising the individual and prevent them from engaging in terrorism (HM Government, 2018: 39).

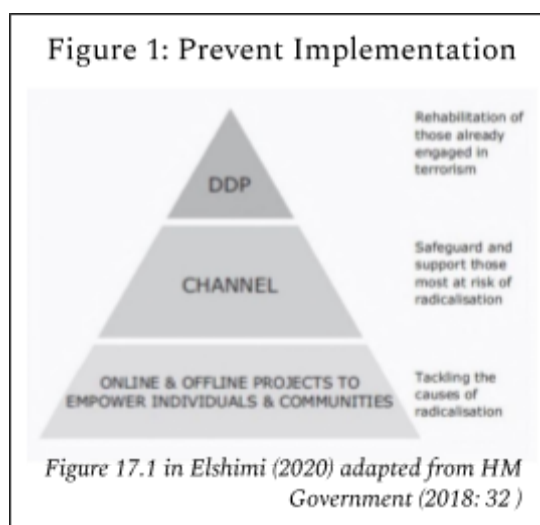
Communities, especially Muslim communities, human rights activists and civil liberties organisations have been advocating for a review of the Prevent Strategy for years (Grierson, 2020). The Prevent Duty has attracted widespread condemnation; critics claim it encourages discrimination against British Muslims (Dudenhoefer, 2018) and racial stereotyping (Addley and Topping, 2017). However, advocates of the strategy claim it has successfully averted vulnerable individuals from turning to extremism and terrorism (Cole, 2016). In light of the controversy and delay of the independent review, this paper aims to critically analyse the Prevent Duty drawing on both its successes and shortcomings, and following, recommend the UK Government clarify key concepts for improved implementation. This paper shall conclude that, though Prevent Strategy has shown epistemological improvement since its introduction in 2003, the implementation via Prevent Duty remains flawed. This is due to issues with the clarity of its objectives and problems in measuring its effectiveness.

¹ Other purposes are: Pursue, detecting terror attacks before they happen; Prepare, mitigate the impact of a terror attack; and Protect, overseeing domestic security (HM Government, 2018)

This paper shall do this by first: defining (2.1); exploring new and old (2.2); and the motivations behind (2.3): terrorism in the UK. It will then explore the demographics of contemporary terrorists in the UK (2.4), and the radicalisation process (2.5). Secondly, this paper will outline Prevent's purpose and objectives (3.1) and explain the Prevent Duty and Channel (3.2). Following, this paper shall outline successes of the strategy in rethinking both radicalisation (4.1) and the pre-criminal space (4.2). It will then examine the shortcomings of the Prevent Duty regarding implementation (5.1) and measurement (5.2). Lastly, this paper shall make recommendations to the UK Government, urging for clarity on the central concepts: 'Islamist terrorism' (6.1) and 'British values' and 'extremism' (6.2).

It should be emphasised first that, due to its nature as a counter-radicalisation strategy, Prevent is a difficult strategy to evaluate. As Prevent is concerned more with extremism and radicalisation than terrorism, it cannot be measured by conventional methods or in references to numbers of attacks, terror-related convictions, etc (Saltman and Russell, 2014). Thereby, its effects, and by extension, shortcomings and successes remain speculative. Hence, this paper relies on predominantly literature review methods to critically analyse the Prevent Duty.

The delivery and implementation of Prevent Strategy is coordinated by the Office for Security and Counterterrorism branch (OSCT) in the Home Office (Dudenhoefer, 2018). As seen in figure 1 taken from Elshimi (2020), it is delivered in three modes: Desistance and Disengagement Programme (DDP), Prevent Duty and Channel, and supporting online and offline projects. This paper will focus on the middle section of the pyramids shown in figure 1. The analysis will focus on the Prevent Duty 's efforts to identify those "vulnerable to radicalisation", however, in order to analyse the duty fully, other aspects of Prevent will be touched upon, particularly Channel. Furthermore, though the CONTEST strategy was designed "to counter all forms of terrorism" (HM Government, 2018: 7) analysis of Prevent Duty in this paper will focus specifically on "Islamist terrorism", given the government considers it "the foremost terrorist threat to the UK" (HM Government, 2018: 8) making it the main target of the Prevent Duty. Furthermore, the Prevent Duty training materials and indicators of 'risk' predominantly focus on Islamic beliefs (Mohammed and Siddiqui, 2013: 9).



2. Terrorism in the UK

2.1 'Terrorism'

According to MI5 website: “terrorism is the use or threat of action, both in and outside of the UK, designed to influence any international government organisation or to intimidate the public.”² It must also be “for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause” (MI5, n.d.). Hence, suicidal rampages are not classified as terrorism unless the killer is explicitly expressed certain grievances concerning British society.

“Islamist Terrorism” is defined as “acts of terrorism perpetrated or inspired by politico-religiously motivated groups or individuals who support and use violence as a means to establish their interpretation of an Islamic society” (HM Government, 2018: 8). This term is discussed in section 6.1. The UK’s counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, was introduced as a response to the threats posed by terrorism.

2.2 Old and New Terrorist Threats in the UK

The 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS) and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) identified terrorism as “one of the highest priority risks to the United Kingdom” (HM Government, 2018: 13). The UK faces terrorist threats from different groups with varying ideologies, however, when CONTEST was updated for the third time in 2018, the threat posed by Islamist terrorism remained “the foremost and most significant” (HM Government, 2018: 19). Terrorism related to extreme right-wing groups, such as risks posed by the far-right group National Action, is a growing threat in the UK (HM Government, 2018: 8). Before the 2000s, most terror attacks in the UK were carried out by the IRA or were in relation to the Northern Ireland conflict (Post, 2007). In March 1999, Amer Mirza was the first citizen in the UK to be convicted of an Islamism-related terrorism offence, marking the beginning of the increasing security risks posed by Islamic fundamentalists. The UK Government states that “Northern Ireland related terrorism remains a serious threat, particularly in Northern Ireland itself” (HM Government, 2018: 19). However, with the turn of the century a so-called ‘New Terrorism’ became the most prominent threat (Silke, 2008).

² Finding a definition to encompass “terrorism” is complicated, shown by the fact that, as of April 2020, there was still no international consensus regarding a universal legal definition of the term. Despite the absence of a definition, the UN general assembly has adopted several resolutions with regards to tackling terrorism, which show that, when terrorism targets innocent civilians, it is considered wrongful in all cultures (Neumann, 2009).

There is a notion amongst some academic observers that we are currently living through an age of New Terrorism (Post, 2007; Neumann, 2009). This argument claims that terrorism of the past is significantly different from terrorism that threatens the world today because nowadays terrorism is more violent, more dangerous (Neumann, 2009: 2) and more heavily motivated by “fundamentalist religion” (Silke, 2008: 102). Silke (2008) gives Al-Qaeda and its affiliates as examples of “New Terrorism” groups. Furthermore, terrorism of this nature is the “most threatening one to western values, interests and societies” (Bakker, 2008: 1) as radical Islamist groups of this nature “encourage a withdrawal from Western norms or ‘values,’ such as democracy” (Powell, 2016: 59). The same is not true of terrorist organisations such as the IRA.

However, Silke (2008) is sceptical of the “New Terrorism” thesis, branding it as “overemphasized”. By studying the history of terrorism, it is quickly apparent that the New Terrorism discourse “overlooks the many examples of lethal, violent and fundamentalist terrorist groups of the past” (Silke, 2008: 102). Moreover, researchers who have conducted studies on terrorists from a variety of groups with different ideologies found more similarities than differences between the members (Horgan, 2005 in Silke 2008). Of course the nature of the group and the ideology may influence the mode or targets of the attack (Mengel, 1977: 453), however, this does not necessarily mean that research focused on members or activities of the IRA is not relevant for understanding the nature of new Islamist terrorist groups, and vice versa (Silke, 2008: 103).

Conversely, Post (2007) differentiates between the different types of terrorist groups and their respective motivations and ideologies, arguing that the groups are distinct in their mission and, therefore, should be considered separately. Also defending the “New Terrorism” thesis, Neumann (2009) argues that globalisation has facilitated a change in the nature of terrorism which demands it being considered as “new”. However, there are continuities between terrorism of the past and terrorism of today which cannot be ignored (Neumann, 2009: 11), thus it would a waste to ignore that insights and conclusions drawn from previous research conducted on other groups and attacks (Silke, 2008: 103).

Overall, though each ‘terrorist group is unique and must be studied in the context of its own. . . culture and history’ (Post, 1990: 29 in Silke, 2008) terrorists groups often have a lot in common (Silke, 2008). Their terror campaigns materialise in similar ways, normally in the form of bombings, kidnappings, or murders, however, the ideological motivation behind the attacks has changed, resulting in some alterations in the nature of terrorism in the UK.

2.3 Terrorist Motivations in the UK

The IRA, which posed the most serious terror threat before the 2000s (Post, 2007), are considered “nationalist terrorists” (Bakker, 2006: 3). The primary goal of the IRA was to gain territory and to force a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland (Post, 2007).

The vast majority of Islamist terrorism is perpetrated by Salafi-Jihadi groups (HM Government, 2018: 8). Kepel (2002: 202) takes “Salafist Jihadism” as a combination of “respect for the sacred texts in their most literal form, [...] with an absolute commitment to jihad, whose number-one target had to be America, perceived as the greatest enemy of the faith.” Jihadism and Salafism are discussed further in section 6.1. Essentially, the goal of Islamist terrorism is a destruction of the Western way of life (Kepel, 2002: 202); a rejection of ‘enlightenment’ values such as democracy, freedom, liberty, equality, etc. (Pinker, 2018: 439); “as well as a commitment to restoring a self-proclaimed “Caliphate” and establishing a brutal and literalist interpretation of sharia law.” (HM Government, 2018: 16).

Islamist terrorism in the UK is inspired not by a territorial dispute or the feeling of ethnic, racial, or national oppression, but because of a religious commandment: jihad and the establishment of sharia. This makes the nature of the attacks different in several ways. The first concerns targets. The IRA targeted mostly British policemen and soldiers, shown by a quote from a young IRA member (in Post, 2007: 49): “I have never taken the life of another person nor do I ever anticipate doing so, but if I had a gun [...] I would have had no hesitations in shooting British soldiers.” As the goal of the IRA was a “united Ireland” (Post, 2007: 54), the terrorists committed acts as means of a political statement (see figure 2; Mengel, 1977) urging a targeting of soldiers and policemen rather than citizens. This is illustrated by the fact that, when the Real IRA bombed Omagh in 1998, killing six teenagers, six children and a woman pregnant with twins, they issued a public apology stating that the bomb had never meant to harm civilians (Post, 2007). High civilian casualties meant the attack had the opposite effect the terrorists intended; public outcry and disgust spurred on peace talks between the UK and Ireland (Post, 2007: 54)

On the other hand, contemporary terrorism, such as the 7 July 2005 London bombing of 3 underground trains and a bus (known as 7/7) is conducted much more randomly (Pinker, 2018: 195). This factor can be explained by the nature of Salafi-jihadi ideology; it vilifies anything incompatible with fundamental Islam so the targets can be anyone and anything ‘western’.

Figure 1 shows the respective motivations of terrorism can be depicted by 4 sets (Mengel, 1977: 453). A 'high specificity of demands' entails Governments either performing, or refraining from performing, an act (Mengel, 1977: 453). Following, the IRA and Salafi-jihadi groups in the UK both exist in the left column. By studying who the IRA and Salafi-jihadi groups in the UK targeted in their attacks, as well as the ideological reasons why, the motivations of the respective movements are exposed. The IRA committed

Figure 2: Terrorist Means

Specificity of Demands	High	Low
Target Selection	Bargaining	Political Statement
Discriminate	Social Paralysis	Mass Casualties
Random		

Mengel (1977: 453)

terrorism as means of 'bargaining' for the withdrawal of British forces from Northern Ireland; Salafi-jihadi groups in the UK commit terrorism as means of 'social paralysis'.

The difference in ideology also explains why Silke (2008: 102) observes that the terror attacks of today, such as the ones committed by Salafi-jihadi groups in the UK, are "more lethal, more violent"; because the attacks are against society as a whole. Movements of this nature are not concerned with public support; their goal is random, deadly attacks which paralyse a society. By bringing their "struggle" directly to anonymous citizens, these groups are able to incite "outsized panic" (Pinker, 2018: 195) as the attacks are usually "more violent" (Mengel, 1977: 453).

The violent and deadly nature of Islamist terrorism can be explained by the ideological aspect of their crimes. Unlike the Real IRA, who felt compelled to apologise for a terror attack due to public backlash, Islamist terrorist are unconcerned with how their crimes are received in a society branded the enemy of Islamic faith (Kepel, 2002).

The ideological aspect of terrorist groups in the UK has changed since the 2000s and this has stipulated changes in the nature of attacks: an increased magnitude of violence, increased fatalities, and the targeting of everyday civilians. The ideological motivation behind the most prominent terror threat in the UK has also meant changes regarding demographics of who terrorists in the UK are.

2.4 Terrorists in the UK

Before the 2000s, IRA attacks were carried out by Nationalist Irish Republicans, of whom a majority were young, Catholic men (Post, 2007). The nationalities and identities of Islamist terrorists in the UK, comparatively, is less clear cut. An unwelcome revelation which came after the 7/7 bombings was the phenomenon of 'home-grown' terrorists (Bakker, 2006: 44; Dudenhofer, 2018: 154). Of the four 7/7 suicide bombers, who represented the first Islamist suicide bombings carried out in Europe, three were British born (Silke, 2008: 99). The fact that the terrorists who committed the 7 July 2005 atrocities were born and raised in the relatively stable and prosperous UK "represented a disturbing development and left the authorities and others struggling to understand how and why this had happened" (Silke, 2008: 100). These attacks proved that Islamist terrorism was not only a serious threat, but "included a malicious home-grown dimension" which was previously unobserved (Bakker, 2006: 2).

So who are these "home-grown" Islamist terrorists who commit horrendous attacks against the country they grew up in? This question is difficult to answer for several reasons. The first is limited data. A substantial amount of papers written on Islamist terrorism rely on literature-review methods (Silke, 2008: 101), and the best available research on this subject is almost entirely written by analysis of secondary data like, for example in the case of Bakker (2006) using archival records. Furthermore, as terrorism affects national security, a lot of primary sources are not accessible to the public and, of the sources available, there is dubious reliability because of biases of different journalists, media reports, and other publications (Bakker, 2006: 16). More generally, terrorism is, thankfully, very rare and accounts for a tiny proportion of criminal activity in the West (Pinker, 2018: 192), hence, there are quite literally not many terrorists to study. Furthermore, with regard to Islamist terrorism in the UK, the actual perpetrators often commit suicide or are shot by the Police. This aspect is evidently important for "martyrdom"; a concept in lesser Jihadi ideology (Kepel, 2002; Silke, 2008: 102).

Despite these difficulties, some excellent sources exist. In his influential study Bakker (2006: 52) found that Jihadi terrorists in Europe were "mostly single males that are born and raised in Europe; they are not particularly young; they are often from the lower strata of society; and many of them have a criminal record." Furthermore, most of the individuals were from immigrant Muslim communities in Europe (Bakker, 2006).

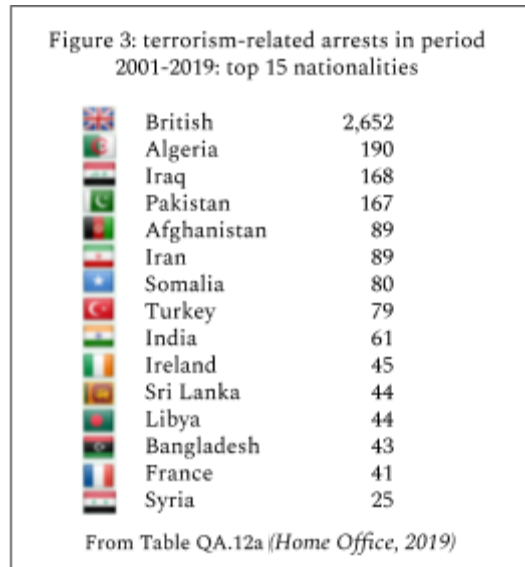
In a briefing paper by Allen and Kirk-Wade (2020), the authors comment on the demographics of 268 terror suspects arrested in the UK over the period 2018/9. They conclude

that of the 268 arrested, 60% were detained in relation to “international terrorism”; defined as “linked or motivated by a terrorist organisation based outside the UK” (Allen and Kirk-Wade, 2020: 11). Of the 268, 34% were charged, and of these, 78% of charges were terror-related (HM Government, 2019). According to the UK Government, Islamist terrorism in the UK is motivated by ideologies of groups like Daesh and Al Qa’ida (HM Government, 2018: 7), so, in the data, it is counted under the “international terrorism” category. An overwhelming majority were male (88%) and British nationals (72%) (HM Government, 2019). Furthermore, similar to Bakker (2006) whose sample boasted an average age of 27.3 years, the suspects were not particularly young with 50% of those arrested aged 30 or over (HM Government, 2019).

In terms of the religious identity of suspects, the data is less recent, the last data published is from 2012, and is less accurate due to the fact that reporting religious identity is not a legal requirement in the UK (Allen and Kirk-Wade, 2020; HM Government, 2013). In the period September 2001 to August 2012 46% of individuals arrested for terror offences self-reported themselves as Muslim; the highest representation compared to ‘other or no religion’ (37%) or ‘unknown religion’ (32%) (HM Government, 2013).

This Official Statistics report from 2013 is the most recent data we have relating religion and terror arrests. However, from figure 2, we can clearly see that, disregarding British nationality, states with Islamic majorities are disproportionately represented. Figure 2 also shows the diminishing threat of the IRA, with Irish nationality ranking 9th, and the growing threat of Islamist terrorism, with all states ranking 2nd-7th boasting Islamic majorities in their populations. In fact, after British, the next 8 most common nationalities make up 21% of terror-related offences; more than the 92 remaining nations, including Ireland combined (20%). This further illustrates the changing nature of terrorism in the UK.

Though it is evident that terrorism conducted by the IRA and by Salafi-Jihadi groups is inherently different, there are demographic similarities between the Catholic communities in Northern Ireland in the 70s and 80s and the Muslim communities in the UK today, the most obvious being that both communities are minorities. O’Leary (2007 in Silke, 2008) identified a number of factors as important elements in increased support within Catholic communities for



extremists. These included: economic deprivation, educational underperformance, and insufficient political representation (Silke, 2008: 112). Interestingly, Muslim communities in the UK are experiencing similar circumstances as these (Silke, 2008: 113). A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 Census found that British Muslims are, compared to the national average, living in poorer standards of housing, in higher concentrations in deprived areas, and have poorer levels of education (The Muslim Council of Britain, 2015). Furthermore, in terms of proportional political representation, 19 of the UK's 650 MPs are Muslim (3%), whilst the UK's Muslim population is around 5 percent (Khojji, 2019).

Overall, both historically and today, minority communities in the UK which boast demographics with high levels of deprivation, low-education, and political under-representation, have "grown" terrorists. Both IRA terrorists and Islamist terrorists are overwhelmingly male and (relatively) young. However, some demographics are different, mostly due to different ideology. As the IRA was a nationalist group, its members were mostly Irish Catholics; whereas Salafi-Jihadi groups are theologian, so their members are Muslims, but predominantly British citizens. The main difference with terrorists nowadays and terrorists of the past is the "home-grown" aspect, for example the brothers who planned the particularly deadly 2017 Manchester Arena suicide bombing were both born in Manchester (Connor, 2017).

2.5 Radicalisation

The process of "radicalisation" is defined by the UK Government as "the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups" (HM Government, 2015: 4). 'Extremism' is defined by the UK Government as "the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs," and adds "calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas" (HM Government, 2015: 5). This vague definition (Ramsay, 2017: 147) is criticised in 6.2.

As stated in the aforementioned section, polarisation between social identities within an area in terms of deprivation or education level is the perfect context in which extremist ideas can flourish (Silke, 2008: 112). However, other factors have been shown to affect the likelihood of getting involved in terrorism and the radicalisation process.

Personal identity has been shown to play a vital role in explaining involvement in terrorism (Silke, 2008: 118). More specifically, those who identify more closely with an identity

which is not the same as the majority in the place they reside, are also those more likely to sympathise with extreme ideas; a study found that Muslims who rate their Islamic identity as personally more important than a national or ethnic identity are also those more likely to hold “positive views on topics such as jihad and martyrdom” (Ansari et al. 2006; in Silke, 2008: 110). Silke (2008: 111) observes that often radicalised individuals are “isolated from the society around them,” and seek companionship from people who share a similar background to them, which, in the West, is often in Mosques. The radicalisation does not often come from direct teachings of the Mosque, but instead that “the mosque often provides the setting in which small groups become radicalised” (Silke, 2008: 111). Bakker (2006) and Sageman (2004) also recognised that most terrorist suspects in the UK attended “extreme” mosques in the months leading up to their attacks.

Interestingly, both Silke (2008) and Sageman (2004) identified London’s Finsbury Park Mosque as one of the mosques visited by a significant number of would-be terrorists. Following, the mosque established both a national and international reputation for “hard-line extremist preaching that advocated the use of violence for furthering the global Salafi jihad” (Silke, 2008: 118). Attendance at the mosque can link a “very high proportion of the UK’s Islamist extremists” (Silke, 2008: 118) and, despite undergoing a transformation, the mosque was again linked to extremism in 2015 after it transpired that Charlie Hebdo gunmen were followers of a radical preacher there in the late 90s (Dearden, 2015).

Bakker (2006: 43) found that, contrary to popular belief, people tended to become involved in terrorism and extremism via relationships and group of friends or relatives: “many of them relate to each other through kinship or friendship”. This theory, often referred to as the ‘bunch of guys’ theory, was popularised by Sageman (2004). Bakker (2006: 6) found that in the radicalisation process there are often no formal ties with any “global Salafi networks”, and instead the members of the group radicalise one another (Silke, 2008; Sageman, 2004). In this group context, “individuals gradually adopt the beliefs and faith of the group’s more extreme members” known as “risky shift” (Silke, 2008: 111) suggesting that group identity and dynamics play a fundamental role in the radicalisation process.

During the ‘risky shift’, Bakker (2006) observes that there is an accelerating dependence on and loyalty towards the new group. This further isolates individuals from the rest of society, even from other friends and family, and brings about a more intense focus on the group. The group then is able to become more and more radical with no outward judgement; instead the group experiences approval from the group as they become more and more radical. Overall “the

polarization experienced within the group, combined with an increased sense of group identity and commitment, helped to radicalise individuals and facilitate their entry into the jihad.” (Silke, 2008: 111). Silke (2008: 112) goes on to argue that if “marginalized groups are discriminated against or internal sections believe that there is discrimination, then there will always be sections within such communities who will be receptive to radical ideologies that advocate changing or reforming the established, mainstream social system”.

It is evident from research that the process of radicalisation is strongly context-dependent. Hence, this paper shall take Ranstorp’s (2010: 6) conception of the radicalisation process as a “multifaceted combination of push-pull factors involving a combination of socio-psychological factors, political grievance, religious motivation and discourse, identity politics and triggering mechanisms” which has been praised by Powell (2016: 48), who “only adds economic factors, since, although often overstated, they do play some role.” Ideology is correctly included in this definition, however, Silke (2008), Ranstorp (2010), Kundani (2012) and Powell (2016) recognise that social, political, psychological and/or economic reasons also play a crucial part in the process of people being drawn into an extremist world-view.

3. The Prevent Strategy

3.1 Prevent Strategy Purpose and Objectives

Initially conceptualised in 2003, Prevent is one of four strands of CONTEST, the UK's counter-terrorism strategy (HM Government, 2018). The Prevent strategy remained "entirely undeveloped" until CONTEST was updated in 2006 (Thomas, 2014a) as a response to the 7/7 attacks in 2005. It was updated again in 2011, to reflect a change in UK Government from a Labour to a Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition (Powell, 2016: 49), and once more in 2018 as a reaction to the previous year, which had three deadly 2017 attacks: the Manchester Arena bombing, along with the London Bridge and the Westminster Bridge and Palace attacks, all resulted in multiple civilian deaths (HM Government, 2018: 3) making it the worst year in terms of civilians killed by terrorism since 2005.

Essentially, the Prevent strategy's primary purpose is to prevent British citizens becoming terrorists: "to safeguard and support those vulnerable to radicalisation" and "to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism" (HM Government, 2018: 31). The objectives of Prevent are to:

- (1) "Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism,"
- (2) "Safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support," and
- (3) "Enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate." (HM Government, 2018: 31).

In this 2018 version of CONTEST, objectives 1 and 3 are notably different from the objectives of the Prevent strategy set out in the 2011 version of the Prevent strategy which were to:

- (1) "Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it," and
- (3) "Work with a wide range of sectors where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address." (HM Government, 2011: 8)

As the second objective "is inextricably tied to the notion of vulnerability" to radicalisation (Dudenhofer, 2018: 155), it is an important objective for the purpose of Prevent ("safeguard and support those vulnerable to radicalisation"). Therefore, it is unsurprising it remains included in the updated version of Prevent. Objectives 1 and 3, however, have changed

considerably since their 2011 conception. The adaptations to these objectives are discussed in chapter 4.

Regarding the second objective, by identifying radicalisation as a complex but ongoing process which involves an extremist ideological aspect (Dudenhoefer, 2018), Prevent aims to intercept this process at its earliest stages by supporting people deemed 'vulnerable' (HM Government, 2018). Thereby, Prevent aims to stop British citizens from being drawn into "terrorist activity" by identifying and supporting individuals who are observed to be engaging in extremism (HM Government, 2018: 32). Furthermore, the nature of Prevent implies it is less a "counter-terrorism" strategy, and closer to a "counter-radicalisation" strategy (Richards, 2011: 2), focusing on preventing (non-violent) extremism (Powell, 2016: 49). This approach aims to discourage the creation of an environment in Britain that may be conducive to terrorism (Powell, 2016). With Prevent Duty, the UK Government is attempting to ensure that extremist views are not popularised or normalised in public spaces in Britain.

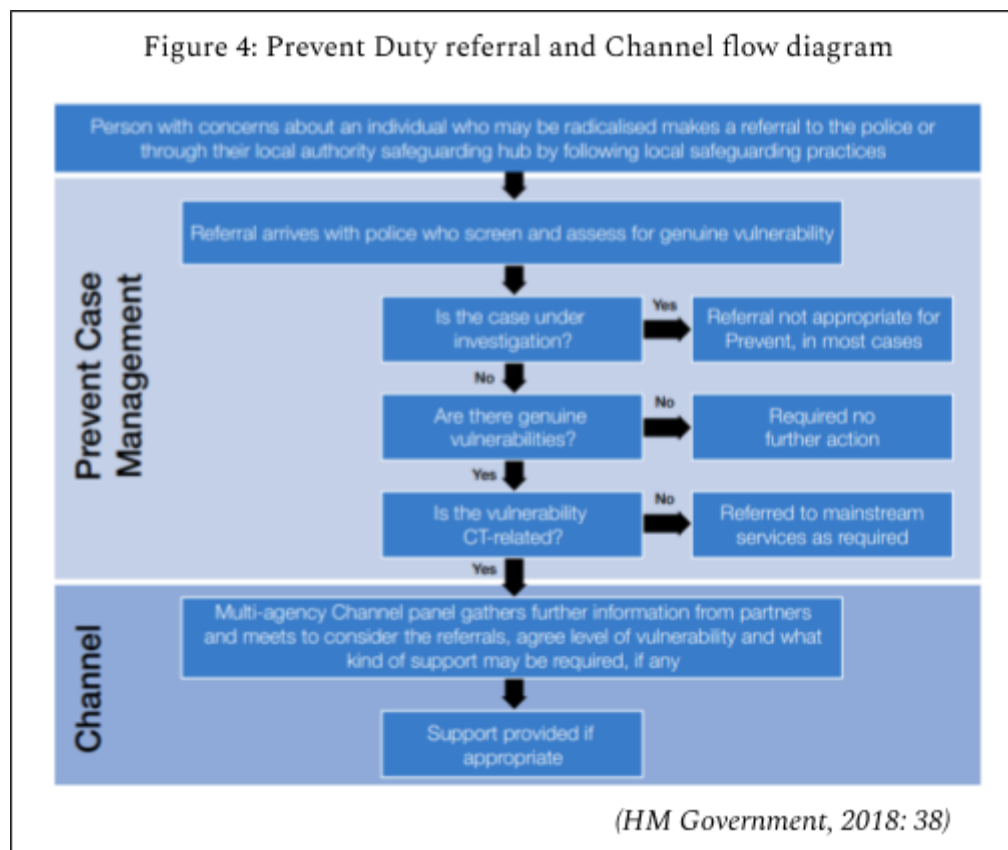
3.2 Prevent Duty and Channel

As stated by Dudenhoefer (2018: 154): "this unanticipated trend [of "home-grown" terrorists] has triggered an urgent and on-going debate on how to sufficiently tackle — and potentially prevent — the radicalisation of young people and specifically young British Muslims at an early stage". Due to an emphasis on preventing radicalisation in young individuals (Dudenhoefer, 2018: 158) the UK Government's response to this trend was the Prevent Duty.

The Prevent Duty requires "vulnerable" persons to be identified by "local authorities, schools, colleges, higher education institutions, health bodies, prisons and probation, and the police" and then safeguarded, via the Channel programme, so they are not drawn into terrorism (HM Government, 2018: 35). The nature of the Prevent Duty and Channel Programme show they are designed to avert the radicalisation process.

The Prevent Duty, first introduced in 2015, is described as a "statutory duty" by which specified authorities must show "due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism" (HM Government, 2015: 3). If a frontline worker in the aforementioned sectors has concerns about an individual being drawn into terrorism, expressing or advocating extremist ideologies or as "vulnerable to radicalisation", the worker can refer them for support or intervention (HM Government, 2018: 35). All referrals received by the police are first examined to see whether the individual referred is "already under investigation, if there is a genuine vulnerability and if that vulnerability is related to terrorism" (HM Government, 2018: 37). If an

individual is assessed as “vulnerable to radicalisation”, they might be offered support through the Channel programme (HM Government, 2018: 38). Participation in the Channel programme remains entirely voluntary (HM Government, 2018: 39). The way the Prevent Duty and Channel work is shown below in figure 4.



Arguably, the identification of those individuals who are “vulnerable” to radicalisation is the core aim of the policy (Dudenhoefer, 2018) and successful identification of these individuals is vital for the success of the Prevent strategy. The term “vulnerability to radicalisation” will be discussed more in-depth in section 5.1.

4. Successes

4.1 Rethinking Radicalisation

Both the first and third objectives of Prevent have been updated in the newest 2018 version of the Prevent strategy. As the third objective is concerned with those who have already engaged in terrorism, it is not relevant for the purpose of this paper.

However, the 2018 version gives the first objective of: “tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism” (HM Government, 2018: 31); reflecting considerable change since 2011 where the first objective was to: “respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it” (HM Government, 2011: 1). This shows a change in the UK Government’s conception of radicalisation from purely ideologically motivated to also context dependent. As the Prevent Duty identifies those vulnerable to radicalisation, this alteration is tied closely to the implementation of the duty.

The ‘Conveyor Belt’ theory was considered the academic framework Prevent was based upon (Powell, 2016: 51). Popularised by Martha Crenshaw’s *The Causes of Terrorism* (1981: 382), the ‘Conveyor Belt’ theory proposes that “social myths, traditions, and habits” are an “important permissive factor” in the legitimisation of violence for political or social struggle. The theory points to ideology as the main motivator of violent extremism and provides terrorists with “sources of moral authority” to legitimise their actions (Crenshaw, 1981: 395). This conception of terrorist activity, however, failed to recognise or consider *why* a person might accept a radical ideology, which is often due to perceived grievance or deprivation (Powell, 2016: 70).

Crenshaw’s theory (1981: 382) also assumes that extremist Islamic groups like Al-Qaeda are able to indoctrinate individuals with radical ideology because terrorist sympathies can be “communicated transnationally”. However, radicalisation, as we saw in section 2.5, is not caused by exploitation of individuals via extremist ideology, but also because of grievances. Perceived deprivation is categorised by Moghaddam (2005: 162) as the “ground floor” to terrorism in his influential paper *The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration*. Ironically, David Anderson, who used to be the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, argued that “Prevent has become a more significant source of grievance in affected communities than the police and ministerial powers” (Anderson, n.d: 3). By adhering to the ‘Conveyor Belt’ theory, Prevent turned Muslim communities in Britain into ‘suspect communities’ (Awan, 2012) and increased “feelings of suspicion-induced marginalisation among Muslim communities,” who sometimes view Channel as “anti-Islamic” (Powell, 2016: 74 Mohammad and Siddiqui, 2013: 12).

It is essential in the process of radicalisation that the ideology is attractive to and mobilising Muslims to participate in violence (Home Office, 2009 in Powell, 2016: 61). This has meant that marginalised individuals can be 'vulnerable' to those groups who may seemingly offer greater acceptance (Mohammad and Siddiqui, 2013: 13) and explain their grievances.

An examination of data and hard evidence would suggest ideology does obviously play some part in the process of radicalisation: Ramzan (2015), has said that "denying the role of ideology is absurd." She cites several examples of young, relatively wealthy, middle-class Muslims, without any socio-economic concerns, who have fled to Syria to fight a violent jihad and asks: "if ideology plays no role then how does that explain the increasing number of white converts who are going off to fight jihad?" (Ramzan, 2015). Furthermore, Sageman (2004: 93) identifies that whilst in childhood only 45 percent of Islamist extremists were described as being from very religious families, before joining, 99 percent were described as being very religious. Sageman (2004: 93) states that this displays that there was "a definite shift in the degree of devotion", refuting the claims of Kundani (2012) that there exists no link between extreme religious belief and terrorism.

It is evident that ideology remains an important aspect of radicalisation, but, as seen in section 2.5, it is not the only factor. Aligning with this thesis, in the 2018 updated Prevent the UK Government rejected the notion that there is a "single pathway, or 'conveyor belt', leading to involvement in terrorism" (HM Government, 2018: 32) a clear reference and rejection of Crenshaw's (1981) conception of radicalisation. From research, Prevent recognises that it is clear that "terrorists come from a broad range of backgrounds and appear to become involved in different ways and for differing reasons" (HM Government, 2018: 32). The updated version of Prevent recognises that "individuals may also be attracted to terrorist groups for social, cultural, material, psychological and other reasons" whilst maintaining that "ideology remains a strong driver" (HM Government, 2018: 16).

This recognition is a notable and big improvement on the Prevent strategy of 2011 and demonstrates the UK Government adapting the strategy to align with contemporary theories on radicalisation. As shown in section 2.4 and 2.5, deprivation, low-education, political under-representation (Silke, 2008) as well as a range of "socio-psychological factors, political grievance, religious motivation and discourse, identity politics and triggering mechanisms" (Ranstorp, 2009: 6) lead to radicalisation. For the Prevent Duty, this widens the profile of those who can be considered "at risk" and, hereby, discourages professional practitioners to rely on

“over-simplified assessments based upon demographics”, which is flawed implementation (Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, 2016: 3 in Dudenhoefer, 2018).

4.2 Rethinking the pre-criminal space

With the 3rd edition of CONTEST, the UK Government has shown that they are open to improving the strategy. The Chief Constable of Leicestershire, Simon Cole, condemned the lack of balance around the Prevent debate in academia arguing that the Prevent “anti-terrorism programme is not perfect, but we need to hear more about its successes” (Cole, 2016).

Cole (2016) argues that academics criticising Prevent do so without considering real life cases where radical young people’s lives have been transformed — maybe even saved — as a result of intervention by Prevent officials (Cole, 2016). There have been some major successes: over 1 million people have received Prevent Duty training, more than a thousand have been supported via Channel since 2012, and, since 2015, about 100 children have been safeguarded by the Courts from being taken to conflict zones around Syria and Iraq (HM Government, 2018: 31). Cole (2016) does not deny that Prevent needs improvements, however, as seen with changes in the 3rd edition of Prevent, the UK Government is willing to implement improvements proposed by “Government and academic research” (HM Government, 2018).

Charlotte Heath-Kelly (2017) argues that there were positive changes imposed by the Coalition Government with the introduction of the Prevent Duty. Previously, “Prevent funding was provided to seventy local authorities in relation to the numbers of Muslims in their area” (Heath-Kelly, 2017: 304) first in areas showing a 5% or higher, and later a 2%, demography of Muslims (Thomas, 2014: 476-477). This helped radicalise the Muslim populations in Britain (Heath-Kelly, 2017). However, the introduction of Prevent Duty altered the geography of counter-radicalisation to include the whole population (Heath-Kelly, 2017). An MI5 report, supported by the research of academics (Bakker, 2006; Sageman, 2004), concluded that “there is no easy way to identify those who become involved in terrorism” (Travis, 2008). Thereby, the UK Government recognises that terrorism cannot be statistically predicted in the style of other crimes (Heath-Kelly, 2017: 315).

Deciding on funding by demographic measures is an example of a pre-criminal measure. Pre-criminality measures employ data on levels of criminal conduct, high concentrations of low education level and economic deprivation to model demographic and geographical probability of future offending as a form of crime prevention measure (McCulloch and Wilson 2016). By deploying Prevent in areas with Muslim populations, communities, and by extension Muslim

individuals, were criminalised (Elishimi, 2020: 224) and branded 'suspect communities' (Awan, 2012). Hence, Heath-Kelly (2017: 298) sees the adoption of Prevent Duty as "radically reconstituted the epidemiological imagination of pre-criminal space, imagining that all bodies are potentially vulnerable to infection by radicalisers and thus warrant surveillance" (Heath-Kelly, 2017: 297). Hereby, the Prevent Duty extended the pre-criminal space outwards to include the whole population instead of isolating a minority. Furthermore, expanding the conception of who can be a terrorist to include an "ever-growing category of persons" (Elishimi, 2020: 225) is important if the Prevent strategy aims to address "all types of extremism, including extreme right-wing" (HM Government, 2018: 26).

This extension of the pre-criminal space refutes Kundnani (2012: 21) argument that strategies, such as Prevent, show that the governments "believe that they can pre-empt future terrorist attacks through intensive surveillance of the spiritual and mental lives of Muslims." To suggest that Prevent is "intensive surveillance" is purely speculative; agencies and ministers involved in Prevent have constantly denied the programme has ever involved spying or intelligence gathering (Hanson and Malik, 2009). Allegations were the result of a lack of transparency (Anderson, n.d). However, these criticisms have been met with increased transparency; as of 2018, the Home Office has started to publish the demographics of individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent and Channel.

In fact, between April 2018 to March 2019, the most common Channel referrals were concerns surrounding right-wing radicalisation (45%), followed by Islamist radicalisation (37%) (HM Government, 2019a: 1). This refutes Dudenhoefer's (2018: 157) claim that "in practice, then, Channel initiatives are most likely to focus on the threat" posed by "Muslim fundamentalism". Moreover, this shows that Prevent doesn't exist to spy on Muslims in the manner Kundani (2012) suggests.

By changing the first objective in the 2018 version of the Prevent strategy and by re-thinking the "pre-criminal" space to include the whole population via Prevent Duty, and, publishing Channel referrals, the UK Government has improved trust and transparency. In doing this, the UK Government shows Prevent is moving away from a "theology-based" discourse and recognises that socio-political grievances play a crucial role in the process of radicalisation. This trend has expanded the pre-criminal space to include the whole population, instead of only focusing, and thereby radicalising, Muslim populations. This reflects research conducted by academics on counter-radicalisation.

5. Shortcomings

5.1 Vulnerability to Radicalisation

Prevent Duty works by identifying those who are “vulnerable to radicalisation” (HM Government, 2018: 10) and offering them support where appropriate. However, what constitutes ‘vulnerability to radicalisation’ has not been clearly outlined.

The description of radicalisation as a process is rather unsurprising as the conception of a ‘process’ directly implies governmental intervention (Heath-Kelly, 2013: 394). Prevent relies upon the idea that ‘radicalisation’ is a process which, when understood, provides a ‘counterfactual’ to terrorism (Heath-Kelly, 2013). It is evident that conceptualising radicalisation as a process is crucial for the theoretical and practical validity of Prevent.

As discussed in sections 2.4, 2.5, and briefly in 4.1, evidence and data shows that the process of radicalisation is a real concept, yet, the concept remains elusive (Neumann, 2013; Bakker, 2006; Dudenhofer, 2018). Neumann (2013: 284) accepts that the concept of radicalisation remains “ambiguous”, however, urges academics and law-makers alike to stop “denying its validity” and instead “work harder to understand and embrace” the concept.

Despite the ambiguity, that radicalisation discourse is dominating policy agendas (Neumann, 2013: 284) exemplified perfectly by Prevent. Bakker (2006: 54) is wary of embarking a course of action like Prevent before we understand much more about the radicalisation process: “we [need to] know much more about the relationship between certain circumstances and the joining of the jihad by groups and individuals”. Upholding this opinion, a report conducted after the 7th July 2005 London bombings on behalf of the House of Commons (2006: 31) found “there is not a consistent profile to help identify who may be vulnerable to radicalisation”.

Without clear indicators, identifying so-called “vulnerable” persons is problematic. In 2017, two brothers of mixed Indian and Middle Eastern heritage, aged seven and five, told a teacher they had been given toy guns by their parents. Subsequently, the two brothers were reported to the Prevent programme as being at risk of radicalisation (Addley and Topping, 2017). After a legal challenge, the Central Bedfordshire council admitted that the boys had been discriminated against because of their race (Addley and Topping, 2017).

This case perfectly demonstrates what is fundamentally flawed about the Prevent strategy. As the School Governors put it: there had been “a degree of racial stereotyping” in the way Prevent had been implemented in the two boys’ case (Addley and Topping, 2017). What the

UK Government fails to recognise is that, by failing to provide clear definitions on what constitutes 'vulnerability to radicalisation', identifying individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation is rendered problematic.

According to the Oxfordshire City Council website, signs that an individual could be being radicalised include: "becoming withdrawn and stopping participating in their usual activities; they may express feelings of: anger, grievance, injustice, or go missing from their home, school or care setting; a new group of friends who have an extremist ideology; using language that supports 'us and them' thinking; or possessing or searching for extremist literature online." However, this list is so vague that it becomes impossible "differentiate between simply rebellious or radicalised teenagers" (Dudenhoefer, 2018: 177). Especially as Thomas (2014a: 182) observes that, despite the resources, scale and funding of Prevent, "little focus has been put on educational resources or, more crucially, on training and orientation for professional practitioners" who are required to perform Prevent Duty.

Without proper guidance, Prevent duty enforcers may rely on existing racial prejudices and biases to identify "vulnerable" individuals, like in the aforementioned case. Ramsay (2017: 150) argues that the lack of clarity in the definition allows "huge scope for the initial identification of potential extremism that will in practice depend on the views and prejudices of the staff member involved in the surveillance of students' conduct and speech." Heath-Kelly (2017: 299) agrees: "schoolteachers and health-care professionals are not immune to Islamophobic media discourses, they apply their duties of suspicion unequally." Even with proper guidance, "applying the Prevent Duty in a non-biased manner may turn into an insurmountable task given the complexity and multitude of vulnerability indicators" (Dudenhoefer, 2018: 177). Expressing similar concerns as Ramsay (2017), the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (2016: 3 in Dudenhoefer, 2018) identified problems with implementation, such as "over-simplified assessments based upon demographics and poverty indicators have consistently demonstrated to increase victimisation, fail to identify vulnerabilities and, in some cases, increase the ability of extremists to exploit, operate and recruit." As the Prevent Duty exists, with specific regard to educational institutions, to "pre-empt the further harms that may result from any violence arising from a student's radicalisation" (Ramsay, 2017: 147), the fact that identifying those who are more likely to be radicalised relies on racial biases throws the legitimacy of Prevent Duty into question.

Furthermore, teenagers being viewed as "vulnerable" only increases susceptibility to "feelings of frustration, anger [and] hate" (Abbas, 2007: 4 in Dudenhoefer, 2018). If anything, this

will only increase their likelihood to turn to an extremist “ideology that explains the source of their problems and gives them hope.” (Juergensmeyer, 2003: 194 in Powell, 2016). Hence, the notion of ‘vulnerability to radicalisation’ might counter-productively be encouraging individuals to turn to extremism.

Bakker (2006: 52) concluded that individuals arrested for, or who carried out, terrorist offences in Europe were “mostly single males that are born and raised in Europe; they are not particularly young; they are often from the lower strata of society; and many of them have a criminal record.” This suggests a common profile amongst terror suspects, however, Bakker (2006: 54) does not advocate for intervention: “such policies may even make things worse, for instance, by stereotyping immigrant and Muslim communities as possible jihadi terrorists.”

Lack of clarity is a common problem with some of Prevent’s other central concepts. According to the UK Government, “there is no precise line between what we have described above as terrorist ideology, and what we consider extremist ideology” (HM Government, 2018: 23). This is inherently problematic since the UK Government has, so far, failed to “define the parameters of illegal extremist material, as opposed to legitimate political speech” (Saltman and Russell, 2014: 1) stipulating confusion in Prevent’s implementation regarding who should be referred and why. This phenomenon likely explains why Mohammad and Siddiqui (2013: 13) found that, of the Prevent referrals between 2006 and 2013, 78% did not need any assessment, suggesting that notions surrounding the identifying of so-called vulnerable individuals “lacks clarity”.

As “holding “predictive power,” is key to the strategy’s execution” (Powell, 2016: 51) the lack of clarity regarding concepts central to the identification of those who are “vulnerable to radicalisation” is inherently problematic for Prevent’s implementation.

5.2 Measuring effects

As mentioned in the introduction, due to the nature of Prevent, its impact is difficult to measure (Saltman and Russell, 2014). This is partly due to the lack of governmental transparency in regard to publishing terror-related statistics in the UK (Powell, 2016), and partly simply because of the nature of counter-radicalisation: “it has been very difficult for Prevent to measure its success or cost-effectiveness on a project-by-project basis, on a local level, or on a national strategic level” (Saltman and Russell, 2014: 4). This is because it is near impossible to measure how extremist a person is or evaluate if they became less extremist because of Prevent Duty and Channel.

MI5's Andrew Parker (2013, in Powell, 2016) revealed that there were thirty-four terrorist plots targeted at the UK, mostly by UK citizens, that were stopped between 2005 and 2013. However, according to Powell (2016: 76) this "appears to suggest that the government and supporting services have demonstrated good use of intelligence and crime prevention, rather than actually reduced support for terrorism, as intended." Kundani (2015) echoes this narrative arguing that stopping violent attacks is of paramount importance for the security of the UK, however, this concerns the objectives of the other strands of CONTEST. In other words, there is no way to truly measure the success of the Prevent Duty and Channel.

Intelligence is an example of "sharp-ended" counter-terrorism. "Sharp-ended" counter-terrorism measure can be quantified more easily by examining security impacts, the number of terror attacks prevented, or prosecution rates for terrorism-related offences (Saltman and Russell, 2014: 4). Prevent cannot be measured in this manner as it would be impossible to draw any causal relationship between the Prevent and the aforementioned variables. Christmann (2012: 76 in Powell, 2016) echoes these concerns stating that it is "exceedingly difficult to gauge the real success of Prevent," as there is not an effective way "to measure one's vulnerability to becoming involved in extremism and the effect certain programmes may have at reversing such processes." For these reasons, Saltman and Russell (2014: 4) were lead to the "questionable conclusion that sharp-end counter-terrorism is more effective than soft-end counter-extremism and is therefore worthy of greater investment."

This is a fundamental flaw in any policy; if you cannot measure success, then how do you know it is effective and, by extension, defend it? The fact that commentators seem unable to comment confidently on the effects of the Prevent Duty and Channel, let alone successes or failures, is a major shortcoming for the programme which is implemented in multiple public sectors across the UK.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Islamist Terrorism

It is noteworthy that, in the 100-page 2018 version of CONTEST, “Islamist terrorism” is the only term explicitly defined (HM Government, 2018: 8). The UK Government defines Islamist terrorism as “acts of terrorism perpetrated or inspired by politico-religiously motivated groups or individuals who support and use violence as means to establish their interpretation of an Islamic society” (HM Government, 2018: 8). In specific regards to the UK, the Islamist terrorist threat is overwhelmingly perpetrated by Salafi-Jihadi movements, which are inherently violent (HM Government, 2018: 8).

However, not all Jihad movements are violent. The phrase derives from the Arabic for ‘struggle’ and there are two versions: the first is the ‘greater jihad’, and the second is the ‘lesser jihad’ (Silke, 2008: 100). The greater jihad is self-seeking and personal: “it involves the effort of each Muslim to become a better human being, to struggle to improve him- or herself and, as a result, to be a good Muslim” (Bakker, 2006: 1). As explained by The Prophet Mohammed, the test of the greater Jihad is his obedience to God (Silke, 2008: 100). The second form, the ‘lesser jihad’, is more outwardly focused. The ‘lesser Jihad’ sanctions violence on behalf of Islam (Silke, 2008: 100) and legitimises violent acts as means to mobilize a political and social struggle against an unjust ruler (Bakker, 2006: 2).

Today, most radical and violent Islamic groups, for example the groups that perpetrate violent acts in the UK, ignore the political and social philosophy of the greater jihad and exclusively adopt the teachings of the lesser jihad (Bakker, 2006: 2). As Sachedina (2001: 121 in Powell, 2016) points out that “any jihad that leads to meaningless destruction of human life and ignores concerns for peace with justice” associated with the teachings of the greater jihad.

“Salafi” is a movement which maintains that Muslims ought to only refer to the Quran and Sunnah for religious guidance (Kepel, 2002). It is a reformist movement within Sunni Islam. Gilles Kepel (2002), who coined the term “Salafist jihadism”, states that Salafis he encountered in the 1980s were largely apolitical. However, exposure and subsequent rejection of mainstream European society combined with the lesser jihad created a volatile mixture (Kepel, 2002: 375).

It is important to remember that though nearly all Islamist terrorists in the UK are Salafist Jihads (HM Government, 2018: 8); the vast majority of Salafists and Jihads are not terrorists. In fact, Salafists which support Jihad “remain a minority among Salafists” (Silke, 2008: 111). Salafist Jihadism is a combination of two radical movements and is considered overly

conservative by the vast majority of Muslims who overwhelmingly reject violence. Moreover, Salafi-Jihadi terrorist groups also often express hostility towards non-Salafi or non-Sunni Muslim demographics; worldwide, the majority of “their victims are Muslims” (HM Government, 2018: 15). These radical groups are evidently distinct from the Islamic community, a fact recognised by the UK Government: “Daesh claims to represent Islam [however] it uses atrocities [...] against Muslims” (HM Government, 2018: 16). Aligning with this, Saudi Arabia’s top cleric, Sheikh Abdulaziz Al al-Sheikh, called ISIS “enemy number one of Islam” (Fraser, 2014).

Hence, the fact that the UK Government refers to Salafi-Jihadi terrorism as “Islamist terrorism” is misleading. Research shows that Salafist Jihadism represents a tiny fraction of Islamic people, rejects Islamic teachings of the greater jihad, and, worldwide, targets predominantly other Muslims. Hence, it is misleading, inaccurate, and confusing for staff required to conduct Prevent Duty, to describe terrorism of this nature as “Islamist”. Hereby, this paper recommends the UK Government replace the term “Islamist Terrorism” with the term “Salafi-Jihadi Terrorism.”

6.2 Extremism and British Values

Extremist ideology is “a strong driver” in the process of radicalisation (HM Government, 2018: 16), and is the defining, distinctive factor between mass-killings and terror attacks (Pinker, 2018). Hence, as the concept of ‘extremism’ underlies all that the Prevent strategy and Prevent Duty aims to restrain and inhibit; clarity is essential.

‘Extremism’ is defined by the UK Government as “the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs,” and adds “calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas” (HM Government, 2015: 5). According to Dudenhofer (2018: 162) “it comes as no surprise that such vague definitions have caused great academic controversy” with Ramsay (2017: 147) stating both ‘extremism’ and ‘British values’ are “vaguely and expansively” defined.

Powell (2016: 55) argues that this vague definition has created a “myriad of problems [...] including problems with its brevity, as well as being inherently contradictory”. This is because, according to this definition of extremism, British society would reject beliefs outside the mainstream (Powell, 2016: 55), despite the Government claiming to uphold individual liberty, respect and tolerance (HM Government, 2015: 5). Therefore, this definition seems paradoxical in

its essence as well as seeming to contradict directly with some human rights such as the freedom of speech.

Another identified problem with this definition is that it is “literally expansive in the sense that it is non-exhaustive” (Ramsay, 2017: 150) as it only mentions values which are part of a list, hereby, suggesting that there might be other undetermined ‘fundamental British values’. This creates great uncertainty to what ‘fundamental British values’ actually are, as well as uncertainty to what ‘extremism’ is which leads Ramsay (2017: 150) to assert both “British-values” and “extremism” are “concepts whose meaning is hugely controversial and can be ‘opposed’ in many different ways about which there is little agreement.”

The controversy surrounding these concepts has had practical implications. As previously mentioned, Erin Marie Saltman and Jonathan Russell (2014: 1) recommend that the UK Government clearly define what constitutes illegal extremist material and what constitutes legitimate political speech if the laws defined by the 2006 Terrorist Act are to be enforced. Section 2 of The Terrorism Act 2006 prohibits “the dissemination of terrorist publications” which are “(a) to be understood by a reasonable person as a direct or indirect encouragement [...] to the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism; or (b) to be useful in the commission or preparation of such acts.”³ It is problematic to have an unclear definition of what constitutes extremist material if the law, and Prevent Duty, is to be properly understood and enforced (Saltman & Russell, 2014: 1).

Extreme components of Islamic ideology are incredibly hateful, intolerant, and oppose democracy, the rule of law and even the most basic of human rights, so it should not and cannot be allowed to flourish in British Mosques, religious schools, or within any section of British society. However, some members of the current Conservative Government aren’t exactly poster-boys for toleration; many of their colleagues voted for Section 28, the bill opposing the legalisation of same-sex marriage (Shariatmadari, 2016). Furthermore, though the rule of law and individual liberty are listed as ‘British values’, on June 7, 2017, Theresa May, announced that “things need to change” in the fight against terrorism, adding that “if our human rights laws get in the way of doing it, we will change the law, so we can do it” (BBC News, 2017); a blatant abuse of the rule of law. May’s statement gives the worryingly hypercritical impression that the UK Government, according to their definitions, is willing to engage in ‘extremism’, in order to fight extremism. Not only does this erode trust in the strategy, but further blurs what is meant by notions of ‘extremism’ and ‘British values’. This creates confusion for the Prevent Duty both in

³ 2006 c. 11

regards to identification of 'vulnerable persons', and the ways that schools and universities are supposed to promote 'British values' (HM Government, 2015:8).

Overall, the definition of extremism given by the UK Government is too vague and leads to problematic notions of what exactly constitutes British values. The current definition has been criticised as contradictory, creates uncertainty to what constitutes both 'extremism' and 'fundamental British values', and stipulates problems with enforcing the Prevent Duty. It is evident from research that the UK Government must clarify these concepts immediately, and, following, create a clear dialogue to which they act in accordance. Furthermore, clear and explicit indicators should be provided to professionals regarding what constitutes 'extremist behaviour', such as disseminating extremist material or showing extremist videos to others. Prevent Duty guidance should also make an explicit and active effort to discourage racial stereotyping.

7. Conclusion

The Prevent strategy has improved notably since its last update in 2011. By listening to research and experts, the UK Government has made Prevent increasingly de-politicised, medicalised, and defensible. The UK Government has also begun to publish statistics showing Prevent Programme and Channel referrals, increasing transparency. The introduction of the Prevent Duty led to positive results, such as expanding the pre-criminal space to the whole population. It is now clear that Prevent Duty and Channel exist to tackle all forms of extremism, not just 'Islamist'.

However, from research, it is evident that Prevent duty still has some notable weaknesses. It is inaccurate and misleading to refer to Salafi-Jihadi terrorism as 'Islamist', hence, the terminology should be changed. Furthermore, due to the lack of clarity surrounding central concepts of the Prevent Duty, such as 'British values' and 'extremism', professional practitioners rely on racial stereotyping to identify those 'vulnerable' to radicalisation. This has created grievances within Muslim communities in Britain, which, in turn, have contributed to the radicalisation of the Muslim population. This has negatively effected counter-terrorism efforts in the UK. The UK Government must provide clarity on both of these concepts in order to improve Prevent's implementation in the UK and provide a clear discourse on what it means to be 'British' and to uphold 'British values'.

Furthermore, it remains that we still lack sufficient evidence with regard to how the radicalisation process occurs, thereby, we simply don't know what the long term social effects of a policy like the Prevent are. The Prevent Duty and Channel's effects remain largely speculative. The lack of measurements means we don't fully realise how manipulating different social factors will affect tensions and balance in society. Without this measuring ability, there is a real possibility the Prevent Duty is ineffective, or worse, counter-productive. The UK Government must work with experts to find a way to attempt to measure the successes of the Prevent Duty and Channel, perhaps by measuring reception within Muslims groups, interviews with ex-Channel referrals or other methods. Without such methods, the UK Government remains incapable of defending its controversial strategy.

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