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How Not to Spot a Terrorist: The Prevent Strategy's Effect on British Muslims

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How Not to Spot a Terrorist: The Prevent Strategy's Effect on British Muslims

by

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Abstract

The United Kingdom's Prevent Strategy is a unique government response to the threat of domestic terrorism. The program mixes social interaction and police work to dissuade suspected political extremists from participating in or supporting terrorist activities. This approach to preventing terrorist threats has had its share of criticism, though. British activists decried the Prevent Strategy for promoting discrimination against Muslims in Britain, misuse of public funding for programs, and a fear of government intrusion into private lives. In addition to a divisive history between Muslims and British natives, the Prevent Strategy's emphasis on threats posed by Al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups contributed to social marginalization against Muslims more than any other minority group in Britain. British Parliament reformed the program recently to address its criticisms, but the reform retained its scope and the United Kingdom has not done enough to respond to Muslims' claims of increased strained relations with the government caused by this policy. This thesis will deconstruct the operations of the Prevent Strategy, review Muslim and British relations, analyze the Prevent Strategy and its 2011 reform, explain the flaws of the original policy, and argue why the reformed law continues to divide Muslims within the British population. It will also describe the social and political characteristics of British Muslims and provide case studies that demonstrate a bias against Muslims in the United Kingdom's domestic counter-terrorism program.

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Introduction

While the British Muslim population reached an all-time high in the 2011 United Kingdom Census, the British government has increased its scope over preventing terrorism in the past decade. Muslims, mostly of South Asian descent, have resided in the United Kingdom since the 1960s, but British society sees them as foreigners and may not accept them into the mainstream due to the presence of Islamist extremists. Nearly five percent of British residents claim to be Muslim, which makes the United Kingdom the third largest Muslim population in the European Union. Since London suffered an Al Qaeda attack on July 7, 2005, the United Kingdom has concentrated on eradicating any attempts from Islamists to kill citizens again. The result of this anti-terrorism campaign is the Prevent Strategy (Prevent).

Enacted in 2007, the Prevent Strategy is the British domestic counter-terrorism program; its promotion of social programs designed to dissuade Muslims from following extremists and integrate them into the mainstream makes it unique. However, the public rejected Prevent since its provisions seemed pervasive and many thought it monitored citizens. In 2011, Parliament acknowledged Prevent's criticism and reformed the program to suit some public demands. This version of the Prevent Strategy spurred more controversy since it introduced activities in universities and failed to address marginalization issues. Criticism of Prevent argues the British public policy of domestic counter-terrorism has intensified the social marginalization of Muslims. Does the 2007 version of Prevent sponsor the burden of terrorism onto British Muslims? Does the 2011 revision reduce scrutiny placed on British Muslims and treat all forms of terrorism equally? This thesis will review the demographics and marginalization of British Muslims, the origins of the Prevent Strategy, contents of the 2007 and 2011 Prevent Strategies,

and public perception of the program; in addition, it will analyze the program and offer suggestions for a third reform.

Literature Review

The literature of this thesis consists of primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources are government publications that explain the operations of the Prevent Strategy and critics' accounts from when the program underwent a review under the British Parliament. Secondary sources include critical analyses of the original Prevent Strategy and statistical data and sociological reports on the Muslim population of the United Kingdom and Europe. Critical analyses of the Prevent Strategy after the implementation of the original law make up the bulk of secondary sources. Critical research papers of Prevent observe the program's effects on Muslim relations with the British government, determine its effectiveness in counter-terrorism and spending, and provide case studies of it that demonstrate flaws of the program's intention to integrate participants. These commentary pieces provide scholarly criticism of the original legislation from 2007 to 2011, but there are very few of the same that cover Prevent after the reform.

The two main primary sources are releases from both chambers of Parliament that detail the changes of the law after the recent reform. There were no primary governmental sources on the first proposal for the Prevent Strategy, but two sources from Parliament describe how the original law developed and explain why the public perceived it negatively. According to a factsheet on the bill that proposed to reform Prevent in June 2011, House of Lords committee on the Home Office acknowledged that the original legislation needed stricter oversight of grants, overlooked right-wing terrorism threats, and had an unclear goal since many of the existing programs provided by the law had a vague purpose (Prevent Strategy 2011, 44-46). Lord

Carlisle, a member of the oversight committee, suggested that public criticisms of the program including spying on suspected British citizens, overseas operations, and the exclusive monitoring of Islamists were exaggerations. These allegations grew out of some parts of Prevent that are true, so the committee recommended that those parts needed to be reformed out of public concern. Although the Prevent program does extend overseas, its international activities fall under a separate branch of the Home Office's counter-terrorism policy called Pursue. The original Prevent program included all forms of terrorism, along with cults and gangs, but administrators overlooked them because of the United Kingdom's prioritization of Al Qaeda as the primary threat to British lives and the fact that right-wing extremists are less organized and developed (26). Furthermore, a government-conducted consultation found that eighty percent of respondents wanted greater use of the program against right-wing extremists (25). For this reason, the committee proposed an increase of funds to combat right-wing extremism to counter allegations that made it seem like the government did not consider other forms of extremism to pose no real threat. In another response to critics, Prevent does not extend into political extremism in Northern Ireland because that duty is reserved solely to the Secretary of State. Although the committee knows about political extremism among Irish separatists, they do not have the power to recommend any changes to the law (105).

In addition to responding to public opinion, the publication reviews the Prevent Strategy's spending and activities and finds that the program was largely ineffective. In an accounting of program spending in 2010, the House of Lords concluded that seventy percent of funds went to local police, 15 percent went to social programs, nine percent went to partnership agencies, and a government campaign to denounce extremists spent three percent (96). One of the most significant problems with the effectiveness of the program was the resulting

controversy among Muslims that suspected the government was acting as a "theological arbiter" by telling Muslims how they should practice their religion (50). The publication also provides demographics for Prevent program participants. According to 2010 data, half of suspected terrorists lived in London Boroughs such as Camden, Brent, Leicester, and Tower Hamlets. Large industrial towns outside of London such as Birmingham and Leeds also received the Prevent Strategy's attention (97). Of these people thwarted from terrorist activities, a quarter was of Pakistani descent, a third held college degrees, and the majority was foreign born (24). In addition to the survey, the committee said that the typical person suspected of supporting extremists tended to be younger, arrive from a low socioeconomic group, and have higher unemployment rates (22).

After the reform bill passed in 2011, the House of Commons reviewed the changes in a publication that published arguments over the bill and advised how the government will better block attempts of terrorism from all extremist ideologies. In a report titled "Roots of Violent Radicalisation," the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee addresses the United Kingdom's policy on counter-terrorism with the same complaints as the House of Lords. The committee also found that the Prevent Strategy from 2007 put little effort on rebutting right-wing extremism, held a negative opinion among the public for its perceived actions, and for improperly addressing Islamist extremism to Muslim communities. A major problem found in the Prevent Strategy was that many Muslims were unaware of extremism in their communities and some even regarded Islamism as a normal ideology. The Islamist ideology urges Muslims to contain themselves in a religious environment in order to prevent the introduction of foreign ideas and practices to the community that may corrupt Islamic observances. By concentrating on the Quran verse *Al-wala wal-bara,* Islamists advocate Muslims living in the West to disconnect

with their non-Islamic environment. For this reason, Islamists prize historic events in which they

uprooted power from non-Muslims such as the defeat of European Christians Crusaders in the

Middle East (Kepel 2004, 134). In fact, one member of the committee suggested that the name

"Prevent" was unnerving to Muslims because they mistook the program's meaning for averting

Islam (Home Affairs Committee 2011, 30). Aside from dissuading Islamists from participating

in the program, the committee stated that the Prevent Strategy in its initial state was insufficient

to respond to terrorist threats. They criticized the lack of an established threat level outside of

Al-Qaeda and Northern Ireland related activities and for a noticeable gap in the government's

attention toward Islamists and right-wing extremists (19). The committee also demanded a

means to monitor the Internet since it has become an increasing place for extremists to promote

their agendas. Although the Home Office has had the authority to shut down any websites that

promote terrorism since 2006, the committee report argued that there needed to be an escalation

of raids against these types of sites in order to meet the amount of dangerous material found in

cyberspace (23). Most of these proposals made it into the legislative bill that reformed Prevent

in June 2011, but some of them died in the committee. For example, a Member of Parliament

suggested extending Prevent into prisons to regulate Muslim chaplains. Some members pointed

out a threat of extremist imams who aimed to develop Islamist ideologies among Muslim

prisoners (26).

Not only does the Home Affairs Committee report provide insight into legislative

thoughts while Parliament reformed the Prevent Strategy, but it also instructs more information

on the program's structure. An analysis of the program's effectiveness showed that the program

chose to distribute funds for social programs because youth were known to prefer social

interaction to a surge in policing (29). The Home Office also lists criteria for what constitutes an

extremist threat. An organization can only be defined as a threat depending on the nature and scale of its operations, the threat it poses to the United Kingdom, its potential harm to British citizens overseas, its presence in Britain, and its need to support other likeminded organizations internationally in the War on Terrorism (32-33). The report also mentioned that Prevent rarely proscribed right-wing extremist organizations and delisted the only such group ever suspected after it abandoned terrorist activities (33).

Two sources provide direct responses from British Muslims and people who disapprove of the Prevent Strategy. The Home Office published results from an Internet questionnaire and a focus group tour in June 2011 about citizens' thoughts on Prevent's social impact. The Equality Impact Assessment received 169 online responses, 124 participants in the travelling focus group, and 78 responses from e-mail-based reviews on Prevent from interest groups such as the Equality and Human Rights Network and the Civil Service Muslim Network. Data gathering occurred from December to November 2010 and both the questionnaire and focus groups asked participants for their opinion on Prevent's impact on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, and marriage status. Only data on race and religion seemed relevant since almost all participants thought Prevent has no impact on other factors.

A report from the Equality and Human Rights Commission conducted by Chodhury and Fenwick analyzes the social impact of the Prevent Strategy and other counterterrorist programs in the United Kingdom. They interviewed Muslim students, Muslim community leaders, mosque attendees, and people who have collaborated with Prevent to see how the government's pursuit against Islamist terrorists and extremists who live within their communities affect their lives. Interview topics include airport checks, monitoring Muslim student organizations, the

preference of foreign or domestic imams, and whether Prevent should be operated at a national or local level.

Commentators' blog posts from the Muslim Council of Britain website give a clear understanding of the Muslims' perspective on the Prevent Strategy's reform during June 2011. There were fifteen opinion articles published about the Prevent 2011 bill that recommended what Muslim political activists thought should have been removed from the original legislation, what should have been added to improve the government's relations with Muslims, and what they thought about new programs added in the reform bill. Sabir's blog post reacts to the new addition of Prevent programs in universities. His attack on the expansion centers on the origin of the bill; a right-of-center think tank's discovery that a significant number of those arrested for collaboration with Al-Qaeda held a university degree might have influenced the idea of monitoring students and faculty. Sabir theorized that since the report claimed that universities might foster radical ideologies, then the government's expansion of Prevent to prevent the development of extremism in universities must have originated from the think tank (Sabir 2011, "Prevent on Campus").

Along with new controversial features, some contributors criticize the reformed program for continuing its promotion of discrimination or launching prejudiced attacks onto certain groups of Muslims. Another article disapproves of the lack of any Prevent activities available for women, a problem in that the government supposedly thinks that Muslim women never fall into extremism or that they can only be victims of extremist ideologies. An example of the latter would be the common Western view of women who wear the niqab as a sign of oppression in Islamist controlled areas. Brown, the author of this post, also advocates for a reform of the government's lack of protection for Muslim women who are harassed for wearing the hijab

(Brown 2011, "Gender Matters"). Leon Moosavi's article argues that the reformed Prevent Strategy discriminates against a lesser-known group of Muslims – native British converts to Islam. According to an information packet obtained by Moosavi, the government advises that newly converted Muslims will be more likely to know less about their religion and are more easily convincible by Islamists to join their cause. The author responds to this claim by berating claims implied in the statement, which is that British Muslim converts use religion as a crutch for their weak-minds and that they are being manipulated by Islamists. The author's perception highlights Muslims' reaction to the reformed Prevent Strategy's inclusion of British converts. Furthermore, Moosavi's article defends the presence of Islamic student organizations on university campuses as helpful groups that assist new converts to uphold their beliefs and religious practices within a social environment that encourages activities prohibited to Muslims (Moosavi 2011, "Extremism, Islamophobia and Muslim Converts"). Like Sabir, Moosavi advocates for the government not to look to universities as incubators for radical Islamist acts.

Secondary sources that criticize the Prevent Strategy for further distancing relations between Muslims and native British people form a wide view of the situation. In *Islam: War on Terror and the Future of Muslim Minorities in the United Kingdom*, Rehman argues that Britain's anti-terrorism policy enacted since late 2001 has displaced Muslims socially and driven them to reject integration. The Race Relations Act of 1976 and the Racial and Religious Hatred Act of 2006 have made discriminatory practices in public and private establishments and eliminated special screenings of Muslims respectively. When the United Kingdom first adopted screenings at airports in 2001, terrorism searches increased triple for people of South Asian descent within a year. Britain's policy on terrorism emphasized Muslims while it ignored terrorist suspicions from Christians and seculars. Prevent joined the police-like strategy with a

"moderation" of Islam plan so that Muslims do not feel unwelcome; the Contest strategy remained in effect, but Prevent's social program took a lead role in 2005. However, discrimination stayed within the new policy. In 2007, an official in the Home Security Office said that adopting "Britishness" was the answer to ending Islamic terrorism. There is also criticism toward the legal treatment of Muslims related to religious practice. The government does not recognize the hijab as a protected religious right nor does it recognize Islamic marriages as official. The lack of recognition of Islamic practices from the United Kingdom has contributed to increasing Muslims' attention toward foreign Islamists for political guidance. Webster shows British Muslims have faced discrimination and social marginalization before the 9/11 attacks. Since the 1980s, British nationalists have blamed Muslims for introducing extremism into the country and have used their higher poverty and low education rates to paint them as foreigners who have failed to integrate within British culture. This information extends the issue of a deep cultural divide between Muslims and native British people by showing that the problem continues from when they arrived as foreign workers.

The growth of political Islam could be an answer to discrimination for some Muslims. Mandaville uses a Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2006 that asked Muslims from various countries on who was their primary guide for religion. For British Muslims, 42 percent said it was their local imam or sheikh and 28 percent said it was a foreign imam or organization. The survey showed that whereas most British Muslims look to their own community for Islamic advice, a large amount sees religious leaders from their home nation or an Islamic republic such as Pakistan or Iran to be better suited for religious guidance. The ones who listen to a foreign leader also tend to be more conservative and admire political Islam. They also hold untrustworthy views of domestic organizations such as the Muslim Council of Britain because

they work within the non-Islamic British system. The perception of accepting a secular government contradicts the ideology of political Islam, which is to promote Islam as the only acceptable guide for government.

The secular culture of the United Kingdom and the negative association of religious behavior is one of the causes of discrimination against Muslims within the Prevent strategy. Because Prevent uses the perception of risk as the main test for identifying suspected terrorists, the United Kingdom has been targeting anyone who delves more deeply into religion. Gutowski compares the perceptions of risk and guidance of Muslim leaders to the United Kingdom's historical inspection of Catholic Churches and Irish leaders in the late nineteenth century because of the focus on religious behavior as a factor for fueling terrorism. There have been comparisons of the perceptions of risk and guidance to Muslim leaders to the United Kingdom's historical inspection of Catholic Churches and Irish leaders from the late nineteenth century to the 1980s due to the Prevent Strategy's focus on religious behavior as a factor for fueling terrorism. During that time, the government met with moderate Irish Catholics and assigned them with tasks to calm down the more devoutly religious political extremists. While Gutowski's comparison to the Irish conflict makes a sound argument, Prevent actually does not operate in Northern Ireland due to the Secretary of State's exclusive authority to negotiate with Irish extremists (Prevent Strategy 2011, 105).

Gutowski also observed government documents on Prevent's administration from 2005 to 2009. She also observed case studies that display Prevent's push of secularism on Muslims during that time. According to her analysis of the program, the government tried to moderate Muslims and failed because they do not understand the practice of Islam. The Home Office's brief power to close mosques that had members charged for criminal offenses from October to

December 2006 was used as an example of the United Kingdom's bias against Muslims. Criticism of the program influenced the Home Office to remove the power to close mosques and reform Prevent in 2008 to switch to interfaith meetings to socially combat extremism in any religion. Criticism of Prevent points out that the program wrongfully assumes all Muslims as potential terrorists and ignores other types of extremists.

Kundnani's research on Prevent's grants to local governments and community organizations from 2008 to 2009 shows that officials held a selective bias of British Muslims for being the most susceptible demographic group to support extremism. The program awards higher amounts to places with large Muslim populations that had convictions or suspicions for terrorism. Recipients freely choose their methods to turn Muslims away from Islamist ideas and violence and convince them that the United Kingdom is not anti-Islamic. Some uses of funds evoked signs of prejudice against Muslims. Kundnani interviewed Muslims on their opinion on Prevent and discovered most respondents complained about the following: it brought attention exclusively to Muslim communities that have had extremists arrested; it assumed Muslims were the only minority group that has extremists; and it failed to acknowledge far-right extremists such as the British National Party and other white supremacist groups. There is also criticism against Prevent's definition of extremism; the program identifies Muslims who might become terrorists based on their views of local or national government and the United Kingdom in general (Kundnani 2009, 28).

Oliver Roy's *Globalized Islam* and Gilles Kepel's *The War for Muslim Minds* are the two manuscripts referenced in research and both have a similar outlook on the European Muslim population. Both provide the history of Muslim-European relations since the arrival of foreign labor in the 1960s and the 1970s, but they concentrate on the effect of Britain's anti-Islamist

foreign policy on British-Muslim relations. Roy and Kepel agree that Muslims in Britain see themselves within a conflict that is cultural and political. Roy argues that the differences between Western Christian norms in the United Kingdom Islamic culture are the driving force of the perception of cultural conflict between both groups. One example is the common view among British natives of Sharia law as backward and harsh; on the other side, Sharia law refers to rules proscribed to Muslims and Islamists in the United Kingdom only wish to implement them within a community in order to preserve their religious practices in an alien environment (Roy 2004, 191).

The British public has also viewed the political views of homegrown Islamists as a national issue. Islamist migrants from states with authoritarian governments have used London as a safe haven for them since the 1980s and usually cite Britain's guarantee of free speech to protect their activities (Kepel 2004, 242). The United Kingdom's decision to join the Global War on Terror with the United States in the aftermath of Al-Qaeda's attacks against America in 2001 has worsened the difficult determination of reaching out to Islamists. Roy also attempts to demonstrate how the Islamist mindset develops among youth. A chapter on Islamists in Europe explains that new converts to Islam who are also young and educated seek instant knowledge into their religious beliefs. However, new converts see the traditional availability of Islamic knowledge as limited, so they seek out information from new media, which Islamist networks provide (Roy 2004, 167). Roy's explanation corresponds with Moosavi's criticism of Prevent's increased attention on new converts, but he and Kepel never mention British or Western European native converts to Islam.

Methodology

This thesis gathers its information from case studies on Prevent's approach to deterring Muslims from planning and committing acts of terrorism since the 2011 reform. The Home Office argues that Prevent now views all forms of political extremism equally, but it does not explain how it does not target mainly Muslims as terrorist suspects as it did before the reform. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the activities of Prevent and on the reactions of Muslims toward the program on how it affects them.

An instrumental approach analyzes case studies that demonstrate how certain Prevent programs promote a prejudiced view against Muslims. The arrest of Rizwaan Sabir in 2008 demonstrates how policing under the Prevent Strategy retains a bias against Muslims. In this case, university officials prosecuted a Muslim graduate student and his professor for possessing Al-Qaeda materials, which were obtained legally and were used for research on terrorism (Townsend, 2012). Publications that the Prevent program has sponsored or created provided the British government's views on the situation and information. The publications include a pamphlet that contains instructions for participating universities to comply with Prevent activities, a government distributed summary of the new and revised goals and methods of administration of the Prevent Strategy, and an evaluation of terrorism prevention strategies published by the House of Commons. The pamphlet reviews critical statements of Prevent and informs readers that the program does not secretly monitor or collect private information on students and citizens. This is an example of an answer to past criticisms of the program; Prevent used to monitor young Muslims suspected to be terrorists by ordering local program staff to collect personal data such as political views on the United Kingdom's government and its foreign policy from them. Data collection mainly targeted Muslim students and many activists criticized Prevent for collecting personal data without permission. Published criticisms from groups that

are critical of the program provided the responses of British Muslims to the program. The

Muslim Council of Britain's website presents several essays that explain arguments against

monitoring and suspecting Muslims of being attracted to terrorism.

The author originally planned to conduct interviews with Muslim leaders and other

citizens concerned with Prevent, but gathering participants was unsuccessful. The Muslim

Council of Britain was contacted to provide the organization's and its members' opinions on the

Prevent Strategy and on Muslim relations with British people and the government. The MCB

was contacted through e-mail, but the organization never responded. The author had planned to

ask them about their views on the program and its effect on their social life.

Case Study of the Prevent Strategy

<u>Background</u>

The United Kingdom's anti-terrorist policy includes five parts, all of which fall under the

authority of the Home Office. The two main parts of the British counter-terrorism strategy are

CONTEST, Prevent, and Pursue. CONTEST carries out the government's police and military

counter-terrorist operations and includes both domestic and international activities. Prevent aims

to prevent domestic terrorist acts by catching suspects of people suspected to support or

participate in terrorist organizations and reforming them (Prevent Strategy 2011, 29). Prevent is

limited to domestic terrorist threats, so a third program named Pursue challenges foreign sources

that promote extremist ideologies and harm Britain. Pursue has the exact same goal and

operations as Prevent and shares funding with it (31). Parliament signed CONTEST into law in

2003, but it lacked any provisions for domestic terrorism. Parliament added Prevent to

CONTEST in 2007 as a response to the July 7, 2005 London suicide bombings orchestrated by

four Islamist British citizens.

Since Al-Qaeda's September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States, Islamist terrorism continues to be the chief concern to British authorities and officials claim that it deserves the highest amount of scrutiny in order to protect the country's security. Due to Muslims making up 2.5% of the British population, counter-terrorism efforts against Islamists is difficult due to this group's sensitive view that the government has been at war against all Muslims since it began targeting Islamist groups. With a growing Muslim population in Britain and Europe, it is imperative for London to avoid any conflict with their Muslim constituents and welcome them to British society. Although other countries in the West have enacted their responses to Islamist terrorist attacks, the Prevent Strategy is the most controversial response because it specifically looks at Muslims as potential supporters or actors of terrorism.

Demographics of British Muslims

In order to understand the problem with the British government's relationship with Muslims, the Muslim population's demographics address the effect of the Prevent program. The Pew Research Center estimates that Muslims comprise about 2.7 percent of the United Kingdom's population, which means nearly there are nearly 2,870,000 British Muslims. The Muslim population increased astoundingly in the United Kingdom from a census count of 1,670,000 Muslims in 2001(Cooperman, et al. 2009, 22). According to the 2011 United Kingdom Census, Muslims now comprise 4.8 percent of the British population, with 2.7 million adherents in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics 2012, 2). With these numbers, Britain's Muslim population ranks as the third largest in Europe, behind France and Germany. France has approximately 3,554,000 to 6,000,000 Muslims and Germany houses about 4,000,000 Muslims. The Muslim population of Britain is also different from France and Germany in ethnicity. Whereas the majority of French Muslims originates from North Africa and German

Muslims from Turkey, most British Muslims descend from South Asia, especially Pakistan. One thing that the Muslim populations of Germany, France, and Britain share is that they are citizens who have descended from migrant workers during the late twentieth century.

Muslims comprise a large part of the British population and are mostly second or third generation British citizens. Muslims have comprised a significant portion of the population since a wave of cheap laborers arrived in the 1960s and 1970s. An abundant demand for labor attracted South Asians to immigrate to the United Kingdom. Manufacturers in Britain were seeking laborers in their factories to boost the post-World War II industrial economy, so they brought a surge of South Asian migrants to work in manual-labor or factory jobs until the economy improved. Of these South Asian immigrants arriving in Britain, Muslims were the majority. Unlike its counterparts in Germany and France, the British government did not attract foreign workers through government sponsored recruiting. Britain's migrant workforce grew rapidly in a path similar to Germany and France, even though London never actively called for migratory workers in industrious manufacturing. Britain's migrant workforce arrived during a postcolonial period where residents of former colonies wanted to live in conditions that were more prosperous. Many South Asians sought to work in Britain because of better living conditions and decided to stay there long after their temporary work visas expired (Roy 2004, 17). Centers of industry where South Asian migrants worked continue to hold most of the Muslim population, especially Greater London. Several East London boroughs top the list of cities with significant Muslim populations; in Tower Hamlets and Newham, the population of Muslims exceeds thirty percent. Excluding London, Blackburn-with-Darwen and Bradford have the largest Muslim populations with 27 percent and 24.7 percent respectively (Office of National Statistics 2012, 9).

This regional migration phenomenon mirrors the movement of North African Arabs to France during the same time, and like France, they are the fastest growing segment of the British population. South Asians such as Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis dominate the demographics for British Muslims. According to the 2001 Census, the average age for British Muslims is twenty-eight-years old, which is far below the national average of all nationals. Because immigration from South Asia appeared to grow too quickly, an immigration quota was set on applications from this region (Roy 2004, 101). While there are a significantly larger number of Muslims in France and Germany, British Muslims are more politically active due to the United Kingdom's larger role in the War on Terror overseas.

Cultural Differences

The main contributing factor to Britain's strained relations with Muslims is that both the native population and Muslims see that they are incompatible with each other. Any Islamic organization, including those that are not political, faces a great difficulty of acceptance among the British because they do not see Islam as a traditional religion (Warner 2006, 472). British Muslims believe they are subject to discrimination and their experience contributes to their sense of distrust. Unemployment and low educational attainment rates are major factors in believing in an unfair system. South Asians in the United Kingdom for factory work have seen unstable employment as industrial manufacturing has been declining since the 1980s. Those of South Asian descent also have lower education and employment rates compared to British natives (Webster 2012, 206). Furthermore, the fact that Muslims are twice more likely to be arrested for a crime than a native fuels a distrust of society (212). This low level of attainment has led British Muslims to believe that the system is discriminating against them in employment and education.

Political and ideological beliefs also play major roles in discrimination. The United Kingdom admits it has problems integrating Muslim immigrants and citizens because of their negative views regarding the government's participation in the 2003 Iraq War and strong support for Israel, the far-right wing's racist campaigns against South Asians, increasingly restrictive immigration laws, and other European states' bans against Islamic dress in public, particularly the hijab (Warner 2006, 458). The far right refers to the behavior of Muslim extremists to prove Islam is incompatible with British values. In its past anti-Islamic campaigns, the British National Party argued Muslims were incompatible with British society by referring to Muslims' protests and death threats against Salman Rushdie in 1989 and the 1995 crime rate in Bradford, a largely Muslim populated city (Webster 2012, 216). In addition to the negative social atmosphere, there is a sharper cultural divide when it comes to lifestyles of Muslims and native British.

Many British Muslims feel that they do not fit into Western culture because much of it contrasts with Islam. For example, Islam prohibits the consumption of alcohol; common practice in British culture of going to a pub for a pint of beer contradicts this rule. A survey of British natives found that it is common belief that Muslims' refusal to adopt British customs such as going to a pub is a reason they are not accepted in such a Western society (Commission for Racial Equality 2006). Although they cannot participate in much of British social life, Muslims desire acceptance as British people. A 2005 survey on citizenship from the Department of Justice found that 43 percent of Muslims relate "very strongly" and 62 percent feel "fairly strongly" to Britain. Muslims and non-white British also appear to hold more optimistic views on political issues than native Brits and that they view Britain as a multicultural society (O'Toole et. al. 2013, 35).

On the other side, Muslims complain that the British do not allow for a full practice of their religion. They cite a lack of room for prayers in public facilities, few places that serve halal food, and the unavailability of Islam-based rehabilitation in prisons as examples of British ignorance of its Muslim population (Rehman 2007, 853). Because a large portion of the native British population perceives Islam as simply incompatible with their culture, Muslims respond with the idea that the British refuse to accept them as British citizens. Although most British Muslims tend to distrust their government, they play an active role in public to counter discrimination and advocate reforming laws that disadvantage Muslim citizens.

Muslims in British Politics

Muslims have become major political players in the United Kingdom despite cultural and socioeconomic barriers. Contrary to perceptions in many Western states, British Muslims do not think in unison when it comes to politics. Politically active Islamic groups in the United Kingdom include ideologies of all perspectives, but Islamists seeking to establish their own enclaves in Britain deserve special attention. Mandaville claims there are four approaches to this issue from Muslim political groups. Liberal-pluralists, the most mainstream ideology, argue that Islamic values can fit well into British society, even though there are some conflicting parts. Communal-pluralists also believe Muslims can blend into Muslim society, but they need to differentiate their identities as adherents to Islam. Communitarians state that Islam is compatible with European principles, but Muslims should form their own communities inside a foreign ideological atmosphere and limit their contact exclusively to other Muslims as much as possible. Islamists have the strictest view on Islamic-Western relations and spark the most controversy in the West due to their political beliefs and social behaviors. They reject any relations with non-Muslims and want to establish enclaves for Muslims that implement sharia law to ensure that

British Muslims can practice Islam to their full ability. Islamists are more interested in maintaining relations with the global ummah than with the British government (Mandaville 2009, 499). Political groups for Muslims range from those that support a secular democracy to those that want to solve social problems, but Islamist groups have caught heavy attention from the government.

Although British Musilms have resided in the United Kingdom for generations, their participation with the government is relatively recent. The British political system first identified a Muslim constituency in the late 1990s when the New Labour party promoted its multicultural ideology and accepted input from various religious and ethnic groups. In 1997, Parliament reached two milestones with the election of the first Muslim to the House of Commons and the foundation of the Muslim Council of Britain, which established a link between Islamic organizations and the government (O'Toole, et. al. 2013, 17). While organized Islamic political groups are new, British Muslims have always held distinct political views. Muslims founded a number of faith-based organizations as their population grew, but they were primarily concerned with preserving the practice of Islam and networking Muslims across Britain. The Union of Muslim Organizations of the United Kingdom and Ireland, founded in 1970, and the Council of Mosques, founded in 1984, were among the earliest nationwide Muslim organizations. A major issue at the time that continues today is ethnic and racial distinction; for example, South Asians formed the Council of Imams and Mosques in 1985 to address their concerns (18). Muslim organizations have succeeded in their political goals such as adding religion to the national census in 2001, amending employment discrimination laws to consider religion, and adding religion as a factor in hate crimes in the 2006 and 2010 Equality Acts (33).

Today, the political atmosphere of British Muslims has expanded greatly. Muslim political organizations are active in many mainstream political issues in Britain. The Federation of Student Islamic Groups, the Cordoba House, and the Islamic Society of Britain are some examples of organizations that lobby Parliament on social issues and represent members in inter-faith councils designed to assist the government to connect with the diverse population. The Federation of Muslim Organizations (FMO) acts as an umbrella lobby group that represents an enormous amount of Muslim organizations in government talks; FMO's importance in politics is so immense that it employs a full-time press staff and has consolidated most large Muslim lobby groups (23). Along with representation, hundreds of Muslims are active currently in political offices. In the 2010 Parliament elections, a record number of eight Muslims won seats in the House of Commons, including three women and two Conservatives (7). Additionally, Muslims hold seats in over 230 local government offices, which is a dramatic increase since the late 1990s (22). Despite Muslims' heavy participation in government since the late 1990s, Islamists have detracted the United Kingdom's attention from mainstream participants.

Due to the July 7, 2005 attack and the United Kingdom's participation in the War on Terrorism, British politicians have spotlighted Islamist extremism as a major national issue. Islamist organizations differ from mainstream Muslim political groups due to their rejection of integration and holding political views considered extreme and foreign to the public. The main purpose of these religious extremist organizations in Britain is to implement sharia law within a Muslim community to conserve members' practice of their religion and to guard against any Western influences from corrupting members. Islamist political organizations in Britain trace back to 1973 when Pakistanis formed a British division of Jama'at Al-Islami to correspond with the wave of international Islamic political activism at the time (Mandaville 2009, 497). This

Pakistan-based organization was part of the Islamist wave that intended to bind Muslims living in Britain together with other Muslims abroad within an international ummah. It was not violent nor did it advocate any illegal activities in both Britain and its home Pakistan (Roy 2004, 60). Furthermore, Jama'at Al-Islami is not a mainstream party in its home state because it only has received a tiny percentage of votes and runs very few religious institutions (79-80). In its British division, Jama'at al Islami only seeks to allow its members to connect with Pakistanis back home and strengthen their Islamic values (Mandaville 2009, 498). Several other similar organizations formed, but none of them actively supported Islamist terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah.

Islamist organizations in Europe are more interested with issues in the countries that they originated from than domestic or European issues. For instance, Jama'at Al-Islami organizes donations to Pakistanis and hold discussions with members interested in political issues in Pakistan (Cooperman, et. al. 2009, 11). Another problem for these organizations is their troubled connection with the youth. In a recent trend, young Muslims tend not to become active within Islamic organizations nor do they publicly affiliate themselves with their mosques (9). For this reason, Islamic organizations are currently adopting social media sites on the Internet to attract younger members. A great number of Islamic organizations in Europe do not promote violence and simply want to bind the Muslim population together so that they can preserve their religion. However, the existence of Islamist organizations in the West has produced considerable controversy.

Because these organizations have a goal similar to international Islamist organizations, many people see them as potential threats to Britain and Europe. Due to Western European states' commitments to join the United States-led Global War on Terrorism, Britain takes

Islamist more seriously than other European states. Another problem is that those who agree with Islamist groups' political views claim that these views are part of their religious beliefs. In fact, several Islamist groups accused of terrorist acts have used London as a safe haven since the 1980s because they believed that the United Kingdom guaranteed freedom of speech and protected expressions of religious beliefs (Kepel 2004, 244). Because it is difficult for the government to discern statements that promote terrorist activities from mere expressions of religious and political beliefs, Muslims who support domestic and international Islamist groups feel that the government's crackdown of Islamist organizations proves that the British oppose Islam. Laws in the West that prohibit supporting Islamist groups contribute to the idea among many Muslims that Westerners have a negative stance against Islam. Political activism in the British Muslim population has been increasing since the past decade and has resulted in an ideological conflict with the public.

Islamist organizations have an outcast-like character in European politics due to their unpopular beliefs and nearly exclusively focus on Muslims and issues related to them. The West's categorization of several Islamist groups as terrorist cells has significantly contributed to the rejection of Islamism as a normal political ideology. They have not always been seen as enemies of Western principles, though. Communist affiliated parties across Western Europe originally welcomed the creation of Islamist organizations during the 1970s and 1980s because they had close political goals (264). They both sought to establish a new state as a solution to many issues, particularly poverty, and spoke in a radical rhetoric that emphasized the struggle between oppressors and the oppressed. The oppressors to Islamists were secularists, Christian Crusaders, and others who halted the practice of Islam and the oppressed were Muslims around the world that lived in an environment that affected their religious practices. To communists,

Islamists' view of the oppressors and the oppressed resembled the conflict of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (265).

Origin of the Prevent Strategy

The Prevent Strategy has been a part of the Home Office's anti-terrorism policy since 2007 and it aims to combat terrorism through local social programs. Prevent was enacted as a response to the July 7, 2005 London Underground terrorist bombings. A group of four Islamist British citizens who placed bombs on a bus in Leicester and on three metro trains throughout the London metropolitan area committed the terrorist attack. The attacks resulted in 52 deaths and more than 700 were injured. What shocked the public was that this domestic terrorist attack was the first such kind committed by natural-born citizens who had an Islamist motive. Given the young age of the perpetrators, which ranged from 18 to 30, Members of Parliament questioned what risks Muslim youth of the country were hiding and worried if London had become a front for the spread of Islamist terrorism (Rehman 2007, 871).

London's terrorist act prompted parliament to pass a number of controversial security enhancement laws. The Terrorism Act of 2006 threatened to remove one's citizenship if the person has been found to have connections to terrorist organizations and granted the executive branch to detain a terrorist suspect without any charges for up to 90 days (872). Muslim and human rights activists denounced the passage of this law under Prime Minister Tony Blair for infringing on the British civil rights principles and for exerting too much power to the government. The largest source of criticism was actually the law's general application of terrorism crimes in the United Kingdom to all worldwide acts of terrorism (873). Although the Terrorist Act increased counterterrorism activities, no legislation mentioned domestic terrorism specifically. The July 7 bombings illustrated the need to dissuade Muslim youth from the

influences of Al-Qaeda related motives. The Prevent Strategy directly addressed this issue by focusing on social integration of Muslims and reducing their fears of British rejection. Parliament directed under New Labour also proposed a £60 million grant to cooperate with Muslim organizations to promote "moderate" Islam. The Home Office had already explored strategies to reduce the risk of terrorist attacks with 107 community leaders of all faiths since October 2005; in these meetings, citizens agreed that the conditions of youth, education, women, imam training, Islamophobia, and counter-terrorism policy affected extremist views (O'Toole et. al. 2013, 20). The result of the consultation period influenced parliament to enact a measure that blended these aspects to reduce Islamist terrorism.

Parliament enacted the Prevent Strategy in April 2007 to allow for local control of policies and have a method to prevent domestic terror attacks. Prevent is the answer to members of parliament who wanted a "moderation" of Islam plan so that Muslims feel welcome in a Western culture like Britain. The New Labour government argued that social coherence prevents extremism when it announced the establishment of Prevent (54). Funding for the programs divides among the Home Office, the Foreign Office, and the Department for Communities and Local Government. The most visible portion of Prevent is national funds to local projects that aim to reduce religious extremism in Muslim communities. Prevent operates through grants to local governments or community organizations that are used to develop social programs intended to dissuade Muslims from joining or supporting Islamist terrorist organizations. The program operates through nationally funded grants to local governments and community organizations. These grants pay for social activities that promote political and religious moderation to suspected Muslim communities that might spread Islamist terrorism. The government intends these measures to show Muslims that British society welcomes multiculturalism and downplays any

claims made by Islamist groups that state otherwise (Kundnani 2009, 10). General discussion forums, citizenship classes, arts related to Muslim's issues, cultural education, and sports are part of the activities meant to include Muslims into British society. In its first year in operation, Prevent had around 44,000 participants and funded 261 social integration projects (Prevent Strategy 2011, 28).

Local government interaction with Muslim and interfaith organizations is not new, though. The United Kingdom has established a link with Islamic charities and political groups since the 1980s. Previously, local governments have held interfaith programs such as Near Neighbours to listen to a non-Christian constituency on public issues. Muslim participation has exceeded other groups in these programs; out of 307 projects in Near Neighbours, 21 were Islamic, 156 were secular, and seven represented other religions (O'Toole, et. al. 2013, 49). The Department of Communities and Local Government also connected with the Imams National Advisory Board Council, Women's and Youth Muslim Advisory Groups, and other Muslim groups that dissuaded extremists before they complied with the Prevent Strategy (54). However, Muslims have expressed disappointment with the lack of participation in foreign policy and national consultations on faith, even though the United Kingdom reserves seats in these areas for Sikhs and Jews (14 and 55).

Grants are available to local governments with at least 2,000 Muslims and those who have experienced a criminal arrest of an Islamist extremist (Kundnani 2009, 12). Examples of cities with a high concentration of Muslims that have received the largest grants include several eastern boroughs of London, Birmingham, and Manchester. Birmingham alone received over 2.4 million pounds in funds, which is nearly double than the second highest recipient city of Bradford (13). The Home Office committee of the House of Lords even stressed Birmingham's

priority because Muslims make up around 12 percent of its population, which is one of the largest rates in the country (Prevent Strategy 2011, 97). Grants do not only provide for local governments to moderate supposed Muslim extremists, though. National grants also pay for police upgrades, contracts with independent agencies to carry out the programs, and to spread government sponsored counter-terrorist messages. In the 2010 budget, police related grants took up 70% of the program's expenses, while Prevent only spent 15% on grants to local projects (104). The government has not evaluated if the program has successfully thwarted plans for domestic terrorist attacks since a specific meaning of the success of terrorism prevention is vague.

Public Response to Prevent

The Prevent Strategy has received a negative perception based on its unclear purpose and goals and for affecting British Muslims. Prevent has been criticized for framing Muslims as the only group in the United Kingdom that could turn to terrorism, thus stigmatizing British Muslims. Britain's social anti-terrorism policy enacted since late 2001 has displaced Muslims socially and driven them to reject integration. Those who reject this accusation refer to the Race Relations Act of 1976 and the Racial and Religious Hatred Act of 2006, which have made discriminatory practices in public and private establishments illegal and eliminated special security screenings of Muslims. Muslims, though, believe that offenses related to religious hate speech target them because they restrict expressions of their political views. Some of them argue that the law prevents them from making political statements against Israel or positive remarks toward Al-Qaeda's political goals (Rehman 2007, 851). Activists complained that Britain's policy on terrorism placed more scrutiny on Muslims while showing of positive bias toward

Christian and secular Europeans. However, Muslim political groups argued that the Prevent Strategy promoted discrimination.

Muslim and human rights activist groups argue that the government's legal treatment of Muslims in regards to religious practice promotes a rejection of Islam in British society. British law does not recognize the hijab as a protected religious right. Those who claim that they are victims of discrimination cannot seek much action since British law does not recognize Islam as an ethnicity, so Muslims cannot respond to public or private discrimination with a lawsuit (Roy 2004, 127). The lack of recognition of Islamic practices from policing has resulted in two responses from the Muslim community. Muslims who embrace participation in public politics demanded reform of the Prevent Strategy and Islamists contributed to increasing Muslims' attention toward foreign Islamists for political guidance since they believed that discriminatory laws reflected the United Kingdom's rejection of its Muslim citizens. However, many Muslims say that they seek foreign religious guidance because outsourced imams are more experienced and some local Islamic leaders acted too politicized. British imams have stated that extremists tend to leave a mosque in search of leaders who fit their views (Choudhury and Fenwick 2011, 70).

British Muslims and non-Muslims campaigned against the Prevent Strategy for its promotion of discrimination against Muslims. While reformers acknowledged that domestic terrorism is a serious issue, they disagreed with the Prevent Strategy's operations. Both Muslim and secular civil rights activist groups' protests against the program's effect on British Muslim communities pressured the Home Office to reform Prevent. Prevent was changed in 2011 to include potential extremist groups other than Islamists as a response to claims that the United Kingdom government thought Muslims were the only group that could be capable of fostering

terrorism. Although the Home Office denounced claims that accused the Prevent Strategy of exclusively monitoring Muslims as untrue, they emphasized their efforts to prevent terrorism from other groups in the reformed strategy (Home Office 2011). However, the program continues to list Al-Qaeda and Islamist extremists as priority concerns for the United Kingdom's counter-terrorism policy. Prevent remains a significant issue in Britain today since it continues much of its operations and focus. Although the Home Office claims that the program does not focus on Muslims as the only perpetrators of terrorism, the reformed Prevent Strategy may continue to associate Muslims with terrorism.

The growth of political Islam could be an answer to discrimination for some Muslims. A Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2006 that asked Muslims from various countries on who was their primary guide for religion found that a majority of British Muslims listen to local leaders, but over a quarter of respondents prefer guidance from outside the Western world. For British Muslims, 42 percent said it was their local imam or sheikh and 28 percent said it was a foreign imam or organization (Mandaville 2009, 502). The survey showed that whereas most British Muslims look to their own community for Islamic advice, a large amount sees religious leaders from their home nation or an Islamic republic such as Pakistan or Iran to be better suited for religious guidance. The ones who listen to a foreign leader also tend to be more conservative and admire political Islam. For this reason, the United Kingdom has a program called Pursue that responds to foreign sources that promote Islamist extremism (Prevent Strategy 2011, 31). They also hold untrustworthy views of domestic organizations such as the Muslim Council of Britain because they work within the non-Islamic British system. The perception of accepting a secular government contradicts the ideology of political Islam, which is to promote Islam as the only acceptable guide for government.

The secular culture of Britain and the negative association of religious behavior is one of the causes of discrimination against Muslims within the Prevent Strategy. Because Prevent uses the perception of risk as the main test for identifying suspected terrorists, the United Kingdom has been targeting anyone who acts more religious as a possible extremist or a supporter of terrorism. The program's method of identifying risky behavior among Muslims showed how administrators were unaware about practicing Islam. For example, a guidebook on identifying Islamic extremists claimed frequent mosque attendance, wearing a hijab, sporting a beard, adhering to strict Islamic dress, and participating in hajj at a young age were distinct behaviors (Gutowski 2011, 352). In addition to these visual indicators, the Terrorism Acts of 2000 and 2006 define clothing or articles that promote terrorist acts or extremist ideologies as indicators for reasonable suspicion (Prevent Strategy 2011, 26). Although most Muslims consider these behaviors normal for their religious practice, Christians and secularists in Britain and Western Europe perceive them to be unusual and harmful because Islamist terrorists performed them. Another criticism of Prevent's categorization of Islamic behaviors is that it did not consider other religions' practices or the anti-religious rhetoric as extremist behaviors.

Prevent's suspicions of risk reflect Britain's misconception of religious people as irrational and violent. One of the administrators for Prevent in Birmingham defended exclusive funding toward Muslims because they "are the most vulnerable to radicalisation" (Kundnani 2009, 24). The first four years of Prevent's operation introduced several methods of defeating ideological extremism that guided participants how to defeat religious extremism. The Home Office sent booklets to schools, held "Radical Middle Way Roadshow" travelling seminars for Muslims that suggested how to practice Islam moderately, and established the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board to check on Muslim leaders' preaching messages and tone them

down if they were perceived to be extreme (Gutowski 2011, 352). Although this approach did not promote a negative bias against Islam, it continued to declare Islam as an extremist prone religion that needed regulation. It seemed unnecessary for a secular government to remind all Muslims to practice their religion carefully. The government's concentration on Islamists in the War on Terror certainly has affected its relations with the Muslim population. The program awards higher amounts to places with large Muslim populations that had convictions or suspicions for terrorism. Recipients freely choose their methods to turn Muslims away from Islamist ideas and violence and convince them that the United Kingdom is not anti-Islamic.

In addition to advising troubled Muslim youth, some uses of funds intended to integrate them culturally. There are several examples of cities spending Prevent grants to guide Muslims in adopting mainstream British culture. Like most recipients, the London Borough of Enfield funded English language lessons and multi-faith sessions. One unusual example is the City of Dudley's payment to the British Muslim Forum to introduce "Britishness" to imams, which included tours of the British Museum (18). To see what Muslims thought about Prevent, Kundnandi interviewed 32 participants who were aware of the program and 5 non-Muslims who felt that Prevent is discriminatory. The most common complaints about Prevent were that it only pays attention to Muslim communities who have had extremists, assumes Muslims are the only minority group that has extremist problems, and ignores far-right extremists such as the British National Party and other white supremacist groups. There is also criticism against Prevent's definition of extremism since the program identifies Muslims who might become terrorists based on their views of local or national government and United Kingdom in general (28). In general, the original Prevent Strategy showed a negative bias against Muslims who were not integrated enough into British culture and never looked at terrorist threats outside of Islamist activities.

Reforming the Prevent Strategy

Parliament responded to several public criticisms against the Prevent Strategy and passed a reformed version of the bill in June 2011. A coalition in the House of Commons began reviewing the program in 2010 as a response to its alleged exclusive attention to Islamist terrorism, spying on Muslims, and an "unhealthy conflation" of policing (Home Affairs Committee 2011, 3). A House of Lords conducted review also stated that the program had "little achieved" in its purpose of preventing terrorist acts because terrorism prevention cannot be measured (Prevent Strategy 2011, 51). The House of Commons also criticized the goals of the program because many British Muslims had been unaware of extremism in their communities. Government relations with Muslims may have worsened because many Muslims felt unfairly targeted and held negative views against Prevent (Home Affairs Committee 2011, 30). Parliament analyzed the program and thought of how the bill should be restructured in order to satisfy public concerns for a year. This review found a number of gaps not just in Prevent, but also in the United Kingdom's domestic terrorism policy. There was no threat level for terrorist threats outside of those related to Al-Qaeda or Northern Ireland, which showed the government's short scope of terrorist prevention (19). Far-right wing extremist organizations went unchecked because the criteria for determining terrorist organizations required them to support other like-minded groups internationally (33). Prevent nearly ignored any terrorist organizations that held their conduct on the Internet; the Home Office already had been monitoring the Internet for terrorist-related websites since 2006, but the House of Commons argued that the existing program did not act enough on shutting them down (23). Parliament's review was not all negative, though. The review found that social programs were more effective and accepted in

Muslim communities, so this section of Prevent yielded the most potential (26). These findings formed the outline for the reformed version of Prevent.

While the main goal of the program remains the law, the June 2011 version of the Prevent Strategy added a list of new abilities for the program that have been designed to capture any previously unnoticed forms of terrorism. Some of the most significant reforms include the Home Office's continued funding of social integration, a greater emphasis on local programs, tying grants to higher risks of extremist activities, aggressive pursuits against threats on the Internet, and including threats outside of Islamist related organizations (Prevent Strategy 2011, 39-41). Concerns over grants handed to organizations tied to Islamist extremists or mishandling of funds led to one of the most publicized reforms. Parliament implemented stricter guidelines after Home Secretary Theresa May announced in early June 2011 that the agency granted some funding for local projects to Islamist organizations; the removal of 28 organizations from participation with Prevent followed this announcement (Hough and Gardham 2011). New parts of the program include the already mentioned Internet monitoring and an extension to universities. There is little concern over regulating the Internet for terrorist supporting websites, but the inclusion of universities into Prevent has resulted in protests.

Among all of the reforms, the introduction of monitoring and counseling Muslim students is the most controversial. A section of the 2011 Prevent proposal states the importance of keeping Islamic extremism out of universities because of the existing threat of radical Islamism recruiting youth through student groups and the vulnerability of young minds to extremist view. Parliament's bigger concern was the fact that thirty percent of Al-Qaeda affiliated convicts in the United Kingdom attended a university and ten percent of those convicts were students at the time they committed their offense (Prevent Strategy 2011, 72).

Backlash on New Segments

A blog run by the Muslim Council of Britain provided much of the public response among British Muslim students against the new initiative in Prevent and Parliament's concern over universities being terrorist hotspots. Sabir's article on the blog argues that the Prevent Strategy guidelines overreact to data on Muslim students and exaggerate the possibility of extremist ideologies unraveled to students in a free academic setting. One of his accusations against Prevent is that administrators are unaware of the ability of universities to remove any persons or groups that promoted extremism and the true role of Muslim student organizations. Sabir's stronger criticism comes from his disapproval of accusations against Muslim student organizations, particularly from the case study of two Muslims who were arrested at the University of Nottingham in 2008. In this event, university administrators arrested Sabir, a graduate student, and a staff member for suspected terrorism planning after they found an Al-Qaeda produced training manual and academic papers related to the terrorist organization. The two worked together on a dissertation about Al-Qaeda's activities, but university officials mistook the student's work as evidence for his collusion with Islamist terrorism. Police later released the two men without charges and the event attracted attention from the media and academics worldwide. A year later after the incident, a coalition of 67 academics accused university police of fabricating evidence against the two as part of an anti-terrorist operation (Townsend 2012). Sabir suspected that this event demonstrated an anti-Muslim bias in universities' terrorist prevention policies, which might have been the reasoning behind the inclusion of monitoring students in the reformed Prevent Strategy (Sabir 2011).

Guidelines for monitoring potential terrorist activities at universities have also run with a negative public reception. Then-doctorate student Moosavi's post on the Muslim Council's blog

attacks an instruction in the Prevent Strategy to oversee Muslim student groups due to their nature of converting students to Islam; a section of the law advises that newly converted Muslims are more prone to be attracted to extremist views. According to his experience as a participant of his university's Islamic Society and the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, Prevent's claim on Muslim student groups is untrue. Muslim student groups operate to protect Muslim students' religious practices and beliefs, promote integration within diverse student bodies, and accommodate Muslim students who have trouble performing their religious practice. The blog post ends with the author proposing that because Al-Qaeda represent so little of the British Muslim population, the fear of another terrorist attack orchestrated by Islamic extremists is being used by far-right politicians to advance their views (Moosavi 2011). These commentators' experiences with Prevent reveal program conductors' personal prejudice against Muslims, but they do not represent its operations or the government's attitude toward Muslims as a whole.

While the announcement of monitoring universities shocked several commentators, the practice is not new to the United Kingdom. Islamist extremism among students has been an issue since the 1980s when students opened campus branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir and similar Islamist organizations for political purposes. The Home Office has recommended police to monitor extremist behaviors at universities before 2011, but the department never acted on the issue itself nor did it require any activities. The defining point for monitoring universities could have been the arrest of Umar Farouk Abdul Muttalib; Abdul Muttalib was the president of a Muslim student group at University College London before he attempted to bomb a passenger plane in the United States in 2009. After this event, Muslim students feared being active in an

Islamic organization due to rumors of a national registry for members intended to spy on potential terrorists (Choudhury and Fenwick 2011, 69).

Gender is another factor of discrimination according to King's College lecturer Katherine Brown. Her argument resembles Moosavi's in that Prevent applies stereotypes and expectations of women to monitoring them for terrorist-like activities. Brown takes on public perceptions of British Islamists by pointing out young Muslim men respond with constant discrimination and negativity by turning to extremism; this claim tends to be true according to statistics on most participants in Prevent. An Equality Impact Assessment review shows that New Prevent benefits women since classes train them to resist extremist persuasion tactics and teaches self-defense, but Brown states that the report only reinforces gender roles. One part of prevent instructs Muslim women how to avoid being persuaded into following Islamists and instead to choose a moderate religious life (Brown 2011). Brown's discontent with Prevent's expectations of Muslim women primarily being victims of extremism signals that the program may ignore the fact women can identify with Islamist ideology. The author's main point is that the British conception of gender equality cannot apply to Muslims due to their separate culture's expectations of gender roles; some Muslim women may find that pursuing a role as a homemaker or voluntarily wearing a niqab, a dress that shields the entire body except eyes, is an acceptable display of independence. The government's advisement to follow moderate Islam is another practice that shows a misunderstanding of Islam; again, how deeply someone practices the religion does not cause alarm in the Muslim world.

Suggestions to Alter the Prevent Strategy

Since many complaints from the original 2007 Prevent Strategy have followed onto the 2011 reform, Parliament needs to respond to public criticism of the new components. The Home Office explored citizens' concerns with Prevent while Members of Parliament formulated a new approach with the Prevent Strategy in June 2011. The Home Office published an Equality Impact Assessment simultaneously with the passage of the reformed law. In order to capture opinions from British citizens, particularly Muslims, the Home Office utilized an online questionnaire, focus group sessions, and consultation events with a small group of participants. These methods collected data on participants' opinions on Prevent's impact on race, religion, and beliefs (Home Office 2011, 6).

The results of the data collection confirmed that most Muslims in Britain felt Prevent affected their lives. Participants largely felt that Prevent affected people on religious terms without much interference on race. In the online questionnaire, 55 percent of respondents answered that Prevent had no negative effect on race and 63 percent claimed it had no positive effect on race. However, 59 percent of respondents answered that Prevent negatively affected religion and 57 percent thought that religion received no positive effects from the program (7). For participants in the focus groups and consultation events, religion also dominated concerns. Several participants blamed the government's focus on Al-Qaeda for placing too much Prevent activity on Muslims, reinforcing radical Muslim stereotypes, and strengthening the far fight's anti-multicultural rhetoric (14). From these collected data, the reformed Prevent Strategy included activity for non-Islamist extremists, but the Home Office has not announced any plans to remedy British Muslims' concerns over social marginalization. The United Kingdom's response to these complaints has been limited to condemning hate crimes against Muslims and South Asians. Obviously, the government needs to address the social effects felt by complaining

Muslims and advocates against Prevent. Parliament and the Home Office need to evaluate the 2011 Prevent Strategy to see if the reforms alleviated marginalization and accusations of its anti-Muslim bias.

Although the British government has publicly denounced discrimination and prejudiced attacks against British Muslims, it has not taken enough measures to reduce the social effects of combatting Islamist terrorists. The addition of other types of terrorism did not satisfy the opposition because Prevent continues to pay the greatest amount of attention to Islamists. Another major concern over the Prevent Strategy is its central governance. Residents of targeted cities complained that the Home Office informed them of their observation immediately when they already began their operations with local governments. An interview with a city worker involved in Prevent questioned why the Home Office chose not to consult local officials and residents over implementing the program (Kundnani 2009, 16). In addition, workers in the Midlands and London disapproved cities' inability to decide and to know which programs the Prevent Strategy funded (17). These testimonials prove that the Prevent-related projects in local governments require better transparency.

Parliament's review of Prevent funding did not address the issue of local autonomy and the lack of transparency in national-local collaboration before a Prevent program goes into effect, which may lead to greater public distrust. Furthermore, it seems that interviewees want a democratic approach to implementing Prevent-funded programs. Workers who criticized the government's interest in cities with large Muslim populations emphasized the government looking over residents' and local officials' opinions (16). If the Home Office wants the public to accept the Prevent Strategy more, it should consider allowing cities to request national assistance

with concerns about local extremists; the current approach provokes the idea of a national takeover of local government.

Conclusions

Reforming Prevent required parliament to remove any testified accusations made by Muslims and human rights organizations and to ensure the new program does not promote discrimination. The effect of the terrorist attacks on London in 2004 definitely peaked Britain's interest in Islamist extremists within its borders, which set back government relations with British Muslims. There is no doubt that all citizens want a government policy to protect people from terrorist acts, so the legal definition of terrorism went unchanged; it is still read as a "vocal or active opposition to fundamental values," which include democracy, accepting other cultures, and the right to liberty and security (Home Affairs Committee 2011, 3). However, the Prevent Strategy and its 2011 reform failed to consider the social effects of emphasizing Islamists in British counterterrorism.

The increased focus on Islamist terrorists amplified marginalization already felt by British Muslims. For instance, a worker affiliated with a Prevent project claimed it "created a culture where adults are frightened to engage with Muslims in case they are terrorists (Choudhury and Fenwick 2011, 64)." The greatest effect of Prevent is that it divided British Muslims' trust of their government further away once they saw a national law specifically targeting their places of worship and associations as incubators of terrorism. Guidelines that listed common traits of Muslims such as sporting beards and clothing demonstrate the United Kingdom's disconnection with Muslims. Counterterrorism strategy planners should learn more about Islam and understand the common practices within the religion in order to avoid another

misunderstanding. Muslims are active in government and Islamic non-profit organizations assist with Prevent-derived activities, but the United Kingdom needs to consult with Muslims when developing counterterrorism activities against

The June 2011 reform of the Prevent Strategy only added more forms of ideological extremism and did not reform any laws related to monitoring Islamic extremists. Adding political and non-Islamic religious extremists solved criticism over the law's discrimination of Muslims, but the Prevent Strategy continues to center on confronting Islamists above all threats. If the United Kingdom treats all forms of extremism equally in their domestic counterterrorism policy, British Muslims will project a more positive image of the government. Attempts to regulate mosques and Muslim student organizations only increased the perception of a cultural conflict. The United Kingdom does not have to cease pursuing Islamist terrorists or socially integrate Muslims to achieve a greater acceptance from them, but the government must solve the Prevent Strategy's negative social effects and other forms of marginalization on Muslims.

The Prevent Strategy could have improved government relations with Muslims if it addressed discrimination and social marginalization. Normalized perception of Muslims could have been staggered if Parliament asserted not all Muslims support terrorism or inserted a publicity campaign to protect the image of British Muslims. In the United States, President George W. Bush launched a campaign claiming Islam was not responsible for provoking terrorist acts and that Americans should welcome Muslims into society. Nearly a week after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Bush delivered a press conference at the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C. in support of American Muslims; there, he urged Americans to end harassing them and quoted the Qur'an to condemn the attack's orchestrators (Office of the White House Press Secretary 2001). The United Kingdom should have attempted to perform a similar action

to gain the trust of British Muslims and persuade citizens to change their negative image of Muslims.

The United Kingdom could have reformed the Prevent Strategy to satisfy its critics, yet the main part of the program remains in place and the same critiques persist. The inclusion of forms of extremist ideologies answered suspicions that the law has a bias toward Islamism, but it did not respond to criticism over the Home Office's concentration of Islamist extremists. For the next revision of the Prevent Strategy, the United Kingdom should find solutions that try to reduce the social marginalization of British Muslims, allow more local control of social programs, and attempt to address all criticisms of the program.

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