**Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS)**
**Doctoral Research**

# A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BRITISH AND SAUDI APPROACHES TO COUNTER RADICALISATION: ENGAGING THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY AS A MODEL

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**Word Count[1]:** 78439 words

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October 2019

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[1] Excluding abstract, appendixes, and references

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# Abstract

This study compares the capacity of Saudi Arabia and Britain to engage their communities in counter-extremism, through the introduction of an original theoretical model of analysis. The thesis argues that active community engagement may serve as a critical indicator of counter-extremist efficiency. The theoretical framework is applied to the radicalisation of Muslim communities in both countries, with specific focuses on the roles of four critical elements in counter-radicalisation: religious figures, women, young individuals, and educational institutions. Drawing on a wide range of interviews, government documents, and other primary and secondary sources, the thesis presents several key insights, which are divided into three interlinked categories. First, the significance of engaging the four main societal components. Second, how community engagement can be enhanced by means of three linear concepts: trust-building, warning people and encouraging them to participate in counter-extremism, and training participants. Third, how this participation can be influenced by three factors: local cultures, external effects, and political systems and their foreign policies. This study demonstrates both British and Saudi weaknesses in reaching individuals and convincing them to participate in counter-extremist efforts.

**Keywords:** Extremism, radicalisation, counter-extremism, community, engagement, Saudi Arabia, Britain.

# Dedication

I would like to dedicate my work to my beloved wife, Reem, who has been taking responsibility for the home and our children since I started my postgraduate study. Also, I dedicate this thesis to Hala, my daughter, who has Down's Syndrome. She repeatedly says that this research has taken me from her and now, here, it is complete.

# Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my leading supervisor, Professor William Lucas, for his continuous support, patience, motivation, and extensive knowledge, which has been of value for my PhD study. His guidance has helped me throughout the research and writing of this thesis. I could not imagine having a better advisor for my PhD study. Besides this, I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Doctor Asaf Siniver, not only for his insightful comments and assistance but also for signposting me to Professor Lucas and recommending him as the advisor for my master's degree five years ago.

# Lists of Abbreviations

1. ACPO       the Association of Chief Police Officers

2. CVE       Counter Violent Extremism

3. CONTEST       The United Kingdom's counter-terrorism strategy

4. DCSF       The British Department for Children, Schools and Families

5. FBI       The Federal Bureau of Investigation

6. GCTF       The Global Counterterrorism Forum

7. Hasanah       An emergency media plan to counter the propaganda directed at Saudi youth by ISIL and other extremist groups

8. ISIL       The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

9. IRA       The Irish Republican Army

10. MCB       The Muslim Council of Britain

11. MOE       The Saudi Ministry of Education

12. NGOs       Non-governmental organisations

13. NUT       The National Union of Teachers

14. OSCE       The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

15. RICU       The Research, Information and Communications Unit

16. PRAC       The Saudi Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare program

17. PVE       Prevent Violent Extremism

18. SAVE       The Sisters Against Violent Extremism

19. SPA       The Saudi Press Agency

20. TVTC       The Technical and Vocational Training Corporation

21. UNSCR       The United Nations Security Council Resolution

22. USAID       The US Agency for International Development

23. WRAP       The Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent

# Chapter 1

# Introduction and Research Design

The academic literature firmly demonstrates the significance of community participation in counter-extremism. Furthermore, it shows that the most efficient counter-extremism approaches have been those that partner with local communities. Several countries encourage local communities to participate in counter-extremism initiatives, especially as contributions from community members can enrich national strategies in countering violence. Therefore, it could be said that community participation in the war against extremism will likely result in a productive outcome. In general, there is a consensus within the academic literature that community participation is crucial for counter-extremism success (Sinai et al., 2019, p.95, Cherney, 2021, p.119).

Community participation and its effectiveness in combating extremism have been investigated in the academic literature in various ways, but still more methods of examination are required to contribute to this field and increase understanding of this subject (Fagan et al., 2008, p.274, Abbas, 2019, p.408, and Ambrozik, 2019, p.1049, Parker and Lindekilde, 2020, pp.2-3, and Salyk-Virk, 2020, p.1037). The assumption is that widening the academic insight of this aspect may require more comprehensive research, incorporating wide and deep (horizontal and vertical) analysis. The horizontal analysis can be conducted by specifying the essential parts of the community. In addition, identifying the most crucial concepts related to the community's participation in counter-extremism is required to conduct the vertical examination. Thus,

studying these two combinations and identifying the relationships between them can contribute to the academic understanding of this issue. Moreover, examining the relationships and influences between a component and another component can confirm the cruciality of these combinations.

The research technique in analysing the engagement of communities in counter-extremism differs from current academic techniques. Observation has shown that academic research generally seems to concentrate on specific components or concepts. Furthermore, these academic studies require a deeper in-depth analysis of the relationship between the community's components and the related concepts. For instance, many academic investigations appear to focus on the engagement of a community as one entity concentrating on concepts, such as the relationship between the state and the community, including cooperation between governments and communities, and the trust, distrust, alienation and tension between them (Klausen, 2009, Dunn et al., 2016, Cherney and Hartley, 2017, Shanaah, 2019, Abbas, 2019, Salyk-Virk, 2020). Other researchers have written about building community resilience, capacity building, promoting cohesion and integrating minorities (Briggs, 2010, Weine et al., 2013, Alam and Husband, 2013, Hardy, 2015, Holmwood and O'Toole, 2018, Abbas, 2019). Within the academic literature, a focus also exists on subjects such as internal community surveillance and the role of individuals in reporting radicalisation and extremism (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, Thomas, 2016, Richards, 2019). In addition, multiple studies evaluated community engagement and how individuals respond to the official invitation to participate in projects and the challenges in countering counter-extremism (Grossman and Tahiri, 2015, O'Toole et al., 2016, Hettiarachchi,

2018, Ambrozik, 2019). Even more academic studies have investigated the engagement of communities from other dimensions, concentrating on specific components and concepts (Briggs, 2010, Gunaratna, 2015, Revell and Bryan, 2016, Cherney and Hartley, 2017, Ahmed et al., 2018, Schanzer and Eyerman, 2019, Gordon and True, 2019, Aslam and Gunaratna, 2019, Parker and Lindekilde, 2020). Observation of these studies has demonstrated a need for greater concentration on the relationships between a combination of societal components and a mixture of related concepts to achieve an increased understanding of this subject.

Some researchers have attempted to achieve a profound understanding of one or more concepts in a specific area by discussing the role of a specific community element in countering this phenomenon. For instance, Mandaville and Nozell (2017), Frazer and Jambers (2018) and McDonnell et al. (2018) researched the role of religious figures. Similarly, the role of educational institutions was discussed by Abbasi (2014), Davies (2018), Holmwood and O'Toole (2018), Busher et al. (2019), Sjøen and Mattsson (2020), Lawale (2020) and Sas et al. (2020). In addition, Wulan (2015), Fink et al. (2016), Eggert (2017), Bigio (2018), Zeiger et al. (2019), al-Kadia and Vale (2020) and Aoláin (2021) deliberated the role of women in counter-extremism. Likewise, the contributions of young individuals in fighting violent extremism have been studied by numerous researchers, such as Fagan et al. (2008), Feddes et al. (2015), Ekpon (2017), Sommers (2019) and Grossman et al. (2020). Notably, countless academic studies have been produced discussing a role or specific community component, focusing on one or more areas or concepts related to counter-extremism. However, it appears that inclusive research techniques

focusing on the relationships between societal components and the related concepts may produce a more comprehensive understanding of community participation in counter-extremism.

In this research, multiple areas will be highlighted to achieve a vision that can answer the research question. Multiple academic studies have tried to define radicalisation; some looked at it from a strict security lens synonymous with terrorism, while others were very tolerant, arguing that radicalisation can be acceptable if it does not lead to any threats to society. However, this research will follow the academic comprehension of radicalisation as a process that can be advanced into violent activities.

Defining radicalisation as a process allows this research to highlight that the extant academic literature mainly considers proactive actions in counter-radicalisation approaches. These considerations emphasise the essentiality of community engagement in counter-radicalisation to identify initial radical indicators. Moreover, some counter-radicalisation definitions emphasise dealing with factors that allow radicalisation to flourish and negatively influence social participation's effectiveness in counter-radicalisation. In addition to these four dimensions, applying benchmarks to measure the efficiency of community engagement in counter-radicalisation will be considered in this study.

## Research Contribution:

The intention of this research is to contribute to academic knowledge by specifying and studying the most crucial societal components and related

concepts that may affect community engagement in counter-extremism activities. Three dimensions will be covered: the essential social components, the related concepts that can affect the community participation in counter-extremism, as well as the critical areas of each specified societal component. The purpose of this specification is to understand the relationships between these aspects and how they affect one another. Comprehending the relationships between these three scopes can increase the efficacy of community engagement in counter-extremism.

As previously discussed, studying the community engagement or the participation of one societal component in counter-extremism provides too general or too exclusive lessons to follow. It is therefore probable that, studying counter-extremism requires greater focus on specific issues in order to provide comprehensive solutions. Partial concentration appears to be unsatisfactory for highly sensitive phenomena such as extremism and terrorism. The deficiency arises because academic research may comprehensively analyse the whole community but may not provide intensive analysis of it. Although studying one societal component may provide intensive evaluations, unfortunately, it cannot be comprehensively utilised to suit the whole community. The limitation is that the general evaluation of the community engagement may provide solutions that cover a wide range of communities, but it does so superficially. Furthermore, concentrated solutions focus on some parts of the community but may ignore other critical societal areas. As a consequence, it seems apparent that academia requires research that comprehensively analyses all critical areas and decides how they influence one another in a way that assists in understanding and improving community participation.

For further elaboration, two crucial issues require emphasis. The first issue is that counter-extremism and counterterrorism necessitate decisive solutions. This need is paramount, as in counterterrorism, one terrorist operation can harmfully affect the national efforts. Even though such violent activities may appear insignificant in comparison to the number of prevented terrorist activities, their negative influences are severely damaging. For more clarification, it can be said that understanding the difference between counter-extremism and marketing may help in signifying the cruciality of counter-extremism. For example, in marketing, achieving a small percentage of the market share may be calculated as a high level of success. Ambler and Kokkinaki (1997, p.669), argued that, in marketing, the target could be to achieve 30% of the market share, but some managers may accept that to achieve 15% of the market share is an indicator of success. In counter-extremism, the target is to achieve a 100% safe community. Significantly, the difference between marketing and counterterrorism can also be viewed through the approaches used to achieve the required goals, namely, marketing utilises an offensive method, while counterterrorism utilises a defensive technique. The challenge with the defensive method is that it requires greater effort to achieve its goals. Thus, comprehensive research that analyses all related angles of a phenomenon is necessary to protect every potential part of a community.

The second aspect is related to the first point, which indicates the need to focus on all critical parts of a community. The academic scrutiny of each area of a given community can identify all potential points that are open to be exploited by radical recruiters. Such contributions can be beneficial for counter-extremism in a variety of ways, such as by enhancing community engagement

and strengthening weak points. Consequently, these two issues suggest that researching such phenomenon requires an intensive and wide-ranging investigation that aims at the analysis of all crucial zones of the investigated environment in order to provide comprehensive solutions. Thus, realising the cruciality of counter-extremism and the need for inclusive solutions demonstrates the importance of the focus on multiple societal components and their related concepts.

Hence, a general investigation into the role of a community seems unlikely to provide a comprehensive understanding of a community's participation in a given issue such as counterterrorism. This lack of in-depth understanding may negatively influence the effectiveness of the societal role in counter-extremism, where the weaknesses and strengths of this involvement become unidentifiable. This uncertainty occurs owing to the absence of a comprehensive picture that can identify pivotal areas in order to determine any deficiency. Subsequently, combining a comprehensive and intensive evaluation requires joint research of general and exclusive analysis. Such analysis requires an identification of the primary components of the community, which can perform a significant role in counter-extremism. Following this identification, a profound investigation that will assist in clarifying the relationships between the investigated societal components is required. By this means, studying critical elements of a community or "the general analysis" can increase the comprehension of this engagement. Likewise, an in-depth examination of each principal component, or "the intensive analysis", can provide the required understanding of each concept. Thus, by using these two research methods

simultaneously, "wide and deep", will assist in achieving better academic understanding.

This investigation has highlighted the need for an academic focus on researching a combination of community components in order to examine their joint effect on the efficacy of counter-extremism. Accordingly, this research aims to contribute to the academic field by examining the role of a combination of four community elements in counter-extremism. It has been assumed that studying such a combination may assist in expanding the understanding of community participation in this field. Consequently, this thesis will focus on four primary components of communities. These societal components are religious figures, women, young people, and educational institutions. The selection of these four societal components has arisen from the significance of these elements, which will be discussed later.

Although there are other substantial social elements, such as social workers, mental health providers, psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, mentors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sectors, and communication experts (Ilyas, 2021, p.9), this research will focus solely on the four selected components. The significant and dynamic relationships between these four elements and their positions within the community, have formed the rationale for selecting them. Additionally, the four components are potential targets for radical networks. Even though other societal elements play vital roles in communities, they appear to be less vulnerable to outside influences than these four stated elements. For instance, it has been shown that some NGOs have been exploited by terrorists to fund their illegal activities. However, such

exploitation might have no harmful effect if community resilience was established. Moreover, it seems that none of the community elements can influence and become influenced by their surroundings more than by the combination of the four elements of religious figures, women, young people, and educational institutions.

## Research Question:

The question of this study is: "what comparable lessons can be drawn from the British and Saudi experience with fighting extremism through community engagement?" This thesis will focus on the engagement of the community in order to better understand how this practice can enhance the effectiveness of counter-extremism programmes. The study seeks to understand what lessons can be learnt through the examination of a community as one entity divided into four primary components. In order to answer the research question, two points will be focussed on. The first point is related to what common denominators can increase the efficacy of the participation of all the researched areas of the community. In other words, there may be some general requirements needed to enhance the quality of these four community elements. The second point focuses on the requirement of each societal element. To elaborate, it has been assumed that such complicated aspects, like communities and their multiple components, need general requirements that suit them all as one combination. Thus, this research tries to determine and treat the community engagement denominators as one unit, whilst seeking to specify the crucial areas under pinning each individual component.

Significantly, each individual component has needs that can increase the effectiveness of its participation in counter-extremism. Accordingly, to answer the question of this study, an investigation of the community as one entity with four components will be conducted, while simultaneously looking at each component as a separated unit. Thus, answering the research question can add to the body of academic knowledge in two aspects. Firstly, it can enhance the understanding of community participation in counter-extremism. Secondly, it may prove useful in terms of understanding each social element independently. Relatively, very few studies have attempted to answer the research question through a multi-level comparative framework. Such a method is one in which an original and significant contribution to the academic literature on counter-extremism through community engagement is claimed. Studying the engagement of four critical elements of the community as one combination, can assist in learning lessons which may boost the quality, participation, and success of counter-extremism initiatives.

## Research Scope:

This research seeks to examine the quality of community participation in counter-extremism with emphasis placed on specific areas. Three limitations have been identified in order to better clarify the research scope. The first limitation concerns the focus of this study which will be on the Muslim community only. Consequently, a comparison will be conducted between the Saudi community, as one hundred per cent Muslim, and the British Muslim community. It is hoped that the findings and lessons drawn from this research may be useful for Muslim communities around the globe. Although examining

the role of mosques and imams is most relevant to Muslim societies, some lessons may prove beneficial in the assisting of expanding the understanding of a community's participation in counter-extremism everywhere.

The second limitation relates to the community zones that will be examined. As mentioned earlier, there are various societal components, which include social workers, mental health providers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. The involvement of all these elements in counter-extremism will be advantageous. However, this research will focus on the roles of four key elements in counter-extremism.  These roles are the roles of religious figures, the roles of women, the roles of young individuals and the roles of educational institutions. These four sectors of the community were chosen due to the vital positions they hold in communities and the need to engage them in counter-extremism, which will be discussed in the next section.

Finally, the third limitation is linked to the definition of radicalisation as used in this study, that is, what is meant by radicalisation, or what type of radicalisation is being researched. Thus, it is essential to state that the intended radicalisation discussed in this research is that committed by radical Muslims. For further elaboration, the extremism under discussion in this research is that which derives from a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of Islam in order to achieve political benefit. It is not the intention of this research to examine any other type of extremism, such as right-wing extremism, left-wing extremism, and single-issue extremism. Greater clarification regarding this issue will be provided in the academic literature review.

## Communities and Radicalisation:

Extensive background reading has led to the research focus of this paper being on the roles of communities in fighting radicalisation. Thus, an understanding of what lessons can be drawn from the engagement of the community in this regard has been sought. The importance of this research derives from the investigation of what a community can provide in terms of reducing violent radicalism. As earlier mentioned, the most efficient projects have been those that function in partnership with leading community players (Griffith-Dickson et al., 2015, p.35, Korn, 2016, p.193). According to Kruse (2016, p.199), Bartlett et al. (2010, p.42), Weine et al. (2009, p.194), and Braga et al. (2001, p.198), various strategies engage community members; religious scholars, women, youth, teachers, communication experts, organisations, and civil society to counter extremism. Contributions from community members can assist in integrating resident values and attitudes into the strategies, which can create a connection between the local figures and these counter extremism strategies (Bamidele, 2016, p.129, Bracht and Tsouros, 1990, p.204). For instance, imams are engaged in instilling the concept of tolerance in some nations (Kaya, 2016, p.95). These scholarly thoughts have subsequently led to an examination of the efficiency of Saudi Arabia, in comparison to Britain, in order to engage its community in counter extremism strategies, focusing on four elements: religious elites, women, youth, and educational institutions. The research has concentrated on the engagement of the community, assuming that it can be an indication of efficiency. The cruciality of choosing to investigate the roles of

these four community apparatuses in counter-extremism comes from a variety of factors.

Multiple factors make religious involvement in countering radicalisation an essential. One such factor is related to the significant number of religious people globally. According to Hackett et al. (2012, p.9), almost eighty-five per cent of individuals around the globe are religiously affiliated. Realising the amount of influence that religious figures have on these numbers of affiliated individuals, demonstrates the essentiality of religious involvement. Thus, the debate regarding the religious elites' involvement in counterterrorism policies which have emerged over the past few years (Mandaville and Nozell, 2017, p.3). OSCE (2020, p.31), affirms that some areas of counter-radicalisation tend to rely heavily on a diverse range of professionals, including religious scholars. This is borne out by Kronfeld (2012, p.10) and Ansary (2008, p.131), who stress the importance of engaging Muslim scholars in fighting extremism, emphasising that it is the key to success.

Besides, radical Muslim ideology is based on a perverted Salafi doctrine, which cannot be refuted, except by Salafi scholars. As such, Salafis can perform a crucial role in the prevention of violence through such refutation. Bitter and Frazer (2016, p.3) have argued that because Salafis share and follow the same religious values, they have an absolute authenticity amongst radical Salafi individuals. Consequently, these religious figures possess the know-how to convince radical Salafi individuals to engage in a peaceful political process and confront their religious justifications for brutality. McDonnell et al. (2018, p.5), have also emphasised the importance of the Salafis' role owing to their ability

to refute radical religious narratives. Thus, it can be said that the importance of engaging religious elites in counter-extremism derives from two areas. The first area is linked to the number of religious people around the world. The second area relates to the ability of religious scholars in refuting radical narratives.

On the other hand, the essentiality of women's participation in counter extremism activities derives from the multiple characteristics they possess. One advantageous characteristic they possess relates to their ability to deal with violent activities in more effective ways than men (Robison, 2010, p.736). Furthermore, women, especially mothers and wives, may recognise very early indications of extremism in their family members (Couture, 2014, p.1). Moreover, Wulan (2015, p.11), affirms that women are the natural educators for their family and children, so they perform an essential role in motivating them. Idris and Abdelaziz (2017, p.4), have further stressed the need to consult women and engage them to prepare and implement counter-extremism programmes. Accordingly, these two researchers have asserted the need to have counter-extremism projects that are explicitly designed for women's engagement. In general, it can be noted that previous studies which investigated practical efforts to counter-extremism have underlined two vital themes: partnerships with communities and the contribution and empowerment of women (al-Kadia and Vale, 2020, p.248).

The cruciality of women's involvement in counter radicalism arises from five factors. The first factor relates to the efficiency of women when dealing with such complicated issues as radicalism, as affirmed by Robison. The second factor is their ability to notice any subtle changes in the behaviour of their family

members. The third factor is linked to the fact that women form approximately fifty per cent of societies around the globe. Accordingly, it would harmfully affect the efficacy of counter-extremism if such a high percentage of people were marginalised. The fourth factor is related to the ability of women to plan projects and create narratives that suit their gender in more effective ways than men can. The fifth factor is connected to the attempts of radical groups to target women. Such attempts have shown a marked increase owing to the harmful roles some radical women have played, as will be highlighted in the sixth chapter. Thus, it seems pivotal to engage women in building female resilience within communities. This is particularly vital in some conservative Muslim societies, such as exist in Saudi Arabia, where women may better interact with other women than with men.

Research has found that those who affiliate with radical organisations are predominantly young individuals (Sommers, 2019, p.2) and, therefore, it is essential to engage young people in counter extremism programmes. Accordingly, an examination of the efficacy of such efforts in this field is also required. Moreover, the focus should be on how to employ the enthusiasm of the young positively, instead of leaving them to be exploited by radical networks. Youth forms a fairly significant percentage of the Muslim population globally. It has been estimated that young people, between the ages 15-34, form almost 37% of the 34.2 million Saudi population (SGAS, 2019). As for Britain, according to Ali et al. (2015, p.12), the median age of the British Muslim population is twenty-five years compared to forty in the overall population of the UK. Ali et al. (2015, p.27) stated that thirty-three per cent of the British Muslim population was under fifteen years old. This abundance of young Muslims

indicates an urgency for researching and engaging Muslim youth in counter-extremism. This can be affirmed by Bartlett et al. (2010, p.39), who have asserted that one of the best British counter-extremism programmes is that which works to develop youth's ability to challenge radical narratives.

Notably, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR, 2015, no.2250) has highlighted the multi essential roles that can be performed by young people, affirming the importance of engaging youth in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, including violent extremism. In this regard, both British and Saudi policies to counter-extremism ensure this cruciality. For example, CONTEST (2006, p.33) emphasised the role of young British Muslims in counter-extremism. Likewise, the Saudi emergency media plan has been designed to counter the propaganda directed at Saudi youth by ISIL and other extremist groups. Hasanah has also affirmed the importance of engaging young people. Article (5) of the culture and media chapter encourages the engagement of youth and the activation of their skills in producing media materials to counter-extremism (Hasanah, 2015, p.36).

Finally, this research has chosen to analyse the engagement of educational institutions, due to the various substantial roles they play in society. History shows that schooling plays a dominant role in moulding the beliefs and behaviour of students. Thus, it can be considered as one of the leading areas where extremism can be combatted (Abbasi, 2014, p.257). Bertram (2016, p.124), and Tiflati (2016, p.200) affirm that various factors contribute to extremism, considering false teachings amongst them. Accordingly, a low education level can play a vital role in the potentiality of an individual's affiliation

with radical groups (Victoroff, 2005, p.7). According to Coppock (2014, p.115), the British government assumes that radical recruiters of all types can exploit schools.

Clearly, educators can participate and assist in identifying pupils at risk. Considering the educational environment as a potential target for radical groups, demonstrates the importance of engaging schooling ecosystems in preventing radicalisation. Various researchers (Von Hippel, 2002, Krueger and Maleckova, 2003, Sageman, 2004, and Silber and Bhatt, 2007), have affirmed that a significant number of terrorists are educated. These studies, therefore, ensure the essentiality of educators' participation in protecting students from being recruited inside schools. Sas et al. (2020, p.1), have also confirmed that some radical organisations believe that educational environments are ripe for recruitment. Consequently, weak or zero participation in counter extremist initiatives by educators may result in the creation of students who may be misguided by radical narratives inside or outside the school. The cruciality here derives from the reality that teachers are almost the first to become aware of changes that occur in students in their appearance, thinking and behaviour. Thus, they need to be empowered to provide counsel and support for their students (Nordbruch, 2016, p.2).

## The Importance of the Research:

Research into this phenomenon has demonstrated that more academic studies are required in order to reach a deeper understanding of how to evaluate the success of counter-extremism initiatives. Accordingly, this research assumes

that active community engagement may serve as a key indicator to the success of counter-extremist programmes. The importance of using this efficacy in evaluating the success of counter-extremism approaches derives from the lack of academic evaluating methods (Hoeft, 2015, p.27, Ambrozik, 2019, p.1050). A key challenge concerning this academic field is how to increase understanding of the counter-extremism evaluation. Subsequently, numerous researchers have discussed the scientific need for accurate methods to evaluate the proficiency of counter-extremism. Parker and Lindekilde (2020, p.1) have pointed out that there is inadequate knowledge concerning the effects of counter-extremism approaches which may relate to the lack of systematic, scientific evaluations of these programs. Hoffman (2014, p.4), affirmed that it was challenging to find tools for evaluating counter-extremism programs. According to Barlow (2019), Jessica Stern has stated that there are more than a thousand programs around the world intended to combat extremism, none of which has shown any evidence of success.

Researchers have indicated a variety of factors that may contribute to the shortage of counter-extremism program evaluation. Such factors that can affect counter-extremism project's evaluation are, "resources, timing of evaluation data collection, and data sensitivity" (Helmus et al., 2017, p.42). Additionally, Fenstermacher (2015, p.17) has suggested that counter-extremism projects have not been scientifically evaluated, in part due to the deficiency of criteria. Mastroe (2016, p.51), supports these arguments by stressing that it is hard to assess the success of national strategies with the absence of useful data on the effectiveness of them. Also, Horgan and Altier (2012, p.87) have asserted that it seems difficult, if not impossible, to obtain reliable data regarding counter-

extremism programs' competency. Horgan and Altier further argued that identifying the standards for measuring success remains an elusive or reluctant feature of most counter-extremism projects. As Fink et al. (2013, p.1) have noted, the problem is not only to build a counter-extremism approach but also to evaluate its efficiency.

Examining the efficiency of British and Saudi efforts to combat extremism shows that both share almost the same level of deficiency. The Saudi and the UK efforts to combat extremism were evaluated by Combes (2013), who noted that the Saudis have not indicated how they evaluate success. Simultaneously, he criticised the British CONTEST, for being introduced in the context of a previous strategy, whilst Gregory (2009, p.5), pointed out that one of the weaknesses of the UK CONTEST is the absence of an adequate evaluation. Furthermore, the Saudi strategy was researched by Horgan and Braddock (2010, p.268), who argued that there is no way to have a scientific examination of the success of the Saudi program. However, Boucek (2008, p.9) evaluated the Saudi project entitled "Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare (PRAC)," and considered the rate of low recidivism, to be estimated between 10% and 20%, as an indication of relative success. Nevertheless, Boucek (2008, p.10), thought that at least five more years were required to evaluate the rates of recidivism accurately. In this regard, Horgan and Altier (2012, p.85) evaluated the Saudi recidivism rate and agreed that for accurate evaluation to take place, a more extended period of investigation was required.

Undoubtedly, evaluation aims to assist in determining success. For instance, for governments, people's level of satisfaction with counterterrorism policies

may determine success. Besides, success can be determined by the participation of youth in national policies or by the level of recidivism (Fink et al., 2013, p.7). Nevertheless, some have argued that the real success or failure of a counter- extremism project is difficult to be judged under ten to fifteen years (Basit, 2015, p.62). This view is supported by Dawson et al. (2014, p.7) who note that one of the obstacles that face counter-extremism evaluation is that it requires an extended period for results to appear. Fink et al. (2013, p.3) have added that assessment needs to identify the scope of the programming, whether it focuses on a particular project, whether it is activated through several agencies, or whether a full range of approaches contribute to the CVE efforts. As such, these studies affirm the need for finding an alternative and more fruitful method to evaluate counter-extremism approaches. This assertion drives the research to suggest the utilisation of the engagement of local communities as an evaluating tool. Accordingly, this research seeks to examine the engagement of communities in Britain and Saudi Arabia in order to learn how this participation can enhance the effectiveness of national strategies to combat extremism.

The shortage of criteria in the evaluation of counter-extremism allows the researcher to assume the possibility to consider the communities' participation efficacy as an indication of the general efficiency of counter-radicalisation initiatives. Two issues are in need of more clarification to explain this point. The first one is that recruiting individuals is vital for radical organisations. Thus, without recruits, these groups cannot implement their violent activities. Although the economy can be considered as a nerve of terrorist networks (van Um, 2009, p.42, Unifab, 2016, p.18), the appearance of "lone wolves" has demonstrated

that terrorist activities can be executed at almost no financial cost. Accordingly, the focus should be on people, as cautioning them can prevent radical narratives from achieving their aims.

This assertion leads to the second point, which assumes that active community participation is necessary to build the required resilience. Thus, the number of recruits may indicate the effectiveness of the community's participation. If the number of recruits is low, then it may be assumed that the community's participation in counter-terrorism initiatives is successful. Vice versa, if the radical narratives are affecting individuals and numerous people are affiliating themselves to them, then this reading can indicate a weakness in counter-extremism participation. However, it must be noted that the measurement of the number of recruits may differ from one community to another depending on a variety of factors. Nevertheless, the efficacy of societal participation can be used in some cases as an evaluating method for counter-extremism. From this angle, the benefit of studying the community's involvement in counter-extremism becomes apparent. Furthermore, the lessons drawn from this research can be developed to become suitable criteria to evaluate the success of counter-extremism approaches through the engagement of communities.

## Summary of Findings:

Investigating the British and Saudi efforts to counter-extremism through diverse types of collected data has assisted the thesis to originate multiple lessons. The first lesson is related to the cruciality of the engagement of the four main elements in Muslim communities. These four elements are religious figures,

women, youth, and educational institutions. Essentially, these four elements almost form the structure of the whole community. Additionally, an individual can play a part in more than one area of the community, playing a different role in each one. For instance, a young female teacher may participate in all four categories, each with a different narrative and different audience. The mission of such a participant will diverge, depending on the area she is representing. For example, a young woman may speak to her colleagues who are in a similar age range and have similar interests in a certain way. However, the same women may discuss social issues with other individuals who are from different age groups and have different interests in different ways. Each situation requires participation which is appropriate for that situation.

In other words, each societal element has its own unique characteristics which should be utilised in counter-extremism. The utilisation of these features can be seen from three angles. The first angle links to the nature of the category, which sometimes cannot be understood except by an individual from the same category. For instance, young individuals may need particular messages that are created and presented by their peers. In some conservative Muslim communities, such as the Saudi society, some women may prefer to be educated by women. The second angle relates to the nature of radical propaganda, which cannot be refuted except by religious scholars. Besides, some religious scholars are trusted by their communities which enables them to influence people more easily. The third angle relates to the nature of relationships between teachers and students and parents and children. Thus, ignoring any of these three elements can negatively affect the proficiency of the community's engagement in counter-extremism programmes. Such disregard

may create a fragile window through which radical networks can recruit individuals. This fragility can be observed in the increasing numbers of women, young individuals, and students who have become affiliated with terrorist organisations. Furthermore, it can be witnessed through the ineffective roles played by some mosques in protecting their congregations from radical narratives.

The second lesson is that a combination of conditions shares a linear correlation with each other which can affect the performance of the community in fighting radicalisation. This linear correlation includes three concepts. The first concept is the importance of building trust between governments and communities in order to enhance their involvement in counter-extremism. It has been noticed that some official stakeholders want to involve the community in counter-extremism prior to building a tight relationship with them. This research has demonstrated that engaging community is difficult before building trust.

The second concept is the increase in awareness. After building trust between governments and communities, comes the need for increasing the awareness regarding the risk of extremism. It is essential to focus on educating communities concerning the risk of extremism in order to alert them that this phenomenon can harmfully affect their lives. Most importantly, cautioning campaigns can assist in building community resilience and in preparing individuals to welcome national encouragement to participate in counter-extremism activities. Also, encouraging individuals to participate in counter-extremism programmes seems beneficial in order to catalyse people to participate in social activities. Accordingly, the communities' readiness should

be utilised to fight radical thoughts. The third concept of this linear combination of catalytical variables is, providing training for all individuals who are willing to participate in counter-extremism activities. Hence, it is essential to understand the role of training in countering radical narratives. This mission is based on intellectual issues that require the necessary understanding in order to challenge such narratives. Consequently, unless individuals undergo proper training and receive the necessary knowledge, it seems challenging to engage them in this task, even if they eagerly want to engage.

The third lesson is that community participation in counter-extremism can be affected by three factors: internal factors, external factors, and political systems and their foreign policies. Such influences can be perceived in individuals' willingness to engage in national activities and to integrate into the surrounding cultures. Examining this phenomenon has confirmed that these three aspects can affect individuals in three different ways. The most noticeable issue is related to the external factor, whereby some individuals can be recruited by radical groups wishing to support other people who live in different countries. Similarly, certain internal factors can inspire some individuals to ignore any call for participation in social activities. The third factor is linked to the internal and external roles of political regimes that influence community participation in counter-extremism. To summarise, the research findings can be seen as a mixture of societal elements, related concepts, and critical factors, that need to be focussed on in order to enhance the efficacy of the Muslim community's engagement in counter-extremism programmes.

## The Structure of the Thesis:

This study will be divided into ten chapters and aims to evaluate the ability of Saudi Arabia to engage its communities in counter-extremism in comparison with the British experience. The purpose of these chapters is to analyse the roles of the chosen social components and the related concepts in greater depth. Besides, the divisions will assist in indicating the main focal points in each investigated area in order to illustrate their relevance from an academic perspective. The first chapter focuses on the research design. The discussion opens with an introduction highlighting the most significant issues in this research. Furthermore, it explains the research question and the research contributions, as well as clarifying the importance of community engagement.

The academic literature review forms the second chapter which will be divided into two categories; the first category will identify the main concepts researched in this study, such as, extremism, radicalisation, community, and counter-extremism. The second category will discuss academic research regarding community participation in counter-extremism. Background reading on this topic has led this research to focus on two combinations: the first links to the primary societal elements that can play useful roles in counter-extremism. The second links to four concepts that play crucial roles in the preparation of community components and the enhancement of their performance in counter-extremism. In this chapter, a clarification is made of all concepts related to this study, and the academic understanding of community participation in counter-

extremism. Consequently, a specification for the research contribution to this field is made apparent. The third chapter will underline the methodology that has been used to conduct this thesis. It will concentrate on the collected data and the manner in which it was collected and investigated to ensure thorough and precise findings.

The fourth chapter will discuss the comparison between the two countries, Saudi Arabia and Britain, to show its importance for academic research. This chapter will highlight the academic benefit of utilising comparative analysis for researching two cases that have similarities and differences. Several factors have led this research to compare the efficiency of Saudi Arabia and the UK in engaging their communities in counter-extremism. The chapter will discuss the similarities between these cases, such as looking at counter-extremism as a vital part of the British and Saudi relationship. For this reason, Britain and Saudi Arabia are essential partners, as well as founding members of various global coalitions and forums. Their partnership is apparent through their sharing of counterterrorism information. Besides, this chapter will discuss the differences between these two countries from different angles. One aspect is to conduct a comparison between the Saudi Muslim community which forms the mainstream culture of that nation, with the British Muslim community which can be described as a minority community surrounded by a different dominating culture. Furthermore, this chapter will provide a comprehensive background of the efforts made by Britain and Saudi Arabia in counter-extremism. This discussion will include a historical look at these efforts and the attempts made to engage their communities in national projects to fight this phenomenon.

The fifth chapter will show the research findings and discuss them. It will analyse the complex relations between the three different combinations of conditions. The six chapter will discuss the role of religious elites in combatting radicalisation. In this chapter, three critical issues will be highlighted. The first issue is the engagement of trustworthy religious scholars. Another aspect will be examined in this chapter is enhancing the imams' awareness about their roles in counter-radicalisation. The third aspect is related to the importance of providing training for religious leaders. The seventh chapter will explore the participation of British and Saudi Muslim women in counter-radicalisation. This chapter will concentrate on three vital issues that can affect women's participation. The first subject is the marginalisation of women's roles in counter-radicalisation. The second issue will be the negative role that can be played by women's radical relatives. The third section will examine the training efforts provided for women.

The eighth chapter will investigate the engagement of young people in counter-radicalisation. This chapter will discuss three issues that play substantial roles in convincing young people to engage in any activity. The first factor will focus on the enhancement of the sense of national belonging amongst youth as a method to build trust between them and counter-radicalisation stakeholders. The second aspect will highlight the utilisation of advanced communication tools to reach young people. The third section will measure the training level and the ability of young people to identify radical signs. The nineth chapter will focus on the role of educational institutions in counter-radicalisation. This chapter will discuss the roles of three apparatuses: parents, teachers, and curricula. These elements jointly, can generate an educational atmosphere that

can produce the required resilience amongst students. The purposes of these four chapters are to discuss what is needed to enhance the efficacy of these four social elements. Also, these four chapters have highlighted multiple factors which can nourish radicalisation.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

This research has investigated the academic literature in an attempt to answer the thesis question: "What comparable lessons can be drawn from the British and Saudi experiences fighting radicalisation through community engagement"? Observations show that five interlinked areas must be considered when evaluating the role of community in counter-radicalisation. These include the definition of radicalisation; the alignment of this definition with the policies that inform community engagement; the benchmarks used to evaluate the efficiency of community engagement with counter-extremism (CE); defining the community and its core societal elements that are necessary (but not sufficient) for this engagement (religious figures, women, youth and education institutions); and factors that can affect the whole community, or a specific social component, making them more susceptible to radicalisation or affecting their participation in counter-radicalisation.

Multiple scholars have highlighted community engagement in their definitions of counter-radicalisation. Participation can be more efficient when specifying the most crucial areas that can play roles in counter-radicalisation. These social components, including religious scholars, women, young people and educational institutions, can be positively and negatively affected by multiple factors. Many studies have asserted the significance of such factors in

radicalisation definitions. Investigating the academic literature demonstrates that some of these factors can affect the whole community, while others can be more influential on a specific social component. This reading shows the criticality of radicalisation and counter-radicalisation definitions in guiding this research in order to obtain lessons from it.

## I Radicalisation Definition:

Searching the academic literature demonstrates that researchers have no single agreed upon definitions for extremism and radicalisation. For instance, Sheikh et al. (2010, p.12), Klein and Kruglanski (2013, p.420), Idris and Abdelaziz (2016, p.7) and Hardy (2015, pp.78–80) have stated that there is little agreement on how extremism and radicalisation can be defined. Hoeft (2015) affirms that there are difficulties facing researchers owing to the lack of a universally accepted definition of this phenomenon (p.7). Even though there are multiple legal, policy and academic definitions, these terms serve various objectives and are not continuously aligned, which sometimes causes challenges in efforts to build international cooperation (OSCE, 2018, p.2). This shortcoming has created a critical difficulty in developing collective regional responses (Bhulai and Fink, 2016, p.11). Moreover, the lack of international consensus on the definition of this term has caused a challenge to academia (Lawale, 2020, p.101). As De Silva (2017) argues, the lack of a precise definition has made it problematic to carry out research and policy (p.2).

Nevertheless, there have been multiple academic attempts to define extremism and radicalisation. Some researchers have linked extremism and radicalisation

to violence. For example, Stephens et al. (2019, p.1) and Lawale (2020, p.101) argue that, in recent times, radicalisation, extremism and violent extremism have become synonymous with terrorism. Also, Davis (2009) affirms that extremism occurs when individuals intend to impose radical viewpoints on others using violence if required (p.185). A restriction can be identified regarding definitions that consider radicalisation a violent action. Abbas (2021, p37) argues that looking at radicalisation through the lens of security assumes it as a threat to public security; radicalisation can be understood as characteristically preceding terrorism. In such case, combating terrorism may create circumstances that prevent social engagement. Counter-terrorism operations may suppress essential human civil rights, mostly leading to innocent citizens being detained, mistreated, or killed (ibid).

Such treatment creates or widens the gap between a state and its community. Multiple scholars have warned that defining radicalisation as the use of violence can lead to the use of the pure security lens, which may cause distrust, isolation, frustration and institutional discrimination that can negatively affect community participation in counter-radicalisation (Adams and Christenson,1998, p.1, Briggs, 2010, p.979, Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.758, Witte, 2015, p.36, al-Kadia and Vale, 2020, p.249, Sommers, 2019, p.2, Sjøen and Jore, 2019, p.226, Agerschou, 2015, p.5). Stephanes et al. (2019) add that these security-driven plans have been criticised for stigmatising Muslim communities and declaring them both a source of risk and containing susceptible individuals at risk of radicalisation (p.1). Sjøen and Jore (2019, p.276) argue that the use of hard preventive approaches, such as profiling, surveillance, and zero-tolerance, seem to hinder the ability to build trust and inclusivity. In addition, defining

radicalisation and extremism as uses of violence that require hard approaches or counter-terrorism policies to combat them has been proven to be an ineffective technique (Fink and Barakat, 2013, p.1).

Stephanes et al. (2019, p.1) state that considering all these phenomena as violent has produced a new crucial subset of academic literature addressing violent extremism that concentrates on upstream preventative policies that place themselves clearly outside of a security-driven framework. Such projects have appeared in reaction to the massive criticism of policies that expand the security-agenda into the domains of care, social work and education.

However, these new methods that address violent activities by focusing on preventive approaches placed outside of the security-led framework seem to be ineffective. This argument is based on the Saudi experience in building counter-radicalisation strategies. The researcher witnessed the Saudi attempt to build inclusive policies that address radicalisation, terrorism and de-radicalisation. These efforts came to the conclusion that it was difficult to place the treatment of all these phenomena under one policy. Accordingly, the Saudi government decided to build three separate strategies: the first one considered radicalisation a process that requires civilian-driven supervision. The second policy focused on countering terrorism using security apparatuses. The third approach concentrated on de-radicalisation and rehabilitation programmes which involve psychological and social specialists.

In the case of the UK, it can be noted that the CONTEST Strategy is constituted by four strands: Prepare, Protect, Pursue and Prevent. Prepare is to lessen the

effects of attacks; Protect is to decrease susceptibility of the national infrastructure to attack; Pursue is to target known suspects; Prevent is to respond to the ideological challenges, preventing individuals from being drawn into terrorism or supporting counter-radicalisation (Dresser, 2019, p.608). These practical understandings of counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism were initially based on the understandings of radicalisation and terrorism.

However, some researchers consider radicalisation a process that can lead to violence. For example, Abbas (2021) affirms that radicalisation is both a process and an outcome (p.36). He argues that this understanding can assist in noticing the processes through which persons move from the early stage of becoming an extremist to ultimately participating in terrorism. Considering radicalisation a process means that it can take years to complete (Hoeft, 2015, p.9), which allows early safeguarding to prevent this process from transferring from cognition to behaviour. Hoeft (2015, p.9) argues that defining radicalisation as an ideology as much as an action allows stakeholders to learn from that long process in order to undermine extremism.

In addition, Abbas (2021, p37) assumes that identifying radicalisation as a process indicates that it works in various directions, such that individuals may choose not to advance their views to the point that they turn brutal. Schmid (2013) criticises the European Commission's definition of radicalisation as "the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism" (p.12). Schmid (2013) argues that one problem with such a formulation lies in the word 'could', because it does not answer the question of under what circumstances such a process takes place. This criticism affirms

that radicalisation seems to be an unpredictable process (Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010, p.9, Abbas, 2021, p.97) that should be treated seriously.

In order to make this argument clearer, it can be noted that the definition of radicalisation seems to be insufficient in serving the purpose of this research, because some researchers look at it strictly from a security lens, which makes it synonymous with terrorism (Stephens et al., 2019, p.1, Lawale, 2020, p.101). Such understanding drives stakeholders to utilise security-led approaches that focus on individuals and their behaviours instead of focusing on ideologies and what may incite them. This security-driven framework leads, as previously stated, to isolation, marginalisation and the detaining of innocent people, which negatively influences community engagement in counter-radicalisation and makes some individuals more susceptible to radical recruitment (Adams and Christenson,1998, p.1, Briggs, 2010, p.979, Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.758).

In contrast, some scholars appear very tolerant of radicalisation. For instance, Lyzhenkov and Lenarčič (2014) believe that radicalisation is acceptable if it does not lead to any threats to society (p.14). Also, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (2014) affirms that radicalisation is not a threat to the community if it is not linked to violence, incitement to hatred or any other unlawful acts (p.19). Such tolerant views may make it difficult to persuade communities to participate in countering what are considered acceptable ideologies, especially in their initial stages.

More challenging is that this tolerance disregards the fact that some acceptable radical viewpoints can be tolerated in some cases but not always. For instance,

the researcher discussed this issue with some British and Saudi individuals who believed and disseminated assumed acceptable radical thoughts. Those individuals argued that although they believed in such ideologies, they were opponents to any violent activities and had no tolerance for terrorism. However, those individuals could inadvertently radicalise some young individuals, who may advance these views to the use of brutality. Such unpredictable transfer (Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010, p.9, Abbas, 2021, p.97) affirms that radicalisation should be treated intolerantly and countered during its initial stages. As has been affirmed by Spalek (2016), radicalisation is regarded as theoretically dangerous, even if it is not linked immediately to violent behaviour (p.40).

Again, it appears essential to combat these ideologies from an early stage. However, the arguments of Lyzhenkov and Lenarčič (2014, p.14) and OSCE (2014, p.19) that consider radicalisation as acceptable and not a threat can be refuted by stating that radicalisation, as a fundamental idea, is always a threat, but radical individuals can be accepted because they are not always a threat, especially when they are unaware that their radical thoughts can dangerously influence innocents and make them vulnerable to terrorist exploitation. Consequently, instead of waiting for acceptable radicalisation to be a threat in the form of incitement, hate and violence, which will create social tension and grievance, proactive safeguarding approaches that engage civil apparatuses can be much more efficient in extinguishing radical ideas in their primary phases.

This understanding of radicalisation as a process that may not be noticeable in its early stages and can advance into violent behaviour aligns with various

academic arguments that consider counter-radicalisation as providing protection to susceptible individuals. Foret and Markoviti, (2020) assert that while de-radicalisation focuses on radicalised individuals with the purpose of reintegrating them into society, counter-radicalisation aims to protect non-radicalised populations from being radicalised (p.548). To achieve this, building a counter-radicalisation policy or establishing a cautionary campaign without community involvement is challenging. Community-based projects towards counter-radicalisation have been advanced and implemented globally, focusing on the protection of at-risk individuals from radical thoughts alongside government officials who work on counterterrorism (Spalek, 2016, pp.39–40).

This argument confirms what was previously mentioned concerning the British and Saudi strategies for counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism, which work in alignment to counter-radicalisation in its early and advanced stages, engaging security and civil apparatuses. Spalek (2016) argues that counter-radicalisation focuses on reducing vulnerability (p.41). Accordingly, these approaches cannot be created unless they have a clear definition of what is meant by 'radicalisation' and 'counter-radicalisation', because it will be challenging to utilise the Prevent Policy to protect susceptible individuals from radicalisation and to operate the Pursue Policy to target known suspects. Accordingly, defining radicalisation as a process that begins with unremarkable radical indicators before transferring into violence can serve in operationalising a counter-radicalisation definition. This definition will create a framework that divides thoughts into multiple levels, starting from acceptable views that gradually advance to reach the peak of radicalisation which can lead to violence. Nevertheless, because these hypothetically acceptable ideologies are

potential incitements for brutality, they should be combated in their initial stages.

The previous reading shows the need for a new definition of radicalisation that concentrates on the five realms, serving the purpose of this study. Thus, this research defines radicalisation as "a process whereby individuals believe in fanatical religious thoughts that may drive them or drive others, intentionally or accidentally, to adopt violence to attain an objective". This definition will serve the purpose of this research because (a) it looks at radicalisation as a process that cannot be treated in its initial phases by security forces, rather it requires social involvements that indicate preliminary radical signs; (b) this process involves advancing radical religious views, mostly exploited in Muslim communities, which can inspire (c) radical thought advocates or susceptible individuals (d) intentionally or unintentionally, because some radical individuals intend to negatively affect others, while some of those who believe in these radical views do not realise that their negative thoughts can radicalise young people and pave the road for terrorist groups to recruit innocent people and (e) exploit these radical thoughts into violent actions.

In conclusion, it appears essential to affirm that radicalisation is both a process and an outcome, through which people move from a preliminary phase of extremism to finally engaging in violent extremism (Abbas, 2021, p.37), seems crucially significant for this research. These multiple directions allow individuals to choose not to advance their ideologies to the point that they engage in terrorism. This choice can be affected positively by moderate narratives that can be initiated by counter-radicalisation campaigns in the early stages.

Otherwise, these views may be, if ignored, advanced and incited by radical propaganda that focuses on susceptible individuals (Schmid, 2013, p.7).

## *II Countering Radicalisation Definition*

As previously stated, the lack of definition for this phenomenon has affected counter-radicalisation. There is no generally approved definition of countering violent extremism (CVE) (Stephens et al., 2019, p.1, Gordon and True, 2019, pp.74-75). Caitlin and Szmania (2016, p.2) argue that many CVE programmes are loosely defined, while Couture (2014, p.9) notes that there is no communal view of what CVE is or how it can be implemented. Couture (2014) suggests that the definitions of these programmes range from preventing individuals from accepting radical ideologies to lessening active backing for terrorist organisations. Hence, the absence of consensus on the definition of radicalisation causes ambiguity in the definition of CVE (Idris and Abdelaziz, 2017, p.1). Accordingly, Davies (2016, p.77) declares that the lack of a clear definition of CVE makes it hard to assess CVE projects as a whole. Moreover, Couture (2014, p.9), states that, in addition to making the evaluation difficult, the absence of a clear definition of CVE causes conflicting and counterproductive plans.

Even though counter-radicalisation is a complicated and new field, some specialists have attempted to define it. The research observations in the academic literature mostly concentrate on four domains that can be beneficial: the first is that many researchers consider these approaches proactive. Caitlin and Szmania (2016) focus more on the actions of CE, stating that "it seeks to

prevent the radicalisation process from taking hold in the first place" (p.3). Hoeft (2015) affirms that counter-radicalisation can be seen as those efforts intended to prevent radicalisation (p.10). In a document published by The US Agency for International Development (USAID) (2016), CVE has been defined as "proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalise, recruit, and mobilise followers to violence" (p.4).

These scientific viewpoints lead to the second critical aspect regarding counter-radicalisation: the essentiality of community engagement in this mission. Accordingly, some researchers include community engagement in their definitions of counter-radicalisation. Zeiger and Aly (2015, p.1) say that CVE and PVE are holistic strategic programmes and policies that include community engagement. Thomas (2016, p.33) affirms that CE can be identified in multiple ways, including partnership with community. The third point is that some definitions of counter-radicalisation highlight factors that nourish radicalisation and also negatively influence the effectiveness of social participation in counter-radicalisation. For instance, Bartlett and Birdwell (2010, p.7) identify counter-radicalisation as policies and programmes intended to address some of the circumstances that may drive people to terrorism. Parker and Lindekilde (2020, p.1) argue that PVE seeks to respond to personal or environmental conditions. Also, USAID (2016, p.4) states that CVE has been defined as "proactive and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment to violence".

The fourth aspect regarding counter-radicalisation that should be considered when creating a definition is the challenges that face both academics and practitioners when they evaluate counter-radicalisation approaches or any of its

domains, such as community engagement in counter-radicalisation. It has been affirmed that it is challenging to evaluate counter-radicalisation (Couture, 2014, p.9, Davies, 2016, p.77). Hence, the challenge that faces these national approaches is an insufficient method to evaluate them (Dawson et al., 2014, p.7). As Fink et al. (2013) have stated, the challenge is not only in building a CVE project, but it is also evaluating its efficiency (p.1).

It has been suggested that the aim of the evaluation will assist in determining success. For instance, success for the government may be determined by people's satisfaction with counter-terrorism policies, participation of youth in national policies or reduced recidivism (Fink et al., 2013, pp.1-7). Some scholars have argued that the real success or failure of a CE project is difficult to judge before the passage of ten to fifteen years (Basit, 2015, p.62). Dawson et al. (2014) note that one of the obstacles is the requirement of an extended period for results to appear (p.7).

The weakness of definitions and effective evaluating methods may be a result of counter-radicalisation programmes not having been researched or examined, in part due to the absence of standard processes and criteria (Fenstermacher, 2015, p.17). Mastroe (2016, p.51) contends that it is hard to assess the success of national strategies with an absence of useful data on their effectiveness. Affirming this, Horgan and Altier (2012, p.87) assert that regardless of the increased approval of risk reduction initiatives, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to obtain reliable data regarding the competency of CVE programmes. Furthermore, Horgan and Altier (2012) have affirmed that

identifying standards for measuring success remains an elusive and challenging feature of most CVE programmes.

This study assumes that limitations of the evaluation of a CE project can be linked to the lack of precise and efficient actions necessary to achieve success in countering radicalisation. For instance, Myhill (2012, p.19), Zeiger and Aly (2015, p.1) and Davies (2018, p.4) emphasise the participation of communities in CE. Even though this emphasis seems workable, the second part of these definitions is not exact, containing immeasurable actions, such as providing information, reassurance and empowerment. Similarly, Davies (2018, p.4), Stephens et al. (2019, p.1), Gordon and True (2019, p.75) and Parker and Lindekilde (2020, p.1) all concentrate on 'building community resilience', though it is unclear how to achieve such a goal. The ambiguity in the definition may cause challenges in the evaluation of CE policies. According to el-Said and Harrigan (2013, p.237), Marsden (2017, p.4) and Eggert (2017, p.3), there is a lack of empirical evidence concerning the efficiency of these strategies.

Consequently, observations show that the academic literature primarily focuses on community engagement in counter-radicalisation. Social participation can be utilised as a sign of counter-radicalisation efficiency, but it is insufficient. Thus, there is a need to concentrate on the various required actions to attain more tools to evaluate this mission. These requirements, which will be discussed broadly in this chapter and can be utilised as benchmarks of success, include enhancing a sense of trust, increasing awareness and providing training.

Consequently, this study will include all four previously discussed issues when defining counter-radicalisation. These aspects are proactive measures, community engagement, common and individual factors that nourish radicalisation and impact social engagement efficiency in counter-radicalisation and evaluative tools to decide the efficacy of counter-radicalisation approaches. Thus, it can be stated that this research defines counter-radicalisation as "proactive actions and processes, to counter radical ideologies, protect community from being influenced by common and individual factors that can nourish radicalisation and affect social engagement productivity in counter-radicalisation, and empower individuals to participate in these projects effectively through inclusive procedures". Thus, the research will utilise this definition to evaluate British and Saudi community engagement in CE in an attempt to draw some lessons from this assessment.

The focus will be on four dimensions: one is to identify a sufficient method to evaluate community engagement in counter-radicalisation. The previously mentioned definitions were not exact, containing immeasurable actions, such as providing information, reassurance, empowerment and building community resilience (Stephens et al., 2019, p.1, Gordon and True, 2019, p.75, Parker and Lindekilde, 2020, p.1). Two is to emphasise community engagement and its effective role in counter-radicalisation, as affirmed by Myhill (2012, p.19), Zeiger and Aly (2015, p.1) and Davies (2018, p.4). Three is to discuss common and individual factors that can nourish radicalisation and influence community engagement in counter-radicalisation. These factors have been asserted in the academic literature as a part of the definition of counter-radicalisation (Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010, p.7, Parker and Lindekilde, 2020, p.1, USAID, 2016, p.4).

Four is to highlight the concepts required to improve community engagement in counter-radicalisation as emphasised by multiple researchers (Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.117, Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.751, Awan, 2012b, p.1174, Davies, 2018, p.21, Dunn et al., 2016, pp.206–207, Sommers, 2019. p.33). Also, these concepts can be utilised as benchmarks to evaluate the proficiency of community engagement in CE.

## III Defining the Benchmarks of Success

The academic literature on CE clearly demonstrates that a variety of factors and concepts can affect community engagement in counter-radicalisation. Scholars have discussed various issues, such as lack of a sense of identity (Abdel-Hady, 2010, p.1), lack of a sense of belonging (Anjum et al., 2019, p.42, Weeks, 2013, p.48), isolation and alienation (Witte, 2015, p.36, al-Kadia and Vale, 2020, p.249, Sommers, 2019, p.2), frustration (Sjøen and Jore, 2019, p.226), institutional discrimination (Agerschou, 2015, p.5), lack of transparency (Sommers, 2019, p.5), lack of a common understanding (Adams and Christenson,1998, p.3), marginalisation (al-Kadia and Vale, 2020, p.262), lack of public awareness (Abbasi, 2014, p.267, al-Kadia and Vale, 2020, p.258, Sjøen and Jore, 2019, p.226), lack of opportunities (Abbasi, 2014, p.265, Ahmed, 2012, p.144) and lack of education and training (Abdel-Hady, 2010, p.19, Abbasi, 2014, p.257, Agerschou, 2015, p.8, Alati, 2020, p.91, al-Kadia and Vale, 2020, p.254).

All these concepts, and more, are often discussed by researchers when they write about community engagement in counter-radicalisation. It can, therefore,

be assumed that all these concepts are crucial and should be taken into consideration when evaluating community participation in counter-radicalisation approaches. However, multiple benchmarks of success have been suggested to evaluate community engagement in CE. For instance, Ambrozik (2019) argues that three factors can affect such engagement: 'community stakeholders' interest in CVE, capacity to participate, and exposure to facilitation' (p.1052).

Also, Cherney and Hartley (2017, p.75) utilise four benchmarks to examine community engagement in counter-radicalisation. These benchmarks include 'overcoming distrust and generating trust', 'balancing the priorities of intelligence gathering, community engagement and trust building', 'choosing partners and distinguishing between friend and foe', and 'levels of consultation and community input'. McCabe et al. (2006) discuss four key elements for effective community engagement: 'Authority is needed to legitimatise issues and on the ground practice', 'follow-up evaluation is crucial to maintain government community mutual respect and confidence', 'formal and pre-set structures, procedures and relationships are required in the mediation of community engagement', 'closely coordinated and clear practical engagement demonstrations are needed to foster future engagement' (p.12).

Investigating these benchmarks shows that they cannot lead to accurate outcomes. Some of these benchmarks focus on the effect and ignore the cause. For example, Ambrozik's (2019) suggestion, which focuses on community stakeholders' interests in CVE, can be considered an outcome of trust building and awareness enhancement. Thus, focusing on the latter two key elements

can lead to a community's willingness to participate in these approaches. However, Cherney and Hartley's (2017) four key benchmarks concentrate on trust building and ignore other crucial dimensions, such as awareness and training, which have been suggested by the academic literature. Investigating what McCabe et al. (2006) suggest shows that these elements mostly focus on regulative aspects, such as legitimatisation, evaluation and procedures which seem more to be general requirements and cannot evaluate the success of community participation in CE.

Also, according to Thomas (2016, p.33), the UK government concentrates on four key themes: "increasing community engagement, strengthening the accountability of policing, improving operational effectiveness and modernising the police service". Looking at these four themes demonstrates the shortage in 'increasing community engagement' before increasing a sense of trust, which has been dangerously lacking, and, therefore, affecting Muslim communities' participation in the UK. As recognised by Weine et al. (2009, p.196), the challenge is in how to establish and maintain partnership with communities. This maintenance requires greater focus on critical issues, such as building trust, solving marginalisation and involving isolated individuals. Also, 'civil engagement needs to reflect respect, care, stability, discipline' (Hettiarachchi, 2018, p.269). Essentially, CVE requires promoting relationships between stakeholders and communities in order to ensure a safe, cooperative and productive atmosphere (Klausen, 2009, p.408, Fink et al., 2013, p.2).

Accordingly, this study's observations show that three concepts that have been considered by researchers can be utilised as benchmarks that serve in

determining the efficiency of community engagement in counter-radicalisation: 'building trust', 'increasing awareness' and 'providing training'. The academic literature has asserted these concepts' significance in community participation in counter-radicalisation, which will be discussed in this section (Awan, 2012b, p.1177, Fink et al., 2013, p.3, Davies, 2018, p.21, Bhulai and Fink, 2016, p.10, De Silva, 2017, p.17, Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.46).

The academic literature has demonstrated that the absence of these concepts, or just one of them, can negatively impact community engagement in CE (Klausen, 2009, p.413, Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, Fink et al., 2013, p.4, Naqshbandi, 2006, p.8, Gunaratna, 2011, p.70). In addition, these three concepts complete each other in a sequential arrangement that serves the purpose of this research. The sequential stages start with 'building trust', then 'increasing awareness and willingness to engage', and the final step is 'providing training' in order to help people participate effectively. These sequential stages can assist stakeholders in building their counter-radicalisation approaches, helping them to know where to start and end. Also, these benchmarks of success can be useful when assessing community engagement in counter-radicalisation schemes.

These benchmarks of success need Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that can serve in measuring the efficiency of community engagement in counter-radicalisation. The KPIs can be used to measure, compare and manage overall organisational performance, including quality, flexibility, delivery reliability, learning and growth (Bhatti et al., 2013, p.1). Multiple KPIs can be utilised to measure the performance level of each concept.

The first benchmark, 'building trust', can be measured by three KPIs. One is an assessment of the level of mutual trust. Awan (2012b, p.1177) and Fink et al. (2013, p.3) affirm the importance of mutual trust between authorities and Muslim communities. The second is evaluating the efficiency of the engagement of trustworthy people. As the academic literature shows, young individuals will not participate in counter-radicalisation projects unless they are invited by trustworthy individuals or civil organisations (Sheikh et al., 2010, p.38). The third is measuring the level of mistrust between communities and governments. This limitation can be caused by marginalisation, isolation and disengagement, as discussed by multiple scholars (Klausen, 2009, p.413, Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.137, Peters, 2014, p.2, d'Estaing, 2017, p.111, Clinch, 2011, p.111, Johns et al., 2014, p.66).

The second concept, 'increasing awareness and willingness to engage', can be measured by multiple KPIs. One evaluates efforts to raise awareness about the importance of radicalisation. Davies (2018) indicates that many people never participate in public vigilance projects owing to a lack of awareness (p.21). Also, Bhulai and Fink (2016, p.10) highlight that raising awareness of counter-radicalisation is very critical. Naqshbandi (2006) supposes that one challenge that faces counter-radicalisation is that Muslim communities are unaware of the risk of radicalisation (p.8). A second challenge is considering the advanced means to speak to people, especially young people. Multiple scholars emphasise the importance of advanced means in delivering propaganda, for example, ISIL's ability to recruit thousands of young people from around the globe (Byman, 2015, p.166, Stern and Berger, 2015, p.22, Weiss and Hassan, 2015, p.31). A third challenge is evaluating governmental efforts in building a

positive image of CE campaigns. One of the challenges that faces stakeholders is that the CVE concept has become almost misunderstood by many people (Ambrozik, 2019, p.1063, Romaniuk, 2015, p.18, Thomas, 2016, p.176). Thus, Awan et al. (2013, p.422), underlining the significance of improving the official image so as to draw people into joining counter-radicalisation.

The third concept, 'providing training', can be measured by multiple KPIs. One is teaching signs of radicalism. The academic literature emphasises the importance of educating concerned individuals how to identify early signals of extremism (De Silva, 2017, p.17, Fink and Barakat, 2013, p.11, Awan, 2012b, p.1162). A second indicator is evaluating individuals' abilities to identify radical signs. Dawson and Godec (2017, p.26), Fink and Barakat (2013, p.11) and Tahiri and Grossman (2013, p.46) have noticed that, in many places around the globe, imams, mothers and teachers are not prepared for such a mission. A third indicator is measuring the critical thinking level of young people. Researchers have asserted that training should concentrate on developing critical thinking in order for young people to question information they receive (Christmann, 2012, p.41, Davies, 2018, p.47). A fourth indicator is having more women with relevant skills and training. Researchers' observations confirm the criticality of enhancing the number of qualified women specialists who can cover every area and ensure the message is received by every vulnerable individual in the community (Nasseef, 2015, p.61, Eggert, 2017, p.6, Hamdan, 2005, p.54).

| KPIs to Measure the Efficiency Level of the Benchmarks of Success | |
|---|---|
| **Benchmarks of Success** | **KPIs** |
| Building Trust | 1) Engaging trustworthy religious figures<br>2) Enabling women and acknowledging their roles in counter-radicalisation<br>3) Enhancing the sense of national belonging among youth<br>4) Measuring trust levels in the educational environment |
| Increasing Awareness and Willingness to Engage | 1) Raising imams' awareness of the importance of radicalisation<br>2) Increasing women's awareness levels that can immunise them from radical thoughts<br>3) Using advanced means that attract young people and enhance their desire to participate in counter-radicalisation<br>4) Building a positive image for CE campaigns amongst educators |
| Providing Training | 1) Teaching religious figures how to identify radical signs<br>2) Having more women with relevant skills and training<br>3) Measuring the youth's abilities to identify radical signs<br>4) Training parents and teachers on how to seriously deal with radicalisation and how to teach their children/students critical thinking |
| These benchmarks and KPIs can be utilised to measure the level of efficiency of community engagement in counter-radicalisation. These tools will be used when discussing and evaluating the British and Saudi cases in chapters 6,7,8 and 9. However, it is important to affirm that the purpose of this research is to draw lessons from these cases, not to evaluate them. Evaluating the efficiency of community engagement in counter-radicalisation in one of these countries requires much more time, effort and circumstances that are outside the scope of this research. This study aims to draw on workable lessons that can be generalised and utilised in evaluating similar cases. All these benchmarks and KPIs have been asserted by the academic literature as factors that can affect community engagement in counter-radicalisation and play major roles in its proficiency. | |

### *Building Trust:*

The first benchmark of effective community engagement in counter-radicalisation is building trust between community and authority. Richards (2019, p.59) mentioned that the collective efficacy theory has confirmed that social control can be only attained when people trust each other and are ready

to cooperate. Hence, many CVE strategies are attempting to narrow the trust gap between governments and communities (Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.117). Cherney and Hartley (2017, p.751) also discussed the role of trust and how it influences community engagement. Trust can be seen as an instrument for community engagement (Awan, 2012a, p.27). Johns et al. (2014, p.59) affirmed that reciprocity and trust are essential to building community resilience. Significantly, trust can increase the community's feeling that their opinions are taken into consideration, which assists in enabling individuals to openly debate any seeming vulnerabilities (Spalek et al., 2011, p.26). A crucial measure of the accomplishment of counter-extremism projects is the degree to which trust, confidence and cooperation have been engendered (Dunn et al., 2016, p.197, Davies, 2018, pp.47-48). Thomas (2016, p.32) confirmed that a fundamental factor in successful policing looks to be complete trust. Thus, Awan (2012b, p.1177) and Fink et al. (2013, p.3) suggested that the future of counter-terrorism strategies needs to address the problem of building trust between authorities and the Muslim community. Subsequently, building trust should be an objective of CVE policies (Awan, 2012b, p.1161, de Silva, 2017, p.18).

Conversely, mistrust can lead to alienation and disengagement that may drive to extremism (Klausen, 2009, p.413, Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.137, Peters 2014, p.2, d'Estaing, 2017, p.111). Moreover, individuals who lean towards radicalism might feel a sense of isolation in their community (Clinch, 2011, p.111, Johns et al., 2014, p.66). According to Davies (2018, p.13), "theoretical research from social psychology points to subjective feelings of shame, alienation and lack of significance are underlying factors that drive youth […] to engage in violent extremism". Also, Kosárová and Ušiak (2017, p.128) argued

that Muslim minorities who live in Western countries might become susceptible to extremist ideologies because of identity crisis which can be triggered by deprivation, discrimination and disrespect, the feeling of non-belonging, or alienation from the mainstream community.

Crucially, mistrust may exacerbate the community's grievances, frustrations, and decrease the community's resilience against violent extremism (Fink et al., 2013, p.3). Besides, the lack of trust will weaken consent and affect cooperation negatively (Dunn et al., 2016, p.198, Richards, 2019, p.50). The absence of eagerness amongst Muslim communities for many CVE projects designates the deficiency of trust and confidence in the official institutions (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, p.199, Spalek, 2010, p.790, Awan, 2012a, p.26, Weeks, 2013, p.301). These potential trust issues may cause the community to be less likely to answer the call to participate in counter-extremism (Ambrozik, 2019, p.1064). For instance, Powers (2015, p.23) reported that it had been observed in the CVE initiative in the UK that, most of those young individuals who participated were black or Latino. Powers, therefore, suggested that trust-building activities could reverberate profoundly with Muslim young people. Accordingly, the importance of building trust can come to a degree, as stated by Innes (2006, p.224), Cherney and Hartley (2017, p.752), and Richards (2019, p.32), where the significant goal of engagement is to build trust with minorities.

Multiple issues cause mistrust between communities and authorities. The cruciality of distrust, as discussed by Cherney and Hartley (2017, p.758), is that one occurrence of distrust can damage ten efforts to generate trust. Powers (2015, p.22) endorsed this statement by reporting that, "while for the most part,

perceptions of the police within the Muslim community in the UK remain positive, there is a clear deficit in trust amongst youth". This statement shows that trust needs time to be gained or regained. For example, Powers believes that surveillance damages the efforts of government and creates a total mistrust. In actuality, research data suggests that an imperative method to rebuild trust is through community-led projects that encourage cohesion and not mass surveillance (Awan, 2012a, p.32). Moreover, Sheikh et al. (2010, p.12) discussed the absence of a common understanding that defines violent extremism which can create a degree of mistrust.

Trust cannot be gained unless parties are satisfied with the other's enthusiasm for engagement (Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.755). Thornton (2010, p.49) and Awan (2012b, p.1168) focused on the nonexistence of transparency, predominantly concerning the aims of CVE projects, which can result in community loss of trust. Moreover, the negative effect of promoting hatred and cultural stereotyping can cause a vital risk to social cohesion, that leads to demoralisation and subsequently to loss of trust in the mainstream (Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.96). Thus, Spalek et al. (2011, p.18) asserted that challenging media stereotyping could be deemed as a primary way of building trust. Furthermore, Sommers (2019. P.24) discussed the lack of education and marginalisation as a cause of mistrust that can lead some young people to join radical networks. Alam and Husband (2013, p.249) stated that marginalisation could contribute significantly to the sense of exclusion and stereotyping, while Sommers (2019. P.2), pointed out that the academic literature is weak on critical issues, such as emasculation, alienation, and humiliation.

Focusing on Muslims as suspects and excluding them from the creation of the initiatives, creates a relationship of mistrust (Greenberg, 2016, p.173). Suspect community is a notion that creates mistrust (Ambrozik, 2019, p.1047, Richards, 2019, p.33). In some areas, communities may engage in overt policing. At the same time, they assume that they are the subject of covert investigations, which can cause tensions and challenges for these communities (Spalek et al., 2011, p.6, Sommers, 2019. P.34). Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.753) suggested that trust-building often requires faith on those being engaged, i.e., Muslim leaders and community members. Even with this suggestion, Cherney and Hartley (2017, p.757) argued that the challenge is that if Muslim leaders are willing to engage with police, community members may accuse them of selling out, which would negatively affect their names. Nonetheless, trust can assist in facilitating coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam 1995, p.67, Johns et al., 2014, pp.58-59, Richards, 2019, p.44). Putnam (1995, p.72) warned that the absence of these aspects could cause negative consequences for civic engagement and trust. Finally, this argument shows how complicated the causal relationships between these concepts and trust-building are, and opens a broad question to know which can come first.

*Increasing Awareness and Willingness to Engage:*

The second benchmark of effective community engagement in counter-radicalisation is the ability of stakeholders to increase individuals' awareness and willingness in order to encourage them to participate in counter-extremism. It has been discerned that many people are unaware of the risk of extremism, even though they oppose it, and, as such, they are inactively dealing with this

phenomenon. Awan (2012b, p.1174) stated that the leading higher education sector in the UK issued a report affirming that universities should be more aware of difficulties caused by extremism. Davies (2018, p.21) specified that the majority of people are against extremism, but they never participate in the public cautioning projects owing to a lack of awareness. Accordingly, Bhulai and Fink, (2016, p.10) emphasised that raising awareness of counter-extremism is very important, and there is a need for more funding and technical resources for such a mission. Naqshbandi (2006, p.8) believes that one challenge that faces counter-extremism is that Muslim communities, especially, leaders and imams, are dysfunctional and cannot deliver authoritative guidance, because they are unaware of the risk of radicalisation. Gunaratna (2011, p.70) supports this argument by stating that although Muslim scholars have the knowledge and authority to clear any misunderstandings, the realisation of the risks of radical thought has not been sufficiently addressed. Davies (2018, p.35) suggested that while Muslim scholars correct the misconceptions, others should warn communities of the dangers of extremism.

Accordingly, there is a need to caution Muslims of the militants' propaganda that wants them to feel they are not welcome in Western societies, which assists to legitimise their claims that the Western world is against Islam (Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.754). Some researchers assume that a stable community would naturally counter radicalisation, however, not all communities necessarily combat extremism (Weine et al., 2013, p.329). Tahiri and Grossman (2013, p.97) firmly believe that many more cautioning programs are required to warn about the risks of extremism, especially on the internet and social media. Furthermore, Dawson and Godec (2017, p.26) have proposed that building

awareness could inspire people to report such radical contents on social media platforms.

Clinch (2011, p.103) discusses the crucial issue relating to how some young individuals' feel that they could never be influenced by extremism, which leads them to be reluctant to engage in any related activities. The crucial obstacle is that this denial is not only prevalent amongst young people, but, as stated by Weine et al. (2009, p.193) psychosocial workers, agencies, and researchers also deny risks of radicalisation and recruitment. When discussing the role of students, Richards (2019, p.202) acknowledged that they should understand what extremism means and that all people should counter it. Furthermore, educational initiatives can raise the awareness of students to think about their future (Sas et al., 2020, p.7). More critical is an observation made by Clinch (2011, p.34) who noted that one of the challenging issues that face counter-extremism policies could be when teachers are unaware that they have to protect their students from radical ideologies. In addition to this, Ambrozik (2019, p.1058) stated that there was a need for educating parents on the dangers of extremism and the significance of participation in counter-radicalisation.

In general, it can be stated that awareness is vital because not many individuals understand the profits gained from joining counter-extremism efforts (Awan et al., 2013, p.428). These arguments demonstrate the need for highlighting the negative impact of this phenomenon on the communities (Fink and Barakat, 2013, p.12). Ambrozik (2019, p.1063) is concerned that the CVE concept has become almost unrealised and misunderstood by many people. Worryingly,

some individuals have never heard of any CVE program (Salyk-Virk, 2020, p.1018). Hence, raising awareness about counter-extremism goals could encourage communities to collaborate and participate in this mission (Fink and Barakat, 2013, p.14). Besides, when counter-extremism stakeholders succeed in addressing what threatens the community, the authorities may have the people's collaboration in countering radicalisation (Briggs, 2010, p.973, Bilazarian, 2016, p.7). In actuality, warning campaigns can enhance awareness among individuals and inspire them to participate in counter-extremism (Richards, 2019, p.45). Parker and Lindekilde (2020, p.3) reported that after a warning program, it had been observed that positive attitudes towards extremism were discernibly reduced. Notably, Skogan and Steiner (2004, p.6), found that one of the warning projects increased community awareness by eighty per cent.

Nevertheless, due to a lack of trust, participation in counter terrorism initiatives may not always be encouraging. It can be assumed that enhancing the sense of trust amongst individuals before discussing the dangers of extremism and the purpose behind counter-extremism initiatives, may be beneficial in encouraging people to involve more in this mission. Regardless, this participation appears less effective than it should be, which may be due to a lack of training. Accordingly, training should be taken into consideration as a third stage for achieving notable outcomes.

*Providing Training:*

The third benchmark of effective community engagement in counter-radicalisation focuses on the national efforts to provide training for participants. It has been stated that extremism is a very sophisticated subject, so that not everyone can understand it. Richards (2019, p.1) argued that this phenomenon is an unclear concept for non-specialists while Dunn et al. (2016, pp.206-207) discussed the need for thorough training. Powers (2015, p.21) suggested that individuals with professional skills could be an essential objective for counter-extremism stakeholders. Likewise, Couture (2014, p.50) and Sommers (2019. P.33) emphasised that having educated individuals is one of the most operative ways to counter-extremism. Accordingly, training should be provided for communities that engage in CVE issues, including enhancing comprehension of recent United Nation (UN) and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) frameworks (Bhulai and Fink, 2016, p.10). Gielen (2015, p.30) discussed the benefits of the European Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) which was developed to exchange best practices and lessons that are usually used by counter-extremism stakeholders. One of the significant practices utilised is, providing training for individuals who work in this field.  Auld (2015, p.218) also confirmed that these best practices considered a range of interventions, including providing training.

Bilazarian (2016, p.7) suggested that basic training can help to build a relationship between police and local agencies and can increase the willingness of local professionals to engage more. Dawson and Godec (2017, p.26) said that there is a need to train individuals to keep an online presence as well as to

train them in how to run a project to enhance resilience amongst people. Furthermore, training in religion can succeed in preventing theological extremism (Christmann, 2012, p.39). In general, it can be ensured that training and capacity building can help individuals who participate in any activities (Vanclay, 2012, p.21). Bonnell et al. (2011, p.98) argued that knowledge, understanding, and training are vital to guarantee that the relevant staff comprehend and value the purposes of the intervention. Besides, training is not needed only for individuals; even officials need it. Rascoff (2012, p.130), Butt and Tuck (2014, p.25), Bhulai and Fink (2016, p.10), Dunn et al. (2016, p.208) and Cherney (2021, p.134) stressed that it is crucial to train law enforcement officials to assist them to understand minorities, build community approaches and identify radical risks. Training can assist staff in preventing individuals from being drawn into extremism and help challenge radical ideologies (Gearon, 2013, p.135, Qurashi, 2017, p.200).

Lawale (2020, p.117) advocated the cruciality of training teachers in order to prevent and counter extremism. He emphasised that training is as important as designing a curriculum. Therefore, teacher training may be a key area in fighting radicalism (Davies, 2009, p.197). Accordingly, Fink et al. (2013, p.4) warned that teachers who lack the proper support or tools to participate in CVE could bring more negative impact than positive. De Silva (2017, p.17) stressed that the training should focus on identifying early indications of extremism. In addition, Saltman and Frenett (2016, p.157) highlighted the need for teachers to undergo intensive training on how to engage with their students on the topics of extremism and terrorism. Training of mentors is also a beneficial component

as it can increase awareness about radicalism and build capabilities and tools to handle their roles (Butt and Tuck, 2014, p.17).

Fink and Barakat (2013, p.11) believe that although mothers are often in a unique location to recognise early signals of extremism and intervene accordingly, in many places around the globe they are not prepared for such a mission. According to a survey conducted by Schlaffer and Kropiunigg (2016, p.62), women, especially mothers, need diverse kinds of training. For example, eighty-six per cent of them acknowledged their need for developing skills in realising the early indications of extremism. Eighty-four per cent of the participants reported that they needed training in self-confidence, while eighty per cent required training in parenting skills.

Besides, it has been found that some new migrant imams were not adequately trained and did not have sufficient knowledge of their new society (Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.46). Thus, the European Union having recognised this challenge, attempted to integrate imams, and provide them with adequate training in language skills as well as in detecting the early indications of radicalisation (Awan, 2012b, p.1162).

Additionally, training should focus on challenging ideology, allowing young people to develop critical thinking in order to question the information they receive (Christmann, 2012, p.41, Davies, 2018, p.47). In this regard, Bonnell et al. (2011, p.34) emphasised that providing training for young individuals can assist them to feel more valuable and trusted. Conversely, the absence of this positive sense can make them vulnerable to radical networks. Moreover, Johns

et al. (2014, p.62) highlighted the improvement of social skills and leadership capacity when providing training for young people.

## IV Community Engagement:

The engagement of local communities plays a significant role in national approaches to counter extremism around the world. Firstly, a community can be identified as "individuals, groups and institutions living in the same area and/or having shared interests" (OSCE, 2014, p.67). Secondly, a community can be identified by three factors: people living in a specific place, people sharing common characteristics, and people sharing common concerns (Thomas, 2016, p.41, Richards, 2019, p.5). The engagement of these individuals in societal activities enhance the efficacy. Kelling and Bratton (2006, p.2), Innes (2006, p.223), Clarke and Newman (2007, p.19) and Thomas (2016, p.43) advocated that community has a role to play in counter-extremism. A community can be seen as a powerful means for combating social problems (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, p.188, Griffith-Dickson et al., 2015, p.36). Concerning problem-solving, Powers (2015, p.22), pointed out that Muslim communities choose to solve their problems locally, rather than involving the government.

Working with the community has become an essential foundation in combating terrorism and extremism (Ansary, 2008, p.131, Kronfeld, 2012, p.10, Richards, 2019, p.31). Leichtman (2008, p.69) said that it is hard to combat crime, in general, without the assistance of the community. It has been further endorsed that the most effective counter-extremism approaches are those that engage

the community (Awan, 2012a, p.26, Griffith-Dickson et al., 2015, p.35, and Korn, 2016, p.193). Spalek et al. (2011, p.13), Dunn et al. (2016, p.196) and Salyk-Virk (2020, p.1030) confirmed that effective policing depends heavily upon community backing.

Effective community engagement can increase flexibility to tailor CVE programs to meet social needs and figure out solutions to local violence (Ambrozik, 2019, p.1046). Thus, CVE needs the participation of the community (Fink et al., 2013, p.2). Rosand (2016, p.1) and Sommers (2019. P.33) emphasised that comprehensive approaches require the empowerment of local actors and community. Dunn et al. (2016, p.204) indicated that the community willing to engage in counter-extremism could be seen as an indicator of success. Nevertheless, it has been observed that the community may be more eager to participate in national rather than local activities, especially those that directly concern them.

It is generally agreed that community engagement in counter-extremism is essential (Fink et al., 2013, p.2, Richards, 2019, pp.44-45). This essentiality comes from the effect of the community engagement, and as Tahiri and Grossman (2013, p.125) have stressed, the more that the community participates at the grassroots level, the more probable CVE would be sufficient, otherwise, the risk of extremism will linger (Salyk-Virk, 2020, p.1015). Fortunately, governments have comprehended this criticality, and attempts have been made to engage communities in counter-extremism and provide funding for participants (Aly et al., 2015, p.3). Myhill (2012, p.8), Thomas (2016, p.36) and de Silva (2017, p.18) insisted that CVE programming must involve

communities. Hence, Hettiarachchi (2018, p.269) stated that authorities must cooperate with communities despite the negative propaganda that works to separate the local community from the government.

This cruciality of community engagement is linked to the multiple ways in which assistance can be provided by local people. For instance, communities can play important roles in assisting the police and the security services in identifying individuals who might become terrorists (Hardy, 2015, p.88). Community members' contribution can also assist in integrating resident values and attitudes into the strategies which create a connection between the local figures and these programs (Bamidele, 2016, p.129, Bracht and Tsouros, 1990, p.204).

Furthermore, communities can help individuals to find a "community of hope, not a community of harm" when they browse the internet and social media (Greenberg, 2016, p. 171). Weine et al. (2009, p.194), stressed that the availability of a local role model who participates, or at least positively talks about community engagement, assists young people to be less interested in radicalisation. Moreover, they can engage in conversations, remove extremist propaganda, as well as introduce counter-narrative mentoring programmes (Davies, 2018, p.11). The importance of community engagement is endorsed by the Carter Centre which emphasises the significance of community leaders in CVE projects, because they have "unique positions of authority, credibility, and communal ties" (Abadi, 2016, p. 2 and Greenberg, 2016, p. 171). It is noteworthy that many specialists who work in the field of combatting violent extremism, firmly believe that controlling this phenomenon comes through communities (Griffith-Dickson et al., 2015, p.27).

The experiences of some states have demonstrated the efficacy of community participation in counter-extremism. Richards (2019, p.111) argued that in the UK, communities enable CONTEST to address radicalisation and extremism locally. Griffith-Dickson et al. (2015, p.27) described this enablement as one of the most pioneering characteristics of the British strategy, whereby the government shifted to a preventative approach, in which communities are vital partners in combating extremism. Fenstermacher (2015, p.15) went further by mentioning that one of the main lessons of the experiences of European countries in countering extremism is that this mission requires the involvement of the community. Awan (2012b, p.1177) wrote that Europe, the UK, and the US plans employ community-based approaches as a means to combat the threat of home-grown extremism. In addition, Boucek (2008, p.9), discussed the efforts of the Saudi authority to engage the community in counter-extremism, while Selim (2016, p.97) described how the 2011 American approach to CVE was to appoint local communities to administrate all these activities. Interestingly, when a counter-extremism project in France has concerns about the families of extremists, it refers their concerns to local NGOs that specialise in professional counselling (Hellmuth, 2015, p.25).

It has also been proposed that community engagement may be more effective if it focuses on some categories of individuals. D'Estaing (2017, p.110), suggested that counter-extremism projects should involve different perspectives from the onset of the design of strategy and measures, to include women, youth, and religious leaders. Furthermore, article (16) of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR, 2014, no.2178) affirms the engagement of youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education

leaders in combatting extremism. According to Braga et al. (2001, p.198), Bartlett et al. (2010, p.42), Weine, et al. (2009, p.194), and Kruse (2016, p.199), various strategies engage community leaders with religious scholars, families, women, youth, schools, communication experts, organisations, and civil society, to counter extremism. For more accuracy, this research will focus on four elements of the community: religious leaders, women, youth, and educational institutions. These elements have been selected for reasons that will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first element of the community, in this study, is religious leaders who can play a crucial role in preventing extremism. According to Klausen (2009, p.414), it has been suggested that radicalisation is owing to the failure of Islamic religious authority. Thus, rebuilding this entity can be of benefit in the countering of extremism in that religious scholars may better understand radical arguments and can refute them. Moreover, they possess an understanding of the local context (Salyk-Virk, 2020, p.1014). Clinch (2011, p.109), Tahiri and Grossman (2013, p.131) argued that, Muslim religious figures exert a powerful influence on their followers, and they are expected to play a crucial role in counter-extremism. Accordingly, some authorities engage imams in cultivating the concept of tolerance in some societies (Kaya, 2016, p.95).

The significance of Muslim religious leaders' participation derives from the enormous number of Mosques and organisations in their communities. For example, there are more than twelve hundred mosques, and about seven thousand Muslim organisations in Britain (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, p.198), and these places provide education and spiritual enlightenment (Awan, 2012b,

p.1169). Gunaratna (2011, p.77) has highlighted how many countries already coordinate with Islamic scholars and clerics to combat this phenomenon. Gunaratna has also explained that Islam has been misinterpreted, and the role of these clerics is to dismantle the concept of radicalisation. Such a statement may have driven Griffith-Dickson et al. (2015, p.27) to conclude that counter-extremism cannot be commenced without the operative engagement of religious actors.

The second element through which the community can play a critical role in counter-extremism is women. It has been stated that in the realm of CVE, women can perform the same sorts of roles as men (Marc and Lacombe, 2016, 174, Sommers, 2019. P.26). Significantly, the roles of women in confronting violence and extremism have been emphasised in several international meetings and workshops, and the European Union has considered women as potential partners in its CVE (Fink and Barakat, 2013, p.2). Weeks (2013, p.212) argued that women are the heart of their houses, and they should not be disregarded, because they play a role in implanting values while raising children.

Furthermore, women have the potential to be tremendously operative in noticing early warning indications in their family members (Couture, 2014, 1, 50, Sommers, 2019. P.26). In this regard, de Silva (2017, p.14) emphasised that CVE programs should take into consideration the unique role that mothers play as the family's first educator. De Silva went on to warn that unless these issues are taken into account, CVE interventions cannot be fruitful. Fink and Barakat (2013, p.8) added that women could offer valuable insights on re-

engaging male and female terrorists into society. Despite their importance and the critical roles women can play, Brown (2013, 51) and d'Estaing (2017, p.105) remarked that women remain marginalised from this involvement. Women are often deemed as targets, not players, and their unique experiences are overlooked. Due to this marginalisation, women may participate and support terrorism, which appears to offer them an escape route from the insulting atmosphere they find themselves in (d'Estaing, 2017, p.116).

The third societal element that can benefit national counter-extremism projects is youth. Youth is defined differently from country to country. The Saudis, for example, consider young people as belonging to a wide category ranging from the age of sixteen until the age of thirty-five (Hasanah, 2015, p.16), while the African Union defines youth as individuals between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five (AUC, 2006, p.11). The UNESCO identifies youth as those people between the ages of fifteen to twenty-four. According to Glibbery (2015, p.1), the Arab League considers every person aged between fifteen and twenty-nine as a young individual. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) regards youth to be those aged between ten and twenty-nine (Sommers, 2019. P.14). In the UK, youth is considered to be those individuals between the ages thirteen and twenty-nine (ONS, 2018).

Undoubtedly, youth form a significant percentage of the Muslim population around the globe. For instance, it has been estimated that young individuals, between the ages 15-34, form more than 35% of the Saudi population (SGAS, 2019). In the UK, according to Ali et al. (2015, p.12), the median age of the British Muslim population is twenty-five years compared to forty in the overall

population of the UK. Ali et al. (2015, p.27) said that more than thirty per cent of the British Muslim population was under fifteen years old. Consequently, this abundance of youth highlights the urgency for engaging Muslim youth in counter-extremism.

Fundamentally, governments can benefit from the engagement of young people in raising awareness projects against extremism (Richards, 2019, p.226). Fink et al. (2013, p.6) affirmed that involving youth in the development of curriculum design can increase its effectiveness and build resilience against extremism. According to Sommers (2019. P.32), a CVE expert has indicated that including young individuals can not only generate projects that refute radical ideologies but can also create positive narratives that are authentic to their counterparts. Bartlett et al. (2010, p.39), contend that one of the best British counter-extremism projects is that which focuses on developing youth's ability to counter radical ideologies.

Furthermore, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR, 2015, no.2250) aims to encourage state members to engage young people, "recognising that youth should actively be engaged in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation and that a large youth population presents a unique demographic dividend that can contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity if inclusive policies are in place". Significantly, the British CONTEST (2006) and the Saudi Hasanah (2015) have both emphasised the role of young Muslims in counter-extremism.

Educational institutions are the fourth community element to feature in this research, as they can play influential roles in counter-extremism. Counter-extremism is no longer solely the concern of the police but is also the responsibility of various organisations including schools (Richards, 2019, p.41). Essentially, education can change values and attitudes (Sas et al., 2020, p.7). Although some researchers have argued that a lack of education could be a driver of radicalisation, there appears to be a consensus that education is one of the most effective tools to reach students and educate them about radical ideologies (de Silva, 2017, p.9). Fink et al. (2013, p.6) have stressed that the central goal of counter-extremism is to build community resilience, of which education can play a serious role.

To have a sustainable counter-extremism project, there is a need to anchor such a project into curricula structures and the working practices of teachers (Davies, 2018, p.48). Clinch (2011, p.39) and Sas et al. (2020, p.8) have confirmed that critical thinking and debate in schools around local and international matters has been recommended for both primary and secondary schools. Beside schools' engagement, many scholars have emphasised the cruciality of focusing on parents and engaging them in addressing violent extremism (Clinch, 2011, p.109, d'Estaing, 2017, p.110, Davies, 2018, p.28, Richards, 2019, p.129 and Salyk-Virk, 2020, p.1012).

The purpose of selecting these four elements of the community can be linked to two reasons. The first reason is that these elements form significant numbers of any community. Religious leaders have effect and popularity everywhere within Muslim communities. As for women, they form around fifty per cent of all

communities, and they are potential targets for radical groups. However, women also possess the skills and power to affect their surroundings and protect them from extremism. As previously discussed, young people also form a significant portion of Muslim communities. Regarding educational institutions, it can be agreed that most people spend their childhood and teenage years in schools which can educate them about various issues, including the risks of radical ideologies.

The second reason is that the engagement of other civil elements, such as social workers, mental health providers, psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sectors, and communication experts, cannot be as effective as these four elements. The significant relationships between these four elements and their locations in the community were the reasons for selecting them. Additionally, the four components are potential targets for radical networks. Even though the other societal elements play vital roles in communities, they appear not to be as vulnerable as these four elements of communities. For instance, it has been observed that some NGOs have been exploited by terrorists to fund their illegal activities. However, such exploitation might have no harmful effect if community resilience was established. Moreover, it seems that none of the community elements can influence and become influenced by their surroundings more than this combination of the four selected elements.

## *V Factors that Affect Community Engagement:*

Multiple counter-radicalisation definitions emphasise the prevention of nourishing factors for radicalisation, which can also influence the efficiency of community engagement in counter-radicalisation (Hoeft, 2015, p.9, Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010, p.7, Parker and Lindekilde, 2020, p.2, USAID, 2016, p.4). For instance, Hoeft (2015, p.9) discusses four factors that can nourish radicalisation and lessen community engagement in counter-radicalisation. These factors include divisions, grievances, narratives and means. USAID (2016, p.5) discusses two types of factors: "institutional and societal failures' and 'people's individual aspirations". The first type includes systematic and gross human rights violations, political, economic or social marginalisation or endemic corruption and impunity. The second includes economic and/or social status, spiritual guidance, adventure, friendship or ideology, including through the use of the internet and social media. Similarly, Parker and Lindekilde, (2020) argue that factors that nourish radicalisation can be divided into two categories: one is factors at the personal level, such as experiences of self-uncertainty, personality traits or social networks (p.2). The second is large-scale factors, such as neighbourhood characteristics and political ideologies.

Investigating these factors shows similarity between them where researchers focused on individuals and social categories. These categories and factors can be beneficial in understanding what may radicalise individuals and impact their participation in counter-

radicalisation. Nevertheless, all these factors seem insufficient to serve the purpose of this research owing to two reasons: first, this study is looking for factors more suitable to Muslim communities and that allow for comparison. For instance, there is a need for a model of factors that can serve in emphasising the roles of religious scholars, teachers and psychological status in radicalising individuals or negatively affecting their participation in counter-radicalisation.

Second, this research concentrates on four societal components that are mostly similar, but each can be more influenced by specific factors than the other components. It can be said that marginalisation can affect the whole community. However, in Muslim communities, this factor may be considered more harmful to women's roles. The same argument can be stated when discussing the effect of a sense of national belonging, which can affect everyone, but may affect young people more. Accordingly, for the purpose of this research, a model can be developed from the previously mentioned factors and what has been emphasised in the academic literature. This model includes two categories: common factors that can affect the whole community and may drive some people to radicalisation or affect their engagement efficiency in counter-radicalisation. The second category includes individual factors that mostly affect a specific social component, nourishing radicalisation or decreasing the willingness to participate in counter-radicalisation.

| Category 1: Common factors that can affect the whole community and may drive some people to radicalisation, or at least, lessen their engagement efficiency in counter-radicalisation | | |
|---|---|---|
| Internal factors: Local cultures | External factors: Surrounding societies | Political systems: Relationships and foreign policies |
| Category 2: Individual factors that may affect a specific social component, nourishing radicalisation and decreasing willingness to participate in counter-radicalisation | | |
| Religious figures:<br><br>1. Distrustful religious figures<br>2. Imams' unawareness<br>3. Insufficient training | Women:<br><br>1. Marginalisation<br>2. Radical relatives | Youth:<br><br>1. Lack of sense of national belonging<br>2. Weak communication tools | Educational institutions:<br><br>1. Mistrustful educational environment<br>2. Ineffective curriculum |

*The Common Factors*

The academic literature shows that radicalisation and community participation in CE can be influenced by three common factors, which will be discussed in chapter four. These common factors are internal factors, external factors and political systems and their foreign policies. The first common factor is the local culture or internal factors that are linked to people's ethnicities (Dallal, 2016, p.304) and play a serious role in this aspect. People deal with their environments in how they interrelate with each other in their local cultural atmosphere (Weeks, 2013, p.215). Inglehart and Norris (2009, p.9) argue that alternative theories of multiculturalism show that some Muslim migrants take their local cultures with them when they travel. Rajkhan (2014, p.2) affirms that the effect of local culture could reach a level where it generates paradoxes between some national laws and what occurs in real life. For instance, local culture can play a crucial role in the way people treat women (Offenhauer, 2005, p.29).

The second common factor that can play a role in nourishing radicalisation and affecting the efficiency of societal participation is external factors that originate from surrounding societies – locally or internationally. Communities are influenced by what happens around them (Bhambhri and Verma, 1972, p.168). This can impact individuals positively, leading them to engage in counter-radicalisation, or negatively, which may feed radicalisation. While Muslim minorities can be influenced by their larger communities (Offenhauer, 2005, p.34, Schmid, 2017, p.8), Muslim majorities can be impacted by globalisation (Inglehart and Norris, 2009, pp.4-5, Weeks, 2013, p.134, al-Raffie, 2013, p.73). Kosárová and Ušiak (2017) discuss a variety of perceived threats to Muslim identity, such as globalisation, Westernisation and secular pro-Western governments (p.123). Negative occurrences that happen around the world are open to exploitation by radical networks for recruitment purposes. Radical narratives may lead some young people to disregard the ethical principles that are promoted by Sharia, such as tolerance, moderation and coexistence (Khambali et al., 2017, p.212, Davids, 2017, p.318, Schmid, 2017, p.12). Also, the concept of Muslim Ummah as an identity (Spalek et al., 2011, p.33, Isakjee, 2012, p.129), transcends all boundaries and unites Muslims based on their religion (Kashyap and Lewis, 2013, p.2121).

The third common factor that can play a crucial role in nourishing radicalisation and impacting the performance of individuals in counter-radicalisation is the relationship between the Muslim community and the dominant political regime. This can be remarked upon in various domains, such as the relationship between the political regime and the community and in foreign policy. The relationship between the Muslim community and the prevailing political regime

affects social involvement in this fight (Gause, 2011, pp.7–8, Yadlin and Golov, 2013, p.49). A negative relationship between individuals and the government may drive them to refuse to participate in some initiatives (Qurashi, 2018, p.8). Also, Powers (2015, p.21) argues that foreign policy can be considered one of the factors fuelling radicalisation. The actions of the government may produce grievances towards the state because suffering by Muslims anywhere can be felt deeply by Muslim people everywhere (Clarke et al., 2009, p.89, Ahmed, 2012, p.97). Bartlett et al. (2010) argue that foreign policy decisions, alongside other factors, have led to the feeling among many Muslims that the West is working to oppress their Ummah (p.18).

### *The Individual Factors*

The second category includes individual factors that mostly affect a specific social component nourishing radicalisation within it and/or affecting willingness to participate in counter-radicalisation. The first category, individual factors, which will be discussed in chapter six, is related to religious aspects. The academic literature has shown that religious figures can play essential roles in CE (Braga et al., 2001, p.198, Bartlett et al., 2010, p.42, Weine et al., 2009, p.194, Kruse, 2016, p.199). It has been confirmed that not every religious scholar can be trusted or is suitable for participation in counter-radicalisation projects (Mandaville and Nozell, 2017, p.8). Also, many researchers have detected that some unaware imams have been taught by radical scholars who live in other parts of the world (Basit, 2015, p.57, Russell and Theodosiou, 2015, p.34, McAndrew and Sobolewska, 2015, p.54, Abbas, 2019, p.403).

Imams can play major roles in radicalisation and counter-radicalisation. It has been noted that their roles in referring potential terrorists to the police is almost inactive (Rashid, 2006, p.7 Hellyer, 2007, p.24, O'Toole et al., 2016, p.172). The third negatively influential factor is an insufficiency in training, which can be seen as a challenge. The lack in training has made some religious leaders unable to provide sufficient influence. Instead, they may cause a more negative impact than a positive one (Fink et al., 2013, p.4). Further discussion in chapter six will show how these three factors can play a role in radicalising individuals or encouraging them to participate in counter-radicalisation.

The second category of individual factors is related to women. Certainly, women play principal roles in raising and educating their children. Even though Muslim women's voices are nearly missing in public life (Devriese, 2008, p.77), their function is reflected by the behaviours of their family members. Attempts to downgrade women's roles in Muslim communities have been ongoing for a long time. A report by Spalek et al. (2008, p.17) suggests that Muslim women are marginalised in counter-radicalisation. Poloni and Ortbals (2013) confirm that the voice and experience of women in combating this phenomenon are wholly ignored (p.66).

The marginalisation of women's roles in public life can be correlated to the efforts of some radical people to exclusively exploit them (Fatany, 2007, p.57). This utilisation of exclusion is possible for those radicals as a result of other women encouraging them to support radical ideologies (Spencer, 2016, p.85). Idris and Abdelaziz (2017, p.10) and Riany et al. (2018, p.1) say that women can be influenced by their close fundamental relatives who can be considered

crucial elements in the recruitment process. Brown (2008, p.481) claims that British Muslim women are not radicals, but if they dress or behave radically, then it is due to pressure from male relatives or social culture.

The third category of individual factors is related to young people. Youths have their own ways of thinking and looking at things. Thus, it is critical to comprehend what inspires them. In Social Identity Theory 'individuals will strive to attach themselves to other individuals' (Jacobson, 2003, p.2). Thus, when the wider community distrusts and rejects young people, they will search for other people to attach themselves to in order to satisfy their need for belonging. The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis affirms that 'the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression' (Miller, 1941, p.338). According to Bizina and Gray (2014, p.72), the absence of acceptance and trust may lead young individuals to affiliate with radical networks.

The second factor is related to the use of advanced tools to enhance young people's awareness and willingness to engage in counter-radicalisation. The psychological status of a person plays a pivotal role in their reaction to propaganda they receive (Loza, 2006, p.146, Fernbach et al., 2013, p.945). It can be noted that ISIL utilised very advanced methods to attract young people (Weiss and Hassan, 2015, p.31, Stern and Berger, 2015, p.22). The use of advanced tech enabled ISIL to recruit individuals and encourage them to travel to foreign countries to fight (Byman and Shapiro, 2014, p.12) or stay at home to harm their fellow citizens (Wright, 2016, p.33). Sageman (2014) believes that there was some mysterious process of brainwashing that was able to convert some innocent young persons into violent individuals (p.567).

The fourth category of individual factors is related to educational institutions. The educational environment can be realised as a critical tool to prevent radicalisation. The prominent role of education comes from the reality that it is proactive and preventive rather than reactive to radical thoughts (Ghosh et al., 2017, p.120). Having read some of what has been written in the academic literature (Long, 2017, p.44, UNESCO, 2017, p.38, Ghosh et al., 2016, p.47), it is evident that there are specific factors that play main roles in the schooling environment, which will be highlighted in chapter nine.

Lodge and Taber (2000, p.209) claim that the educational environment might drive students to build more radical viewpoints than they had before. Riany et al. (2018) suggest that parents have crucial roles in transforming radical ideologies among their children (p.24). Also, Felderhof (2018, p.250) and Arthur (2015, p.311) affirm that some teachers may have sympathy for terrorist activities and may work as recruiters inside of schools. Ansary (2008, p.126) argues that radical teachers may suggest alternative books that might include fundamental ideologies.

Additionally, the direct influence of education on radicalisation relies deeply on curricula content (Sas et al., 2020, p.6). Bonnell et al. (2011, p.4) and Davies (2018, p.48) suggest that in order for there to be efficient counter-radicalisation, there must be a link to curricula and teachers. Bonnell et al. (2011, p.3) emphasise that critical thinking skills are substantial in examining and testing radical ideologies. The educational environment's focus on teaching students to pass exams at the expense of enhancing students' critical thinking skills harms students and their ability to deal with challenges.

## Conclusion

The main part of this thesis discusses multiple domains in order to achieve a vision that can assist the researcher in answering the study question. Towards this purpose, investigations showed that some interlinked areas must be considered when evaluating the role of community engagement in CE. Multiple academic studies have attempted to define extremism and radicalisation. Some researchers strictly look at this phenomenon from a security lens, which makes it synonymous with terrorism. Such interpretation drives stakeholders to employ security-led approaches that focus on individuals and their behaviours instead of focusing on ideas and what may provoke them.

In contrast, some scholars appear very tolerant of radicalisation, arguing that it can be acceptable if it does not lead to any threats to society. Such tolerant viewpoints make it challenging to persuade communities to participate in countering what are considered suitable principles, especially in their early phases. However, the academic comprehension of radicalisation as a process that may be hidden in its early steps and can advance to violent behaviours aligns with various arguments that consider counter-radicalisation as providing protection for vulnerable persons. Thus, for the objective of this research, radicalisation can be defined as 'a process whereby individuals believe in fanatical religious thoughts that may drive them or others, intentionally or accidentally, to adopt violence to attain an objective'. This definition considers radicalisation a process which must be socially and intolerantly handled from its early phases before it transfers into brutality.

Defining radicalisation as a process aligns with observations from the research, which noticed that the academic literature mostly focuses on counter-radicalisation approaches as proactive actions. These actions emphasise the essentiality of community engagement in counter-radicalisation in order to identify initial radical indicators. Also, some counter-radicalisation definitions highlight the factors that nourish radicalisation and influence the effectiveness of social participation in counter-radicalisation. Finally, it can be seen that there are some challenges confronting both academics and practitioners when evaluating community engagement in counter-radicalisation. This study has considered these aspects when defining counter-radicalisation. Thus, this research defines counter-radicalisation as "proactive actions and processes to counter radical ideologies, protect communities from being influenced by common and individual factors that can nourish radicalisation and affect the productivity of social engagement in counter-radicalisation and empower individuals to effectively participate in these projects through inclusive procedures".

This definition of counter-radicalisation, which focuses on community engagement, has led this research to examine what can serve the evaluation of this engagement, what may harm the social environment and what may affect the efficiency of community engagement. The academic literature has shown that empowering individuals to effectively participate in these projects through inclusive procedures includes three concepts that can be utilised as benchmarks of success to assess community engagement in counter-radicalisation. These aspects include 'building trust', 'increasing awareness' and 'providing training'. The academic literature has demonstrated that the

absence of these concepts, or just one of them, can negatively impact community engagement in counter-radicalisation. In addition, these three concepts complete each other in a sequential arrangement that can prove how such correlations are significant to counter-radicalisation.

Also, the academic literature demonstrates that a variety of factors and concepts can affect community engagement in CE. Multiple counter-radicalisation definitions emphasise the prevention of factors that nourish radicalisation and can also influence the efficiency of community engagement in counter-radicalisation. Therefore, the research has developed a model of common and individual factors that can nourish radicalisation and influence community engagement in counter-radicalisation. Two reasons influenced this research to create such a model. First, the research is looking for factors that are more suitable for Muslim communities and serve this comparative study. Second, this research concentrates on four societal components that are mostly similar, but each can be much more affected by specific factors than the other components.

In conclusion, it can be stated that defining radicalisation as a process that may take months or even years before transferring into violence has led this research to consider counter-radicalisation as a proactive action and process. Owing to the difficulties counter-radicalisation approaches will face in identifying individuals with early radical indicators, this research emphasises community engagement in combating radicalisation in its initial stages. In order to guarantee efficient social participation, this study has noted the need to focus

on two domains: what concepts enhance such engagement and what factors

nourish radicalisation.

# Chapter 3

## Methodology

## Data Collection:

Data collection is an essential tool in academia, as the collected information is intended to contribute to a profound comprehension of the researched phenomenon (Etikan et al., 2016, p.2). For the purposes of this study, the qualitative method will be utilised to examine the various related documents that may relate to any given aspect of this present research. Investigation of the societal participation in counter-extremism needs to analyse four sorts of materials. The first type involves official documents that have been issued by the named governments concerning strategies to combat extremism. The second type consists of the literature that has been compiled regarding the research subject. The third type comprises relevant international documents that have been issued by international organisations. The fourth type is an analysis of responses made by interviewees. Interviews with specialists from Saudi Arabia and Britain, such as Saudi religious scholars and experts on this issue, as well as British Muslim religious scholars and British scientists studying extremism, can help to evaluate the effectiveness of this involvement.

Besides the interviews, data has been collected from original documents and secondary sources. This secondary data was collated from various sources, such as books, e-books, academic articles, newspaper, magazines. Secondary data can be defined as; a piece of information that can be obtained from other

published materials (Creswell, 2007, p.69). Cooper and Schindler (2006, p.25), considered this type of research as being a conveniently available collection of information discussing an exact subject. This kind of data collection technique is often a highly effective way of gathering information, especially when a quantitative measurement is not required (Gerring, 2006, p.69).

## Interviews:

The opinions of experts and professionals will be advantageous in order to evaluate the approaches to counter terrorism. According to Vanclay (2012, p.5-6), the qualitative method utilises a wide variety of qualitative social research techniques. These tools incorporate interviews with experts that are executed face-to-face, by telephone and by Skype. As reported by Hollway and Jefferson (2012, p.9), face-to-face interviewing has turned into the most basic sort of qualitative research technique utilised as a part of the endeavour to discover more about individual experiences. Accordingly, these approaches will be evaluated by specialists and experts from both countries. Interviewing such professionals and experts should prove pertinent to this study as they predominantly observe official activities associated with extremism, including the engagement of communities. As such, the interview has been chosen as the primary data collection tool.

For efficient outcomes, a significant number of experts in counter-extremism have been interviewed as they can enhance the understanding of this issue. Moreover, in-depth interviews can generate a suitable form of data (Darlngton and Scott, 2002, p.48). Thus, the interview process adopted for this thesis

involved a structured method interview which intended to discourse the essential information needed for this research (Joffe, 2001, p.219). It was considered a pragmatic method for this study, whereby an identical set of questions were predesigned to cover the exact areas being studied. Hence, follow-up questions were not deemed necessary. Furthermore, structured interviews with pre-set questions assisted the researcher to request more clarification when an answer was unclear (Long and Stansbury, 1994, p.318).

A reasonable amount of data has been collected through the interactions between experts and the interviewer. Creswell (2007, p.73) affirmed that this interaction is a crucial task as it requires effort to catalyse participants to disclose information that can deepen the understanding of the investigated subject.  All interviews were taped, then transcribed literally to guarantee that none of the critical collected information was lost or misunderstood by being taken out of context (Kumar, 2007, p.41). This strategy assisted in drawing a clear image of the subject, making it unnecessary to re-contact any participant in order to clarify any vagueness in expression or statements.

In-depth interviews were conducted in three different ways, depending on the circumstances and the wishes of participants. Some participants preferred face to face interviews, while others favoured written, structured interviews (WSI), which can be a flexible alternative to oral interviews for data collection (Whetzel et al., 2003, p.1). However, most of the interviews were completed via phone calls or Skype. The interviews lasted between forty to seventy minutes, except for two of the participants who stipulated a maximum interview time of thirty minutes. These time variations of the interviews did not affect the discussion.

In fact, a given time limit helped the interviewee to be more specific and focus only on points related to the asked question.

According to Davies (2007, p.15), it is crucial to select sample criteria before starting any interviews to guarantee the avoidance of bias sampling. Thus, interviewees have been selected through snowball purposive sampling (Etienne, 2005, p.1195), by selecting only those people who have had a direct involvement with this subject, or experiences to share concerning counter-extremism issues. Regarding the selection process, participants were chosen by the critical informant method (KIM), a technique whereby interviewees are not selected at random, but preferably based on their characteristics, such as their speciality, knowledge, or position (Phillips, 1981, p.396).

However, because it was challenging to find experts and specialists who could participate in these research interviews, the number of participants was increased by requesting other contributors to suggest other experts who may be willing to participate in the research. This challenge faced the researcher with the British sample, where the number of respondents started small before snowballing into a more substantial sample. Besides, some challenges arose out of the experts' accessibility and willingness to participate as indicated by Wong-Wylie (2007, p.59). Consequently, taking such obstacles into consideration, the selection of experts depended on their availability and readiness to participate in the interviews.

This research has used Expert Sampling, which is a form of Purposive Sampling, a technique that can be utilised when a study requires information

from people with specific experience. Purposive Sampling, according to Etikan et al. (2016, p.2), is a technique that does not require a fundamental theory or a set number of interviewees. Simply, all that is needed in this method is that the researcher selects what he wants to know and then searches for people who can provide the required data. This technique helped to achieve deeper understanding by highlighting areas related to the asked questions. In addition, Expert Sampling can be helpful when empirical evidence is deficient in some areas and high levels of ambiguity occurs (Hemming et al., 2018, p.170). As earlier mentioned, a long period of time is required to obtain adequate research findings. For instance, evaluating community engagement in counter-extremism requires the involvement of individuals who are experts in assessing this matter.

One disadvantage of Expert Sampling is that some individuals may claim knowledge in counter-extremism but may not have the desired experience required. Thus, multiple suggested names were rejected because they did not match the criterion. Accordingly, selecting the research sample passed through a two-stage process. First, it was defined that an expert is someone who searches or works in counter-extremism. Second, was selecting suitable individuals who met this criterion. This criterion made it challenging to detect a proper specialist. It is important to point out that the Expert Sampling in this research does not refer to highly educated individuals in counter-extremism, Kitamaya and Cohen (2010, p.212). More accurately, the expert in this research is the one who matches the research criterion. For instance, some imams who participated in the interviews were engaged owing to their practical experiences in this field.

The sample of this research is a heterogeneous sampling or Maximum Variation Sampling (MVS). Observing the sample can show that participants differed in multiple ways. Some of the interviewees are very highly educated; others are of average education but with high levels of intellectual understanding. Besides, the sample included men and women, British and Saudi experts, academics, and practitioners. This diversity helped to focus on each possible angle, in order to enhance the understanding of the researched phenomenon. One advantage of the heterogeneous sample is that it validated the data. The heterogenous interviews demonstrated that individuals who have a concern in counter-extremism view some aspects in different ways. While some practitioners evaluated the efforts spent dealing with some issues positively, some academics criticised the same efforts by affirming that they were unprofessional or provided for a very tiny percentage of communities.

Although researching and working in the same field has advantages, it should be noted that interviewing friends and colleagues can affect the validity of this method of data collection. In this regard, Creswell (2007, p.59) affirmed that interviewing those with whom the researcher shares a close relationship, such as family, co-workers and friends can be awkward and may lead to insufficient or even biased answers. Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p.123), agreed that qualitative researchers, in general, need to be aware of their biases. Accordingly, the researcher has considered this problematic issue, paying rigorous effort to discuss this issue with a diverse number of people to avoid any limitations that may lead to a conflict of interest or difficulties that may occur because of the close relationship with some interviewees.

In-depth interviews have their advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of in-depth interviewing is that it helps to discuss some issues which deepen the academic understanding of this subject. This advantage is exclusive to the interview nature, and usually cannot be achieved by other data collection tools, such as questionnaires (Darlngton and Scott, 2002, p.49). Additionally, the friendly conversation during the interview process empowered some interviewees to reveal information to the researcher that would not have been attained through other data collecting instruments (Leed and Omrod, 2009, p.188). Nevertheless, researching sensitive subjects, such as extremism and terrorism, makes people very conservative in disclosing some information. As such, it was noticed that many participants started the interview with much concern, then they gradually revealed information which they believed was very sensitive (Darlngton and Scott, 2002, p.50). Another strength of this technique is its ability to specify the relevant data. According to Davies (2007, p.23), the open-ended interview can assist the interviewer in determining the critical factors of his research. Subsequently, discussing this issue with specialists helped to draw a comprehensive picture of the engagement of communities in counter-extremism.

Interviewing experts was one of the most challenging requirements of this research. The aim was to discuss the British and Saudi societal participation in counter-extremism with forty experts from these two countries. At first, this mission appeared uncomplicated, but multiple difficulties arose when the interview procedure started. Some experts were constantly busy and had no time for such discussions. Other specialists were very hesitant and constantly requested further information about various issues, such as the subject,

questions to be asked, researcher, and purpose of the study, before eventually apologising for not wishing to become involved in this type of research. Some experts withdrew or stopped responding to messages providing no excuse. Gaining access to respondents was challenging and time consuming (Ozerdem and Bowd, 2010, p.123). Such difficulty most probably arose from the sensitivity of discussing counter-extremism with someone with whom they had had no previous contact or relationship.

This explanation predominantly applies to some British experts who were contacted through their emails or Twitter accounts. However, it was the researcher's responsibility to manage all these challenges (Poggenpoel and Myburgh 2003, p.418). On the other hand, some Saudi specialists who knew the researcher and were informed that these interviews would be used for academic purposes, did not refuse, but were very conservative in their responses. This conservativeness is apparent through their interview responses which were very short and unsatisfactory. Thus, these signs indicated that such respondents had participated in the research as a means of being complimentary to the researcher, rather than wanting to discuss the subject in a meaningful and in-depth manner. Therefore, the researcher decided to exclude such interviewees and replaced them with those who felt comfortable discussing the topic and displayed a genuine willingness to engage in this research.

Fortunately, when some experts knew that the researcher was a PhD student and at the same time, a practitioner, they became more willing to participate and to discuss this phenomenon. It, therefore, became apparent that it is crucial

to gain the trust and friendship of participants (Srinivas, 1992, p.144 and Scheper-Hughes, 2001, p.325). Alas, sometimes, it was an unattainable task. Prior to illustrating the advantages of being a practitioner and researcher simultaneously, it occasionally became difficult to engage with experts and collect data from them. For instance, one expert who worked in the academic and governmental fields and knew the researcher, was hesitant, eventually rejecting the idea of participation in this research but offering no excuse. The aim of stating this information is to confirm that interviewing forty individuals was a challenging mission for the researcher as a doctoral student and a practitioner. When a PhD student contacts an expert in the hope of interviewing him for research purposes, it is a challenge to receive even a response never mind an appointment. However, contacting the same expert as a practitioner for a discussion about the same issue was a much less complicated matter.

## Documents:

A set of documents which can assist in understanding counter terrorism has been identified. All documents used in this research are a combination of sources that belong to four different regions. The first source includes documents published by the British and Saudi governments, such as their national strategy to counterterrorism. The second source incorporates documents that were published by international institutions, such as the United Nations Security Council Resolutions, and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum Memorandums for good practices. The third source of documents is literature written in this field discussing counter-extremism. The fourth source of documents includes newspapers, magazines, and websites (Davies, 2007,

p.21). Some of these documentations are written in Arabic, but most of them are written in English. For the purpose of this research, all the Arabic documents that include Saudi official papers, Arabic newspapers, magazines, websites, and Arabic literature have been translated into English by the researcher.

This diverse range of materials has proven beneficial in collecting data and building a deep understanding of community participation in counter-extremism in Saudi Arabia and the UK. Furthermore, these multiple sources of documentation have aided in identifying significant milestones and the correlated contextual ecosystem (May, 2001, p.194). One significant aspect of collecting data from open sources is the lack of need to negotiate with the doorkeepers in any official or non-official establishment. This method has made the collection of data from documentation much more straightforward than collecting information from interviews.

On the one hand, requesting data from some official departments was the most challenging aspect of this mission. On the other hand, collecting data from the internet was the most achievable task in this research. An enormous amount of data discussing counter-extremism is available, which assisted in understanding this aspect but made it harder to contribute to this field. Fortunately, almost all the information needed for building accurate analysis was available online. The most relevant and updated academic materials discussed in the field of counter terrorism have been utilised. Thus, most of the collected research data has come from online databases and digital libraries of academic journals, such as JSTOR, Springer, Wiley, DOAJ, Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, EBSCO, and ProQuest.

Analysing the collected data demonstrated whether they were significant and accurate (Scott, 1990, p.22). This is in accordance with Scott who pointed out that, data analysis indicates whether some information represented in documents is credible or meaningful or not. Hence, all unnecessary data was removed utilising the recursive abstraction approach. This approach was used during the analytical process to filter the collected data. This usage was beneficial for removing all additional information. Also, the recursive abstraction was an aid to removing unwanted incomparable issues, even though they were meaningful and accurate.

As these issues were given consideration in one case but were not concerned in another case, thus, they were removed from the final stage of coding (Morgan, 2011, p.215). For instance, the British strategy to counterterrorism, CONTEST (2018, p.12) indicated that the government funding for counterterrorism would be more than £2 billion per year. Although generous financing plays a crucial role in encouraging individuals to participate, this issue could not be a comparable dimension in this research. This limitation occurred due to a lack of transparency in the Saudi case. On the other hand, the role of a national central Islamic affair institution in Saudi Arabia plays essential roles in counter-extremism, but there was not a counterpart establishment in the UK to compare such a religious institution's efforts to in counter-extremism. The absence of such a counterpart institution has made this source of data inaccurate to draw out codes and themes that could enrich the research findings.

Collecting data from official documents was found to be complicated in some cases. One of the challenges, as discussed by Ozerdemand and Bowd (2010, p.125), is known as the effectiveness element, illustrating the difficulties that may counter the researcher when trying to attain data. Almost all official documents used in this research were taken from open sources. Yet, one type of document was unavailable on the internet or in any available library or archive. This document was the Saudi emergency media plan to counter the propaganda directed at Saudi youth by ISIL and other extremist groups (Hasanah, 2015). An investigation of this plan was required but the official document could not be located. Although some of this document's instructions were known through working in this field, it was inadequate to draw a full picture of the Saudi community roles in counter-extremism. Accordingly, various Saudi official departments concerned with this document were contacted but, alas, no response was received.

Even though such a document should be published or at least be attainable for practitioners and researchers who request it, it was difficult to attain this policy, arising out of bureaucratic concerns. As confirmed by Salkind (2007, p.222), in some cases, it is difficult to obtain data because they are "simply not available, accessible, or disclosable". Regrettably, it was difficult to conduct such research without examining the Saudi strategical documents to evaluate them and compare them with the British plan, which was freely available online. After more than eighteen months of working on this study, utilising various official and non-official documents which were useful but inadequate, the General Department for Counter-extremism decided to formulate a new Saudi strategy to counter-extremism and appointed the researcher as the team leader for this

mission. This appointment has assisted the researcher to gain access to the official policy and all related documents which were previously unavailable due to bureaucratic reasons.

**Data Analysis:**

The researcher has conducted data analysis using thematic analysis (TA) following the appropriate steps for this technique recommended by Castleberry and Nolen (2018, p.814). This method has been selected mainly owing to its flexibility, which can deliver a fertile and detailed account of the data (Braun and Clark, 2006, p.78). Also, TA is effective in capturing complicated meanings within a textual data set. According to Evans (2018, p.3), one of the advantages of TA is that it allows researchers to examine the ways that interviewees make meaning out of their experiences. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) defined thematic analysis as a technique for detecting, analysing and reporting themes within data. Themes can be seen as pieces of implicit and explicit meaning that can be detected in the data by a person who reads the text (Guest et al., 2012, p.50).

The researcher has utilised thematic analysis to discover themes in the data gathered that are necessary or relevant to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82). In order to identify these themes, the collected data has been reviewed, leading to two main concepts that have been noticed and defined in Chapter Two. These concepts are radicalisation and counter-radicalisation, from which the researcher has drawn multiple themes that served in answering the research question, as shown in table (1).

First, radicalisation has been defined in a way that serves the purpose of this research. Radicalisation can be seen as a process that security forces cannot treat in its initial phases. Instead, it requires social involvements that can indicate preliminary radical signs. This process advances radical religious views that are primarily exploited in Muslim communities, which can drive radical thoughts advocates or susceptible individuals, intentionally or unintentionally. The intention is crucial because some radical individuals intend to negatively affect others, while some who believe in these radical views do not realise that their negative thoughts can radicalise young people. Such radical thoughts may pave the road for terrorist networks to recruit innocent people and exploit them to participate in violent actions.

Focusing on implicit and explicit meaning of radicalisation definitions (Guest et al., 2012, p.50) has assisted the researcher to conduct a definition that can serve the purpose of this study. For instance, considering radicalisation as a process that security forces cannot treat in its early stages demonstrated the cruciality of the engagement with individuals who can indicate initial radical signs. Also, considering individuals' intentions in the definition allowed the researcher to differentiate between radicalisation and radical individuals. Some scholars have argued that radicalisation can be accepted if it does not lead to violence. Such an argument can cause people to be reluctant to be involved in counter-radicalisation in its early stages. Thus, this research assumes that some radical individuals can be accepted due to their good intentions, but radicalisation cannot be accepted and should be combated from its early stages because it may affect innocent people, as discussed in Chapter Two.

The second concept is the counter-radicalisation definition. Reviewing the counter-radicalisation definitions demonstrated that four themes should be considered when defining counter-radicalisation. These aspects are proactive measures, community engagement, common and individual factors that nourish radicalisation and impact the social engagement efficiency in counter-radicalisation, and evaluative tools to decide the efficacy of counter-radicalisation approaches, as shown in tables (1,2). It can be seen that the themes that have been drawn from radicalisation definitions assisted this research to spot some terms that were crucial to prove the importance of combating this phenomenon from its early stages with the assistance of communities. Also, the themes spotted in counter-radicalisation definitions have helped this research draw lessons considering how to counter this phenomenon, how to evaluate the proficiency of community engagement and what factors can affect this involvement.

| Table (1) shows that the research argument has been built based on two concepts: radicalisation definitions and counter-radicalisation definitions. These two concepts and themes, indications and codes have been defined manually using Microsoft Word to serve this research based on literature and interviewees' answers. | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Concepts | Themes | Indications/Codes |
| Radicalisation Definitions | Radicalisation is a process | The importance of engaging community to counter-radicalisation from early stages. |
| | Radical religious views | This theme indicates one of the research scopes, which will be on religious radicalisation in Muslim communities. |
| | No accepted radicalisation | Accepted radicalisation in the early stages makes it hard to convince individuals to combat what is considered accepted thoughts. |
| Counter-Radicalisation Definitions | Proactive measures | Preventing the radicalisation process from taking hold in the first place. Reactive measures decrease the community participation value. Also, it may become a counterterrorism concept instead of counter-radicalisation. |
| | Community engagement in counter-extremism. | This social engagement includes: 1. Religious figures. 2. Women. 3. Young people. 4. Educational institutions. |
| | Common factors that nourish radicalisation. | 1. Internal factors: local cultures. |

| | | 2. External factors: surrounding societies. |
| | | 3. Political systems: relationships and foreign policies |
| | Individual factors that can influence the social engagement | a. distrustful scholars. b. unaware imams. c. lack of training. d. marginalisation. e. radical relatives. f. overwhelming desires. g. sense of national belonging. h. psychological status. j. trust in the education environment. i. educators' awareness levels. k. students' critical thinking levels. |
| | Benchmarks of success | 1. Building trust |
| | | 2. Increasing awareness and willingness to engage |
| | | 3. Providing training |

**Table (2):** After specifying benchmarks of the community engagement efficiency, the researcher has identified multiple Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs have been drawn from literature and interviewees' answers to measure the British and Saudi efforts to engage Muslim communities in counter-radicalisation. This measurement is based on three benchmarks: building trust, increasing awareness and willingness to engage communities in counter-radicalisation and providing training.

| Benchmarks of Success | Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) | Targets |
|---|---|---|
| Building Trust | Engaging trustworthy religious figures. | National efforts engage highly trusted individuals who can positively affect their communities. |
| | Enabling women and acknowledging their roles in counter-radicalisation. | Women play equal roles to men without any marginalisation. |
| | Enhancing the sense of national belonging among youth. | Achieving a high level of sense of national belonging that increase mutual trust between young people and stakeholders. |
| | Measuring trust levels in the educational environment. | Achieving high levels of mutual trust between parents, teachers and children/students. |
| Increasing Awareness and Willingness | Raising imams' awareness about the cruciality of radicalisation. | Achieving a high level of awareness among imams about the cruciality of radicalisation. |
| | Increasing women's awareness levels that can immunise them from radical thoughts. | Women achieve levels of awareness that immunise, especially from their radical relatives, and encourage them to participate in counter-radicalisation. |
| | Using advanced means that attract young people and enhance their desire to participate in counter-radicalisation. | Advanced tools are utilised to reach young people and enhance their willingness to participate in counter-radicalisation. |
| | Building a positive image for counter-extremism campaigns amongst educators. | Educators realise the significance of counter-radicalisation. |
| Providing Training | Teaching religious figures how to identify signs of radicalism. | Training on how to identify radical signs is provided for religious leaders. |
| | Having more women with relevant skills and training. | A sufficient number of women with relevant skills and training are engaged in counter-radicalisation efforts. |
| | Measuring youth's abilities to identify radical signs. | Young people can realise radical signs in their surroundings. |
| | Training parents and teachers on how seriously deal with radicalisation and teaching their children/students critical thinking. | Parents and teacher are trained in regard to these phenomena, and their children/students can critically analyse and discuss crucial issues. |

These benchmarks were discussed with interviewees focusing on the KPIs and assessing the efficiency of British and Saudi efforts based on their abilities to meet these targets. These concepts have sequential correlations starting from trust and awareness, then training. Weakness in any concept can affect the whole effort, as shown in table (3). Multiple benchmarks of success have been suggested to evaluate the community engagement in counter-extremism. Investigating these benchmarks in Chapter Four shows that they cannot lead to accurate outcomes. Some of these benchmarks focused on the effect and ignored the cause (Ambrozik, 2019, p.1,052). Some other benchmarks concentrated on one crucial side, ignoring other critical dimensions that have been crucially suggested by literature (Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.75). Also, the benchmarks that have been suggested by McCabe et al. (2006, p.12) concentrated on regulative aspects such as legitimatisation, evaluation and procedures that appear to be more general requirements and cannot evaluate the success of the community participation in counter-extremism.

Accordingly, this study's observations show that these three concepts that have been selected by this research as benchmarks can serve in determining the efficiency of the community engagement in counter-radicalisation. The literature has asserted these concepts significance in community participation in counter-radicalisation, which will be discussed in Chapter Four (Awan, 2012b, p.1177, Fink et al., 2013, p.3, Davies, 2018, p.21, Bhulai and Fink, 2016, p.10, De Silva, 2017, p.17, Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.46). Also, the literature has demonstrated that the absence of even one of these concepts can negatively impact the community engagement in counter-extremism (Klausen, 2009, p.413, Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, Fink et al., 2013, p.4, Naqshbandi, 2006,

p.8, Gunaratna, 2011, p.70). Furthermore, these three concepts complete each other in a sequential arrangement and can be useful when assessing community engagement in counter-radicalisation schemes.

| Trust-building | Enhancing Awareness | Providing Training | Outcomes (Possible Pathways of Success) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Table (3)** shows that the research assumes that one of the possible pathways to attain a sufficient level of community engagement success in counter-radicalisation can be achieving adequate proficiency level in all three benchmarks. However, an ineffective performance in one of these benchmarks can negatively affect the outcome of the community engagement in counter-radicalisation. | | | |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Counter-radicalisation projects that engage the community and achieve good benchmarks (trust-building, enhancing awareness and providing training) can be considered practical projects. |
| ✓ | ✓ | X | Counter-radicalisation projects that engage the community and achieve sufficient levels in two benchmarks (trust-building and enhancing awareness) and perform insufficiently in training may achieve backlash outcomes because people without proper training may negatively affect their audiences (Fink et al., 2013, p.4). Also, training is crucial to guarantee that the relevant staff comprehend and value the purposes of the intervention (Bonnell et al., 2011, p.98). |
| ✓ | X | ✓ | Counter-radicalisation projects that engage the community and achieve sufficient levels of success in two benchmarks (trust-building and providing training) but perform insufficiently in enhancing awareness may lead individuals to avoid engaging themselves in the public cautioning projects (Davies, 2018, p.21). It has been noticed that Muslim communities, especially leaders and imams, are dysfunctional and cannot deliver authoritative guidance because they are unaware of the risk of radicalisation (Naqshbandi, 2006, p.8, Gunaratna, 2011, p.70). |
| X | ✓ | ✓ | Counter-radicalisation projects that engage the community and achieve sufficient levels of success in two benchmarks (enhancing awareness and providing training), yet these projects score low marks in trust-building. This lack of mutual trust can drive some individuals to extremism (Peters 2014, p.2, d'Estaing, 2017, p.111). Moreover, mistrust may cause the community to be less likely to answer the call to participate in counter-radicalisation (Ambrozik, 2019, p.1064). |
| X | X | X | As previously asserted, the insufficiency of the performance of one benchmark can negatively influence the success of community engagement. Thus, it can be suggested that counter-radicalisation projects that engage the community and achieve insufficient levels of success in all these three benchmarks may need to engage community in counter-radicalisation projects focusing on three sequential concepts. The first step is to build trust between the community and stakeholders, concentrating on multiple aspects such as fighting marginalisation, alienation, discrimination, reviewing foreign policy and utilising trustworthy people. The second stage is that these projects may need to enhance awareness, considering some key |

| | | | issues such as building warning programs, generating effective messages, using advanced media means and affirming the cruciality of extremism. The third phase provides training that concentrates on critical zones such as identifying radical signs, teaching critical thinking and increasing the number of individuals with required skills. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |

**Data Analysis Process:**

This research follows Braun and Clarke's (2006, p.87) thematic analysis process. The data analysis process has occurred inductively where all themes have been identified from the collected data (Guest et al., 2012, p.6). As stated by Castleberry and Nolen (2018, pp.808–809), "qualitative data analysis is largely inductive, allowing meaning to emerge from the data". Also, Saldaña (2013, p.177) affirmed that "thematic analysis allows categories to emerge from the data". Thus, the researcher has conducted the coding process without any attempt to match the data into a current framework or theory. The researcher considered the importance of all themes regarding their relevance to the research question and cruciality in drawing lessons from this study (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82). For this purpose, the researcher conducted his thematical analysis process going back and forth between data analysis stages until he achieved a sufficient level of satisfaction with the final themes (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018, p.814). During this analytical process phase, the researcher tried to go beyond explicit meanings of the data (Guest et al., 2012, p.9, Buetow, 2010, p.123) to present an obvious meaning of the collected data.

**Phase 1: Becoming familiar with the data:**

After he completed data collection, the researcher started data transcription into written form. The researcher was concerned about transcription accuracy, which can produce unidentifiable biases in the data analysis process (Guest et al., 2012, p.11). In order to avoid such limitations, the researcher attempted to transcribe all interviewees' responses precisely as they stated them. This method did not include some interviewees' personal stories irrelevant to the subject. Although some of these irrelevant answers were eliminated from the transcription, the researcher listened to them multiple times, ensuring that their removal would not affect data or create any biases. Even though some thematic analysis proponents (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.87) assumed that the end of this stage to be as a beginning of the coding process and suggested marking content that addresses the research question, the researcher did not start his coding in an attempt to be sufficiently familiar with the content of the data.

**Phase 2: Generating initial codes:**

After completing the data transcription, the researcher started the thematic analysis second phase, where he used Microsoft Word to identify codes, words or short phrases to serve the research question. In the beginning, the researcher utilised MAXQDA, but he was not comfortable with this means. Thus, he restarted this stage manually (Saldaña, 2013, p.255) using Microsoft Word. LaPelle (2004, p.106) stated that "Microsoft Word can be used as QDA software". The researcher utilised MS Word after becoming familiar with the dataset, which was complicated but not so much to be coded manually. During

this stage, although the researcher started noticing these codes in the first stage of this process, he did not begin writing these words and phrases until the completion of data transcription. However, spotting these potential codes started during the interviews (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.105), and the researcher did not write them in the coding table until he had reached the second stage of the data analysis process. During this stage, the researcher tried to refine these codes by inserting, reducing, merging or dividing hypothetical codes (Saldaña, 2013, p.218).

**Phase 3: Generating themes**

After completing the coding generating stage, the researcher began examining how these codes could be combined to form related and meaningful themes. During this stage, the researcher considered how relationships were developed between codes and themes and between newly generated themes. One challenge facing the researcher was that multiple complicated themes and sub-themes were spotted before and during the thematic analysis process. Such limitation was related to the difficulty of preserving a sense of continuity of data due to the concentration on spotting themes across data items (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82). Researching the community engagement in counter-radicalisation produced multiple themes such as social components (religious figures, women, young people and educational institutions). These components can be affected by many aspects identified as themes with complicated correlations, as seen in previous tables in this section.

**Phase 4: Reviewing themes**

During this stage, the researcher checked his early themes against the coded data and the data set. This revision was made to guarantee that the data analysis during the generation of themes provided the most relevant data to the research question. This stage served the researcher to further expand themes as they developed. During this stage, the researcher attempted to review the identified themes and reassure that the themes he discarded in the previous stage owing to their irrelevance might provide relevant meaning later in the analysis process. Also, some identified themes were combined, and other themes were divided into smaller categories (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.103). Before completing this stage, the researcher tried to ensure connections between the themes, which served the researcher to generate or eliminate themes depending on these correlations.

In this regard, the research has noted that one of the challenges that faced him during the thematic analysis process was when some of the identified themes did not seem to function, which caused some weakness or inconvenience in the data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.94). Accordingly, one of the purposes of this stage was to avoid such limitations. To summarise the work that has been done in this stage, it can be stated that the researcher attempted to ensure that themes would describe a consistent narrative about the data before progressing to the fifth stage of data analysis.

**Phase 5: Defining and naming themes**

At this stage, the researcher tried to identify how each particular theme and sub-theme could form part of the whole picture of the data. Although Braun and Clarke (2006, pp.94–95) warned about creating numerous sub-themes as this could cause a fragmentation in the analysis, the counter-radicalisation complexity has drawn this research to generating multiple themes and sub-themes. Such complications caused some challenges for the researcher. For instance, generating the sub-theme 'positive image' appeared to be related to the central theme 'building trust'. However, during this stage, the researcher noticed that the participants' answers linked this sub-theme to 'enhancing awareness'. Because this title did not provide a sufficient relationship between the theme and the sub-theme, the researcher renamed the second theme to 'increasing awareness and willingness'. Before completing this stage, the researcher attempted to make sure that each theme was crucial for the research question, they were clearly comprehended, and themes were linked and completed each other to draw the final picture of the data (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p.403).

**Phase 6: Producing the report**

After completing all the five data analysis stages, the researcher started writing the findings of this study. During this stage, the concentration was on how to convey the complex anecdote of the data to represent the validity and quality of the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.93). In order to make these findings sufficiently valuable for readers, the researcher considered writing his final

reports in a clear, straightforward and uncomplicated style. Even though Castleberry and Nolen (2018, p.812) affirmed the importance of including member checking as a means to establish credibility, Braun and Clarke (2013, p.284) did not view it as a necessary practice. The researcher utilised this means during the interviews, as previously mentioned. This suggestion is in line with Creswell and Creswell's (2018, p.201) assertion that 'the more experience that a researcher has with participants in their settings, the more accurate or valid will be the findings'.

## Trustworthiness:

By their nature, qualitative studies have the potential to produce subjective outcomes. Thus, it is crucial to avoid desirability or bias and seek for trustworthiness.  Sarantakos (1993, p.18), emphasised the importance of acknowledging the researcher's standpoint as objective or value-neutral to lessen biases, and demonstrate the reality as it is, rather than as affected by the researcher's desirability. Hence, to evade bias outcomes, two angles were focussed on; the internal validity that can be guaranteed by assuring that the study evaluated what it proposed to evaluate, focusing on credibility and confirmability. Besides, the researcher focused on the external validity, in order to investigate whether the findings are able to be applied to other situations and contexts, such as "Muslim community around the globe", concentrating on transformability and dependability.

In an attempt to ensure that the research findings genuinely reflect the phenomenon of counter-extremism, much concern was placed on the

trustworthiness of every potential aspect, especially the data collection which would affect the findings. Trustworthiness is essential for enabling other scholars to elaborate on the research outcomes. Accordingly, credibility has been a main concern as it can increase confidence in the certainty of the research findings. Consequently, credibility is essential, owing to its role in clarifying the study findings, reflecting reasonable understanding drawn from the interviewees.

In addition, a concerted effort has been made to ensure transparency in the research process, in order that it can be examined by others for its trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007, p.206). Academic study can be impacted by various influences that may cause invalidations in research findings (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989, p.95). Thus, this research has concentrated on those aspects that may affect the trustworthiness of the findings, striving to control all probable factors that may weaken the trustworthiness of the study. Furthermore, it has utilised multiple trustworthiness procedures to ensure the accuracy of the findings. Creswell and Creswell (2018, pp.199-201) discussed eight strategies, some of which are from those most commonly used and easy to execute, to those used infrequently and harder to implement. Accordingly, some of these techniques were utilised, such as multiple data collection, member checking, and spending prolonged periods in the field.

Trustworthiness, moreover, is hugely affected by the data collection. Therefore, multiple data collection has been utilised in this research. The research has explored different avenues of data sources to create a coherent justification for arguments. Establishing research themes based on converging multiple

sources of information, including perspectives from interviewees, has added to the credibility of the research. The trustworthiness affirms the ability of the researcher to precisely characterise the phenomenon (Kumar, 2007, p.42). Subsequently, to strengthen the trustworthiness, more generalised findings have been arrived at through utilising qualitative comparative analysis that includes two different cases that belong to different cultures. It is important to state that the generalisation of these research findings applies only to Muslim communities who share similar contexts. Analysing one case could cause the research findings to be invalid as they cannot be applied to contexts outside the investigated case (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989, p.95).

As previously mentioned, member checking has been used to monitor the accuracy of the data by taking specific perspectives mentioned by some interviewees back to other participants in order to determine whether or not these arguments were accurate. This type of trustworthiness procedure did not mean conducting a follow-up interview with participants in the research, but, instead, it was a form of building accurate findings through validating the previous responses by the judgment of later interviewees. Normally, member checking involves engaging some research members to review the whole outcome and interpretations. However, in this research, it was not feasible to follow the exact procedures, as the sample was built using a snowball technique which mostly included participants with whom the researcher had a formal relationship. Accordingly, it was inappropriate for the researcher to request them to review the research findings. Besides, most participants were very busy and had barely agreed to participate in this research in the first place (Braun

and Clarke, 2013, p.284). Nevertheless, discussing previous responses with some interviewees was very useful in ensuring the credibility of the study.

Moreover, by adopting the strategy of spending prolonged periods of time in the field, an in-depth understanding of counter-extremism was able to be constructed. This is in line with Creswell and Creswell's (2018, p.201) assertion that, "the more experience that a researcher has with participants in their settings, the more accurate or valid will be the findings". Experience in the field greatly assisted in defining some vital concepts that may play pivotal roles in the community's engagement. The strategy of spending prolonged time in the researched field was manipulated through three stages. The first stage was initiating the research with a reasonable understanding of the key areas that can affect the research findings. The second stage was to review the literature to ensure the significance of these areas from an academic perspective. The third stage was to validate the key concepts from a practical point of view, attempting to ensure its validity to be harmonised and implemented in the practical field.

One crucial dimension of trustworthiness is transferability that focuses on the level to which the outcomes of the study can be transferred to other contexts, which in this present case are the Muslim communities around the globe. Facilitation of the transferability of judgment is achieved through a dependency on a purposive sampling technique through interviewing forty knowledgeable individuals in counter-extremism. Spending one hour, on average, with each interviewee, meant that almost forty hours of dense data was collected broadly describing this phenomenon. Hence, the purposive sampling and responses

with heavy description enhanced the transferability of the research. Interviewing experts from Saudi Arabia and the UK assisted in identifying the most accurate practices that worked in both cases and can be applied in similar situations around the world.

Another element of the trustworthiness factor is dependability which relies on keeping the findings of the research stable over time. To ensure this dependability, a concerted effort was made to engage participants in evaluating parts of other respondent's critical answers in order to test whether they can be considered potential findings. Also, to examine if their interpretations are the same as the researcher's understanding and if they considered them as possible findings. This technique engaged only those participants who were capable of judging the potential outcomes and interpretation.

## Reflexivity:

The challenge in reflexivity, as asserted by Berger (2015, p. 220), derives from the importance of a researcher being able to supervise the impact of his bias, belief, and personal experience on his work to maintain the balance between what is personal and what is general. This difficulty can be noted when the researcher works in the same field as his study and notices some aspects that need to be proven academically before discussing them in his research. Working in the counter-extremism field as a practitioner and observer has made the researcher the primary research instrument (Walsh, 1998, p.221). The researcher performed multiple roles such as, interviewing, reading from various sources, writing notes, and analysing information before writing his research

findings. This mixture of processes can be a highly positive addition to the research, especially as the researcher was aware of the essentiality of monitoring the effects of his personal feelings, such as his emotions, intuitions, and prejudices (Maso, 2003, p.40).

According to Creswell (2007, p.178), suitable reflexivity can be observed when the researcher includes some notes reflecting his personal experience, and how it may affect his understanding and findings. Nevertheless, Creswell emphasised that a qualitative researcher has to limit his writing about personal knowledge, in order not to dominate the significance of the research content or methods. Thus, this researcher has placed much concern on attempting to remain neutral during the data collection, seeking to present the participants' opinions without any biases and as objectively as possible (Neuman, 2014, p.170).

Accordingly, it seems wrong to assume that this research was conducted in a vacuum with no influence from the researcher's personality concerning how the study was conducted and presented. Studying counter-extremism, whereby the researcher holds personal convictions as a practitioner within the field, may conflict with customary practices, making it even more important not to allow personal thoughts to direct the research to interpret data to serve his own views (Finlay, 2003, p.4). Therefore, the researcher's personal experience, the interviewees' opinions and the collected data can provide more mature and neutral interpretation with no effect from bias. By following such a method for evaluating a specific aspect, an attempt was made to avoid partial interpretations (Atkinson et al., 2003, p.31).

However, the cruciality of reflexivity appeared not only in protecting the research from biases (Maso, 2003, p.40), and from the effect of the researcher's personal beliefs, but it assisted the researcher in how to deal with the respondents' answers. Thus, the researcher did not treat these responses as truth. Instead, these answers were taken, analysed and compared with other collected data before utilising them to enhance the researcher's understanding of the investigated subject. In this research, the reflexivity will assist in exposing the research processes dynamicity and transparency. This transparency includes self-understanding, as identified by Hunt (1989, p.5), who stressed that this term is vital to well-implemented research,that should study the interactions between three aspects: the subject, data and investigator.

## Research Ethics:

Research ethics are important considerations, especially when the investigated subject concerns the sensitive area of counter-extremism. Besides, it can become more critical when the research involves the researcher's personal experience (Lee and Renzetti, 1993, p.5, Gunaratham, 2003, p.161). Building trust with interviewees was an essential aspect of the interview process (Hunt, 1989, p.13). The researcher experienced no lack of confidence when discussing such a sensitive subject, especially when the Saudi participants knew the researcher and answered all the questions openly without any reservations. On the other hand, the researcher found it more challenging to gain the British interviewees' trust. Some participants spent much time investigating this issue before they agreed to participate in this research. Furthermore, some of them refused to participate, offering no excuse for their

refusal. In general, respondents were concerned about the purpose of the study; thus, they requested an explanation of the research and the interview questions.

Conducting research based on a comparative method led to the reading of the relevant ethical guidelines in Britain and Saudi Arabia. These documents included guidelines for researchers to differentiate between what is appropriate and what is not suitable in all aspects related to academic research[2]. As emphasised by Daymon and Holloway (2002, p.71), ethical guidelines instruct researchers to guarantee a high ethical standard and to follow all related ethical principles. Accordingly, ethical frameworks were followed emphasising the essentiality of such ethical values as honesty, objectivity, respect for copyrights and all forms of intellectual property, integrity, confidentiality, and privacy (Neuman, 2014, p.156).

Significantly, the relationship between the researcher and participants developed during the interviews (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, p.46). This relationship reached a level whereby some participants felt comfortable requesting the researcher to concentrate on some related issues of their concerns. At times, participants spoke to the researcher as if he could help in correcting some concerns they had relating to intellectual matters. This treatment was ethically critical for the researcher in his role as a PhD candidate who was interviewing them for academic purposes. Nevertheless, some

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[2] . The researcher became acquainted with some related British ethical materials that have been suggested by the University of Birmingham, such as the British Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, (2011), the Social Research Association (SRA) Research ethics guidance, (2003), International Sociological Association (ISA) Code of Ethics, (2001), and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Framework for research ethics, (2015). Besides, the researcher has become aware of the rules in some Saudi ethical documents that include different regulations and guidelines related to scientific research, such as, the Law of the Council of Higher Education and Universities and its Implementation Regulations, (1994), the Law of Patents Regulations, (1986), the Governing Scientific Honesty Document, (2011), King Saudi University's Rules Governing the Ethics of Scientific Research, (2015)

participants insisted on treating the researcher as a practitioner (Haahr et al., 2014, p.6). Thus, some participants assumed that the researcher could focus on some critical areas which needed more concentration. Subsequently, the researcher found himself forced to clarify this issue for the participants, emphasising that he was interviewing them as an academic, not as a professional. This emphasis was part of the transparency required by a researcher, as outlined by Hunt (1989, p.5).

# Chapter 4

# Comparing Two Muslim Communities

## Introduction:

Various religious, societal and political issues affect the interaction of Muslim individuals, such as Salafism, local culture and surrounding communities locally and internationally. Likewise, the relationship between the Muslim community and the political regime can affect social activities, including counter-radicalisation. Examining the effects of these aspects in a case study will assist in understanding how to enhance social participation in a specific country. Additionally, investigating multiple cases will help in drawing generalisable lessons that suit similar cases.

The similarity between Muslim communities in Britain and Saudi Arabia and the eagerness of authorities to fight this phenomenon and engage communities in this fight create a suitable atmosphere for academic comparison. Both communities comprise numerous currents and sects, such as Salafism, Sufiism, Shi'ism, and Islamism (Fandy, 1999, p.125, Hamid, 2008, p.10, Bonnefoy, 2013, pp.1-2 and al-saif, 2013, p.383). By considering these factors, this research intends to highlight the radical religious ideologies advocated by al-Qaeda and ISIL that consider the British and Saudi Muslim youth as targets for their recruitment. Both networks have been associated with Salafi doctrines,

leading this research to focus on Salafi ideology in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom.

This research indicates that similarities between British and Saudi Muslim communities occurred due to strong relationships between individuals in these two countries. Their populations have been exposed to almost the same ideologies, as radical ideologies were introduced to these communities simultaneously by the same sources, leading to similar reactions. As a result, Salafism can quickly affect people in these Muslim communities, creating suitable sample cases that can be examined and compared academically to draw generalisable lessons.

## A Historical Glance:

Salafi doctrine considers that genuine Islam is represented by Muslims who lived in the first three centuries of Islam. Thus, Salafism theology seeks to track the religious path of these forebears, 'salaf', and stay dedicated to their thoughts (al-Atawneh, 2011, p.255). One of these thoughts is that, according to Hadith, the Muslim Ummah will fragment into seventy-three sects, all of them in the hellfire except one that will follow the path of the righteous predecessors (ibid). Accordingly, Imam Muhammed bin Saudi and Shaikh Muhammed bin Abdul Wahhab established the first Saudi state in 1744, following the path of al-Salaf al-Saleh. Therefore, Saudi intellectual structure is based on monarchy, Salafism and tribalism (Doumato, 1992, p.36).

In the United Kingdom, Muslim communities began to form in the 1960s and 1970s, encompassing four significant tendencies comprising a tiny portion of these sects: Barelwi, Deobandi, Jamaat-i Ism, and Salafi (Hamid, 2008, p.10). This same period witnessed the development of the Islamic Awakening 'Sahwa' in Saudi Arabia, affecting young people internally (Rached, 2021, p.247) and externally, including British Muslims (Hamid, 2008, p.10). Hamid stated that the spread of Salafism in Britain was underwritten by religious institutions, literature from Saudi Arabia and religious studies graduates from Saudi universities.

Salafis in Saudi Arabia formed a traditional current that considered loyalty to the Muslim ruler as a crucial pillar of the Salafi creed (Bonnefoy, 2013, pp.1-2, and Ismail, 2019, p.173). This belief has been affected by the Brotherhood ideology opposing Muslim rulers since the early 1980s (al-saif, 2013, p.383). The immigration of Brotherhood members from Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq divided Salafism into three branches (Hamid, 2008, p.11 and Bonnefoy, 2013, pp.1-2). purists loyal to the Salafi doctrine emphasising loyalty to the Muslim ruler, politicos calling for reform in the Salafi methodology, and Jihadis wanting to use violence to effect social change (Hamid, 2008, p.11).

These new ideologies and activities led the Saudi government to expel many Brotherhood members who played roles in these mobilities, including two Syrian clerics, Omar Bakri (Hellyer, 2007, p.3) and Mohammad Srour Zain Al-Abdeen, who played significant roles in the birth of so-called politico and militant Salafism (al-saif, 2013, p.383 and Rached, 2021, p.248). his expulsion from Saudi Arabia, Bakri has been sheltered by the UK government for the past twenty years. During his stay, he has founded al-Muhajiroun, an infamous

radical organisation in the United Kingdom (Smith, 2005, p.1). Zain Al-Abdeen lived in Birmingham and established the publishing house, the Centre for Islamic Studies, and al-Sunnah magazine, through which he expressed his views towards political issues and events (Kindawi, 2020, p.77).

With their followers in Saudi Arabia and British students graduating from Saudi universities, these clerics in the United Kingdom enhanced the similarities between the two communities. For example, since the first Gulf War in 1991, British and Saudi Salafi scholars have been divided over the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia. Even though this break-up began within Saudi society, led by some Zain Al-Abdeen followers, such as Salman al-Audah and Safar al-Hawali (Hegghammer, 2006, p.54), it has been extended to include the British Muslim community. These protests were countered by pro-Saudi state Salafis, including the British Salafi, Abdul Wahid Abu Khadeejah, and his group (Hamid, 2008, p.11).

## Similarities and Differences:

This domain can be discussed from political and social dimensions. Such examination cannot be achieved without conducting comparative research between two Muslim communities that are generally similar in nature and structure but have a considerable dissimilarity in some crucial aspects (Bilic, 2013, p.33), such as their political regime and cultural issues. First, the political dimension, to be discussed further in this chapter, displays that Britain and Saudi Arabia are essential partners and founding members of various global coalitions and forums, such as the Global Coalition against Daish and the

Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF). The two countries share counter-terrorism information, evaluate their strengths, adopt best practices to counter violent extremism and collaborate in multiple CVE activities. Therefore, it can be inferred that counter-extremism is a vital part of the British and Saudi relationship.

One crucial factor of this relationship is that they share the most dangerous source of threat to their lands and populations; al-Qaeda and Daish and their radical narratives. For example, Combes (2013) confirms, pp.2-3), has confirmed that British and Saudi strategies for counter-terrorism have been designed to fight militant Islamist ideologies. Moreover, the frequent mutual official visits to enhance their performances in combating extremism and terrorism indicate similarities between these two cases. This closeness between Britain and Saudi Arabia in various fields, especially counter-extremism, will make the comparison more valuable and assist the study in achieving successful outcomes.

The similarity between the compared communities and the eagerness of authorities to fight this phenomenon and engage communities in this fight create a suitable atmosphere for academic comparison. In addition, two further factors play crucial roles in this comparison: First, the way governments employ societal elements and the elements' responses to such invitations. Second, the effects of the independent variables on this interaction. As the constant variables are almost identical in all Muslim communities around the globe, this study seeks to understand the lessons to be drawn from this comparison and

the changes that could be made in the various inconstant factors to achieve generalisable lessons.

Despite that Britain and Saudi Arabia have made a tremendous effort to combat terrorist recruitment among their youth, they still suffer from this dilemma. Recent statistics confirmed that many British Muslims had joined ISIS. The statistics also indicated that more British Muslims join ISIS than British Muslim youths enlist in the British Army (Weaver, 2015a). Only 600 Muslims have joined the British Army compared to more than 1,500 British Muslims who have joined ISIS (Grant and Sharkov, 2014). It was reported that every day in 2015, one terrorist was arrested in the United Kingdom. Most of these cases were linked to the Syrian crisis (Marsden, 2017, p.6). As for Saudi Arabia, statistics in June 2019 indicated that 3,443 Saudi fighters had joined ISIS[3].

Both countries have made numerous official efforts to face this phenomenon. These efforts are well known worldwide because they are comprehensive and generously financed by the two states (Combes, 2013, p.2). As previously mentioned, political systems can play significant roles in societal participation in counter-extremism. However, variations in the significance given to these roles can affect comparative studies. For example, a comparative study would be impractical if one authority had put considerable effort into engaging individuals in counter-extremism while another authority ignored such engagement. Nevertheless, as previously seen, both governments are

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[3] Unpublished statics issued by the Saudi Presidency of State Security.

earnestly dealing with this aspect and trying to engage their communities in these efforts.

Second, the social factor demonstrates that Muslim communities have more similarities in their lifestyles than differences (Dallal, 2016, p.308). Anjum et al. (2019, p.42), argued that even though there are differences among Muslim communities around the globe, much of the social life across these societies reflects broadly shared interpretations of their religion. Anjum explains that the differences between Muslim communities appear quite insignificant compared to the everyday social practices of other non-Muslim societies. For instance, a Muslim individual would not find it challenging to live in another Muslim community in the world because of the similar nature and structure of these communities. However, this individual may face some challenges in accepting the local culture of the new community and could be negatively influenced by the surrounding society. Accordingly, if individuals face such effects, they may affect the whole community to a certain level.

Multiple aspects perform valuable roles in social interactions; these aspects can be observed in various societal fields, such as the dominant role of Islam in the individual and public lives of Muslims (Offenhauer, 2005, pp.33-34). In this regard, Joshanloo (2013, p.1869), stated that "Muslims are obliged to reconcile their drives with the demands of society, and acts which are harmful to the community are fiercely condemned". Also, Inglehart and Norris (2009, p.15), affirmed that Muslim identities explicitly impact individual values. Such arguments assert that Muslims are generally supposed to behave under their

religion's direct effects, encouraging them to participate in counter-extremism activities.

Maintaining that Muslim identities can influence individuals does not mean that there is homogeneity amongst Muslims globally. On the contrary, several differences among Muslim countries can be discerned (Anjum et al., 2019, p.42). Moreover, Islamic communities differ in various ways, such as social life, level of secularism, and how Islam is implemented. Accordingly, Muslim communities cannot be assumed as homogenous (Mohee, 2011, p.181). For instance, Spalek et al. (2009, p.30), argued that the Muslim inhabitants of London are tremendously heterogeneous in terms of 'race, ethnicity, gender, age, class, culture, politics, country of origin and religious strands within Islam and schools of Islamic thought'.

Nevertheless, this heterogenicity within one community does not affect the global Islamic community representing different regions, nationalities, ethnicity and languages (Ahmed, 2012, p.37). For example, although Spalek et al. (2009, p.30), have stated that the Muslim community in London is tremendously heterogeneous, Ahmed (2012, p.38), has argued that some British Muslims tend toward a universal Islam that ignores cultural differences.

Regardless of the differences among Islamic communities, there are generally common understandings of Islam (Anjum et al., 2019, p.42). Anjum argued that these differences might seem insignificant when compared to the other non-Muslim communities. Brown (2008, p.483) claimed that mosques build the values of the Muslim community around the globe. Furthermore, these religious

values are less likely to be affected by immigration (Pettersson, 2007, p.74). One of these concepts is 'Ummah', removing the distance between Muslims everywhere and creating emotional links that impact their interpretation of events (Lynch, 2013, p.255).

Accordingly, Britain and Saudi Arabia have been selected for this comparison to explore the extent that these two countries have succeeded in their attempts to engage their Muslim communities in counter-extremism. Of course, this comparative research could have been conducted between two or more Muslim communities around the globe. However, having dependent variables, such as the dominance of Sharia and the structure of Muslim communities, and independent variables, such as the political regime and local cultures, led the researcher to select countries with different independent variables. Notably, it can be stated that comparing the Saudi case with an Arab country of a very similar community structure, local culture, and political system would not help in investigating the effects of these factors.

Consequently, the British case has been chosen for two reasons: First, the considerable difference between the British and Saudi cases in their political systems, local culture and surrounding social cultures. These differences have more negligible effects than the multiple aspects tying Muslim communities around the globe, such as Sharia, Ummah, and the similar structure of daily life. For this reason, comparative research could be conducted between the Saudi case and a non-Muslim country with a Muslim community, such as the United States, France or India. However, the second reason for selecting the British case is linked to the relevant context and background of these two cases, which

was discussed in the previous section and is highlighted later in this chapter. These two reasons indicate the suitability of the British and Saudi cases for this comparative research.

## Relationships with Other Ideologies and Faiths:

The tendency towards religion has caused some challenges for British and Saudi Muslim communities internally and externally. Four different fronts have been established due to this tendency: relationships within Salafi branches, the relationship of Salafis with other Muslim sects, relationships with non-Muslims and relationships with the state. Salafis were, in general, a unity, yet fragmentation has occurred in British and Saudi Salafi communities due to several causes, such as the return of British Muslim graduates from Saudi universities.

Furthermore, the immigration of radical individuals from different Arab countries, such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq, has caused some difficulties. Those radical people brought their ideologies, affecting young people and generating unprecedented currents, such as the Sahwa movement and Jihadi cells in Saudi Arabia (Rached, 2021, p.247, and Hegghammer, 2009, p.405) and the Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Muhajiroun organisations in the United Kingdom (Sinclair, 2018, p.219, and Smith, 2005, p.1). With the appearance of these currents, multiple new radical ideologies began to grow, such as the re-establishment of the Caliphate (Sinclair, 2018, p.219), the uprising against existing regimes (Özev, 2017, p.1006), and the popularity of the Ummah concept that has

removed the distance between Muslims everywhere, forming emotional ties that impact their interpretation of events (Lynch, 2013, p.255).

These new ideologies fed one another, reforming British and Saudi Muslim communities and causing significant fragmentation between individuals. For instance, the first Gulf War in 1991, leading to America's arrival to fight Saddam Hussein, caused many conflicts between Islamists and traditional Salafis in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom (Hamid, 2008, p.11). Moreover, these radical thoughts led Islamists to call for an uprising against the Saudi government (Hegghammer, 2009, p.405). In the United Kingdom, intense feelings of Ummah drove British Muslims to criticise the British government for participating in the war in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 (Weeks, 2013, p.288).

Accordingly, al-Qaeda and ISIL called for the murder of Western people anywhere in response to these foreign policies (Hegghammer, 2009). For example, the murder of Lee Rigby in London by a radical Muslim increased the tension between the British Muslim community and far-right extremists; recruiters exploited this tension to radicalise young Muslims (Russell and Theodosiou, 2015). In addition, the murder of the Irish cameraman, Simon Cumbers, in Riyadh demonstrates the harmful effects of radical propaganda against non-Muslims living in Muslim communities (Gradner, 2006, p.485). However, the tension caused by radical propaganda is not exclusively aimed at non-Muslims; it also includes Muslims from different sects (Rached, 2021, p.249). In addition, Baker (2009, p.342) stated that tensions within Muslim

communities affect some sects' credibility, making Salafis one of the most influential groups in countering radicalisation.

## Structure and Nature:

Even though British and Saudi Muslim communities differ in their intellectual structure, they share a similar social environment. Intellectually, the British Muslim community is based on religion, ethnicity and 'Britishness' (Baker, 2009, pp.52-54), and the Saudi community relies on the monarchy, religion and tribalism (Özev, 2017, p.1013). Regardless of these differences, these communities have similar primary influential social elements, such as mosques, religious figures, theologian sources, an abundance of youth and cultural views towards women. These components and characteristics can be observed in typical Muslim communities worldwide, irrespective of whether they are majority or minority communities. These aspects are influenced by two significant concepts: Sharia and Ummah. This mixture of religious, social and political concepts plays crucial roles in Muslim communities' affairs, making this study's comparison workable and capable of presenting tangible outcomes. According to Dallal (2016, p.319), "Muslim societies were not held together primarily by centralised rule, but by the reproduction of Islamic cultural norms over the centuries". This statement indicates that the influence of Islam on the Muslim community possibly exceeds any other influential factor.

Social work is a common denominator in the Muslim community, including all activities performed by all societal components. In this research, social work is a dependent variable influenced by three independent variables: internal factors

(ethnic cultures), external factors (surrounding cultures) and the political system (to be discussed in chapters four and five). The social work of the Muslim community is based on the sovereignty of the Sharia (Pasha, 2008, p.380). The concept of Ummah also plays a role in Muslim communities around the world (Kosárová and Ušiak, 2017, p.119).

First, Sharia affects all social aspects, including the main four components of the chosen community: religious leaders, women, young individuals and educational institutions. The sovereignty of the Sharia controls and directs Muslim communities in similar ways around the world (Dallal, 2016, p.318). Significantly, Muslims are supposed to live according to the Qur'an and the teaching of the Prophet 'Sharia' (Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.45). The importance of Sharia becomes evident when considering the religiosity of individuals. For instance, according to Dunn et al. (2016, p.202), 54.5% and 42.5% of interviewees deemed themselves very religious and moderately religious, respectively. When asked about the role of Islam in their daily lives, 84.8% of the respondents said their religion plays a significant role. These statistics and assertions demonstrate the influence of Sharia on Muslim communities everywhere.

Nevertheless, the solidity that helps shape the Muslim lifestyle everywhere (Joshanloo, 2013, p.1858), can be affected by internal and external factors and political systems. Such effects can be discerned in individuals' willingness to engage in governmental activities and integrate into their surrounding cultures (Anjum et al., 2019, p.43). As religious practices are almost the same everywhere, a comparative study could be conducted between any two Muslim

communities around the globe. These constant similarities, so reliable due to Sharia dominance, make the comparison between the Saudi and the British Muslim communities possible.

Second, the Muslim Ummah is an Arabic term that refers to a universal Muslim community (Isakjee, 2012, p.129). Bilic (2013, p.35), confirmed that this concept transcends all boundaries and unites Muslims based on their religion. Ummah is a true and empowering source of identity for Muslims, especially for young individuals who identify as Muslims (Spalek et al., 2011, p.33, Isakjee, 2012, p.129, Murji, 2014, p.77). While ethnicity may be particular to a region or community, the Islamic religion has universal relevance that encourages Muslim youth to identify with Ummah (Kashyap and Lewis, 2013, p.2121).

Numerous studies indicate the significance of Islam as an identity marker for Muslim individuals living in Western countries, especially for youth who are claiming their Islamic identities (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, p.198). According to Ahmed (2012, p.97), almost ninety-three per cent of Muslims feel that their loyalty towards Ummah does not contradict their role as a nation's citizen. Mohee (2011, p.173) explained thatMuslims in Britain feel loyalty, and being British reflects their political involvement while being Muslim indicates their religious affiliations.

As for Islam, Ummah prioritises the group over the individual and religion over any other identity (Kosárová and Ušiak, 2017, p.119). Kosárová and Ušiak (ibid) affirm that Ummah is considered an instrument of solidarity among Muslims globally, regardless of nationality and ethnicity. Thus, the sense of Ummah

becomes more evident during crises and the war against terrorism (Ahmed, 2012, p.241). As stated by Spalek et al. (2009, p.67), such crises demonstrate the role of this global identity in driving individuals to participate in countering violent activities committed in the name of their religion.

Consequently, the strong presence of Islam in Muslim communities around the globe plays a primary role in counter-extremism projects. For instance, in Muslim communities, radicalisation is driven by a perceived threat to the community's identity, usually due to Western influence, leading the religious identity to become an instrument of self-identification (Kosárová and Ušiak, 2017, p.127). Kosárová and Ušiak explained that the absence of an efficient means to counter this danger creates a fruitful ground for radicalisation. Therefore, CVE project stakeholders recognised the role of the Muslim community when facing such a challenge and consider these effects in their attempts to achieve better outcomes.

Thus, many researchers agree that countering radical Islamist groups requires the involvement of Muslim communities (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, p.189, Brown, 2008, p.483, Fenstermacher, 2015, p.15, Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.751, Abbas, 2019, p.399, Lawale, 2020, p.119, Alati, 2020, pp.89-90). Furthermore, influences of religious identity and the concept of Ummah on Muslim individuals around the globe indicate the importance of community engagement and the possibility of realising generalisable lessons from this study.

## Internal Composition and Currents:

Salafism and culture have crucial roles in British and Saudi Muslim communities. As previously discussed, the immigration of Brotherhood members to Saudi Arabia intellectually affected the British and Saudi communities. The impact of Brotherhood ideology in Salafism led to the creation of Islamist groups, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, introduced to the British Muslim community for the first time by Bakri in the mid-1980s (Sinclair, 2018, p.219). This group started to distribute its ideology underground through cassettes and faxes, making radical ideologies available to everyone (Fandy, 1999, p.132). Almost simultaneously, the Sahwa movement, created by the Syrian cleric Zain Al-Abdeen began adopting a similar ideology that attracted young Saudi activists into a position opposed to the government (Hegghammer, 2006, p.54 and al-saif, 2013, p.383). Hegghammer (2009, p.405) stated that the al-Qaeda leaders, a harvest of the Sahwa movement, were pan-Islamist and wanted to topple the Saudi regime.

Although British and Saudi Muslim communities differ in their intellectual structures, Salafism could unify people under one identity. While the British Muslim community is based on religion, ethnicity and Britishness (Baker, 2009, pp.52-54), the Saudi community relies on the monarchy, religion, and tribalism (Özev, 2017, p.1013). However, Hamid (2008, p.10) argued that British Muslims have become tired of cultural Islam, finding an approach to religious commitment in the Salafi viewpoint. As a result, individuals who join Salafi groups can feel like they acquire membership into a multi-ethnic, supranational identity.

Thus, young individuals identified themselves as Muslims (Spalek et al., 2011, p.33, Isakjee, 2012, p.129, Murji, 2014, p.77). Mohee (2011, p.173) argued that British Muslims identify themselves religiously by indicating their religious affiliations, but they feel British, reflecting their political involvement. According to Doumato (1992), in Saudi Arabia, the state 'tried to create overarching loyalties based on a common social and religious community' (Doumato, 1992, p. 36). This new tendency transformed Saudi Arabia into an influential player on Islamic and global levels (Özev, 2017, p.1013).

An important internal issue to be considered is the societal culture linked to the people's ethnicity (Dallal, 2016, p.304). Notably, individuals deal with their surroundings according to their interrelation with their local cultural environment (Weeks, 2013, p.215). Therefore, the cultural aspect can play significant roles in some areas, such as women's roles in the societal setting, young people's levels of engagement in multicultural communities and the effect of first and second immigrant generations on the daily social life of Muslim communities.

Moreover, Inglehart and Norris (2009, p.9) noted that alternative theories of multiculturalism indicate that some Muslim migrants keep their local culture with them when they travel, as evident in the British Muslim community. The influence of local culture is also apparent in the Saudi community. According to al-Brikan (2017, p.10), Saudi students' perspectives concerning their teachers, choosing classmates and evaluating situations depend on the thoughts instilled by their parents, affected by their local culture. Rajkhan (2014, p.2), argued that the influence of local culture can reach a level where it creates contradictions between some national laws and real life.

Kundnani (2009, p.7) and Husband (2011, p.11) argued that the British Muslim culture could be seen as a challenge for the government because multiculturalism has driven Muslims to split themselves and live by their values. For instance, British women are generally wider social participants than their Saudi counterparts. In addition, some Asian British Muslim women may be more conservative than the average British woman (Brown, 2006, p.424, Kashyap and Lewis, 2013, p.2120, Bhopal, 2016, p.516).

Such an issue could cause difficulties and marginalise women's roles in their communities (Spalek et al., 2009, p.17, Poloni and Ortbals, 2013, p.66, Barakat et al., 2014, p.6). Marginalisation is a crucial aspect affecting women's social engagement, where the local culture plays a role in the way individuals treat women (Offenhauer, 2005, p.29). Thus, it can be seen that there are no significant differences in the cultural issues between these two communities in general. Offenhauer (2005, pp.29-30)) presents that the sacred texts embody egalitarian principles whereby women and men have moral equality, alongside misogynist conceptions that cite the differences between men and women as the justification for female subordination to men.

## External Influences:

The external influences from surrounding societies, locally or internationally, play a role in societal participation and integration. For example, communities can be impacted by their environment affecting individuals positively or negatively (Bhambhri and Verma, 1972, p.168). Accordingly, Muslim minorities

are influenced by their surroundings and interactions with larger communities (Offenhauer, 2005, p.34, Schmid, 2017, p.8).

The same can be said about Muslims living in Muslim countries, influenced by globalisation (Inglehart and Norris, 2009, pp.4-5, Weeks, 2013, p.134, al-Raffie, 2013, p.73). Kosárová and Ušiak (2017, p.123), pointed out multiple perceived threats to the Muslim identity, such as globalisation, Westernisation and secular pro-Western governments. However, although all these influences partially change people's lives, they are still subjugated to the Islamic style of life shaped by the sovereignty of the Sharia, 'Islamic Law' (Diouf, 2013, p.99). Thus, like the other three factors, this factor can affect individuals' behaviours; yet the role of Sharia continues to shape every Muslim community around the globe.

There is a shared sense of unity amongst Muslim individuals internationally, arising from the strength of religious aspects that gather and drive them to think similarly. Religious scholars, the role of Mosques and the inspirations of Islamic sources on Muslim individuals (Abdel-Hady, 2010, p.1, Joshanloo, 2013, p.1861, Ansari, 2016, p.27), all play influential roles in Muslim social life everywhere. Nevertheless, in some parts of the Muslim communities worldwide, events can be exploited by radical networks to recruit more people. For example, when al-Qaeda and ISIL invited young Muslims globally to join them, they narrated the violence against their brothers and sisters (Neumann and Rogers, 2007, p.36, Veldhuis and Staun, 2009, p.8, Azani and Koblentz-Stenzler, 2019, p.9).

These radical narratives could drive some individuals to ignore the ethical values promoted by Sharia, such as tolerance, moderation and coexistence (Khambali et al., 2017, p.212, Davids, 2017, p.318, Schmid, 2017, p.12). Consequently, more than 1,500 British Muslims joined ISIS (Grant and Sharkov, 2014). Also, every day in 2015, a terrorist was arrested in the United Kingdom, most attributed to the Syrian crisis (Marsden, 2017, p.6). The level of brutality can make some individuals ignore Sharia values, but because of Sharia's dominance over all Muslim communities (Joshanloo (2013, p.1862), Generally, people prefer to follow these guiding principles. Consequently, a more comprehensive education concerning these values will help make more people immune to external influences and enable them to build community resilience (Weine et al., 2013, p.328 and Salyk-Virk, 2020, p.1017).

## Relationships with State:

The political systems in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom are entirely different. Whereas the first is an authoritarian system, the British political system is based on parliamentary democracy. Saudi Arabia is a state ruled by a single absolute ruler, while the United Kingdom has a constitutional monarchy. The absolute monarch of Saudi Arabia holds supreme power and is entitled to make state decisions for the country, paving the road for the regime to establish mutual patronage. Conversely, in Britain's constitutional monarchy, the parliament is responsible for state decisions and possesses legally unlimited legislative authority (Lakin, 2018. p.168).

It is challenging to create patronage similar to Saudi Arabia in such a system, as people are considered equal in a constitutional monarchy. For instance, the Saudi regime has a stable relationship with different societal categories, such as tribes, clans, business families, religious establishments, the media and a wide range of individuals (Gause, 2011, pp.7-8, Yadlin and Golov, 2013, p.49). These relationships are built on mutual patronage so that the government can mobilise these networks when needed (Gause, 2011, p.8). Thus, in its efforts to counter extremism, Saudi Arabia depends heavily on these friends. Despite the differences in the political systems of the two mentioned countries, conducting comparative research between the Muslim communities in these countries is still possible due to the similarities such communities share and the aim of the two countries to counter extremism.

The Saudi government directly affects some societal elements, such as religious establishments and educational institutions. Moreover, the government has the power to enact laws serving its policies. For example, King Abdullah pushed to pass laws enabling Saudi women and argued with the religious elites who were reluctant to give women more rights (Rajkhan, 2014, p.15). This step shows one of the significant indirect roles of the political regime, paving the way for women to participate in social activities. However, the challenge is that both the Saudi and UK governments have no direct power over individuals. Therefore, the Saudi government needs its friends to mobilise primary elements, such as women and youth. In addition, it may need them to encourage teachers, imams and parents to participate in civic activities.

What distinguishes the Saudi authority is its solid relationship with the religious establishment and its figures (Montagu, 2010, p.68). Al-Shihri affirmed that the government has direct contact with official preachers. For example, in July 2018, two terrorists affiliated with ISIL tried to attack police officers in one of the Saudi provinces. In response to this attempt, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs requested all the Friday preachers to warn people about these activities. Only 28 preachers ignored this request, leading the Ministry to exclude them from preaching[4]. Anas Mohammed, an imam of a mosque in an eastern district of Riyadh, confirmed that, on occasion, imams delivering the Friday sermon receive a request from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to speak about a specific subject. Anas also stated that although imams generally follow these requests, the superintendents may request a printed copy of the sermon from the preachers in some cases.

Saudi Arabia conducts programmes to train imams and monitors mosques to purge extremism and intolerance. According to al-Shihri, in May 2003, after a terrorist attack in Riyadh, the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs proclaimed the removal of 353 imams because they lacked the qualifications to work in mosques. In addition, the Ministry announced that almost fifteen hundred imams underwent further training (Gause, 2004, p.21). Also, in 2020, 'many imams were fired after failing to follow a ministry directive to warn citizens against the Muslim Brotherhood and its ideology' (Naar, 2020).

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[4] Ali al-Shihri is the director of the General Department for Intellectual Awareness at the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, interview with the author, 11 November 2018.

As a result of this strict supervision, there is a gap between some religious elites and the official body. This breach in relations may have occurred because of the Ministry's inability to boost the willingness among imams to participate in cautioning projects. Al-Hiliyl suggested that dictating instructions to the official imams is the Ministry's crucial weakness rather than discussing the new intellectual phenomena.[5] This treatment and relationship with the imams affect their performance. In this regard, some interviewees asserted that if the authority showed the imams proof of the extremism and terrorism risks on the whole nation, it would encourage them to engage in this battle.

The British government faces two challenges when attempting to engage the Muslim community in counter-extremism. The first is strengthening its relationship with Muslim communities and their needs, especially building mutual trust (Bonnell et al., 2011, p.57). The second challenge is that the government does not have patronage networks like Saudi Arabia, making it harder to engage the community in national activities. Instead of such patronage networks, the British government should strive to build a strong relationship with Muslim community leaders to work as a bridge between the state and the Muslim community. Unfortunately, many British Muslims avoid participating in counter-extremism campaigns due to their negative impression of the 'Prevent' strategy. Muslim communities see this strategy as a tool used by the British government to discriminate against them (Qurashi, 2018, p.5).

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[5] Abdul-Aziz al-Hiliyl is a researcher in radicalisation signs who works for the Saudi General Department for Counter Extremism, interview with the author, 10 October 2018.

Notably, some British Muslims have refused to participate in initiatives because they are financed by the Prevent strategy (Qurashi, 2018, p.8). This refusal is due to British Muslims feeling targeted for being Muslim, affecting their participation in counter-extremism and making their relationship with the government appear negative (Spalek et al., 2011, p.33). In addition, Spalek et al. (2008, p.9), reported that British Muslims claimed that their experience of hostility regarding the law had lessened their enthusiasm to collaborate with state specialists.

Regrettably, the British government seems to face difficulties in gaining the trust of its Muslim community (Mohammed and Siddiqui, 2013, p.14). For instance, the Muslim community appears suspicious regarding the role of educators in their children's schools. According to Novelli (2017, p.847), in British schools, teachers act as state agents. As such, the UK teachers' monitoring role appears to harm the relationship between students and their families, driving some Muslim children to be less willing to discuss critical issues openly for fear of being referred (Novelli, 2017, p.847).

The challenge is not only that students do not speak; according to Novelli (ibid), the fear is that they may discuss all these concerning aspects underground, where there is no adviser to correct misleading thoughts. Ironically, in their union conference, teachers discarded the Prevent policy due to the suspicion and confusion it causes in the classroom and staffroom (Adams, 2016). Hooper (2016) wrote that the UK National Union of Teachers (NUT) accused the Prevent strategy of being against Muslims. The NUT stated that the risk is that Prevent may worsen relationships between teachers and students (Hooper,

2016). Qurashi (2016), noted that the NUT argued that the Prevent policy targets Muslim students, where more than half of the referrals are Muslims who form only 5% of the United Kingdom's population.

Moreover, it has been noted that the multiculturalism policy has caused minorities living in the United Kingdom to link to their motherlands more than to their host land, creating challenges for the British government (Poole, 2002, p. 22, Faimau, 2016, p.3). According to Weeks (2013, p.224) and Meer and Modood (2016, p.25), David Cameron described British multiculturalism as a barrier dividing British society. Therefore, distinguishing the British Muslim community from the mainstream has boosted the Islamic characteristics of this community (Kundnani, 2015, p.12), making this comparative research more fruitful. This Islamic dominance creates general societal similarities that can assist researchers in conducting comparative studies between Muslim communities around the globe. Such comparative research may prove beneficial when considering the common denominators between these communities and how they are affected by other factors.

Extremism evidently cannot be resolved by the government alone. Pickles and Ahmad stated that religious leaders have a valuable opportunity and a significant responsibility to explain and demonstrate how the religion of Islam can be part of the British identity (Dawson, and Godec, 2017, p.25). Fatwas also have a vital part to play in this mission. Issuing a fatwa or statement by Muslim religious leaders would be seen as a voluntary act to protect Islam from those trying to exploit it by recruiting vulnerable people. Fatwas and statements produced by independent individuals can be read as supporting messages for

the British government. These fatwas and statements would indicate that Muslim theologians support national efforts to combat violent activities. Such positive actions would be an encouraging sign that Muslim religious leaders can express their loyalty to their broader British community without any pressure from the government.

The relationship between the Saudi government and its social components differs from that in the United Kingdom. While the Saudi authority requests preachers to participate, the British government does not make such requests. For instance, Rahman confirmed that he has never received a request from the British government to speak or not to speak about any issue.[6] Accordingly, some interviewees stated that not receiving such a request could be interpreted as a lack of cooperation between the British government and the Muslim community. Additionally, some specialists have criticised the British government for devising the Prevent policy without consulting British Muslim leaders.

Excluding the British Muslim community's involvement in establishing the Prevent strategy has made Muslims suspicious of its programmes and avoid engagement in its activities (Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.751). For example, Eggert mentioned that she helped arrange a workshop in London held by a local organisation working with Muslim women. Accordingly, she applied for funding from Prevent and received support from the government. However, this support proved harmful because some individuals in the community were

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[6] Hafiz Rahman is the Imam of Jalal Abad Mosque in Birmingham. The interview with the author took place on 9 October 2018.

suspicious regarding this funding and accused Muslim organisations of working

for the Prevent strategy at the expense of the Muslim community.[7]

In addition to such internal issues, it can be stated that Muslim communities

may be affected by their government's foreign policy to a level that determines

their interaction with national activities. The government's actions could

produce grievances towards the state because the suffering of Muslims in one

location is felt deeply by Muslim individuals elsewhere (Clarke et al., 2009, p.89,

Ahmed, 2012, p.97). Bartlett et al. (2010, p.18), argued that foreign policy

decisions alongside other factors have led to the feeling among many Muslims

that the West is working to oppress their Ummah. These policies involve various

critical matters, such as the Arab–Israeli conflict and the American wars in Iraq

and Afghanistan that have created an attendant image of Muslim suffering,

enflaming anger at these policies (Hafez and Mullins, 2015, p.963). According

to Weeks (2013, p.288), anger and frustration towards the British government

are evident due to its involvement and support for the American war on terror.

Bartlett et al. (2010, p.25), have claimed that the anger at Western foreign

policies is commonly used to explain the terrorist activity and that these policies

are significant and consistent grievances among young Muslims, whose

condemnation of them has been almost unanimous. Mohammed and Siddiqui

(2013, p.18), stressed that the Muslim refusal of British foreign policy plays a

vital role in increasing grievances among Muslims, potentially leading to

adverse reactions. Consequently, foreign policy is often seen as one of the

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[7] Jennifer Eggert is a researcher in the Department of Sociology at the University of Warwick, researcher and practitioner working on gender, political violence and preventing /countering violent extremism. The interview with the author took place on 10-28 October 2018.

factors fuelling extremism (Powers, 2015, p.21). Thus, it can be noted that British Muslims are dissatisfied because of their government's foreign policy, and that Prevent has increased this feeling, creating further mistrust (Abbas, 2019, p.407). The limitation is that the Prevent strategy discounts foreign policy as a promoter of violence (Mohammed and Siddiqui, 2013, p.7).

Finally, it can be said that some governments play a significant role in directing local cultures. As previously highlighted, the Saudi government has significantly more influence on local culture than the British government. Two examples of this influence are noted: In the early 1960s, the Saudis succeeded in encouraging women to attend school when the dominant culture rejected female education (al-Rawaf and Simmons, 1991, p.294). In more recent times, the government also succeeded in enabling women and encouraging them to engage more in social activities.

Nevertheless, challenges are still present. For example, Sakr (2008, p.386), noticed that while Saudi youth consider their religion the stable and unchallenged base of their identity, most reveal discomfort with some familial and social conceptions. According to Brown (2006, p.426), some Muslim Asians brought their culture to Britain, encouraging a woman to serve her husband rather than continue her education. Moreover, Weeks (2013, p.79) and Faimau (2016, p.6) argued that British multiculturalism has failed to address the issue of the integration of (young) British Muslims into British society.

This chapter sought to discuss some crucial aspects affecting the efficiency of religious people in counter-radicalisation initiatives. The research into this issue

has shown that three issues should be considered when discussing this subject: first, the engagement of trustworthy religious figures who can positively affect their communities; second, raising the awareness of imams regarding the cruciality of radicalisation and encouraging them to play influential roles in counter-radicalisation; third, teaching religious figures the signs of radicalism to empower them in recognising radical people in their communities.

## Challenges and Initiatives:

Exploring this subject has demonstrated that serious efforts have been taken by Saudi Arabia and Britain to engage their communities to participate in fighting radicalisation. Focusing more on the research subject shows that both authorities attempt to encourage the four societal elements to participate in these efforts. Notably, Britons and Saudis concern themselves with engaging their communities in counter-extremism (Akilu, 2015, p.34, Holmwood and O'Toole, 2018, p.73, al-Maawi, 2016, p.217, and Combes, 2013, p.5). Britain and Saudi Arabia pay considerable attention to fighting this phenomenon locally and globally.

For a long period of time, Britain and Saudi Arabia have been spending tremendous efforts on combating extremism. British history is full of attempts to thwart this phenomenon. Powers (2015, p.19), stated that Britain has had great experience in the prevention of radical activities. For example, the UK declared its war against the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1969 (Ackerman, 2016, p.12). According to Ranstorp and Brun (2013, p.6), the IRA violence erupted in 1916 when the Irish Catholics sought their independence from the United Kingdom.

While Saudi Arabia, countered tremendous challenges in the 1960s when Arab nationalists began their violent activities against the government (Bahgat, 2004, p.53). Besides this, there was the 1979 takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca that was led by Juhayman al-Otaybi (Cupta, 2011, p.49). These violent events were subsequently followed by tens of attacks by terrorist groups, such as al-Qaeda and ISIL.

## Engaging Religious Figures:

 In the case of the UK, it was detected that some Catholics were helping the rebels and supporting their demands (Cupta, 2011, p.45). In this regard, Patrick Ryan, a Catholic priest (Bennett, 2014, p.76 and Davies, 1988), and John Burns (Bennett, 2014, p.76) can be taken as examples. Although the Catholic Church refused to excommunicate members of the IRA during the troubles, it vehemently condemned the movement and announced that the IRA was engaged in an unjust war (Tonge, 2013, p.105). Interestingly, Hickman et al. (2011, p.5), have argued that although tensions within Irish communities and Muslim communities can be associated to a religious cause, only in the recent period of violent extremism, has the UK integrated religion as an instrument in countering radical narratives. This fragile cooperation may reflect the British government's unwillingness or inability to create mutual patronage with social elements.

Fraihi (2008, p.131), has asserted that the new British orientation towards Islamist radicalisation is, as Muslims argue, a Muslim problem. This new British orientation has affirmed the importance of engaging Muslim scholars, as a key

for encouraging other social components to participate in this fight. As Johnson (2009, p.28), suggested, the British government needs to cooperate with moderate Muslim scholars to counter the extremist narrative. Thus, it can be understood that the participation of religious leaders to counter tensions within the UK border can be divided into two forms. The first was during the British war against the Irish Republican Army (IRA) paramilitary, where the role of social institutions and individuals was to condemn the actions of the rebels. The second was during the war against al-Qaeda and ISIL, where it seemed that the wider community started to point at their Muslim counterparts, blaming them for those who manipulated Islam to justify their violent actions. These pressures have effectively catalysed Muslims to bear the significant part of the narrative to counter those who are using texts from the Muslim faith that cannot be faced, except, by those who know how to refute the extremist's propaganda. Another explanation of the need to engage societal components may relate to the nature of this new era of terrorism which exploits the internet and social media networks. This transformation has moved the war from the actual world to the virtual world.

Consequently, the weaponry, which was a state's substantial tool in its conventional wars, has been defused in the war against radical ideologies. Hence, dominance is reserved for the one who can effectively promote his narrative. Accordingly, observers like Fraihi (2008, p.131), believe that the most efficient instrument to win the war against al-Qaeda and ISIL is to engage Muslim religious scholars. This war is in contrast to the previous war against the IRA, where the religious leaders had little input regards the national policy to counter the revolutionists. Conversely, in the war against al-Qaeda and ISIL,

the British government have found itself unable to combat the terrorists' recruitment except with the assistance of Muslim theologians.

Consequently, the UK attempts to engage its local Muslim religious leaders in sharing the responsibility for this issue. Therefore, CONTEST (2011, pp.67-68), has emphasised the role of the British government to continue their support for religious leaders to stand up against radicalisation. The government endeavours to guarantee that those who work in this public area are well qualified. This attempt demonstrates the determination of the UK government to engage community leaders after providing the necessary training (Akilu, 2015, p.34). Subsequently, after the attack on the Charlie Hebdo's offices in Paris on January 2015, the then UK Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, and Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon wrote to Muslim Leaders requesting them to play a role in countering extremism. They emphasised that the administration would play its part in defeating the voice of division.

On the other hand, the Saudi community engagement in counter-extremism began after the first terrorist operation in modern Saudi history, which was in 1979. Three significant events occurred at that time, which affected youth in Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries. According to Cupta (2011, p.49), these three events are "the beginning of a new Islamic century, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Afghan War". It seems that Cupta meant by "the beginning of a new Islamic century", 20 November 1979 (1/1/1400 AH), which is when Juhayman al-Otaybi attacked the Holy Mosque in Mecca, that is, the first day of that year according to the Islamic Calendar. In protest against this

action, the senior scholars' council issued a statement condemning such an attack. Significantly, this declaration was the only noted effort. There was no participation from imams to warn people of the danger of extremism.

The second wave of community participation ranged from the mid1990s to the early 2000s (Combes, 2013, p.2). In 2003, during the third wave, the Saudi government started to encourage its religious leaders to refute terrorist narratives (al-Saud, 2009, p.76). During this era, there were invitations for the community to participate in counter-extremism. In 2015, the state regulated such engagement and included it in its security policy. Thus, it can be observed that the Saudi emergency media plan to counter the propaganda directed at Saudi youth by ISIL and other extremist groups (Hasanah, 2015, p.26), has emphasised the significance of choosing moderate imams and Friday sermon preachers and supporting them morally and financially. This plan affirms the belief that imams should educate their congregations, "mosalleen", to respect the Muslim rulers and warn them of the danger of extremism. Furthermore, Hasanah asserts that imams should encourage people to cooperate with the police and contact them when they encounter any suspicious issue.

While there is no supervising national commission for the Mosques in Britain, the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs supervises all mosques and takes responsibility for all their expenses, including imams' monthly salaries. According to al-Shihri, practically every twenty mosques are supervised by an appointed supervisor. As a result of such supervision, the Ministry has reported that it has recorded some radical preaching during Friday sermons (al-Atawneh, 2011, p.260). Subsequently, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs has become stricter

on supervising their imams. Thus, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs now conducts a project to train imams on how to combat extremism and intolerant rhetoric. Moreover, the Ministry requests imams to speak openly about specific issues in attempts to build a community resilience.

Many religious activities are organised annually in Saudi Arabia to warn people of the negative impact of over-zealousness and violence. Above and beyond this, the Saudi Council of Senior Scholars "religious scholars", "*Hay'at Kibar al-Ulama*", has issued various statements condemning terrorist activities regardless of the objectives of these operations (Al-Atawneh, 2011, p.258). For example, after the Khobar Towers bombing, in 1996, that killed 19 Americans and wounded 498 people of various nationalities, the Council of Senior Scholars issued a statement condemning this action and warning people of the severe punishment awaiting those who extinguish the lives of innocent human beings. After a suicide bomber attacked a Shia Mosque situated in Qudeih village, in May 2015, that killed 21 people, the Saudi Council of Senior Scholars issued a statement condemning this attack. Such statements are highly respected by Saudis and Muslims globally. This latter statement warned people of the dangers of terrorism, radicalism, takfir, hatred, and intolerance.

In April 2008, a religious centre named the Prince Sultan Ibn Abd al-'Aziz Chair for Contemporary Islamic Studies, "Kursi al-Amir Sultan li-Ddirasat al-Islamiyya al-Mu'asirah", at King Saud University was founded. The theological chair aims to conduct and support research that affirms tolerance and moderation (al-Atawneh, 2011, p.258). Also, the Assakina campaign (Tranquillity) seems to be the most significant project run by the Saudi government to combat radical

narrative religiously. This project is supervised by The Ministry of Islamic Affairs and focuses on monitoring terrorist websites, forums, and social media, trying to refute their propaganda (al-Rawi, 2013, p.183). Additionally, Assakina plays significant roles in counter-extremism in female communities, where tens of women participate in its cautionary projects.

## Engaging Women:

Various activities are run by Muslim women who are trying to fight extremist propaganda. In January 2008, the British government launched the National Muslim Women's Advisory Group in order to encourage Muslim women to participate in civic, social, economic life, and in countering violent extremism (Allen and Guru, 2012, p.2). Moreover, the British government, in one of its policy initiatives to combat terrorism, worked to increase the participation of Muslim women in mosques (Brown, 2008, p.480). Also, "Making a Stand" is a campaign which was launched in September 2014 by British Muslim women across the UK, aiming to counter extremism, and build resilience in British communities (van Ginkel, 2015, p.9).

Besides these activities, there are numerous Muslim female activists involved in UK counter-extremism. An-Nisa Slough Muslim Women's Group works to counsel Muslim women on various community matters, including thwarting violent extremism (DCLG, 2008, p.30). Furthermore, after three schoolgirls travelled to Syria, in February 2015 (Evans, 2015), a national campaign for women to intervene was launched, in March 2015, aiming to prevent British women from travelling to Syria to join ISIL (Weaver, 2015b). This campaign

encourages mothers to talk to their daughters about different and controversial topics. Mothers are encouraged to discuss with their daughters what they browse on the internet, and what they think about the conflict in the Levant (ibid).

Moreover, in their efforts to benefit from the experiences of international organisations, British women have participated in an initiative called "Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) (WWB, 2009). This campaign, which is supervised by Women without Borders, was launched in January 2009. It aims to focus on issues regarding violent extremism, trying to understand what drives those involved and increase the dialogue between Muslim and non-Muslim communities (ibid).

In Saudi Arabia, women play a reasonable part in national efforts to fight extremism. The Saudi system, on some occasions, engages women by referring to the family or the parents. The Saudi Basic Law of Governance (2012), states in article (9), that the nucleus of Saudi society is the family. Besides Hasanah (2015, p.55), has emphasised the significance of educating women about radical indications. Furthermore, the presidency of the Two Holy Mosques Affairs plays an essential role in counter-extremism in Saudi Arabia and everywhere in the Muslim world. This presidency launched a new department in May 2017 which is run by women in order to warn visitors to the Two Holy Mosques about extremism and to encourage the concept of moderation (SPA, 2017).

One of the most successful campaigns to counter extremism in Saudi Arabia is called Assakina, "Tranquillity", which was initiated in 2003, employing many volunteers, some of whom are women (Assakina, 2017). According to Assakina, it has been estimated that women run 60% of al-Qaeda websites. Thus, the women of Assakina held a debate with more than two hundred of these radical women and convinced more than 75% of them to renounce the extreme ideology of al-Qaeda (Ansary, 2008, p.123). These female volunteers' efforts were beneficial to a level where al-Qaeda issued numerous cautioning statements urging its women not to participate in such dialogues. Assakina's campaign is sponsored by the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs which has appointed numerous Saudi women preachers, to caution other women about the dangers of extremism, Takfir, and terrorism (al-Rawi, 2013, p.182).

Beside the Assakina campaign, Saudi women have been engaged in countering radicalism in the kingdom, through launching tens of activities and initiatives, such as lectures, expos, contests, and workshops (Assakina, 2017). For instance, in Tabuk City, located along the north-west coast of Saudi Arabia, within the Hasanah plan, thirty-four female centres are engaged in a campaign aimed to warn female communities against radicalism and to spread moderate and tolerant concepts (al-mnatiq, 2016). In the Taif Governorate, located 70 km south-east of the Holy Makkah, more than six thousand girls have participated in a campaign called "Our Safe Summer". Tens of activities were launched to warn daughters and mothers of the danger of extremism and were intensively active for three days during the summer holiday (al-Malki, 2017). Besides, Saudi women adequately participate in academic conferences and forums, authoring papers and research in counter-extremism.

However, studying some of these counterterrorism programs shows that a variety of challenges are facing these countries. For instance, many cautionary projects are directed at a very tiny percentage of women, while the rest of them may never hear of these activities (Nasseef, 2015, p.61). The small percentage of beneficiaries is mainly due to the shortage of qualified specialist women who can cover every area and guarantee the arrival of the message to every susceptible person in the community (Eggert, 2017, p.6). This shortage may cause many individuals to become affected negatively by the local culture and the surrounding communities. According to Hamdan (2005, p.54), this shortage can be linked to those local cultures which deny women equality to the point where such denial is often regarded as Islamic instructions

## Engaging Youth:

British authorities have attempted to engage Muslims in the broader society. According to Husband (2011, p.11), this attempt began after 9/11, where there was a focus on British Muslim youth who were viewed as being a supposed challenge to the unity of British society and British internal security. Therefore, community cohesion as it developed was an attempt to make these Muslim communities more British (ibid). However, after the 7 July 2005, London bombing, a new dimension of counterterrorism policy appeared, and Muslims were encouraged to work with the state to help battle extremism (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, p.189). In addition, CONTEST (2006, p.33) emphasised the role of young British Muslims in counter-extremism, affirming that they should be "working in their own community, particularly with young people, to encourage

community engagement and to counter those who seek to promote radicalisation and terrorist violence".

Consequently, a Young Muslims Advisory Group was formulated to prompt the government on their part in handling brutal extremism (Baker, 2009, p.274). Before engaging young people, the Home Office and Foreign Office launched, in 2005, an initiative named the "Radical Middle Way Program" which aimed to fund moderate religious Muslim intellectuals and scholars to lecture to British Muslim youth around the UK in order to encourage them to integrate into British society (Hellyer, 2007, p.7). A few years before the "Radical Middle Way Program", the United Kingdom had already started to integrate its diverse communities. Thomas (2016, p.175), has pointed out that community cohesion was the new British strategic way to deal with ethnic relations propelled into action after the 2001 mob riots in northern towns and urban areas that included young Muslims. According to Thomas, the community cohesion recognised ethnic "parallel lives", ethnic, physical, and social isolation and related radicalised pressures and the need to conquer these through strategic tactics that organised shared values.

Being susceptible, young people are possible targets for terrorist organisations. Thus, the UK government works to immunise them and engage them in its war against violent extremism. CONTEST (2009, p.90) stated that, youth could be employed in the national battle against violent extremism and be the most reliable voice and most stringent supporter. As such, the British Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (Department for Education) encourages young people to participate in its programs to warn children, youth

services and schools of violent extremism (CONTEST, 2009, p.159). At the same time, "CONTEST Annual Report for 2015", focuses on supporting susceptible young people and "increasing young people's resilience to terrorist and extremist ideologies" (CONTEST, 2016, p.17). However, CONTEST (2018) does not mention any role for young people in countering extremism. The former British Police and Counter-Terrorism Minister, Hazel Blears, has emphasised the usefulness of learning from the experience of young people who are susceptible to extremism and incorporate their thoughts into counter-extremism strategies to guarantee the efficiency of the response (Dalton, 2016).

Nevertheless, Bartlett et al. (2010, p.39), have asserted that one of the best British counter-extremism programmes is that which works to develop youth's ability to challenge extremist arguments. Furthermore, in October 2008, the Young Muslims Advisory Group, which contained twenty young Muslims became personal advisors to three cabinet ministers in order to help combat radicalism in Muslim youth communities (Casciani, 2008). This group, aged 16 to 25, aimed to provide cabinet ministers with an understanding of the issues that concern young Muslims, such as employment opportunities and education. Furthermore, the advisory group has worked to educate young people on how to counter extremism (Drury, 2008).

Additionally, British efforts to engage youth is apparent in a project named "Safe Space North-West". This initiative was originated, designed, and delivered by young individuals through the work of the North West Regional Youth Work Unit, UK Youth Parliament and supporting Youth Services (HC, 2010, p.36). This project aimed to provide young people with a healthy environment to

discuss radicalisation and terrorism with the decision-makers, such as Senior Police Officers (Moxon et al., 2016). Moreover, the Swindon Muslim Youth Development Programme is an initiative run by Crime Concern, the Karimia Institute, and Muslim Hands. This project aimed to recruit, train and support a group of young Muslim leaders associated with Mosques and Islamic centres to participate in the national Prevention of Violent Extremism efforts (Smith, 2008, p.74).

One young British woman who effectively engaged in the national project to counter extremism is named Fatima Zaman, and she provides consultation for some UK Ministers on the response to counter extremism in schools and by young people (OYW, 2016). Zaman was selected, in 2016, to be one of ten young individuals to launch a Kofi Annan Foundation as well as the European Commission-funded initiative named "Extremely Together", which intends to combat violent radicalism (Nathanson, 2017). Zaman runs a website called "Educate against Hate" that was built by the Department for Education and the Home Office, to assist people to be aware of the danger of radicalisation (educateagainsthate.com). In 2017, Fatima Zaman won the UK's Asian Women of Achievement Award (Lydall, 2017).

As for Saudi Arabia, the population is estimated to be more than thirty-four million, with a median age of 28 years, and more than nineteen million of them under the age of thirty (SGAS, 2019). As previously stated, there are 3,443 Saudi fighters who have joined ISIS[8]. Consequently, there are calls for youth's participation in all kinds of social activities. The Saudi emergency media plan to

counter the propaganda directed at Saudi youth by ISIL and other extremist groups (Hasanah, 2015, p.36), called for the engagement of young people and hoped to benefit from their skills in creating cautionary messages.

Accordingly, young individuals' responses were encouraging. Tens of initiatives have been offered or suggested by young Saudi individuals. For instance, Myasar Jabr is a Saudi female student who initiated, along with fifty other young Saudi students, a campaign entitled @SaudiEfforts. This initiative aims to promote Saudi national efforts to combat violence and to participate in peacekeeping around the world. This initiative has been voluntarily translated into ten international languages. In addition, Mohammed Almrwani, who recently graduated from university to work as an engineer in the Saudi Railway Company, has spent much time reading about how an individual becomes a terrorist then participates in violent acts. After years of study, he has concluded with recommendations and presented them to the Saudi Ministry of Interior. Additionally, more than three thousand young people participated in a program that aimed to enhance national loyalty and counter violent extremism in an indirect way (Asiri, 2015, p.5).

However, the participation of young people appears to be less effective than what it should be. The UK has multiple initiatives to engage its Muslim youth in counter-extremism but these initiatives last for a short period then disappear. The same is the case with Saudi Arabia, where young people have been neglected until recent times when the Hasanah plan recognised them as leading players who can play a significant part in this mission. Neither the British nor the Saudi strategies have succeeded in convincing young people to engage

in combating radical narratives effectively. In the British case, this challenge can be explained by Kosárová and Ušiak (2017, p.125), who have argued that Muslim youth is torn between the culture of their host countries and the traditional culture of their families; therefore, they may feel disconnected from both communities. In such situations, young people may avoid engagement with social activities.

Young British Muslims have a feeling of being targeted, which negatively affects their participation in counter-extremism (Spalek et al., 2011, p.33). Published data shows bias against the Muslim community in the UK, causing young people to avoid participation in national projects to counter-extremism. Even though Muslims make up less than 5% of the number of inhabitants in England and Wales, statistics show that between April 2007 and April 2015, on average, 65% of the referrals included Muslims, while between April 2015 and April 2016 no less than 68% of the referrals included Muslims (Qurashi, 2018, p.4). It has been estimated that young British Muslims under the age of sixteen forms about one-third of the Muslim population in the UK, compared to a fifth of British society (Ahmed, 2009, p.41). Nevertheless, the participation of the Muslim young in community and political movements, according to Smith (2008, p.61), is lower than the national norm. Smith has attributed this weakness to the fact that young British Muslims tend to confront a twofold prohibition: from the more extensive society and traditional positions of authority inside their own community.

## Engaging Educational Institutions:

Educational institutions contain the most vulnerable part of societies, so these places play crucial roles in countering radicalism. The British Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (section 26) has stressed that educational institutions, amongst other authorities, must prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. According to Long (2017, pp.9-10), since 2011, the Prevent strategy has funded about 200 projects, around a third of them have concentrated on educational institutions, in an attempt to protect students from extremism. The Prevent strategy's guidance for teachers (NASUWT, 2015, p.5), confirms that the Prevent policy is mostly relevant to educational establishments.

It has been stated that all those who are in charge of the educational system, including, teachers and school and college leaders, play an essential role regarding the assurance that pupils are safe from being drawn into terrorism (ibid). Besides, The UK Government Document "Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales" (HMG, 2015, p.10), has affirmed the duty of educational institutions to protect students from being drawn into extremism. Article (10) in the tenth section of the Prevent strategy has affirmed the significance of engaging schools in counter-extremism efforts as they can play a crucial role in preparing young people to fight radicalism and efficiently refute its advocators. Article (55) in the same section has asserted that teachers and other school staff possess sufficient knowledge on how to react when they observe that a student is at risk of extremism. Subsequently, since the launching of Prevent, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has introduced various teaching programs, such as, "Watch Over Me," "Prevent, Police and Schools,"

and "Act Now," to assist teachers to discuss with students the dangers of radicalism (Awan, 2012b, pp.1172-1173).

In most counter-extremism strategies, teachers have a legal responsibility to protect their students from being drawn into extremism. In the British 2015 Counterterrorism and Security initiative, teachers are urged to counter radical interpretations and thwart students from being brought to immoderation (Arthur, 2015, p.324). Accordingly, to prepare frontline professionals, including teachers, to be engaged in counter-extremism and to be able to identify students who are susceptible to radicalisation and how to deal with them (Enfield, 2017), the British government has launched a program called "WRAP" (Blackwood et al., 2016, p.598).

Despite this, although the Prevent policy has placed the protection of students from the threat of radicalisation on schools, the British Educational Suppliers' Association, has stated that 51% of teachers in primary schools, and 49% in secondary schools have indicated that they need more training on how to challenge the online extremism (IG, 2017). Regardless of the insufficient knowledge of how to identify potential extremism among students, Bilazarian (2016, p.4) has affirmed that teachers and schools' staff are required, in the wake of the 2015 Counterterrorism and Security Act, to apply Channel, as part of Prevent, and establish measures to deal with the risk of radicalisation. Teachers, therefore, require training in how to observe the signs of radicalisation, such as support for the Islamic political system, a focus on scripture as a reliable, independent source and a conspiratorial mindset

(Coppock, 2014, p.120). This kind of training can ensure that teachers accurately identify and refer those students at risk.

As in Britain, Saudi educational institutions bear heavy duties to immunise students from the risk of radicalisation. The Ministry of Education has established a program named; "the Unit of Intellectual Awareness in School". This program is intended to enhance Saudi national values amongst students as well as monitor any deviant behaviour in schools and strive to rectify it (MOE, 2015, p.14). The Ministry of Education has launched multiple initiatives, one of which is called, "My Mind is Immune" and was embarked upon in 2016, to immunise female students from the risk of fanaticism (Makki, 2017). Moreover, "The Unity of the Country; Values and Principles" is a warning program directed at students in elementary, secondary, and high schools (Hasanah, 2015, p.16). Besides, Hasanah launched eighteen projects and initiatives that are directed at students, teachers, and educational staff (ibid).

Furthermore, The Ministry of Education launched a program called "Fatehn", that focused on students' behaviours. "Fatehn" provided four kinds of projects: training, education, consultation, and social responsibility (MOE, 2017). According to the "Fatehn" website, 4,316 trainers work for this national initiative which, in 2016, trained more than 1.2 million male and female students. Besides, the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), the foremost technical training institution in the KSA (tvtc.gov.sa), employs an initiative called "Yaqidh" (Vigilant) whose target is to educate technical students regarding the risk of deviant thoughts. According to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA, 2017), about fifty thousand trainees have benefited from this program.

Multiple challenges face British and Saudi efforts to counter-extremism. Although the Saudi Ministry of Education conducts numerous projects and activities, many students and teachers have no idea about the units of intellectual awareness in their schools. Some male and female teachers have acknowledged an ignorance of these units, confessing that they had never benefitted from them, nor did they know about the counter-extremism mechanisms in their schools. Also, it has been found that some teachers are sympathisers with terrorist groups. Moreover, some teachers exploit their involvement with students to recruit them. For instance, one of the Saudi investigation departments noted that a significant number of ISIL fighters were studying or had studied in the same school. Inspections demonstrated that one teacher had recruited all these students. In 2017, the Saudi Specialized Criminal Court accused this teacher of multiple charges, one of which was hiring some of his students and encouraging them to travel to Syria to fight with ISIL. The teacher admitted that he was propagating radical ideologies, calling for takfir against the state and those who work for the country, as well as exploiting the school environment to inspire his students to join terrorist groups.

The danger of these radical teachers can be highlighted through the case of Hila al-Qsayer. This teacher called "the mother of al-Qaeda", was dealing directly with tens of female students. The essential issue of al-Qsayer's background was that she had devoted her life to extreme views as an act of revenge for her husband who had been a member of al-Qaeda until he was killed, in 2004, by the Saudi special security forces. Al-Qsayer spent considerable time propagating radical ideas and supporting terrorist groups, before being arrested for her terrorist financing activities. Saudi authorities

continue to urge teachers and school staff to deal with those students who show signs of extremism. Al-Mutairi said that the Saudi Ministry of Education works to train the students' advisers.[9] The Ministry has trained more than thirty thousand students' advisers. The course focuses on identifying extremism indicators amongst students and gives advice on how to deal with them. Hence, when a teacher notices any radical sign in a student, he must inform the students' adviser who then evaluates the case and decides on an appropriate cause of action. The referred student can be counselled by the school adviser, referred to the intellectual awareness committee in the educational department, or he can be referred to the police department.

Al-Mutari has emphasised that students' advisers have a wide range of authority regarding how to deal with each case. For instance, a teacher requested his pupils to wear the police uniform, as part of the national loyalty enhancement course. One of the high school students refused to wear the police uniform, saying that he believed that all policemen are "Kafir" infidels. According to Sedgwick (2012, p.367), a Muslim police officer may be assumed as a non-Muslim and become a legitimate target because he is serving an illegitimate ruler. This allegation is used by ISIL and al-Qaeda to justify their violence against Muslim individuals, making them legitimate targets for terrorist attacks (Gendron, 2010, p.498). In response, the adviser, in coordination with some concerned school staff, started treating this student through a simple questioning course commencing with an invitation to scrutiny called "imagine the city without policemen", what will happen? At the end of the course, this

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[9] Tariq al-Mutairi is the Hasanah Plan coordinator at the Saudi Ministry of Education. The interview with the author took place on 2 February 2019.

student admitted that he was wrong, declaring that his wish after graduation was to become a policeman.

On the other hand, in Britain, it appears that the sophisticated policing duty has caused enormous pressures on teachers and schools' staff. According to Combes (2013, p.4), the British Union of Students declared that although they were satisfied with alertness raising, they were unhappy with the notion that educators were requested to observe a specific ethnic community. Thus, this dichotomy caused some teachers to be confused about observing students. Accordingly, if they noticed some guesstimated sign of radicalisation in a student's speech or behaviour, they might ignore the assumed sign. Mohammed and Siddiqui (2013, p.14), have also found that teachers find referring such students causes them a dilemma.

## Conclusion:

This chapter has demonstrated that multiple issues can verify the usefulness of conducting a comparative study between two Muslim communities in different countries. Therefore, lessons drawn from such a comparative study can be derived and utilised in the enhancement of Muslim community engagement efficiency in counter-extremism. The possibility of conducting comparative research is related to various aspects, some of which are general issues suiting multiple communities, while other issues may suit only a few communities. One of these general issues is the dominant role of Islam concerning the individual life and public life of a Muslim. This drives Muslims to reconcile their needs with the demands of society, and all activities which may harm the community are

fiercely condemned. In this regard, Muslim identity has an explicit impact on individual values which encourages Muslims to either participate in counter-extremism or in radical activities (Alam and Husband, 2013, p.250). For instance, the concept of Ummah is an empowering source of identity for Muslims, especially for young individuals who identify themselves as Muslims.

Social identity theory shows that belonging to a group shapes individual identity and relationships (Richards, 2019, p.5). Identity theory and social identity theory acknowledge that the self is socially defined, which intermediates the relationship between self and the wider social surroundings (Richards, 2019, p.66). This relationship shows that the sense of belonging to this Ummah becomes more evident during crises and the war against terrorism. Thus, it can be observed that the strong presence of Islam, Muslim identity, and the concept of Ummah in Muslim communities around the globe can play primary roles in counter-extremism projects, making such a comparative study academically beneficial. In general, it can be presumed that religious identity is more significant than ethnic or national identity (Kosárová and Ušiak, 2017, p.120).

The second aspect is the role of a similar social environment in Muslim communities in counter-extremism. These communities have almost the same primary influential social elements, such as mosques, religious figures, and theologian sources, regardless of whether they are majorities or minorities. These elements play crucial roles in social affairs, including counter-extremism, which make the comparison between these communities workable and may result in generalisable outcomes. It is widely accepted that Muslim societies are not held together primarily by centralised rule, but by the reproduction of Islamic

cultural norms over the centuries. This statement indicates the influence of Islamic lifestyle on the Muslim community, which may exceed any other influential factors.

Accordingly, a comparative study could be conducted between any Muslim communities regardless of whether they are majorities or minorities. However, the selection of the British and Saudi cases is linked to the relevant context and background of these two cases, such as the tremendous efforts paid by the two countries in combating extremism, the joint efforts in this field, sharing the most dangerous source of threat to their lands and populations, and the frequent mutual official visits. Thus, the similarity between the compared communities can create a suitable atmosphere for academic comparison. Nevertheless, this similarity between Muslim communities around the globe can be affected by various factors, such as political decisions and a variety of internal and external aspects.

# Chapter 5
## Findings and Discussion

As discussed in previous chapters, the participation of communities in counter-extremism initiatives would appear essential for their successful implementation, as well as valuable lessons being drawn from such a practice. Accordingly, this thesis seeks to categorise the comparable lessons that can be drawn from the British and Saudi experience of fighting extremism through community engagement. As such, this research has concentrated on the participation of communities in counter-extremism, aiming to enhance the understanding of how this engagement can positively affect counter-extremism. This research has investigated communities by dividing them into four primary components, aiming to concentrate on common denominators shared by these components which can increase the efficacy of this participation, and the requirements of each social component.

This research can contribute to the body of academic knowledge in two aspects. Firstly, it can increase the comprehension of community engagement in counter-extremism. Secondly, it may prove valuable in terms of understanding each societal component independently. Four dimensions have been covered: the essential social components, as well as the critical areas of each specified societal component, the related concepts that are required for community participation in counter-extremism, also, factors that can impact this involvement. Understanding the relationships between these scopes may enhance the effectiveness of community contribution in counter-extremism. Discussing community engagement or the participation of one societal

component in counter-radicalisation offers general or exclusive lessons to follow. Specifically, probing into counter-extremism required greater concentration on particular issues in order to provide an inclusive understanding.

The importance of this research derives from the academic need for more studies related to community engagement in counter-extremism, in order to gain a profound understanding of the evaluation of the success of counter-extremism and the effect of community engagement in this regard. This study is based on the assumption that social participation in counter-extremism may serve as a key indicator of eventual achievement. The cruciality of focusing on the community engagement as a potential indication of the efficacy of counter-extremism approaches, originates from the deficiency of academic evaluating methods (Hoeft, 2015, p.27, Ambrozik, 2019, p.1050). A primary challenge concerning this academic field is how to enhance the understanding of the counter-extremism evaluation, especially as many researchers have confirmed the scientific need for accurate methods to evaluate the proficiency of counter-extremism. Thus, lessons drawn from this study can be developed to become a suitable criterion to assess the efficiency of counter-extremism through community engagement.

## Findings:

Lessons drawn from this study can be divided into three categories that influence one another. The first category is the significance of engaging four main societal components. The second lesson is a combination of three stages of requirements that are needed for effective community engagement. The third

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category comprises the three factors that can affect community engagement. The relationship between these three categories is very tight, and each can affect one another. First, this study has noticed that community engagement appears to be a necessity for the success of counter-extremism. Second, the community engagement can be enhanced by a combination of three linear concepts which start from trust-building, then warning and encouraging people to participate, before providing training for participants. Third, this participation can be influenced by three factors: local cultures, external effects, and political systems and their foreign policies.

| It can be observed that three main lessons can be drawn from this study. Under each lesson, some aspects should be considered in order to utilise these lessons effectively. | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Lessons** | **Components** | **Crucial Aspects** |
| Community engagement | 1. Religious figures<br>2. Women<br>3. Youth<br>4. Educational institutions | a. understanding the local context.<br>b. exerting a powerful influence on their followers.<br>c. enormous number of Mosques.<br>d. women are the heart of their houses.<br>e. Women can notice early warning indications.<br>f. Youth form a significant percentage of the Muslim population.<br>g. Young people can create positive narratives.<br>h. Education can change values and attitudes.<br>i. Lack of education could be a driver of radicalisation. |
| Three linear concepts required for effectiveness | 1. Trust building<br>2. Awareness enhancement<br>3. Providing training | a. Engaging trustworthy religious figures.<br>b. Enabling women and acknowledging their roles in counter-radicalisation |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | c. Enhancing the sense of national belonging among youth. |
| | | d. Measuring trust levels in the educational environment. |
| | | e. Raising imams' awareness about the cruciality of radicalisation. |
| | | f. Increasing women's awareness levels that can immunise them from radical thoughts. |
| | | g. Using advanced means that attract young people and enhance their desire to participate in counter-radicalisation. |
| | | h. Building a positive image for counter-extremism campaigns amongst educators. |
| | | i. Teaching religious figures how to identify radical signs. |
| | | j. Having more women with relevant skills and training. |
| | | k. Measuring youth's abilities to identify radical signs. |
| | | l. Training parents and teachers on how seriously deal with radicalisation and teaching their children/students critical thinking. |
| Three factors which can affect the engagement | 1. Internal factors<br>2. External factors<br>3. Political systems | a. Some migrants bring their local cultures.<br>b. Communities can be influenced by their surroundings.<br>c. The relationship between the Muslim community and the dominant political regime.<br>d. The negative effect of foreign policies.<br>e. The Sharia's effects on the social concepts.<br>f. The roles of the concept of Muslim Ummah.<br>g. Sharing a sense of unity internationally. |

## Discussion:

**Lesson One: The Significance of Engaging Four Main Societal Components:**

This research has shown that community engagement in counter-extremism efforts is crucial for success. Furthermore, it has highlighted two aspects which should be considered to achieve more effective participation. The first issue is the importance of engaging four societal elements that play major roles in this fight. These social components are religious figures, women, youth, and educational institutions. The purpose of selecting these four elements of the community is linked to two reasons, as explained in chapter one. Reason one is because these elements form significant numbers of any community. Religious leaders especially, have extensive effect and popularity within Muslim communities. Women naturally form around fifty per cent of communities, and they are potential targets for radical groups. However, women also possess the skills and power to affect their surroundings and protect them from extremism. In addition, young people form a significant portion of Muslim communities. For educational institutions, it is commonly accepted that the majority of people spend their childhood and teenage years in schools which educate them about various issues, which could also include the risks of radical ideologies.

Reason two is that the engagement of other civil elements, such as social workers, mental health providers, psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sectors, and communication

experts, cannot be as effective as these four elements. The significant relationships between these four elements and their locations in the community were the reasons for selecting them. Additionally, the four components are potential targets for radical networks. Even though other societal elements play vital roles in communities, they appear not to be as vulnerable as these four elements of communities. For instance, it has been noted that some NGOs have been exploited by terrorists to fund their illegal activities. Nontheless, such exploitation might have no harmful effect if community resilience was established. Moreover, it appears that none of the community elements can influence and become influenced by their surroundings more than this combination of the four stated elements.

The second aspect is that each societal component of these four parts of a community has some critical areas that require more focus on, in order to enhance their efficiency when participating in counter-extremism initiatives. Regarding religion, attention should be given to engaging suitable religious scholars, the role of mosques, and establishing a religious institution to coordinate fatwa issuing. For women, there is a need for greater awareness of the marginalisation of women's role in Muslim societies, as well as the harmful effects of women's radical relatives. Similarly, there are areas of young individuals' lives which require a greater focus on. Accordingly, for the more active involvement of adolescence, there is a need for greater concentration on enhancing the sense of national belonging amongst young people, working on their overwhelming desire, and their psychological status. Finally, investigating the role of educational institutions has shown that two pivotal areas form the focal points of this component: the influence of parents and teachers on children

and students, and the importance of critical thinking learning for counter-extremism.

**Religious Leaders' Engagement:**

This research has found that religious leaders can play a crucial role in preventing extremism. Religious scholars may better understand radical arguments and be better placed to refute them (Salyk-Virk, 2020, p.1014). Clinch (2011, p.109) and Tahiri and Grossman (2013, p.131) argued that Muslim religious figures exert a powerful influence on their followers, and they are expected to play a crucial role in counter-extremism. The significance of Muslim religious leaders' participation derives from the enormous numbers of Mosques and organisations in their communities. For example, there are more than 1,200 mosques, and about 7,000 Muslim organisations in Britain (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, p.198), and these places provide education and spiritual enlightenment (Awan, 2012b, p.1169). Gunaratna (2011, p.77) argued that many countries already coordinate with Muslim scholars and clerics to combat the phenomenon of terrorism. Gunaratna has also enlightened how Islam has been misinterpreted, and the roles that religious scholars can play to dismantle the concept of radicalisation. Such a statement may have led Griffith-Dickson et al. (2015, p.27) to conclude that counter-extremism cannot be commenced without the operative engagement of religious actors.

**Women's Engagement:**

Investigating this issue has displayed that women can play a critical role in counter-extremism. Weeks (2013, p.212) argued that women are the heart of

their homes, and they should not be disregarded, as they play a vital role in implanting values while raising children. Furthermore, women have the potential to be tremendously operative in noticing early warning indications in their family members (Couture, 2014, 1, 50, Sommers, 2019. P.26). In this regard, de Silva (2017, p.14) emphasised that counter-extremism programs should take into consideration the unique role that a mother plays as her family's first educator. De Silva went on to say that unless these issues are taken into account, official interventions cannot be fruitful.

**Youth's Engagement:**

This study has concluded that young individuals can benefit national counter-extremism projects. The significance of engaging young people comes from the reality that they form a noteworthy percentage of the Muslim population globally. For instance, it has been estimated that young individuals, between the ages 15-34, form more than 35% of the Saudi population (SGAS, 2019). In the UK, according to Ali et al. (2015, p.12), the median age of the British Muslim population is twenty-five years compared to forty in the overall population of the UK. Ali et al. (2015, p.27) added that thirty-three per cent of the British Muslim population was under fifteen years old. Consequently, this abundance of youth highlights the urgency for engaging Muslim youth in counter-extremism.

Not surprisingly, the literature has emphasised the beneficial effect of participation of young individuals in counter-extremism. Fink et al. (2013, p.6) affirmed that involving youth in the development of curriculum design can increase its effectiveness and build resilience against extremism. According to

Sommers (2019. P.32), including young individuals can not only generate projects that refute radical ideologies but can also create positive narratives that are authentic to their counterparts. Bartlett et al. (2010, p.39), have asserted that one of the best British counter-extremism projects is that which focuses on developing youth's ability to counter radical ideologies.

**Educational Institutions' Engagement:**

Educational institutions are the fourth community element which can play influential roles in counter-extremism. Essentially, education can shape and change values and attitudes (Sas et al., 2020, p.7). Researchers have argued that education is one of the most effective tools to reach students and educate them about radical ideologies (de Silva, 2017, p.9). To have a sustainable counter-extremism project, there is a need to anchor such a project into curricula structures and the working practices of teachers (Davies, 2018, p.48). Clinch (2011, p.39) and Sas et al. (2020, p.8) have recommended that critical thinking and debate in schools about local and international matters, should be encouraged in both primary and secondary schools. Besides schools' engagement, many scholars have emphasised the essentialness of concentrating on parents and engaging them in addressing violent extremism (Clinch, 2011, p.109, d'Estaing, 2017, p.110, Davies, 2018, p.28, Richards, 2019, p.129 and Salyk-Virk, 2020, p.1012).

## Lesson Two: Three Stages of Effective Societal Engagement:

**The Importance of Enhancing Trust-building:** this research has confirmed what has been suggested by some researchers who have discussed the importance of building trust between governments and communities in order to enhance their participation in counter-extremism (Awan, 2012a, p.27, Johns et al., 2014, p.59, Thomas, 2016, p.32, Cherney and Hartley 2017, p.751). Observers believe that some official stakeholders want to engage the community in counter-extremism prior to building a tight relationship with them. As evidence of this, Imtiaz reported that engaging community is difficult before building trust. He added, that to gain people's trust, first, it is essential to speak about their concerns, such as education, employment, and marriage, before talking about counter-extremism.[10] Douglas confirmed how inappropriate it is to engage youth in policy matters before paving the road, as this will lead to rejection. Najashi suggested that the most significant issue is asking if this encouragement is enough or not. He observed its ineffectiveness being due to the programs being run by the wrong people who are biased against Muslims (Spalek et al., 2011, p.6, Greenberg, 2016, p.173, Sommers, 2019. P.34).[11]

Specialists have assumed that building trust between stakeholders and community can lead to the enhancement of the sense of national belonging which can attract youth to engage in national projects to counter extremism. Johns et al. (2014, p.57) and Salyk-Virk (2020, p.1023) emphasised that a sense of belonging is essential to promote resilience against extremism.

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[10] Mohammed Imtiaz is the vice-chairman of the Central Mosque in Birmingham. The interview with the author took place on 28 October 2018.
[1111] Craig Najashi is an expert in criminology and counter-extremism. The interview with the author took place on 8 January 2019.

Besides, the need for a sense of belonging can make radical groups appear attractive because they can provide a real sense of family and protection (Clinch, 2011, p.110). Bin Dabil felt that the cautiousness of the stakeholders should be not explained as a political mistrust of people, rather, it should be considered a sensitive issue that needs direct attention from the sponsors. The dilemma that faces governments, owing to the sensitivity of counter-extremism, is that these governments, without engaging their communities, cannot caution all at-risk individuals. This has led specialists to suggest that governments could imitate ISIL's ways, especially in utilising everyone.

According to Baker, when governments attempt to involve their communities, and people realise that the state is working with trustworthy individuals or organisations, they will be more willing to engage in this issue. On the other hand, if people do not trust those who are running cautioning projects, they are unwilling to participate. For instance, although "Imams Online" created attractive materials that astonished audiences, it was condemned by people because of the leak that the British Research Information and Communications Unit (RICU) funded it. Many people rejected the contents provided by "Imam Online" as they assumed that the project was cooperating with the state and supporting the official narrative. This case, as well as many others, provide evidence that the British government has failed to build a positive image for its counter-extremism campaigns to fight radicalism. The aforementioned example supports Cherney and Hartley's (2017, pp.753-757) viewpoint, whereby they warned that the challenge is that if Muslim leaders are willing to engage with police, community members may accuse them of selling out, which would negatively affect their names.

Dunn et al. (2016, p.198) and Richards (2019, p.50) attributed this failure to the lack of trust which weakens consent and affects cooperation negatively. Al-Afnan elaborated on this by explaining that three different causes lead an individual to ignore the invitation to participate in counter-extremism.[12] One of these causes relates to the absence of trust between the state and people, which drives them to avoid the harmful imaginary consequence of speaking to any official institution. This unwillingness amongst Muslim individuals to participate in CVE projects designates the deficiency of trust and confidence in the official institutions as indicated by Spalek and Imtoual (2007, p.199), Spalek (2010, p.790), Awan (2012a, p.26), and Weeks (2013, p.301). As stated by Ambrozik (2019, p.1064) and supported by al-Afnan, the lack of trust can lead individuals to be less likely to answer the call to participate in counter-extremism.

Karmani suggested that if governments want to succeed in reaching communities, they should recognise the two possible ways of contacting audiences, namely, the heavy preventive approach and the light preventive approach. Karmani believed that the problem with the British government is that it utilises a heavy prevent model, which is a top-down approach that does not work. On the other hand, the light preventive model, which is based on building partnerships and trust on social issues, can help gain the sympathy of the people. This suggestion confirmed Awan's (2012a, p.32) recommendation that rebuilding trust can be achieved through community-led projects. Karmani affirmed that he has worked in various counter-extremism projects such as the

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[12] Ali al-Afnan is a psychiatrist and member of Muhammed bin Naif Counselling and Care Centre. The interview with the author took place on 2 January 2019.

Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish projects, which have proven more effective than the British project as they have followed a light preventive approach.

Noticeably, British and Saudi authorities both attempted to enhance trust with their communities by building a positive image for counter-extremism campaigns. Al-Jadid said that although efforts have been made to create an attractive image to reach people and enhance trust, such actions can be made more comprehensive regards national projects which can further introduce a picture that satisfies people. Further to this, some experts believe that the Saudi authority has succeeded in building a positive image and enhancing the willingness of individuals to participate in counter-extremism projects. Bin Dabil confirmed that the strategic goal of trust-building was to convince people that counter-extremism is not against Islamic principles, rather, al-Qaeda, ISIL, and all terrorist groups are not Islamic. Besides, the government attempts to educate people that radical groups are trying to kidnap the religion of Islam, or, as Galloway (2014, p.172), described it, that extremists are hijacking Islam.

Some observers believe that the current British government has failed to build a positive image amongst the Muslim youth. Instead, the official image seems to be very harmful. Baker reinforces Romaniuk (2015, p.18), and Thomas's (2016, p.176), opinion that the Muslim community, in general, sees the Prevent strategy as a spying tool that is deployed to harm them and their children. This being the case, Awan et al. (2013, p.422) have stressed the importance of improving the official image so as to attract people to participate in counter-extremism. Furthermore, a positive image needs to be created by local people, not just by governments. For example, Karmani reported how he used to work

in a London suburb called Hounslow, where multiple warning programs were formulated which successfully engaged many young people, while in other areas in London, the participation was lower. Karmani explained that the differentiation might arise from local officials who were able to build mutual trust in Hounslow, which assisted in achieving an encouraging outcome. Baker commented on this, saying that the absence of trust between the British government and the Muslim community has made it challenging to build a positive image. For instance, if the government wishes to improve its image by cooperating with some Muslim figures, Muslims will accuse the elite of being government agents (Novelli, 2017, p.847, UNESCO, 2017, p.50). It seems that this social impression of the government and those who collaborate with it, is the most challenging issue.

Creating a positive image and building trust can be further weakened when governments overly concentrate on policing solutions as affirmed by Russell and Theodosiou (2015, p.41). Some interviewees emphasised that the sophisticated policing strategy had caused enormous pressures on teachers and schools' staff. Teachers appear confused regards observing students, and, as such, if they notice any possible sign of radicalisation in a student's speech or behaviour, they may ignore it, as teachers find referring such students causes them a dilemma. As a result, teachers may not participate in surveillance that targets specific people (Mohammed and Siddiqui, 2013, p.14). Accordingly, the Prevent policy might return the parental roles to the teachers and encourage them to patiently deal with any potential radical student and try to rectify his thoughts and behaviour so keeping the referrals for critical cases only.  It can be observed that teachers' reactions to policing duties supports

Powers' argument (2015, p.22). Power argued that surveillance damages governmental efforts and creates a total mistrust. Moreover, Awan (2012a, p.32), emphasised the need for rebuilding trust through cohesion, not through surveillance.

When the British Muslim community felt that they were being accused, the Prevent strategy started to lose the trust of those Muslims who viewed this national policy as a tool to discriminate against them (O'Toole et al., 2016, p.172). Although few officials have misused this tool, the injured people mistrust the whole plan and call for stopping discriminative measures. For example, the teachers' monitoring role appears to harm their relationship with their students and their families, driving some Muslim young people to be less eager to discuss demanding concerns openly fearing they might be referred (Novelli, 2017, p.847). The fear here, according to Novelli, is that students may discuss such concerning aspects underground, where there is no adviser to correct misleading thoughts. Such mistrust between teachers and their students which leads young people to find answers to their inquiries from unknown websites, may cause them to join radical groups (Atran et al., 2017, p.353, Sommers, 2019. P.24).

Worryingly, published data shows bias against the Muslim community in the UK, causing young people to lose trust and avoid participation in national projects to counter-extremism. Even though Muslims make up less than 5% of the number of inhabitants in England and Wales, statistics published show that between April 2007 and April 2015, on average, 65% of the referrals included Muslims, whilst between April 2015 and April 2016 no less than 68% of the

referrals included Muslims (Qurashi, 2018, p.4). It has been estimated that young British Muslims under the age of sixteen forms about one-third of the Muslim population in the UK, compared to a fifth of British society (Ahmed, 2009, p.41). However, the participation of Muslim young people in the community and political movements, according to Smith (2008, p.61), is lower than the national norm. Smith has attributed this low participation rate to the fact that young British Muslims tend to confront a twofold prohibition: from more extensive society and traditional positions of authority inside their community.

Regardless of this unsatisfactory involvement, British authorities have attempted to engage Muslims in the broad society. According to Husband (2011, p.11), this attempt began after September Eleven, where there was a focus on British Muslims who were viewed as being a supposed challenge to the unity of British society and British internal security. Therefore, community cohesion as it developed was an attempt to make these Muslim communities more British (ibid). However, after the 7th of July 2005, London bombing, a new dimension of counter-terrorism policy appeared, and Muslims were encouraged to work with the state to help battle extremism (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, p.189). As a result, CONTEST (2006), stressed the role of young British Muslims in counter-extremism.

**The Importance of Awareness and Encouraging People to Engage:**
Although, as previously discussed, trust-building is extremely important for community engagement in counter-extremism, awareness is also essential for this participation. Chapter two has demonstrated that in some cases, individuals have a tight relationship with their governments, but they do not engage in

counter-extremism activities as they believe that it is the state's responsibility. Attempts to engage individuals to participate in combating radicalism has demonstrated that many of them were unaware of this phenomenon. As investigations have shown, the critical challenge is how to reach people's minds and bring them to a level where they comprehend the risk of extremism. Consequently, enhancing an individual's awareness of the issue will raise the possibility of their favourable impression and participation in counter extremism initiatives.

Al-Foaim believed that participation depends on people's persuasions. For instance, if people are satisfied with the idea, they will participate in these projects, but if they are unconvinced, then cautioning campaigns will not attract them to participate at all.[13] According to al-Hiliyl, the real necessity is to raise people's awareness about the importance of this issue before calling them to become involved in training programs. Raising the awareness of the risk of extremism is a positive step to engage individuals in counter-extremism. Hence, addressing what threatens the community may convince people to collaborate in countering radicalisation (Briggs, 2010, p.973, Bilazarian, 2016, p.7). Richards (2019, p.45) firmly believes that cautioning campaigns can increase awareness among individuals and motivate them to contribute to counter-extremism.

Bullock (2014, p.112) warned that awareness alone cannot always attract individuals to engage in counter-extremism. In accordance with this, some interviewees referred to the weakness of social engagement in counter-

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[13] Fahd al-Foaim is a researcher in counter-extremism and ideological security. The interview with the author took place on 1 October 2018.

extremism to the unattractive names of cautioning programs. They explained that projects' names have security flavours, while they deal with civilians who may engage in a new experience that is unfamiliar to them. Al-Rwais affirmed that when individuals hear program names, such as "counter-extremism" and "counter-terrorism", they may become frightened, assuming that these missions might be exclusive for policemen. Fink et al. (2013, p.4) stated that, "while many participants recognized the importance of education in CVE, some cautioned against the idea of "injecting" CVE policy into curricula and were concerned that programming around CVE and education would backfire due to wariness around "hard" counterterrorism measures". Accordingly, some interviewees suggested that governments can invent creative ways to reach audiences by cooperating with young people who have creative minds, braveness, and acceptance amongst people.

It has been reported by some experts, that many young people wish to do something to combat extremism, but are unable to do so, owing to the absence of a coordinating establishment that can help them to engage in such duty. Fink et al. (2013, p.11), and Agerschou (2015, p.6), discussed the need for a platform to coordinate between stakeholders and communities. However, many young people may have a fear of dealing with the security apparatus. In general, British interviewees believe that there is a willingness among young Muslim individuals to participate, but they face the absence of an official desire to involve them. The serious aspect here is that the governmental disregard of youth's eagerness to participate, can be regarded as a marginalisation that can be exploited by extremist groups to recruit some enthusiastic individuals. Young people need to know the importance of counter-extremism in order to

participate in it. The problem is that, as stressed by Salyk-Virk (2020, p.1018), some individuals have never heard of any counter-extremism program.

Notably, the media have been placing the news and reports of extremism and terrorism on their front pages, which has raised awareness concerning these two phenomena (Greenberg, 2016, p.170, Davies, 2018, p.22). This media coverage has increased the eagerness of young individuals to become involved in counter-extremism, but the challenge remains that governments are not making enough effort to appeal to the young people and gain their cooperation. How young audiences are approached plays a significant role in gaining their hearts. This mechanism can be a suitable tool to evaluate the success of propagandists in reaching the audience.

Additionally, an enticing message to invite youth to be involved in this fight against extremism is needed (Nye, 2015, p.5). According to Al-Jasir, the Saudi authorities have made insufficient efforts to encourage young people to participate in the national counter-extremism policy despite, as Al-Afnan stated, the Saudi government's attempt to employ social media platforms to reach young people.[14] Besides, the state has tried to encourage social media influencers to deliver its messages. On the other hand, the British government is utilising multiple methods to speak to Muslim youth. As reported by Macklin (2019, p.15), in December 2016, National Action became the first extreme-right group to be banned in the UK since 1940 and the first-ever such group to be proscribed as a terrorist organisation. Baker commented that one of the main

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[14] Abdullah al-Jasir is the Riyadh Youth Committee secretary and a former member of Muhammed bin Naif, Counselling and Care Centre. The interview with the author took place on 3 January 2019.

tools that is utilised by the British government is, to target far-right extremism in an attempt to convince Muslims that they are combating all kinds of radicalisation. Targeting the far-right extremists was a strategy to encourage the British Muslim community to participate in counter-extremism. Nevertheless, if governments are to enhance social awareness, trust is essential in facilitating coordination and cooperation (Putnam 1995, p.67, Johns et al., 2014, pp.58-59, Richards, 2019, p.44). Likewise, Muslim leaders' trust and knowledge without awareness of the risk of extremism, may cause these figures to be dysfunctional and unable to deliver authoritative guidance (Naqshbandi, 2006, p.8, Gunaratna, 2011, p.70).

**The Essentiality of Providing Training for Participants in Counter-extremism:** Training is the third stage for ensuring possible effective social engagement in counter-extremism. Training individuals on how to participate in official counter-extremism projects can increase the quality of these programs and encourage more people to engage (Couture, 2014, p.50, Sommers, 2019. P.33). It should be noted that there is a need for training in a variety of fields (Dunn et al. 2016, pp.206-207) with interviewees having emphasised the significance of such training. The benefits of training programs are that they increase the confidence of participants and enhance their knowledge about countering and refuting radical ideas. Through training, people who engage in counter-extremism efforts can understand the gravity and sensitivity of this mission.

The need for educating individuals on how to identify radical signs can be considered one of the most challenging in this field. The European Union has

recognised this challenge and planned to equip participants with the skills necessary to assist them in detecting early radical indications (Awan, 2012b, p.1162). Mirsal emphasised the seriousness of understanding these signs, dividing them into three types. The first type is generally recognisable. The second type, however, is less easily detected and is related to tolerant issues. The third type is difficult to be identified by most people, except by those who are specialists in this field.[15] Accordingly, this category can be referred to as knowledge and experience that some participants possess, and some do not. However, these three concepts will be discussed in the next four chapters.

## Lesson Three: Multiple Factors Affecting Community Engagement:

This research has found that community participation in counter-extremism can be influenced by three factors: internal factors, external factors, and political systems and their foreign policies. Such effects can be perceived in individuals' willingness to engage in governmental activities and to integrate into the surrounding cultures (Anjum et al., 2019, p.43). Investigating this phenomenon has demonstrated that these three aspects can affect individuals in three different ways. The most obvious issue is related to the external factor, whereby some individuals can be recruited by terrorist networks wishing to support other individuals who live in different countries. Also, certain internal factors can motivate some people to ignore any call for participation in social activities. The third factor is linked to the internal and external roles of political regimes that affect community participation in counter-extremism. Before discussing the

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[15] Majid Mirsal is a specialist in counter-extremism and advisor at the Saudi General Department for Counter-Extremism. The interview with the author took place on 30 September 2018.

effect of these factors, it is important to realise, as discussed in chapter four, that Muslim social works are based on the principle of the sovereignty of the Sharia (Pasha, 2008, p.380). Thus, the Sharia can affect all social aspects and shape Muslim lifestyles everywhere (Joshanloo, 2013, p.1858). Significantly, Sharia controls and directs Muslim communities in similar ways around the world (Dallal, 2016, p.318). However, it is essential to realise that the earlier mentioned factors can be more effective than Sharia in certain cases.

**Local Cultures Can Affect the Social Engagement in Counter-Extremism:**
The internal factor - or what can be called the local culture - is linked to the people's ethnicity (Dallal, 2016, p.304), and plays a critical role in this aspect. Individuals deal with their surroundings by how they interrelate with each other in their local cultural environment (Weeks, 2013, p.215). Therefore, it can be observed that this factor plays a significant role in some areas, such as women's roles in societies, young people's levels of engagement in multicultural communities, and the effect of first and second immigrant generations on the daily social life of Muslim communities. Afzal has acknowledged that the local culture plays a crucial role in limiting Muslim women's participation in counter-extremism.[16] Further, Inglehart and Norris (2009, p.9) have pointed out that alternative theories of multiculturalism indicate that some Muslim migrants take their local cultures with them when they travel, which is evident in the British Muslim community. Kundnani (2009, p.7) and Husband (2011, p.11) have stated that the culture of British Muslims can be seen as a challenge for the government because multiculturalism has driven Muslims to split themselves

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[16] Samayya Afzal is the community engagement manager at the Muslim Council of Britain. The interview with the author took place on 7 February 2019.

from the prevailing culture and live by their own values. Furthermore, Cornwall criticised the British police for speaking so much about integration but not making efforts to ensure it becomes a reality.

The influence of local culture is also apparent in the Saudi community. According to Al-Brikan (2017, p.10), Saudi students' perspectives concerning their teachers, choosing classmates, and evaluating situations depend on what has been instilled in their minds by their parents who, likewise, are affected by their local culture. Rajkhan (2014, p.2), affirmed that the influence of local culture could reach a level where it can create contradictions between some national laws and what occurs in real life. For instance, British women, in general, are greater social participants than their Saudi counterparts. Conversely, some Asian British Muslim women may be more conservative than their British counterparts (Brown, 2006, p.424, Kashyap and Lewis, 2013, p.2120, Bhopal, 2016, p.516). Such an issue can cause difficulties and lead to the marginalisation of women's roles in their communities (Spalek et al., 2008, p.17, Poloni and Ortbals, 2014, p.66, Barakat et al., 2014, p.6). Marginalisation is a critical issue that can impact women's social engagement, especially where the local culture plays a significant role in the way individuals treat women (Offenhauer, 2005, p.29). Furthermore, Raja suggested that governments should delve further into the backgrounds of those affiliated with ISIL and other radical groups, believing that they are likely to find that they come from families with low educational levels.[17]

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[17] Abid Raja is a Muslim Contact Unit member (a Metropolitan Police anti-terrorism unit) and former community officer in Notting Hill. The interview with the author took place on 8 January 2019.

**External Factors Can Crucially Impact the Individuals' Activities:**

External influences that originate from the surrounding societies - locally or internationally - can play a role in integration and societal participation. Communities are affected by what occurs around them (Bhambhri and Verma, 1972, p.168) and this effect influences individuals positively or negatively. Accordingly, Muslim minorities are affected by their surroundings and interact with the larger communities (Offenhauer, 2005, p.34, Schmid, 2017, p.8). The same can be said about Muslims who live in Muslim countries, where they are affected by globalisation (Inglehart and Norris, 2009, pp.4-5, Weeks, 2013, p.134, al-Raffie, 2013, p.73). Kosárová and Ušiak (2017, p.123), have also mentioned a variety of perceived threats to the Muslim identity, such as globalisation, Westernisation, secular pro-Western governments. Negative occurrences which occur in some parts of Muslim communities around the world, are open to exploitation by radical networks for recruitment purposes. For example, when al-Qaeda and ISIL encouraged young Muslims globally to join them, they related stories which described the brutality used against their Muslim brothers and sisters (Neumann and Rogers, 2007, p.36, Veldhuis and Staun, 2009, p.8, Azani and Koblentz-Stenzler, 2019, p.9). These radical narratives may lead some young people to disregard the ethical principles that are promoted by Sharia, such as tolerance, moderation, and coexistence (Khambali et al., 2017, p.212, Davids, 2017, p.318, Schmid, 2017, p.12).

Chapter four has shown how the concept of Muslim Ummah transcends all boundaries and unites Muslims based on their religion. Ummah is a genuine and empowering source of identity for Muslims, especially for young individuals

who identify themselves as Muslims (Spalek et al., 2011, p.33, Isakjee, 2012, p.129, Murji, 2014, p.77). While ethnicity may be particular to a region or community, the Islamic religion has universal relevance that encourages Muslim youth to identify themselves with Ummah (Kashyap and Lewis, 2013, p.2121). Multiple studies indicate the significance of Islam as an identity marker for Muslim individuals living in Western countries, especially, for youth who are claiming Islamic identities for themselves (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007, p.198). Ummah gives priority to the group over the individual and religion over any other identity (Kosárová and Ušiak, 2017, p.119). Kosárová and Ušiak have stressed that Ummah is considered an instrument of solidarity among Muslims globally, regardless of their nationality and ethnicity.

Consequently, Hamid firmly believes that the strong presence of Islam in Muslim communities around the globe can play a primary role in counter-extremism projects. Besides, the influences of religious identity and the concept of Ummah can be perceived in multiple dimensions of Muslim communities globally. For instance, in Muslim communities, extremism is driven by a seeming threat to identity, usually as a result of Western influence which leads the religious identity to become an instrument of self-identification (Kosárová and Ušiak, 2017, p.127). Kosárová and Ušiak explained that, the absence of efficient means to counter this danger creates a fruitful ground for radicalisation. Interviews have confirmed that this factor has played a vital role in convincing many British and Saudi young people to affiliate with ISIL. As Hadlaq stated, many Saudis went to fight in Syria in response to the call to support their brothers and sisters there. Also, Eggert explained that young British Muslims might suffer at the hands of those who are trying to separate Muslims from their

surroundings, forcing them to seek elsewhere for identity and a sense of belonging. Limbada affirmed that such narrative attempted to draw Muslims out of the UK, focusing on identity, belonging, and brotherhood that can be found in Syria under the caliphate's flag.[18]

**Political Systems Can Cause Critical Influences:**

The relationship between the Muslim community and the prevailing political regime affects social involvement in this fight. For instance, the Saudi regime has a stable relationship with diverse societal categories, such as tribes, clans, business families, religious establishments, media, and a wide range of individuals (Gause, 2011, pp.7-8, Yadlin and Golov, 2013, p.49). Thus, the government can utilise these networks when there is a need (Gause, 2011, p.8). In its efforts to counter-extremism, Saudi Arabia depends heavily on these friends as well as its solid relationship with the religious establishment and its official preachers (Montagu, 2010, p.68) as confirmed by Al-Shihri, who works for the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs.

On the other hand, the British government does not have such networks of patronage, which makes it harder to engage the community in national activities. Instead of such networks of patronage, the British government could strive to build a strong relationship with Muslim community leaders to work as a bridge between the state and the Muslim community. Unfortunately, many British Muslims avoid participation in counter-extremism campaigns as a result of the negative impression they have of the British government. Douglas stated

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[18] Zubeda Limbada is the founder and director of Connect Futures (a social enterprise that delivers training and research for the prevention of extremism and exploitation). The interview with the author took place on 28 November 2018.

that statistics show that the language of the British government against Muslims has become more robust, and Islamophobia has increased in recent years. As a consequence, these adverse changes have made young Muslims feel that they are less British than they used to be a few years ago. Imtiaz and Karmani believe that this dramatic change in feeling has been exploited by ISIL to attract some young British Muslims to travel to Syria, where they can find a sense of national belonging. Regrettably, Muslim communities see the Prevent strategy as a tool in the hands of the British government to discriminate against them (Qurashi, 2018, p.5). Noticeably, a number of British Muslims have refused to participate in some initiatives, solely because they are financed by the Prevent strategy (Qurashi, 2018, p.8).

Moreover, Muslim communities may be affected by their government's foreign policy to a level that it determines their interaction with national activities. The actions of the government may produce grievances towards the state because suffering by Muslims wherever can be felt deeply by Muslim individuals elsewhere (Clarke et al., 2009, p.89, Ahmed, 2012, p.97). Bartlett et al. (2010, p.18), argued that foreign policy decisions alongside other factors have led to the feeling among many Muslims that the West is working to oppress their Ummah. These policies involve a number of critical matters, such as the Arab–Israeli conflict and the American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which have served to create an attendant image of Muslim suffering, enflaming anger at these policies (Hafez and Mullins, 2015, p.963). According to Weeks (2013, p.288), there is anger and frustration towards the British government due to its involvement and support for the American war on terror.

Bartlett et al. (2010, p.25), have claimed that the anger at Western foreign policies is commonly used to explain the terrorist activity and that these policies fuel significant and consistent grievances among young Muslims, whose condemnation of them has been almost unanimous. Mohammed and Siddiqui (2013, p.18), have stressed that the Muslim refusal of British foreign policy plays a vital role in increasing the grievance amongst Muslims, which may lead to adverse reactions. Consequently, foreign policy is often seen as one of the factors fuelling extremism (Powers, 2015, p.21). Thus, it has become apparent that British Muslims are dissatisfied because of their government's foreign policy and that Prevent has increased this feeling creating further mistrust (Abbas, p.2019, p.407). The limitation here is that the Prevent strategy discounts foreign policy as a promoter of violence (Mohammed and Siddiqui, 2013, p.7).

## Conclusion:

This discussion has shown that three combinations can affect community engagement in counter-extremism, which then will enhance the proficiency of counter-extremism efforts. The first combination is related to the participation of four social elements: religious leaders, women, youth, and educational institutions. Chapter two and four have discussed the importance of this engagement. Besides, each component is comprised of a number of critical zones which require more consideration as has been elaborated on in chapters six, seven, eight, and nine. The second combination is formed of three sequential aspects which rely on one another for their efficacy. This research has strongly demonstrated that without trust, awareness, and training,

community engagement cannot be effective. Also, it can be noticed that the absence of one of these concepts will harmfully affect the rest. These relationships between aspects in this combination can be simplified as follow: a. without trust, individuals will reject any call for participation. b. trust without awareness affects the engagement because people are unaware of the significance of this involvement. c. trust and awareness without training may cause more negative impacts than positive effects. The third combination is formed of three factors that can harmfully affect social participation in counter-radicalisation. These factors are local cultures, external factors, and political systems and foreign policies. Considering these combinations can improve the effectiveness of community engagement, which may be reflected in counter-extremism efforts.

# Chapter 6

## The Role of Religious Leaders in Counter-Extremism

The academic literature has shown that religious figures can play essential roles in counter-extremism. Braga et al. (2001, p.198), Bartlett et al. (2010, p.42), Weine, et al. (2009, p.194), and Kruse (2016, p.199), have affirmed that many counter-extremism policies engage community members including religious leaders. Some of these initiatives engage imams in training the concept of tolerance in some societies (Kaya, 2016, p.95). Besides, religious scholars may better understand the local context (Salyk-Virk, 2020, p.1014), and therefore be in an ideal position to influence people (Clinch, 2011, p.109, Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.131). In fact, according to Griffith-Dickson et al. (2015, p.27), counter-extremism cannot be achieved without the engagement of religious leaders. McAndrew and Sobolewska (2015, p.55) maintained that places of worship could and should engage minorities in social activities.

This chapter seeks to discuss some crucial aspects that can affect the efficiency of religious people in counter-radicalisation initiatives. Research into this issue has shown that three issues should be considered when discussing this subject. Firstly, engaging trustworthy religious figures who can positively affect their communities. Secondly, raising imams' awareness about the cruciality of radicalisation, which can encourage them to effectively play roles in counter-radicalisation. Thirdly, teaching religious figures the signs of radicalism to empower them to realise radical people in their communities.

## Engaging Trustworthy Religious Leaders:

Engaging trustworthy religious scholars can enhance community engagement proficiency in counter-radicalisation. Religious efforts to counter extremism in Britain and Saudi Arabia appear to be efficient up to a certain level. Nevertheless, two trials face these efforts. The first is that the voice of religious scholars does not reach some of those who are affected by extreme ideologies and who ignore those messages that come from outside their radical circles (Abbas, 2019, p.403). Thus, it is imperative to reach those people and talk to them, and not to be satisfied with preaching that is directed only towards the public (Russell and Theodosiou, 2015, p.34).

The second challenge is that countering religious extremism should be endorsed by trustworthy religious leaders, but the limitation here is that not every religious scholar and organisation are equipped or suitable for this mission (Mastroe and Szmania, 2016, p.31). The argument here, does not harmonise with those who insist that the engagement should cover different types of ideological schools (Bartlett et al. 2010, p.43). This result is a consequence of the nature of this ideology that is based on a perverted Salafi doctrine, which cannot be refuted, except by Salafi scholars. Thus, it seems a critical mistake to seek any assistance from certain Muslim scholars, such as Sofi and Shiite, to counter ISIL's or al-Qaeda's radical ideologies.

Moreover, the same thing can be said about Salafi scholars who are compassionate to the *Ikhwani* (Brotherhood) ideology and whose ideology is in opposition to the notion of the national state (Soage, 2009, p.197, Johnson,

2009, p.24). It would seem probable that *Ikhwani* scholars are untrustworthy and would not sincerely collaborate with the government to refute radical thoughts and convince terrorist group members to resign their belief. Knowing that many al-Qaeda and ISIL leaders, such as bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and al-Zarqawi have been affected by the "Ikhwani" ideology (Lynch, 2010, p.474, Kirkpatrick, 2019), may assist in comprehending why those who are embracing the Muslim Brotherhood doctrine cannot be suitable for working in counter-extremism. Kruse (2016, p.206), acknowledged that "It is necessary to understand the complex reality of the political and ideological debates on Islamism and secularism in the Muslim World in order to initiate CVE strategy".

It is known that many radical imams used to work in counter-extremism projects (Russell and Theodosiou, 2015, p.24) and amongst these imams were some extremists who are Brotherhood members. However, In March 2014, Saudi Arabia designated this organisation as a terrorist group alongside two other organisations, the Lebanese Hezbollah and ISIL (Darwich, 2017, p.1290). Al-Anani (2015, p.542) commented on this designation saying that Saudi Arabia viewed the Brotherhood's rise as an existential threat to their regimes. Solomon and Tausch (2020, p.180), confirmed that various countries had taken the same decision, including Egypt, Bahrain, Russia, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates.

Also, in November 2020, the Saudi Council of Senior Scholars issued a statement that affirmed that The Muslim Brothers' organisation is a terrorist group that takes Islam as a mask to cover its aims (Abueish, 2020). Nevertheless, Pierce (2014, p. 72), argued that the Muslim Brotherhood has

avoided violence as a way of accomplishing its goals. Furthermore, this organisation has been attempting to distinguish itself from extremist Islamist militants and the Salafists (Weber, 2013, p.521 and al-Kadi, 2019, p.247) and, as Leiken and Brooke (2007, p.107) have pointed out, the Muslim Brotherhood rejects the global jihad. As such, Marcellino et al. (2017, p.49), investigated the Muslim Brotherhood's narrative, and have concluded that it has "similar Salafist ideological roots, but without Daesh's violent extremism".

Despite the above assertions, according to Solomon and Tausch (2020, p.172), the Muslim Brotherhood had an armed wing in the 1930s and 1940s. This armed wing reactivated in 2014, killing five police officers, and in 2017, two branches of the group were involved in terror attacks across Egypt. In 2015, some Muslim Brotherhood members used violence against the Egyptian state (Gunaratna, 2015, p.107). Striem (2015, p.3) wrote that although it is hard to guesstimate the extent of the Muslim Brotherhood's involvement in the wave of violent action, the process of Muslim Brotherhood members falling into multiple types of violent activities is evident. Ramana (2011, p.24), remarked that Sayyid Qutb could be seen as the father of radical Islamist ideologies, and advocated the usage of violence to achieve the objectives of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Spoerl (2020, p.217), believes that Muslim Brotherhood members use duplicity as a standard part of their modus operandi. Accordingly, Al-Yusuf commented on the wisdom of allowing some Muslim Brotherhood members to participate in the rehabilitation program.[19] Al-Yusuf confirmed that it is an ineffective way to combat terrorism by engaging religious scholars who, in the past, used to invite

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[19] Faisal al-Yusuf is an Islamic study professor at King Fahd Security College. He was interviewed by the author on 10 November 2018.

young people to travel to the crisis areas, then meet the same innocent people in order to advise them on how to eliminate their radical ideologies. Such engagement could result in a serious backfire effect; thus, it is crucial to identify whom to engage (Campbell, 2015, p.22).

The challenge is that many active religious leaders who live in Saudi Arabia and the UK are affiliated with the Brotherhood ideology (Alterman and McCants, 2014, pp.151-152, Shideler and Daoud, 2014, p.14, Lacroix, 2014, p.2, Bryson, 2017, p.6). According to Vidino (2020, p.6), active Brotherhood members in the UK number between six hundred and one thousand. The Brotherhood have formed a multitude of organisations that are not publicly identified as being linked to the leading group, but which have an efficient engagement with Muslim communities and Western society (Vidino, 2020, p.7). Subsequently, stakeholders might be aware of this and can avoid relying on them entirely in their counter radicalism campaigns. Significantly, the Brotherhood network shares with terrorist groups, the goal of re-establishing the Caliphate (Solomon and Tausch, 2020, p.171).

It has been found that the weakness of coordination between Britain and Saudi Arabia has a negative effect on the Muslim community in the UK. The outcomes of such weakness can be seen from two perspectives; the first is that when the Saudi government expelled extremist members of the Brotherhood Movement, some of them were hosted by the British government as political refugees. For instance, one such extremist, Omar Bakri Muhammad, is a Syrian militant leader who has been sheltered by the UK government for twenty years (Hellyer, 2007, p.3). During his stay, he has founded al-Muhajiroun, the infamous radical

organisation in the UK (Smith, 2005, p.1). If the British had benefited from the Saudi experience and rejected Bakri's immigration to the UK, Anjem Choudary, the nefarious extremist, might not be known in Britain. Moreover, it would have avoided having dozens of extremists being taught by Bakri (Bryson, 2017, p.26).

It is known that numerous Brotherhood members live in the UK and spread their radical ideology. It has reached a level where the UK has become a very safe haven for extremists (Briggs et al., 2006, p.22, Awan, 2012b, p.1162). Mustafa Kamel Mustafa, who is known as Abu Hamza al-Masri, is one of these extremists given refuge by the UK. Al-Masri was the imam of Finsbury Park Mosque in London, where he preached extremist thoughts and was accused of inciting violence and racial hatred (Hellyer, 2007, p.29, Russell and Theodosiou, 2015, p.21). Abu Hamza met with Brotherhood member and Afghan Mujahideen spiritual leader Abdullah Azzam who employed him to work in Afghanistan, before his immigration to the UK (Bryson, 2017, p.26). Ismail has reported that British imams attempted to challenge members of "Hizb al-Tahrir" and Almuhajroun, in the 1990s.

However, the British government accused these imams of being intolerant. Nevertheless, after a few years, the British government came to realise that the imams understood the negative consequences of treating such radical people tolerantly. For instance, when Abu Hamza al-Masri became the imam of Finsbury Park Mosque in London, in 1997, and marginalised all the moderate

religious figures at that time, no one listened to the warnings.[20] As Weeks (2013, p.111) mentioned, the Finsbury Park Mosque was subsequently used by al-Qaeda for multiple purposes, such as recruitment, propaganda, and fundraising.

The British authority failed to deal seriously with these cautions, allowing al-Masri to radicalise people until 2002. In this year, the British government suspended him before his exclusion by the mosque committee (Bryson, 2017, p.10). Besides, the Egyptian radical preacher Hani al-Sibai lives in London and praises al-Qaeda on Twitter. Al-Sibai has also radicalised many young British Muslims, including Mohammed Emwazi, who is more notoriously known as Jihadi John (Verkaik, 2017). Bryson (2017, p.6), has pointed out that almost seventy per cent of extremists in the UK have had direct or indirect connections to six individuals. Those individuals are Abu Hamza al-Masri, Abdullah al-Faisal, Abu Qatada al-Filistini, Omar Bakri Mohammad, Anjem Choudary, and Hani al-Sibai. According to Thackrah (2003, p.145), al-Faisal was an associate of Abu Hamza. Also, Choudary was taught by Bakri (Bryson, 2017, p.26).

## Awareness and Willingness:

Raising imams' awareness and willingness can be considered as a sign of efficient community engagement in counter-radicalisation. Although Saudi Arabia has robust infrastructure to monitor young individuals in mosques and schools, the role of imams in referring potential terrorists to the police is almost inactive (Rashid, 2006, p.7, Hellyer, 2007, p.24, O'Toole et al., 2016, p.172). It

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would appear that this is a political mistake because imams cannot report any absenteeism unless with in coordination with the police.

One of the methods of terrorist networks to convince individuals to join them is, the partial isolation technique (Smith, 2008, p.56). This technique is based on isolating a potential recruit for two or three days on several occasions before they enter into complete isolation. As such, it would seem relatively straightforward to identify those new terrorist group initiates as their mechanism of recruitment almost always follows the same procedures. A significant number of mosques, about a hundred thousand mosques in Saudi Arabia, and more than seventeen hundred mosques in the UK (Kaufman, 2017), can assist governments in referring any individual's abnormal absence.

Besides, imams are well placed to monitor their neighbourhoods and report any suspicious behaviour. Initiating a joint project run by mosques and governments would help to achieve positive outcomes. Such a plan may reduce the number of extremists and prevent recruitment. Furthermore, it would reduce the pressure on Muslim communities in the UK for their engagement, which may lead to a decrease in terrorist operations. Likewise, it would be beneficial if governments encourage imams to strengthen their connection with Muslim individuals who live in the same neighbourhood. This encouragement would efficiently catalyse imams to participate in national efforts to counter-extremism. The challenge now is that some young Muslims do not consider imams as their primary source of religious knowledge (Smith, 2008, p.56).

Imams, with the assistance of governments, can build a strong relationship with surrounding Muslim communities (Rashid, 2006, p.6). This relationship can help in comprehending how individuals think as well as in correcting any positive feeling towards radical activities. The purpose of this project is not to force those young people to attend mosques and pray. Instead, the purpose is to ensure that individuals are educated to become intolerant of radical ideologies (Eliseev et al., 2017, p.1004). Nevertheless, it has been observed that some young people may dislike moderate narrative, so they join radical mosques.

According to Hellyer (2007, p.24), radicals rarely join mosques because they follow deviant forms of ideologies. Imams may notice the absence of these young individuals and their attendance to distant mosques but ignore such suspicious acts. Besides, many people who live in these communities may be unaware of extremist indications, and so they may not recognise deviant behaviours of their family members or neighbours. Accordingly, imams' participation cannot be adequate, unless with the police's involvement in educating imams about how to understand and deal with the unexpected actions of some young people.

However, some imams and communities exclude those who show any radical indication (Hardy, 2015, p.91, Sommers, 2019, pp.18–39). This expulsion appears to be an unwise decision, as they are expected to refer such people to the police who will deal with them appropriately and provide suitable courses of action and therapy. If imams refuse to refer young people who have perverted ideology to the police, such individuals may attend another mosque that may

tolerate their extremism. Hence, these radical young individuals are at risk of being exploited by violent terrorist groups who attend such mosques knowing that they treat extremists tolerantly.

For example, in 2015, while the imam was delivering the Friday sermon in Jabir Bin Zayd mosque in London, encouraging people to participate in a general election, a man interrupted the imam to claim that participation in such voting was 'un-Islamic' (Roberts, 2017). Roberts disclosed that the manager of the mosque expelled this radical person, and he was not seen there again. Later, in June 2017, this same man was killed by police during the London attacks. It is important to realise that expulsion from a local mosque can be considered as isolation that leads some individuals to affiliate with terrorist groups (Everington, 2015, p.82). The use of exclusion may indicate that some imams consider their roles as merely to protect their mosques. In respect to this, they may need to be reminded that their duties are to protect the entire community.

Another critical issue that should be considered is regarding the British strict instructions that requested imams to inform the police about suspicious individuals. According to Saleem, when imams identify any member of their mosques congregation inclined to any radical group, it is his responsibility to inform the police. Rahman asserted that such a general guideline given to imams is not always possible to apply. He explained that requesting imams to report everyone in their communities is not the solution. Imtiaz said that imams must stay and work in their communities and keep in contact with individuals and their families. So, if an imam reports every individual to the police, he will

lose his credibility and respect within the community. It would be as if imams were spying for the police.

Saleem said that the Green Lane Mosque has close contact with the police, local council and the charity committee. Accordingly, the mosque sometimes invites these official bodies to benefit from their expertise in different fields, including how to tackle radicalisation. Ismail declares that the government is working with the Muslim community through different channels such as imams, mosque committees and organisations. However, the government sometimes faces challenges in this regard, which are caused by those who misuse Prevent. Experts in general claimed that the British government is not performing satisfying efforts in this regard. This shortage may be because of the economic situation in the UK, which makes it hard to provide awareness for Muslim scholars and imams.

British imams are encouraged to participate in counter-extremism. Saleem explained that the effect of such effort could be shown in critical situations. For instance, a man came to the Greenlane Mosque in Birmingham and gathered some people in a circle and started brainwashing them. When he was informed to stop his illegal behaviour, he refused and accused the mosque staff of working for the British government. The next procedure was prohibiting him from coming to the mosque before the police could arrest and accuse him of recruiting young people for the Somalian infamous group "al-Shabab.

Many imams think that their role ends when those extremists cease coming to their mosques. Misguidedly, some of these imams believe that they are

incapable of countering radical ideologies (Brown, 2008, p.479). Such thought is problematic but can be corrected by training. Imams can refer any extremist to the police or any other responsible official department. In addition, the government may coordinate with imams on this issue and encourage them to perform their duties in such cases. One of the projects to educate imams is the "Big Society" which is an initiative for combating extremism; one of its usages is to assist imams in identifying what can catalyse individuals to affiliate with extremists (Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010, p.30, and Awan, 2012b, p.1162).

As for the UK, investigation has shown that there is a gap caused by the Prevent policy coordinators who are not doing enough to engage imams and to educate them (Cherney and Hartley, 2017, p.751). Imams can cooperate with the state by referring to it anyone holding an extremist view who leaves their mosque in search of a more accommodating environment that will absorb their ideology. In Saudi Arabia, two young men attacked their family, murdering their mother, and injuring their father and brother (Samuels, 2016).

Subsequent police investigations have demonstrated that these young individuals were affected by ISIL ideology that requested them to attack all kafir "disbeliever", who does not give "Bayʿah", an oath of allegiance, to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi the leader of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (al-Barei, 2016). Their evil ideology avows that greater reward is earned if one attacks their close relatives. The neighbourhood mosque imam said that he had noticed a change in the two men's ideologies and their behaviours before they abandoned his mosque. Their strange behaviour had been observed by their mosque, school, and family, but no one had reported this to the police.

To conclude, it can be stated that interviews with multiple specialists and experts in British and Saudi national counter-extremism showed that religious elites play essential roles in counter-extremism. Two indications can demonstrate the significance of the roles of imams: the high numbers of programs and activities and the shrinking of the radical ideology in Saudi Arabia. In the UK, interviewees assume that religious elites participate in combating this phenomenon. British imams have succeeded in eliminating all extremists to a level where it has become almost impossible to find any terrorist or extremist who is a member of their mosques. However, when it comes to imams' capacities, it can be noted that Saudi imams who can identify signs of radicalisation only comprise around 30%, and this limitation is due to the lack of training programs and the absence of a real image of extremism. In the UK, imams can identify some of the radical indications, even though there is insufficient training in this regard.

**Providing Training for Religious Figures:**

Investigating this aspect has demonstrated that there are no sufficient training programs provided for British and Saudi religious leaders to counter extremism. Few imams are able to identify the signs of radicalisation in their neighbourhoods. This is in line with Tahiri and Grossman's (2013, p.46) affirmation that some new migrant imams were not adequately trained. Additionally, it can be said that some local imams need more training, as emphasised by some interviewees. According to al-Yusuf, only 30% of imams can distinguish the signs of radicalisation in their congregations. Al-Yusuf

attributes this limitation to the lack of training programs along with the absence of the real image of extremism.

Some interviewees have asserted that, even though imams can identify some radical indications, it is evident that there is insufficient training in this regard, and the training needs re-thinking. This matter can be seen as a challenge for many of those who work in advisory fields as, even if they are educated about the risks of such phenomena and wish to cooperate in counter-extremism, they cannot provide sufficient influence owing to their lack of training. Instead, they could cause a more negative impact than positive impact (Fink et al., 2013, p.4).

The challenge that imams face in counter-extremism training is the lack of coordination between concerning institutions (Tahiri and Grossman, 2013, p.17, Bhulai and Fink, 2016, p.2). Mirsal stated that the Ministry of Islamic Affairs considered itself as an unspecialised institution in counter-extremism. Consequently, it assumed that its role is to train imams and preachers on general subjects that relate to religious and social affairs. Thus, it suggested that security apparatuses should provide counter-extremism training. On the other hand, counter-extremism stakeholders assumed that preachers and imams are working with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, which should bear the responsibility of training its staff. However, al-Hiliyl argued that counter-extremism is a national concern and should be held by all concerning bodies through joint programs that include providing training for all those who engage in this field.

Few imams can identify the signs of radicalisation in their neighbourhoods. According to al-Yusuf, only thirty percent of imams can distinguish the signs of radicalisation in their congregations. Al-Yusuf attribute this limitation to the lack of training programs along with the absence of the real image of extremism. The challenge here is determining the multiple levels of these signs. Mirsal divides these indications into three types. The first type can be recognised by all imams. The second kind cannot be realised by every imam which relates to the tolerance of people toward some specific cases. The third type of sign is that which seems to be challenging to be realised by most people, including many religious figures, except those who are specialists in this field. Accordingly, this category can be referred to as the knowledge and experience that some imams have, and some do not.

In the UK, the challenge seems to be situated in a specific diminution where Muslim scholars affirmed that it is not tricky for imams to identify the radical individual in their community. The challenge is how to deal with these radical persons. Saleem has said that this depends on judging the situation: if the person is young, then he needs assistance. In some cases, the person is mature and inclined to a radical group or tries to arrange a circle in a mosque, and then imams will block him from entering the mosque or inform the police.

Some participants have asserted that, even though the imams can identify some of the radical indications, it is evident that there is insufficient training in this regard, and the training needs shaking. It seems difficult to decide on this matter; however, observations indicate that extremists exploit the internet to radicalise young people. Accordingly, these people do not practice their

radicalisation in British mosques because they know that they are not welcome to preach there.

Such strict regulation has made it difficult to decide whether or not the imams can identify the signs of radicalisation as they rarely meet the fundamentalists. It has been noticed that in some cases, radical people come to mosques to discuss some ideological issues, seeking assistance, but not to argue. In such cases, the mosque educates them and helps them to correct their deviant thoughts. Rahman states that from his experience as an imam for more than 10 years, he never predicted if someone was a radical or not unless he came and sought help.

The imams' capacities to deal with these subjects are less than satisfactory. It can be said that a small percentage of religious figures can achieve this, but it is not enough, because there are vast numbers who need training. This matter can be seen as a challenge for many of those who work in cautioning fields. Thus, it appears that not every imam can achieve this level of skill. This limitation faces various people, such as preachers, teachers, and lecturers. Thus, training is needed to develop this skill. Explaining this limitation, al-Foaim suggested that this limitation can refer to one of three causes:

1.  Some imams have a negative view of the situation in general; it is caused by the media, which may lead some imams dealing with this issue harmfully.

2. Some unqualified religious scholars try to get involved in this issue, and because of the insufficient experience, they negatively affect the processes of the cautioning campaigns.

3. Some imams who engage in these efforts are affiliated to some intellectual groups who may work with hidden agendas that oppose the national projects.

According to Saleem, the cruciality of this matter has driven the "Ahl al-Hadith" movement, which contains forty-five mosques around the United Kingdom, to intervene in this issue. Greenlane and other mosques in Birmingham hold meetings and pieces of training for imams and specialists regarding the best practices and mechanisms in openly and safely addressing the grievances of the community. Such non-governmental initiatives show that British mosques are more active than their Saudi counterparts, who still wait for the government to encourage them.

Understanding what catalyses individuals to join radical groups is very significant while dealing with this phenomenon. Mirsal said that imams are aware of some factors that lead young people to affiliate with radical networks. Some of these factors are browsing radical websites and listening to radical preachers who are recruiting for terrorist groups. On the other hand, a large percentage of imams do not know what drives young people to affiliate with radical groups because of their lack of information.

Training In the UK, some experts confirmed that imams, in general, and those who are involved in youth issues are aware of these factors that catalyse young

people to affiliate themselves with radical groups. Imtiaz emphasises that some imams have no linkage to youth, so they are unaware of what drives young people to join these groups, which makes it difficult for them to address the problem. According to Hamid, imams cannot understand what catalyses individuals to join radical groups because they are not trained to do so.

## Conclusion:

This chapter has discussed three crucial issues related to trust-building, enhancing imams' awareness and providing training for religious figures. The religious efforts to counter radicalisation in Saudi Arabia and the UK appear to be efficient up to a certain level. It has been noticed that countering religious radicalisation should be endorsed by trustworthy religious scholars, but the restriction here is that not every religious scholar and organisation is trustworthy or equipped for this mission. Two challenges may limit these efforts. The first challenge is related to distrustful scholars who have covert relationships with radical networks. The second challenge is that cautioning messages may not reach many radicals because they disregard information that comes from outside their circles. To summarise, it can be said that Saudi Arabia and the UK have been cooperating with some distrustful religious leaders who lack the acceptance in their communities. Such cooperation has harmful effects, causing many individuals to be reluctant to some counter-radicalisation projects.

Also, this research has examined the imams' awareness and willingness to engage in counter-radicalisation, finding some limitations. In Saudi Arabia and

the UK, the roles of imams in referring potential terrorists to the police are almost inactive. However, due to the lack of awareness, some imams exclude those who show any radical indication. This expulsion seems to be a risky decision, as they are likely to refer such radical individuals to the police. What appears more challenging is that many imams think that their role ends when those radicals cease coming to their mosques.

Regardless of such challenges, it can be specified that interviews with multiple specialists and experts in British and Saudi national counter-radicalisation showed that religious leaders play critical roles in counter-radicalisations. Two signals can validate this observation: the high numbers of activities performed by those religious leaders, and the shrinking of the radical ideology. Even though such activities which have led to a decrease in radical thoughts, investigation has displayed that there are no sufficient training programs provided for British and Saudi religious figures to counter radicalisation. Few of them are able to identify the signs of radicalisation in their neighbourhoods. Some interviewees linked such deficiency to the lack of coordination between concerning institutions.

# Chapter 7

## The Role of Women in Counter Extremism

Women are a significant component in counter-extremism. Thus, it is important to encourage them to participate in this mission. Accordingly, the British government issued the Prevent strategy guide for local partners, which emphasises the productive role of the voice of women. Also, the Prevent policy empowers Muslim women to be part of the British project to counter violent extremism. Likewise, Saudi authority has emphasised the significance of educating women about the dangers of radicalism and the indicators of extremism. In support of this, some official institutions that play essential roles in combating radicalisation in Saudi Arabia encourage women to participate in this task. Bartlett et al. (2010, p.43) acknowledged that many Muslim women possess sufficient knowledge and skills to enable them to reach those women who are potential extremists. The significance of women in the community comes from distinct factors that appear to be exclusive to women. As Anderlini (2007, p.2) stated, 'women are the panacea, the internal bulwark against extremism'.

This chapter will discuss the levels of the three concepts that are assumed to affect the community engagement in counter-radicalisation. The research will discuss the level of trust-building and the enablement of women and acknowledgment of their roles in counter-radicalisation in order to assess if they play equal roles to men without any marginalisation. Also, this chapter will discuss the level of awareness and willingness amongst women that can

encourage them to participate in counter-radicalisation and immunise them from being negatively influenced by radical ideologies, especially by their families' members. The third section of this research will discuss the training provided for women to enable them to effectively participate in counter-radicalisation and to have sufficient number of females with relevant skills and training.

## Enhancing Trust in Women:

Marginalising Muslim women can be considered as a crucial factor that can affect mutual trust. Undoubtedly, women play a leading role in raising and educating their children. Although Muslim women's voices are almost absent in public life (Devriese, 2008, p.77), their function can be reflected by the behaviours of their family members. Women as mothers, wives and sisters help indirectly in the national strategy to counter-extremism. This role is almost hidden, and many observers do not pay enough attention to it. This role can demonstrate that each culture has its way of engaging women in their plans. In this regard, it seems that the low affiliation with extremist groups can be seen as an indicator of the useful role of women in their houses. Women are in an ideal position to educate their children and warn them about the jeopardy of radicalisation. Besides, they can identify early radical indications and work with other family members to refute them or refer those who have extremist views to the relevant authorities.

Attempts to consider woman as untrustworthy and downgrade their roles in Muslim societies have been ongoing for a long time. A report (Spalek et al.,

2008, p.17), has indicated that Muslim women are marginalised in counter violent activities. Those who study the roles of women in extremism and terrorism commonly focus on three dimensions (Couture, 2014, p.1), which are those of "participant, enabler, and preventer". Regrettably, researchers have paid less attention to the role of women in combating radicalisation. According to Couture, this negative view of the role of women in counter-extremism is because they fail to understand the role that women can play in observing national security. Poloni and Ortbals (2013, p.66), confirmed that the voice and experience of women in fighting violent extremism are entirely ignored.

Additionally, although the international community has emphasised individuals' roles in combating radicalisation, less consideration has been paid to the engagement of women in national efforts to counter extremism (Barakat et al., 2014, p.6). This distrust of women's roles seems to be a result of cultural concepts. For instance, in Saudi Arabia and the UK, the role of Muslim women in the community and public life is insufficient because of the misunderstanding of religious texts. Although Saudi Arabia was established in 1932, and much development and reforms were undertaken, women's education was prohibited until 1960 (al-suwaida, 2016, p.112). Abdul-Aziz al-Ghofaili, who was one of a few individuals who fought for women's right in education, and established several schools for girls in Saudi Arabia, faced enormous challenges by many people who were against educating women. Those people believed that women must stay at home and serve their husbands and families.

In the UK, the right to educate women has been rarely confronted in the Muslim community (Brown, 2006, p.426). Nevertheless, the UK faces two challenges

in respect of Asian immigrants; one is that some of them came to Britain without any education (Mohee, 2011, p.162). Being without schooling keeps them illiterate and under the shadow of their family, with no specific role in their communities. The second challenge is that some Asian families believe only in primary education for their girls (Brown, 2006, p.426), so they prohibit them from attending any further schooling. These two factors may exacerbate the negative thoughts that women are untrustworthy. According to Ahmed (2015, p.164), many British Muslim women fought to win their families' backing because their parents were more conservative and reluctant to permit them to attend university or work. These two challenges are weakening the role of Muslim women as well as preventing them from playing any prominent role in cautioning programs against radicalism.

Marginalising women in Muslim communities can be due to various factors. The first factor is because some women stand beside men who attempt to prohibit women from having any role in public life (Fatany, 2007, p.19). For instance, Ramsdal (2013, p.3) mentioned that she met with women in Saudi Arabia who were against giving the right to drive to Saudi women. These female voices are more persuasive than male voices. Besides, some women are directed by some men to refute women's right to participate in public life. The second factor is that some people exploit specific religious texts to strengthen their argument (Galloway, 2014, p.193). The exploitation of religion can be a beneficial way to win some debates in Muslim communities. The third factor is that the nature of some Muslim communities is to consider the discussion of women's rights as a taboo, owing to the local culture, as earlier been discussed in chapter four (Fatany, 2007, p.56, Nasseef, 2015, p.20) which can worsen the distrustful

thoughts toward women. Accordingly, it seems to be acceptable to see women as untrustworthy and marginalise their roles in public life, without a recognisable condemnation. Furthermore, several Muslim scholars have interpreted the holy texts in a way that demonstrates women as marginalised and subjected human beings (Galloway, 2014, p.8).

The distrustful views and marginalisation of women's roles in public life can be linked to the attempts of some radical individuals to exclusively exploit them. Some religious leaders have their own political agenda, which is, mostly, manipulated clandestinely. Hence, they want to use every possible way to exploit their societies. At the same time, they want to prevent everyone from engaging women in their activities. Accordingly, the simplest way to achieve this aim is through urging women to stay in their houses without any participation in social activities (Fatany, 2007, p.57).

This strategy can ensure that women are kept away from those who think otherwise. At the same time, it remains possible for those radicals to reach women through other women who work with these religious leaders, such as their wives, sisters, mothers, and daughters. It has been observed that these radicals encourage women to leave their houses to join ISIL in the Levant (Spencer, 2016, p.85). It appears that this exploitation may be related to the lack of religious teaching. For instance, in Britain, some radical religious people do not allow women to pray in neighbourhood mosques (Younus, 2017). This overzealousness may have resulted in a lack of religious knowledge amongst British Muslim women. Subsequently, this deficiency of religious understanding

amongst British Muslim women increases the possibility of them being potential targets for radical recruiters.

Undoubtedly, the lack of education enhances the distrustful thought and marginalisation of Muslim women in Britain and Saudi Arabia. Although British Muslim women seem more socially active than Saudi women, the latter have a better chance of education and employment. For example, in Britain, according to Bhopal (2016, p.516), it is difficult for Muslim women to continue their higher education due to cultural and economic factors. In fact, some British Muslim women have stated that their work as mothers and wives is more significant than employment and further education (Brown, 2006, p.424).

Such lack of knowledge negatively affects the trust of British and Saudi women and weakens their chances to participate in public life. Kashyap and Lewis (2013, p.2120) have pointed out that twenty-two per cent of Muslim women possess no qualifications compared to the national average of sixteen per cent. The challenge here is not only that the shortage of education limits the role of women in their communities, but it also makes them a susceptible target for terrorist networks. Robison (2010, p.736) mentioned that a study has found that an increase in female labour leads to a reduction of local terrorism. Robison explained that this relationship may indicate that communities that allow women to work are less fanatic. Besides, trusting women and providing jobs for them reduces grievances that can be exploited by extremists.

Conversely, Saudi women have far better chances to further their education. While British women may spend significant amounts of money on their higher

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education, Saudi women study all their schooling, including graduate and post-graduate with full governmental scholarship. Moreover, the state pays a salary to higher education students and provides scholarships for those who study abroad. This generous policy encourages women to continue their education to a level where their numbers in the last decade have surpassed the numbers of male students. According to an official estimation, the percentage of girls in higher education stands at about fifty-two per cent (Alarabiya, 2015). Despite this, until recently, Saudi women had been suffering from distrust due to old traditions that prevented them from engaging in their communities (Fatany, 2007, p.57, Coates, 2015, p.187, Hussein, 2018, p.7). On the other hand, British Muslim women are severely hampered because of their lack of education. As a result of imported traditions, Asian women, in general, regardless of their religions, tend to marry and work as housewives, so they, mostly, do not achieve a further education qualification (Ahmed, 2015, p.124). Reeves et al. (2009, 514) stated that British Muslim women play significant roles as mothers, sisters, and friends, and hence must be supported and empowered to participate in counter-radicalisation initiatives.

The role of women in their homes can be synchronised with their participation in their communities. Women have a primary duty that is difficult to be performed by men. This primary responsibility is to educate their children and prepare them to deal with the changes and challenges that may face them (Murji, 2014, p.67). Part of this duty is to protect children from radical thoughts (al-Brikan, 2017, p.11). Although women generally can adequately play this part, some limitations need further discussion. One of these challenges is that some women may have sufficient knowledge on how to deal with their children,

but when it comes to the indications of radicalisation, they cannot identify if their children are affected or not. Fink and Barakat (2013, p.11) argued that mothers are often in a suitable position to detect the early signs of radicalisation in their children, however, in many countries they are not prepared to do so. Another challenge is how to warn women about the risk of this issue. Some women may have sufficient knowledge about the danger of drug addiction, smoking cigarettes, and exceeding the speed limit, but they have insufficient understanding about the risk of radicalisation or how to deal with radical individuals (Basit, 2015, p.61, Dunn et al., 2016, p.203). This shortage of knowledge can harmfully impact the mutual trust and lead to an unwillingness to engage in educational classes on how to identify and deal with a radical family member (Naqshbandi, 2006, p.8, Davies, 2018, p.21).

## Women's Awareness and Willingness:

Achieving high levels of awareness can encourage women to participate in counter-radicalisation. This awareness can also protect women from negative influences of their family members. As a result of a lack of awareness, women can be affected by radical propaganda, especially from their close radical relatives (Idris and Abdelaziz, 2017, p.10). Riany et al. (2018, p.1) stated that 'there are also indications that family members are keys in the recruitment process'. For instance, Rima al-Jurayyish was sixteen and in high school when she married a very violent extremist. She abandoned her education and started to follow her husband's ideology. Al-Hamili, who encouraged his wife to leave her studies, also prevented his children from attending Saudi public schools (al-Ghamdi, 2016). Instead, they were taught violent ideologies, and Rima

continued this mission until her eldest son reached fifteen. When the son reached this age, he illegally travelled to Syria to join ISIL with full support from his mother. Sikkensa et al. (2017, p.193) emphasised that 'parents may both influence and are being influenced by the radicalization of their children'. Rima, who refused the suggestion of her family to divorce her husband, had her fifth child while her husband, al-Hamili, was in prison[21] (al-Ghamdi, 2016).

Furthermore, in November 2014, Rima announced that she had escaped to Syria with her four children to join ISIL. At the same time, she sent a tweet to her husband informing him that she had emigrated and would be waiting for him in the Levant Land (al-Harbi 2016). Nevertheless, a few months later, she was persuaded by one of the ISIL theorists to get married regardless of her marital status. Thus, in August 2015, she became the wife of abo Mohammed al-Shamali, who was an ISIL fighter while at the same time being still married to al-Hamili who was imprisoned in Riyadh (al-Harbi 2016, al-Saud, 2019, p.33). Such a case shows how terrorists exploit women due to the lack of awareness. Al-Jurayyish was exploited by terrorists in multiple ways; at the beginning, her radical husband prevented her from continuing her education. Also, she was convinced to teach her children radical ideologies. Eventually, she encouraged her child to join ISIL. This was prior to the terrorists exploiting her ignorance and betrothing her to a man while she was still married.

The case of Rima al-Jurayyish highlights how terrorist networks search out uneducated and vulnerable women who can be recruited and engaged in their

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Spouses are allowed to meet in a private, allocated area as the Saudi government considers such meetings as a right of the wife.[21]

violent activities. This woman, who was an orphan and ceased her education at the age of sixteen, became a very active member of al-Qaeda and played a crucial role in terrorist propaganda. She was in charge of the al-Khansa Electronic Force working in recruiting women online (al-Otaibi, 2016). As such, she was able to recruit numerous women and encourage them to join al-Qaeda in Yemen or ISIL in Syria. In one case, she recruited two women called Mai al-Tahalq and Aminah al-Rashed, who tried to escape to Yemen with their children, but the Saudi police arrested them (al-Ghamdi, 2016, al-Harbi, 2016). Although this radical woman was dangerous to herself, her family, and the whole society, the Saudi authorities treated her in a very compassionate way. Rima al-Jurayyish was arrested and released several times, despite her mother's declaration that she hoped that her daughter would never be released. Her mother preferred that her daughter would be kept in a Saudi prison for years, instead of joining ISIL for one night (al-Ghamdi, 2016).

The prison authorities will not keep anyone imprisoned who declares their repentance. However, the dilemma is that the offender may return to radical thoughts and behaviour. The challenge lies with those who behave hypocritically, declaring their repentance while still harbouring violent mind-sets. Al-Jurayyish can be taken as an example of an extremist who declared their repentance then became a recidivist after having been released. Even though Saudi authorities use strict measures to avoid releasing those who claim repentance while secretly persisting in harbouring radical ideas, the case of al-Jurayyish illustrates how the consultancy role of women after the release of a female detainee is not effectively working. When al-Jurayyish was released from prison in 2014, there was insufficient effort to monitor her movements and

report any irregularities in her behaviour. Her mother reported that she had assured the Saudi authority that she had left her previous extreme ideologies. However, she suddenly disappeared taking with her all her four children, in addition to the eldest son who had previously joined ISIL.

The radicalisation journey of this woman started with her engagement to her radical husband (al-Harbi, 2016). It was challenging to discover this procedure, but after the arrest of her husband in 2004, their house could be monitored by the police. The absence of any official role by women, in this case, allowed an uneducated radical woman to prevent her children from pursuing their rights to be educated. This case serves to illustrate how neither specialist women nor her fellow women played efficient roles in protecting a potential recruit. According to Rima's mother, after the arrest of her husband, the Saudi authorities became responsible for all Rima's household expenses to a level that she was living a better life than others of her social class. It can be seen that the rehabilitation program focused on her financial issues but lacked insight or support for her intellectual growth and well-being.

Despite this case being well-known to the police, Rima was able to radicalise her children and recruit other women who also attempted to join al-Qaeda or became sympathetic to violent activities (al-Saleh 2016). In fact, she was arrested for her participation in demonstrations along with other radical women. The demonstrations called for the release of terrorists who were arrested by the Saudi police (al-Ansari 2019). To conclude, this case illustrates the need for a comprehensive awareness and rehabilitation programme for radical people, which should also take into consideration that the financial support that is

provided to such radicals may be used by them to recruit innocent people. As such, this case displays the need for well-prepared strategies that engage specialists and female relatives to report any change in a radical's situation.

Similar cases to Rima al-Jurayyish's case have been recorded in Saudi Arabia and the UK. It has been ascertained that various cases of women becoming radicalised in Saudi Arabia are a result of influence from radical male relatives. For instance, Arwa Baghdadi became radicalised and was arrested by the Saudi police many times (al-Sghayr and al-Shmrani, 2012). She was influenced by her terrorist husband, Yasen al-Amri, who has been imprisoned since 2004 (al-Arabiya, 2014). Her brother Anas Baghdadi is likewise a terrorist who is presently in jail, and the Saudi police killed her brother Muhammed in 2010 in a successful thwarting of a planned terrorist attack (al-Sghayr and al-Shmrani, 2012). Although there were some efforts to rehabilitate this woman, they were inadequate. Baghdadi escaped to Yemen in 2013 (al-Arabiya, 2014), highlighting the weakness in how the Saudi authorities dealt with her situation. Baghdadi was an apparent potential terrorist and was arrested numerous times for her violent extremism. Such women who are extraordinarily radical and surrounded by radical relatives could be individually educated and observed, but this has not been the case. Brown (2008, p.481) assumed that British Muslim women are not extremists, but if they dress or behave radically then it is due to a pressure from male relatives or social culture.

Searching through the Saudi records has uncovered various cases similar to Baghdadi and al-Jurayyish's cases, in which women have become radicalised after being affected by their male relatives. Hila al-Qsayer, known by her nom

de plume, "Umm Arrabab", was married to a fundamentalist who was jailed (al-Ghamdi 2015). Al-Ghamdi confirmed that Hila then married his terrorist student who was killed by the Saudi police in 2004, before being arrested for her terrorist financing activities. Furthermore, Najwa al-Saadi is the sister and the wife of two violent extremists which further demonstrates that radical women often result from having extreme male relatives. In 2010, Saudi police dismantled nineteen terrorist cells, arresting one hundred and ninety forty terrorists, thirteen of them were women, all of whom had blood relations with at least one captured male (al-Saleh, 2010).

The British case has shown similar instances. The radical preacher Anjem Chowdary was well known to the British police, but his wife Rubana Akhtar, who was also known by her nom de plume,"Umm L.", was preaching extremism before and after the arrest of her husband (Fruen, 2016). Akhtar was the leader of the female wing of the banned infamous group, Al-Muhajiroun. Although it was crystal clear that she was a potential violent extremist, she continued her radical preaching without any police interference. She spent a considerable time lecturing for ISIL and encouraging young women to immigrate to join ISIL in Syria (Morley, 2015). This infamous figure, who freely worked without any official intervention to stop her, demonstrates that the British efforts to engage women in their war against violent extremism are not rigorous enough. It would appear logical that a strategy that ineffectively deals with an apparent and known extremist would hardly succeed to warn the whole community.

A further example of an influential extremist woman is "Umm Saalihah", the wife of Mohammed Shamsuddin, who was a member of al-Muhajiroun and was

jailed in 2014 for his radical preaching and support for terrorism. "Umm Saalihah" spent years spreading radical ideas in the real and virtual world (Whitehead, 2015). Delving into this issue has affirmed that there have been several British Muslim women who have been radicalised due to the lack of awareness and their male relatives' influence, among them, "Umm L.", "Umm Saalihah" and "Umm Usmaan".

Accordingly, it can be stated that the weakness of cautioning projects has helped terrorist networks to succeed in exploiting women, with the assistance of their relatives, to participate in violent activities. Terrorist networks encourage women to take on several different duties (Huey and Witmer, 2016, p.2). Significantly, radical groups have succeeded in their mission because they work strategically and have adopted a specific policy to engage women in their activities. This strategy deals with women in six different ways as:

1. A family instigator.
2. A shelter provider.
3. A logistic services' provider.
4. A propaganda disseminator.
5. A money collector.
6. A suicide bomber.

Terrorist organisations treat a woman as a mother who is responsible for her children's education. With the lack of official awareness, they encourage her to teach them how to be fighters. Specific radical magazines, such as, "granddaughters of al-Khansa", "stories of granddaughters of Hafsa", and "al-

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Shamikhah" speak directly to women and catalyse them to prepare their children in a way that assists them to be effective members of terrorist groups. For instance, a man who has named himself "the Jihad of the Ummah" wrote a now removed article on Facebook, that was entitled: "The military plan for the preparation of jihadist generations". In this article, he encouraged women to participate in what he called, "Jihadist activities". He addressed women as mothers, calling them to prepare their children to be good fighters. The article advised women to raise their children on how to love the Jihad. The writer urged mothers to share the stories of jihadists with their children. He also insisted that women should not think that their children were too young to understand. The article suggested that women should feed their children the love of Jihad with their milk. When boys reach school age, the writer advised their mothers to teach them how to use the Kalashnikov.

Another way in which terrorist networks exploit women is in having them provide shelters. According to Al-Haqbani (2011), in "The Voice of Jihad" radical magazine, Sultan al-Otaibi, who was wanted by the Saudi police, praised his wife for offering their house as a shelter for members of al-Qaeda. She provided food for them and spent a great deal of money on meeting their needs. In general, it has been recorded that women have enabled terrorist organisations in various ways, such as networking, recruiting, propagandising (Zakaria, 2017, p.43). Moreover, wives provide moral support for their fighter husbands (ibid).

As for logistic issues, radical women produce media materials and send them to other radicals who can publish them on the internet or social media (Abo Roman and Abo Hanyh, 2017, p.79). In some cases, women may prepare

radical messages and publish them on the internet (Assakina, 2017). According to Ansary (2008, p.123), sixty per cent of al-Qaeda websites are functioned by women. In 2010, the Saudi police arrested a woman who was very active on internet websites and forums, using various pseudonyms, such as, "Bint najid", "the Immigrant Lion", and "The Stranger". The latter extremist woman was playing vital roles in al-Qaeda's propaganda, running websites, forums, and preparing various kinds of media materials and sending them to al-Qaeda's members as well as those who were sympathetic to violent activities (Hammodah, 2010). Umm Osamah, who was a member of al-Qaeda, confirmed that 80% of female activities concerned propaganda. She asserted that fundamental pieces of literature called for Jihad and emphasised that all governments are "Kafir", not Muslim, thus, every man and woman must join al-Qaeada (Abo Amshah, 2014).

Such fundamentalist works of literature assert that women do not need permission from their husbands or any family member to join Mujahideen. Refuting such stances is almost absent in female communities. Therefore, it allows extremists to deceive innocent people and recruit them. Umm Osamah said that official religious messages never talked about these critical issues. Thus, the only narratives regarding these topics are those produced by extremist networks. Awareness of such imitation and correctness of misunderstanding have been practically absent until now. Consequently, religious terms, such as Jihad, Caliphate, Takfir, and "al-walaa wa al-Baraa" "Loyalty and Enmity" have been exploited by radicals to recruit people. What Umm Osamah stated, shows the need for warning campaigns that clarify these

terms and ensure that they cannot be exploited by extremists (Abo Roman and Abo Hanyh, 2017, p.494).

Women are used by terrorist networks to provide shelters. Some sympathetic women open their houses and hide those who are wanted by the police. They may provide food, money, and safe places for their weapons. In March 2016, Saudi police arrested Soylim al-Rwaili, before killing a woman called Banan Hilal, who tried to attack police officers using a Kalashnikov. The investigations revealed that this woman had provided shelter for al-Rwaili and illegally married him, even though she was still married to another man (al-Brqawi, 2016). In some cases, terrorist groups exploit women to carry out their terrorist operations. Terrorists assume that women are mostly inconspicuous (Pilch, 2006, p.116). Thus, they can perform some operations in safer ways than men can do. For example, the story of Umm Abdullah was revealed in the second issue of al-Shamikha magazine, in February 2012, which was directed at radical women and issued by al-Fajr Media Centre which is officially run by al-Qaeda. Umm Abdullah assisted a group of terrorists who wanted to attack a specific target. Her role was to accompany them so that when police noticed a woman with them, they would not be suspicious and so not detain them.

Besides, women are exploited by violent activists to preach for them and recruit other women. A trustworthy preacher woman can collect money from those who attend her lectures. The alleged reasons for collecting this money can be for legal purposes, such as helping poor people in a Muslim country or assisting refugees in different parts of the world. For instance, it has been estimated that Hila al-Qsayer collected more than six hundred and fifty thousand dollars for

charities which she transferred to different terrorist cells in crisis areas. According to al-Amri et al. (2010), al-Qsayer is considered the most dangerous female member of al-Qaeda where she, in addition to being the collector of money, provided shelter for terrorists, as well as recruited several women.

Moreover, it has been observed that some women can be convinced by terrorists to commit suicide attacks. The exploitation of women has enormously increased with statistics showing that between 1985 and 2006 there were 220 female suicide bombers (Bloom, 2007, p.95) but in one year, 2015 to 2016, these numbers were already at 160 (Kricheli et al., 2017, p.3). Despite such statistics, it can be noticed that British and Saudi governments pay little or no attention to women's eagerness and the roles that they can perform in national projects to counter-extremism. Although a woman can work as a protector for her family's members, preacher in her community, and technical and internet expert, her engagement is still far less than her contribution to radical activities. In her study exploring the roles of Saudi women in the prevention of terrorism, al-Brikan (2017, p.22) has stated that women have three different levels of function. The most significant role in her family is to encourage her children to choose good friends. Then, in her educational institution, a woman may focus on Islamic values. At the community level, a woman can emphasise the significance of safety and peace and the crucial role the state plays in attaining them.

In order to understand the significance of women in regard to counter terrorism, it is essential to comprehend the difference between the mechanisms that terrorists use to run their organisations, and the devices utilised by

governments. While terrorists seek for results and want to achieve goals by any means, officials may focus on the procedures. They think that their responsibilities limit their choices, so they must follow specific rules to change any method. While bureaucracy may cause negative impacts on national strategies (Rascoff, 2012, p.140, Nasseef, 2015, p.161), it is almost non-existent in the terrorist environment.

At the early stage of al-Qaeda, especially in the 1990s, the network used to run hierarchically. Thus, every plan or terrorist operation must be approved by Osama bin Laden (Klausen, 2009, p.410, Rabasa et al., 2010, p.91). Bin Laden, who had set some rules on how to represent his terrorist group, was highly respected by adherents who dutifully followed his instructions. Gunaratna (2007, p.31) stated that "al Qaeda operates as a franchise by providing financial and logistical support, as well as name recognition, to terrorist groups operating in such diverse places as the Philippines, Algeria, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Tajikistan, Somalia, Yemen, Kashmir and Iraq". However, this franchise affected al-Qaeda's prestige (Diliberto, 2016, p.141).

Nonetheless, these strict rules prevented radicals from exploiting women. During bin Laden's time, women had specific duties related to soft power, such as preaching, educating children, and collecting money (Knop, 2007, p.405). Thus, bin Laden made his network's activities more organised and more disciplined. However, since the September 11 attack, al-Qaeda has been divided into small groups and cells, where their leaders have worked with no coordination to achieve their goals. During this stage, whereas bin Laden had followed a franchising strategy, many terrorist operations occurred with which

bin Laden was dissatisfied. Bin Laden wished to achieve his goals using strict policy that limited women's roles in his war (Bizovi, 2014, p.36). In contrast, those who lead the franchised terrorist cells have ignored this policy and worked independently. According to de Leede (2018, p.4), al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) encouraged women to participate in militant activities, mostly as suicide operatives, regardless of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri's affirmation that women's roles in jihad are as mothers and wives.

In general, it can be noticed that governmental efforts to engage individuals, especially women, displays shortcomings. Thus, raising the awareness of women with relative skills and training about the importance of counter-radicalisation is essential to the government's goal of gaining support from the entire nation. From her experience, al-Shalhoob assured that there are no campaigns that focus on women, and there is a deficiency in efforts to increase their awareness concerning the importance of participation in counter-extremism. Regardless of the lack of awareness and the exploitation of women by radical groups, looking at women as mothers may indicate that they play a very significant role, especially in educating their children about national and Muslim values. Al-Brikan believed that Saudi women indirectly play a significant role in counter-radicalisation. For instance, women can educate their children about various intellectual issues from an early age. However, asking women to play a role in official and social programs such as meetings, forums and conferences is not going to be enough.

In the UK, some Muslim women's organisations and individuals are engaging in the CVE to some extent. Mulbocus assumed that it was challenging to decide

if British Muslim women are educated enough to a level that allows them to realise the importance of participating in governmental efforts to counter radicalisation. Inspections demonstrated that British women participate in local activities such as social cohesion, which are not counter-radicalisation projects but do indirectly play a part. Eggert affirmed that British Muslim women could play more decisive roles if they have enough awareness and empowerment.

**Providing Training for Women:**

Providing training for women and having more women with relevant skills can demonstrate an encouraging sign of the community engagement success in counter-radicalisation. It has been noted that many women do not know how to react when they meet radical people due to an absence of training. Furthermore, the academic literature has highlighted the need for increased training for female participants (Schlaffer and Kropiunigg, 2016, p.62). Al-Otaibi believes that the Saudi authority has taken training issues seriously. Thus, it has been providing training for women who work in 'intellectual units'.[22] Nevertheless, it can be noted that these training programs are insufficient to qualify women.

Interviewees indicated that there are lectures, meetings, and workshops, but there are no specialised training programs. Al-Moshawwah noted that from the participation of women in counter-extremism, it could be seen that there is a weakness in the women's understanding of radical signs.[23] The picture is not

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[22] Awatif al-Otaibi is a member of the Intellectual Awareness Centre in the Saudi Ministry of Education. The interview with the author took place on 3 March 2019.
[23] Abdulmonaem al-Moshawwah is the founder and director of Assakina Campaign for Dialogue. The interview with the author took place on 3 January 2019.

clear for them, and there is hesitation and contradiction when it comes to the identification of these signs. This argument verifies Schlaffer and Kropiunigg's (2016, p.62) survey that showed that almost 70% of women acknowledged their need for training in identifying early radical signs.

This insufficiency of dealing with radical issues can be related to the absence of training programs. Al-Brikan explained that the participation of women in counter-extremism could be seen by stakeholders - owing to cultural attitudes - as secondary or marginal (Spalek et al., 2008, p.17, Galloway, 2014, p.8).[24] Consequently, women are not seriously engaged in counter-extremism and have no sufficient training in this field. Al-Dossary affirmed that Saudi women are not prepared to engage in counter-extremism because they need to be trained in various related subjects, such as dialogue, negotiations, tolerance, moderation, and understanding.[25]

In the UK, the government provides different types of training programs which are conducted by various departments (CONTEST, 2018, p.36). One of these training programs is a Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP). Besides, there is a free specialist workshop designed by the British government to offer interested people an introduction to Prevent and clarify an individual's role in safeguarding vulnerable people. In order for them to be successful, Cook thought that most women need to be informed about these training programs.[26]

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[24] Luluah al-Brikan is an assistant professor of sociology at Princess Nora bint Abdul Rahman University. The interview with the author took place on 25 December 2018.
[25] Fawziah al-Dossary is a professor of social studies at Princess Nora bint Abdul Rahman University. The interview with the author took place on 21 December 2018.
[26] Joana Cook is an assistant professor of terrorism and political violence, faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, Leiden University. The interview with the author took place on 2 October 2018.

As Cook mentioned, there are training courses, but women might not know about them. In this regard, Basit (2015, p.54), said some stakeholders organised training in various regions to make it more convenient for applicants to join. Another challenge is that British Muslim women are not encouraged to participate in counter-extremism. Mulbocus said that the absence of stimulation for women to participate in counter-extremism could be linked to the way men look at women, where they, owing to cultural issues, expect them to stay at home and look after their children.

Besides, certain people consider counter-extremism the exclusive confine of men. It therefore seems apparent that cultural issues play negative roles in the British and Saudi cases, confirming Spalek et al. (2008, p.17) and Galloway's (2014, p.8) findings concerning the marginal female roles played in Muslim communities. Hence, even though training programs may exist, two limitations require more consideration. One is that there is a weakness in promoting training projects. Two is the local culture, as discussed early in this chapter, plays a crucial role in limiting Muslim women's participation in counter-extremism.

It can be said that although there are some individual attempts to train British and Saudi women, they are still not prepared to caution their communities about the danger of extremism. This lack of training has affected numbers of women with relevant skills and training in both countries. The sufficiency of the number of Muslim women with relevant skills and training can be considered as a key sign of official success. The evaluation of this issue demonstrates that women still need particular training courses to engage in all forms of counter-

radicalisation. Al-Dosari assumed that the insufficiency of numbers of women with relevant skills and training has harmfully weakened their participation in counter-radicalisation.

This study shows that there is almost a consensus among Saudi participants who confirmed the limitation of Saudi women who can effectively engage in counter-radicalisation According to Cook, in the UK, many women are cooperating with Prevent Strategy. However, Cook affirmed that it is challenging to decide the size of their number. According to Eggert, the numbers of women with relevant skills and training are still insufficient because these training programs are unattractive to Muslim women. Limbada said that although multiple training programs focus on educating women about issues related to counter-extremism, it can be assumed that there are no programs specialised in preparing women to participate in counter-radicalisation. In conclusion, it can be stated that the absence of specialised training programs limits the number of British and Saudi Muslim women with relevant skills and training.

## Conclusion:

This chapter has demonstrated that women play a leading role in raising and educating their children. Even though Muslim women's roles are almost absent in public life, their contribution can be reflected by their children's behaviours. The academic literature has indicated that women as mothers, wives and sisters engage indirectly in counter-radicalisation. However, it can be noticed that some influential individuals consider British and Saudi woman

untrustworthy, downgrading their roles in Muslim societies. These attempts of marginalising women's roles can be related to a misunderstanding of religious texts. Also, these distrustful views and marginalisation can be linked to the attempts of some radical individuals to exclusively exploit them. Some researchers referred these radical attempts to the lack of education.

This chapter has noticed that the deficient awareness harmfully affected some women, making them potential victims for radical recruitments, especially from their close radical relatives who became major players in the recruitment process. Observations showed that British Muslim women are not radicals, but if they dress or behave radically, then it is due to pressure from male relatives or social culture. Investigating some female individuals' cases in Saudi Arabia and the UK has proven this statement, which can be related to the insufficiency of awareness and the absence of police interference. Therefore, it can be affirmed that the weakness of cautioning schemes has helped terrorist networks to succeed in exploiting some British and Saudi Muslim women, with the assistance of their relatives, to participate in brutal activities.

In addition to the distrustful thoughts towards women and the lack of awareness, it has been noted that many women do not know how to react when they meet radical people due to an absence of training. Although some interviewees asserted the existence of training course for women, there was almost a consensus that these training programs are insufficient to qualify women. Interviewees affirmed that there are lectures, meetings and workshops, but there are no specialised training programs. Such training deficiency has caused some challenges for women, including their inability to deal with their

children when it comes to the indications of radicalisation because they cannot identify if their children are affected or not.

This insufficiency can be related to the absence of training programs, which are considered as secondary or marginal by some interviewee stakeholders due to their cultural attitudes. This weakness of training plans has negatively affected the number of women with relevant skills and training. It can be said that the weakness of training can be related to one of three factors. First, the unwillingness of stakeholders to provide such training is owed to cultural issues, Second, there are training projects, but women might not know about them. Third, British and Saudi Muslim women are not encouraged to participate in these courses due to cultural beliefs which assume counter-radicalisation as an exclusive confine of men.

# Chapter 8

# The Role of Young People in Counter-Extremism

Engaging young people seems to be more complicated than anticipated. Young people have their own ways of thinking and looking at things. Thus, it is essential to understand what motivates them. Unless counter-radicalisation campaign stakeholders understand the motivations catalyse young people, it will be challenging to encourage them to affiliate to any projects (Coppock and McGovern, 2014, p.253). The UNSCR (2015, no.2250) resolution affirmed the significance of engaging young individuals to be part of counter-radicalisation projects. Concerning this, the chapter discusses how three combined factors affect young people's willingness to join any group and devote their selves to its cause. The first issue is craving. Improving the sense of national belonging among young people can increase the mutual trust between them and their surroundings. The second aspect is using advanced tools to enhance young people's awareness and willingness to engage in counter-radicalisation. The third factor is the ability of young individuals to identify radical signs.

This chapter will discuss the nature of the relationship between stakeholders and young people, what tools are utilised to reach them and the training that has been provided for them. The criticality of this subject has led the researcher to focus more on ISIL traditions to recruit young people. This focus can assist in understanding and evaluating the British and Saudi efforts in engaging young individuals. Discussing the enhancement of the sense of national belonging among youth is important because it can reflect the mutual trust between young

people and stakeholders. Also, using advanced means that attract young people and enhance their desire can be considered as a sign of proficiency in the engagement of youth in counter-radicalisation. Finally, the measurement of youth's abilities to identify radical signs and realise them in their surroundings can help in protecting young people from radical ideologies.

## Building Trust with Young People:

Enhancing the sense of national belonging among youth can increase the mutual trust between them and their surroundings. The search for identity, trust and belonging assists terrorist groups to exploit some vulnerable young people and convince them to find the belonging that they are searching for through joining them. Mink (2015, p.63) argued that the need for camaraderie, identity and a sense of belonging can motivate young people to affiliate with terrorist organisations. Realising the importance of religious and political identity for young people assists terrorist organisations in exploiting their vulnerability. According to Rothenberger and Kotarac (2015, p.93), 'identities are stronger sources of meaning than roles, because of the process of self-construction and individuation that they involve'. Moreover, religious identity is compelling (Dominika and Jaroslav, 2017, p.115) to a level whereby it paves the road for radicals to recruit zealots in the name of religion. Furthermore, Venhaus (2010, p.10), stressed how crucial it is for young individuals to define themselves, the norms of their group identity and the acceptance of their friends.

In the Social Identity Theory, "individuals will strive to attach themselves to other individuals" (Jacobson, 2003, p.2). Thus, when the wider community distrusts

and rejects young people, they will search for other people to attach themselves to, in order to satisfy their need for belonging. Hadlaq pointed out that there were no national campaigns, in Saudi Arabia, that can enhance the sense of national belonging.[27] Some experts feel that the sensitivity of this subject may reach a level that makes stakeholders very cautious of allowing young people to participate in this field.

In the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis, Miller (1941, p.338), affirmed that "the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression". Hence, encouraging and nurturing a sense of national belonging among young individuals may be beneficial prior to calling them to engage in counter-extremism. The challenge is that the way in which some Western media cover Muslim affairs reflects bias against them. This is foolhardy as, according to Bizina, and Gray (2014, p.72), the absence of acceptance and trust may lead young individuals to affiliate to radical networks. Examining what some British media say, shows that they explicitly say to British Muslims that they are not accepted as citizens.

Subsequently, it appears important to differentiate between effective dissemination and the destructive narrative that is adopted by some media (Isakjee, 2012, p.70). Comparing ISIL's propaganda and local media's negative messages indicate that both lead to the same outcome. For instance, the radical narrative that is published by terrorist networks and the anti-Islamic messages disseminated by local media can both lead to radicalisation. A crucial

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[27] Abdulrahman al-Hadlaq is the former director of the Saudi General Department for Counter-Extremism. The interview with the author took place on 4 January 2019.

dimension that may limit the engagement of British Muslim youth in social activities is, the incitement of some Muslim radical groups inside and outside the UK who try to exploit the feeling of distrust and disengagement to recruit young people.

Similar solutions can be found to the challenges that face British and Saudi efforts to enhance their young people's feeling of trust and desire to engage in national strategies. Although these challenges seem complex, the solutions are attainable. Analysing these challenges shows that the problem concentrates on the absence of the desire of youth to participate in national strategies to fight radical ideas (Weeks, 2013, p.350, Shanaah, 2019, p.5). This absence is a result of the lack of trust and loyalty because of the contentious incitement to commit violent acts (Baker, 2009, pp.243-244, Bryson, 2016, p.25). Silencing these narratives can be the first step in preparing young people to hear the moderate views that will reconnect stakeholders with young individuals.

When young British Muslims feel that their government is seriously dealing with the right extremists, the Islamophobia, and media bias against them, their feeling of trust will increase, and they might be more willing to engage in counter-radicalisation (Jiries, 2016, p.225). Otherwise, they may isolate themselves from the broader community and join radical networks (Bizina, and Gray, 2014, p.73). If governments consider such issues, it can lead to positive outcomes, where the voice of radical people cannot find a space to nourish. Besides, young Muslims will have a desire to fight wicked thoughts. The al-Oraini twins' story illustrates how ISIL operates according to a clear strategy, compared to British and Saudi efforts which suffer from the weakness of media

policies that fail to convince youth that they are trustworthy and substantial players in counter-radicalisation campaigns.

Significantly, one critical error in some of these cautionary campaigns is that they look at young individuals as victims in need of protection. This viewpoint can cause a negative reaction to these campaigns. Consequently, young people will not benefit from the warnings, and they will not participate in the preparation of the messages. According to Coppock and McGovern (2014, p.243) and Romaniuk (2015, p.18), one of the challenges that face counter-extremism stakeholders is that they cause young people to feel guilty for supporting extremism or being potential victims, whilst failing to recognise them as trustworthy players in countering it.

The absence of young people's input in these campaigns may result in them being unsuitable for youth, as they are predominantly prepared by people from different age groups who may be unaware of the type of messages that better suit young minds. Hence, engaging youth in counter-radicalisation campaigns is crucial. Nevertheless, before asking them to participate in these projects, it is important to understand what concerns them and motivates them or prevents them from such engagement. Furthermore, they might be given a chance to play roles in influencing and leading projects (Davies, 2016, p.15). A study has demonstrated that more than two million British young people would participate in volunteer missions if they were requested to do so (ibid).

Observation shows that the problem in the UK is that the policy on counter-extremism is centralised into official hands. This being so, young people are

suspicious and see it as policing and biased against specific communities (Ambrozik, 2019, p.1047, Richards, 2019, p.33). This observation is a confirmation of Putnam's (1995, p.77) warning, who cautioned that the lack of trust could cause negative consequences for civic engagement. Thus, if young people are requested by the government to participate in counter-extremism, they mostly reject the idea, but if they are encouraged by one of the trustworthy civil organisations, they are more willing to answer the call (Sheikh et al., 2010, p.38).

Commenting on this, Baker said that the most critical thing for Muslim youth in the UK is to see with whom they are dealing. If this person is trustworthy, then they will engage with them. In general, it can be inferred that young Muslims do not participate in counter-extremism in the UK because they do not trust the police. For instance, Karmani stated that, in the "STREET Project," they succeeded in working as a bridge between the British government and young Muslims. This way assisted in positively engaging many individuals.[28]

## Youth's Awareness and Willingness:

Using advanced tools to enhance young people's awareness and willingness to engage in counter-radicalisation can demonstrate the proficiency of governmental efforts. Research into this phenomenon shows that terrorist groups, especially ISIL, are far better than British and Saudi governments in their utilisation of narratives and tools to reach young people. The psychological

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[28] Aylas Karmani is a specialist in violence, prevention intervention, provider worker with young people, and co-founder of the Strategy to Reach, Empower and Educate Teenagers Initiative (STREET). The interview with the author took place on 1 January 2019.

status of a person plays a pivotal role in their reaction to the propaganda they receive (Loza, 2006, p.146, Fernbach et al., 2013, p.945). Thus, it is significant to communicate with people in a way that they like. For instance, when an intellectual was asked about the way he talked to young people, he answered that it is like a fisherman who catches fish using a bait that fish likes, not a food a fisherman likes.

Therefore, to engage young people to participate effectively in counter-radicalisation, it is important to utilise what they like most (Clinch, 2011, p.136, Hirschfield et al., 2012, p.50). While British and Saudi governments were still using basic means to speak to youth, according to Weiss and Hassan (2015, p.31), and Stern and Berger, 2015 p.22), ISIL was utilising very advanced methods. For instance, British and Saudi authorities have recently started to utilise social media networks to speak to young people. At the same time, ISIL is exploiting new tools to affect its audiences. This radical group has started to use computer games in its recruiting activities. Videogames are full of negative or unwholesome materials; therefore, they teach young players harmful behaviours. For example, commercial games like Mortal Kombat, Street Fighter and Doom use harmful contents like violence, sex, and drugs to attract users" (Schoech, et al., 2013, p.209). According to Apau (2018, p.16), "there is mostly anecdotal evidence that ISIS supporters have proposed modified versions of some games to spread propaganda". Nonetheless, it is easy to imagine how persuasive such modified versions would be.

It has been proven that young individuals feel the tied relationship with videogames because they engage players in the action. As Schulzke (2014,

p.632) noted, videogames affect young people in such a way that they feel they are participants of the simulated fighting, rather than spectators who watch the action from a separate perspective (ibid). This idea seems to be crucial because videogames include young people as part of the event, whereby they can play roles in creating the events.

Regardless of the quality of this videogame and its sufficiency in teaching young people positive manners, it demonstrates that these tools are able to be utilised for cautionary purposes. Observation indicates that ISIL deals with this new tool in four different ways. ISIL works to break the codes of some games and to change pictures and sounds to provide an attractive image of ISIL. More critical, ISIL shows its black flag (Kee, 2016), to keep its brand-name in young people's subconscious. In some cases, ISIL works to imitate the way these electronic games are made and produces films with the same picture quality (al-Rawi, 2018, p.746, Apau, 2018, p.16). Besides, playing online has assisted ISIL recruiters to communicate with young people and attract some of them to their cause (Tassi, 2015). Finally, ISIL affiliates exploit this technology to send encoded messages to each other. According to Brown (2015), Belgian Federal Home Affairs Minister, Jan Jambon, affirmed that ISIL used the PlayStation4 to communicate as this type of console was extremely challenging to supervise.

To achieve satisfactory results, ISIL have depended on two vital pillars; one is recruiting young people to develop the utilisation of videogames. As young people are more able to use and deal with videogames, they have been adept at building a high-quality videogame, that is capable of attracting other young people. Conversely, hiring older individuals to create a videogame for young

people may fail to fulfil their satisfaction. The American Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) cautioning videogame entitled "Do Not Be a Puppet" serves as an example of these types of failing warning videogames (Sidahmed, 2016). The second pillar is the money that is available to this terrorist network, which generously spends it on recruitment. For instance, a young Syrian technology expert mentioned that ISIL paid him more than triple the salary he used to earn from his previous job (Thornhill, 2014).

It can be said that using videogames for awareness requires three crucial aspects. The first is to have a narrative that can attract young people to use a videogame. The second is that the videogame industry is very sophisticated and relies on very skilled people in all its manufacturing stages. The third is that the production of a videogame can cost a considerable amount of money. Consequently, British and Saudi governments should be persuaded to finance this industry in order to utilise them in encouraging young people to participate in social activities.

The experiences of some countries have proven the efficiency of advanced tools in warning young individuals. Various entities have been working in this field, indicating the significance of videogames in the recruitment of people. Significantly, the American army has been investing in this tool since the 1960s (Shaban, 2013). The Pentagon has been promoting its official videogame which is called "the American Army" for more than forty years for free (Kang, 2014). This videogame has been targeting young people who are aged between thirteen and twenty-one years old (Holmes, 2009). Kang (2014) stated that even though it can be noticed that there is not much difference between these two

entities in utilising videogames for recruitment, the "American Army" videogame is useful, constructive, and does not call players to practice violence for an evil purpose.

Beside the utilisation of advanced tools, it seems crucial to deal physiologically with young people to increase their desire to participate in counter-radicalisation. Many warning projects work to engage young people without clarifying the added values of these efforts to them. Such an error can be considered a crucial factor that prevents young people from participating in counter-extremism (Hirschfield et al., 2012, p.50, Erwin, 2016, p.2). More beneficial would be focusing on how to create a willingness amongst young people and feeding it to a level where it can motivate them to engage voluntarily in counter-extremism. Crombach et al. (2013, p.561), have argued that wealth gaining, social status, or other privileges contribute to expanding "appetitive aggression", driving individuals to more horrid cruelties. Studying the idea of "Lone Wolves" shows that recruiters of terrorist organisations are able to enhance the desire of young people to a level where they want to contribute to the cause. Pantucci (2011, p.34) stated that "many of the lone wolves suffer from social isolation, so the Internet serves to replace the communities that they lack in the real world. When young people reach this level of alienation, it seems difficult to stop them unless through a similar counter procedure.

The overwhelming desire can reach a level where a person feels that he is unimportant unless he can provide a significant contribution to what he desires. Loza (2006, p.147) affirmed that individuals participate in violence because it provides them with a sense of self-actualisation, fulfilment, status, power. The

effect of this addiction to the cause can be seen through the affiliation with a radical group or a desire to assist oppressed people. For example, Ashraf (2012, p.210) explained that bin Laden defended Islam and the ummah by repeatedly mentioning suffering situations where Muslims have been oppressed in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir. This exaggerated desire can catalyse an individual to leave their family and join a violent organisation in a foreign country. For example, during a police investigation, an ISIL member admitted to his interrogator that he ate, lived, breathed ISIL, and spent his life in his room watching ISIL on YouTube (Mortimer, 2018). This story, along with many others, demonstrates the advanced level to which these terrorist groups have reached in enhancing their followers' desires to serve radical agendas.

It appears hard to understand what motivated the Tunisian, Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, who had three children, to drive a truck in July 2016 to deliberately attack a crowd of people in Nice, France, killing eighty-six innocents and injuring 458 others (Visser and Orjoux, 2016). Even though ISIL declared responsibility for this terrorist attack, the explanation of how this man reached this level of brutality which resulted in him killing and injuring a considerable number of people, is unclear. Perhaps the desire to achieve a specific issue may lead young people to behave in unacceptable ways. McMurran (1994, p.70), stated that when it comes to a level of dependence, there will be a firm involvement in addictive behaviour. McMurran further affirmed that people can become addicted to anything, whether it is alcohol, drugs, gambling, or other activities. He explained that the addiction progressively increases until it turns into an excessive indulgence. When it reaches this level, satisfaction becomes

the goal, to a degree where the addicted person may lose his home, job, and even his life.

Such addiction may explain why some individuals commit suicide for the cause of their terrorist groups. McMurran's explanation illustrates how an individual's overwhelming desire leads him to sacrifice everything in order to satisfy his addiction. For instance, the al-Oraini twins felt that they were part of the Caliphate and wanted to immigrate to Syria to join ISIL. When it became apparent that their family would not allow them to do so, they killed their mother and injured their father and brother (Samuels, 2016). It appears that these twins reached a level of addiction where they felt that their lives were meaningless without performing some act for the Caliphate. Undoubtedly, ISIL's propaganda played a significant role in increasing the twins' willingness to consider the Caliphate as the most valuable aspect in this life. The twins' belief reached an overwhelming level whereby they willingly sacrificed everything for the cause of this, seemingly, priceless aspect.

Youth's overwhelming desire can operate in any field. For instance, ISIL is able to recruit individuals and encourage them to travel to foreign countries to fight (Byman and Shapiro, 2014, p.12), or stay at home to cause harm to their fellow citizens (Wright, 2016, p.33). Likewise, it is used by various companies and individuals to guarantee that their customers will stay for longer and order more. For example, when some "pornography" websites offer hundreds of porn movies for free, they are not providing services that remain free of charge. Clarkson and Kopaczewski (2013, p.129), asserted that the obtainability of pornography on the Internet could be seen as a prime threat.

Satisfying overwhelming desire may drive some people to sacrifice everything. Uusitalo and Eijk (2016, p.20) explained that "an addicted individual's brain is static in the sense that desire-related mechanisms determine the agent's actions without the agent's possibility to intervene or veto these processes". Those who commit lethal attacks may have reached levels of belief in their causes, which motivate them to sacrifice their most valuable assets. Some polytheists may even sacrifice their children in order to please what they believe are gods. Allah says in the Holy Quran; "And likewise, to many of the polytheists, their partners have made [to seem] pleasing the killing of their children" (7:137).

Recruiters encourage such overwhelming desire to flourish to a level where individuals feel compelled to do something to fulfil their cravings. Significantly, such overwhelming willingness to sacrifice can be linked to the enjoyment that individuals find when doing so (Crombach et al., 2013, p.560). Such enjoyment gained from acting brutally and loyally for a cause will lead fanatics to participate according to the instruction of their recruiters. ISIL's propaganda encourages people to immigrate to Levant or commit terrorist attacks in their homeland. Hence, it seems evident that an overwhelming desire can play a crucial role in mobilising vulnerable young people to participate in activities regardless of the nature of these activities and whether they are constructive or destructive, as Uusitalo and Eijk (2016, p.20) have affirmed.

Making a country the most significant aspect for young citizens, can encourage them to participate in national projects. Thus, the usage of videogames for defensive purposes may prove an efficient way to reach young people today

(Schoech et al., 2013, p.199). Furthermore, a high level of desire can be achieved by creating a very healthy environment with a comprehensively supportive atmosphere. Such social environments are achieved where sects, ethnicities, and colours come together, putting the national interest on the top of everyone's list of interests. Educating young people in the national values at an early age may also increase their loyalty to and love for their countries, which will increase their overwhelming desire that can lead to them sacrificing for their country (Sleegers et al., 2015, p.130, Davies, 2018, p.24). It can be said that the difference between two young people, one hates his country, and the other admires it, is generated by the surrounding atmosphere and people. For example, some families speak negatively about their homelands in front of their children, assuming that they will not be affected by what they hear, but this may not be the case at all.

One critical aspect of recruiting young people is to allow them to compete or be rewarded. The "Gamification Theory" is a technique that works to mix the elements of games in nongame situations (Prince, 2013, p.162). Gamification is a mechanism used to attain a goal, such as to motivate individuals to buy a product or to inspire them to change their habits through different techniques, such as rewards and bonuses (Schoech et al., 2013, p.198). This theory focuses on motivating a player to do his best when competing against other people. In Social Learning Theory, "when a behaviour is rewarded regularly, it will most likely persist; conversely, if a particular behaviour is constantly punished, it will most likely desist" (Claire et al., 2012, p.79). This technique can motive students, customers, or users who perform a routine mission to increase their efforts by receiving some rewards (Prince, 2013, p.163). Skillicorn (2015,

p.2), said that Gamification could be a convincing tactic that can be considered as a new way of advertising.

The way in which messages are delivered to young people can affect their influence. Some messages dictate to young people what to do and what not to do. However, Erwin (2016, p.30) warned that it is vital to recognise the criticality of imposing values on young individuals. These kinds of messages may be rejected by youth who might rebel against those who want to dictate orders to them. The story of the young al-Oraini twins, who quit school one year before they killed their mother and joined ISIL, shows that this terrorist group has reached a level of impressive ability regarding brainwashing techniques. Sageman (2014, p.567) believed that there was some mysterious process of brainwashing that was able to convert some innocent young persons into violent individuals. It seems difficult to comprehend what could motivate young individuals to murder their mother.

It has been noticed that British and Saudi narratives rarely reach young people's minds. Instead, these official narratives, sometimes, contain negative messages that speak to young individuals as if they need protection. These messages do not consider young people as reliable individuals capable of protecting and building their country. Instead, the narratives are prepared to warn young people about becoming terrorists. Therefore, it seems apparent that governments need to encourage youth by creating attractive messages that foster the feeling in the young that they are essential to the development of their country. In support of this, the reactions of some young people to the violent messages in videogames has demonstrated that they behave according

to the message that they receive. Thus, if the message treats them as if they are the country builders, they will behave accordingly. Such a reaction may confirm the idea that young people look for an ideology to follow. As Sageman's theory "bunch of guys" affirmed, individuals look for the ideology not the network (Sageman, 2008, p.116). Accordingly, narratives can be conducted in a way that they will attract these young people who are seeking for an ideology or identity. To conclude, it can be stated that the content of videogames can influence some users. Hence, creating constructive contents for these tools can be valuable in encouraging young people to participate in counter-extremism.

Haque et al. (2015, p.5), explained why radical ideology is attractive, saying that it is because terrorist recruiters offer fast food that suits some spiritually hungry young Westerners. When young individuals ask reasonable questions, radical groups present themselves as having the most satisfying answers, providing a vibrant narrative that placates the anxieties of young people (Venhaus, 2010, p.2). Simultaneously, boringly produced official messages cause young individuals to reject them. In a survey conducted by King Saudi University, 71% of three thousand Saudi participants stated that they were dissatisfied with the official warning messages due to their unattractive presentation (Saudi youth national strategy, 2014, p.211).

Various hurdles face Britain and Saudi Arabia in enhancing their youth's desire to participate in national counter-extremism campaigns. Instead of having positive messages that encourage young people to love their countries, unhealthy atmospheres seem to exist. Saudi Arabia has been suffering the negative narrative of al-Sahwa that focuses on the marginalising of the national

state. According to Ansary, (2008, p.112), the tactic which al-Sahwa used is 'reading selected books, listening to selected tapes, and hearing from selected individuals who indoctrinated them with radical ideology'. Hadlaq argued that evaluating the Saudi case showed that there is a weakness in proficiency in the means that are used to speak to young people. Al-Jadid agreed and added that the usage of social media networks seems to be the only promising sign, but it is insufficient, which leads to affirming that more advanced tools and methods are required.

The challenge that faces Britain and may limit the participation of its Muslim youth in counter-extremism efforts can be linked to its inability to find a healthy environment that attract young people (Busher et al., 2017, p.5). Thus, it would drive some people to boycott national activities, feeling that they are isolated and considered not part of the broader community. Thomas (2014, p.477) asserted that the Prevent strategy had stopped young Muslims from participating in the wider British community by creating spaces and places for them only. However, Douglas said that regardless of these challenges, it can be noticed that the British government has succeeded to a certain level by utilising various methods. Douglas added that many online official campaigns use search engine optimisation (SEO) that would help to deliver the warning materials on YouTube and other social media platforms to the targeted audiences.

**Providing Training for Young People:**

Investigating the ability of young people to identify radical signs shows that they can recognise some of these signs, but there is a confusion that needs official

involvement. While young people may understand certain ideological aspects, such as antisemitism and racism, this does not mean that they have a well-developed and defined idea of ideology (Mattsson and Johansson, 2021, pp.9-10). RAN (2016, p.13), affirmed that because there was no specific way to recognise radicalisation processes, clear answers should be provided to questions, such as, how to assess possible cases of radicalisation? Who is responsible? To whom to report? Cornwall acknowledged that, from his perspective, working in the Home Office visiting schools and universities and discussing extremism with young people, has been a long journey which has shown him that youth can identify fundamental indications. Najashi agreed, but he believed that some young Muslims in the UK lack an understanding of their faith. As a consequence, it seems perplexing for them to decide which behaviours and ideologies are radical. This complication can be related to the ambiguity of the concept of extremism for non-specialists (Richards, 2019, p.1). Karmani claimed that while running some training programs, it was observed that the majority of adolescents received no training, and that the British government made insufficient efforts to address this shortage.

Although young people are able to identify some radical signs, investigation displays a lack of training programs. Al-Jasir pointed out that this absence relates to two factors. The first is stakeholders' insufficient realisation of the importance of youth engagement and training. The second possible explanation arises from the misuse of authority by some officials who might be none supportive of these projects, so they thwart any efforts to engage young people in national plans. This explanation confirms researchers' assertion of the need for awareness and training that is directed at officials (Rascoff, 2012, p.130,

Gearon, 2013, p.135, Butt and Tuck, 2014, p.25, Bhulai and Fink, 2016, p.10, Dunn et al., 2016, p.208, Qurashi, 2017, p.200). Hadlaq said that there were, to his knowledge, no such efforts in this issue; however, if there are some programs, they do not affect youth. According to Al-Jadid, the King Abdulaziz Centre for National Dialogue offers some training courses that teach young people to acquire dialogue skills, but they are insufficient and underline the assertion that more training courses are needed. Some interviewees assumed that the absence of institutions that are available to arrange young people' engagement has led to a lack of training programs.

Al-Jasir, who talked about his experience in the Muhammed bin Naif Counselling and Care Centre, stated that the radical signs could be categorised into 37 types, some of which are easy to be recognised by young people. Conversely, some of them are difficult to identify unless specialists have engaged in advanced training courses. interviewees believe that understanding these signs depends on the individual's background and knowledge. The same limitation can be observed in the UK, where interviewees noted that training programs are fragile. Baker blamed the "Conservative Party" for cutting tens of millions of pounds from the counter-extremism budget (Barej, 2017, Dodd, 2017). Likewise, Cornwall believes that this step has affected the efficiency of CONTEST in general and decreased the social participation of Muslims and non-Muslims in the UK. Numerous experts spoke about this issue, affirming that the negative impact of the governmental decision to cut most finances from youth services can be seen in the increase of the percentage of young people' committing crimes and the rise in the number of gangs in the UK.

According to Barrett (2016), violent crimes, in England and Wales, jumped twenty-seven per cent. Hamid argued that, although there are some programs as mentioned by some experts, the training is not in the governmental policy. He insisted that the British government needs to spend considerable effort and time building effective training programs.[29] Cornwall commented that he had participated in training initiatives in countries, such as Georgia and Azerbaijan, which were running successfully. Cornwall added that he was involved in a similar initiative called the "Young Leaders Program" from the "Active Change Foundation", in the UK, but it failed owing to the governmental refusal to fund it.

## Conclusion:

It can be seen that mutual trust, increasing awareness and willingness to participate by utilising advanced tools and providing training for young people all can professionalise the engagement of community in counter-radicalisation. However, studying these three concepts showed some limitations in each one. The absence of acceptance and trust led some young individuals to affiliate to radical groups. In this regard, some British media have exacerbated this problem by explicitly telling British Muslims that they were not accepted as citizens.

Such radical messages in addition to what terrorist organisations are publishing can both lead to a feeling of distrust and disengagement that exploited by

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[29] Sadek Hamid is a senior researcher at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies at Oxford University. The interview with the author took place on 30 September 2018.

extremists to recruit young people. In addition to this, there were no national campaigns that can enhance trust and the sense of national belonging to attract young people. Some explanations referred this limitation to the sensitivity of this subject, which may make stakeholders very cautious of allowing young people to participate in this field. In the UK, the strategy of counter-extremism is centralised into official hands, which has caused young people to be suspicious and see it as policing and biased against their communities.

The second dimension that has been discussed in this chapter is relating to the importance of utilising advanced tools to reach young people. This chapter has shown the effectiveness of the advanced tools in influencing young people. Yet, while ISIL was using very complicated methods including videogames and social media, British and Saudi governments were still speaking to young people through basic means. The chapter has affirmed that the usage of videogames for awareness requires a narrative that can attract young people, skilled people and a considerable amount of money. However, British and Saudi governments need persuasion to finance this industry in order to utilise them in encouraging young people to participate in counter-radicalisation. The weakness of awareness in this field can be seen in the reaction of Saudi audiences who declared their dissatisfaction with the official narratives.

In regard to the enhancement of young individuals' skills to counter-radicalisation, investigation demonstrates a nonexistence of training plans. This absence can be related to the fact that stakeholders consider youth engagement and training insignificant. Also, some officials who might be not supportive of these projects may prevent any attempts to provide training for

young people. Examining the ability of young people to recognise radical signs demonstrated that they could identify some of these signs, but there is a misperception that required official involvement.

While these young individuals may comprehend some intellectual subjects, this does not mean that they have a well-developed and defined idea of ideology. Interviews showed that radical indicators could be categorised into multiple types, some of which are easily understood by young people, while other are hard to recognise without advanced training courses. Accordingly, it can be stated that young people in Saudi Arabia and the UK have basic knowledge about radical signs that may not enable them to engage effectively in counter-radicalisation.

# Chapter 9

## The Role of Educational Institutions in Counter-extremism

The educational environment can be seen as an essential tool to combat extremism. The salient role of education comes from the reality that it is proactive and preventive rather than reactive to radical thoughts (Ghosh et al., 2017, p.120). Accordingly, it is evident, as Gearon (2015, p.275) stated, that the relationship between security apparatuses and educational institutions has grown stronger during recent times. Children spend a substantial amount of their time learning. Thus, wisely building on this educational system will help build future generations of moderate thinkers who are resilient to radical ideas and deviant behaviours.

This chapter will examine the quality levels of the three concepts: trust, awareness, and training in the educational environment. It will focus on evaluating the trust levels amongst parents, teachers, children/students. Also, this chapter will discuss the national efforts in building a positive image for counter-radicalisation campaigns in educational atmospheres, making them realise the cruciality of counter-radicalisation. The third section of this chapter will discuss the training plans that have been prepared to qualify parents and teachers on how seriously deal with radical thought amongst their children/students and the curricula efficiency in teaching students the critical thinking.

## Trust-Building in the Educational Environment:

Enhancing the trust levels in the educational environment can increase its efficiency in counter-radicalisation. The academic literature indicates that the parent-teacher relationship is related to students' welfare and adjustment (Pirchio et al., 2013, p.152). Parental trust and cooperation with teachers is vital to the school environment (Minke et al., 2014, p.527, Perriel, 2015, pp.75-76). Schultz et al. (2016, p.344) maintain that the continuing collaboration between parents and teachers is the foundation of supporting young people. Janssen et al. (2012, p.385) argued that while teachers hold the responsibility of teaching, parents focus on child-rearing. Ecological theory indicates that efficient relationships between parents and teachers can encourage students, especially concerning behaviour difficulties (Witte, 2015, p.36). Similarly, Hillier et al. (2019, p.498) have affirmed that parents and teachers are able to enhance students' strengths when they work together. It has been observed that students become more comfortable and have a lower rate of behaviour problems when they are aware that their parents are trusting and working together with their teachers (Pirchio et al., 2013, p.145, Cullaj, 2015, p.22, Witte, 2015, p.12). When parents reinforce their children's behaviour at home, it can make a lifelong change (Cullaj, 2015, p.22) so that such involvement can build lasting resilience to radical ideologies.

Conversely, distrust and negative relationships between parents and teachers can detrimentally affect students. Witte (2015, p.2) has noted that undesirable contact between these two elements can cause a negative effect, particularly regarding student behaviour. Thus, it appears critical to understand what

causes such a distrustful relationship to develop in order to rectify it and create a resilient environment to radicalisation. Minke et al. (2014, p.528) argued that when parents or teachers feel uncomfortable or displeasure during interactions, this discomfort frequently leads to miscommunication and intensified obstacles in the relationship. Minke explained that teachers might assume parents' insufficiency as proof of family lack of assistance for the child's education, leading to ineffective interactions (Minke et al., 2014, p.528). Lee (2019, p.30) claimed that this relationship's unproductivity could be caused by a lack of cultural sensitivity toward minority families and cultures.

Therefore, teachers should be required to examine and expand their knowledge about immigrants' cultures which may positively lead parents to interpret this understanding as encouragement. Pirchio et al., 2013, p.147) support this viewpoint by pointing out that parents' support would be judged positively by parents and strengthen their reciprocal relationships. Witte (2015, p.2) acknowledged that this positive rapport is more likely to encourage the family to involve more in their children's education. Besides, Adams and Christenson (1998, p.7) suggested that programs planned to enhance the parent/teacher relationship should consider potential differences.

Parents and teachers are underappreciated sources of social control; thus, policies should be developed to support them in countering radicalisation (Pels and de Ruyter, 2012, p.311). Pels and de Ruyter also argued that children can be inspired by the ideals-driven teaching they receive and that there is a possibility that children come to embrace these principles. (2012, p.315). Therefore, Jiries (2016, p.225) and Chin et al. (2016, p.123) emphasised that it

is imperative to encourage communities, especially teachers and parents, to participate in counter-extremism initiatives. Parents and teachers perform primary roles in encouraging moral views in young people (Bjørgo, 2016, p.28).

Nevertheless, such joint efforts need increased trust and coordination to achieve better outcomes. Jansen and Verdegaal (2019. p.3) affirmed that the mediation between the parents and teacher is crucial, especially when a child's worrying behaviour is observed. Jansen and Verdegaal firmly believe that teachers with the parents' assistance are able to play vital roles in building children's resilience (ibid). Hence, cooperation between parents and school will help to educate students about this crucial issue. Significantly, according to Davies (2018, p.28), engaging parents in their children's schooling has the ability to promote social cohesion.

Parents play the most active role in their children's lives because they are the first source of knowledge. Davies (2000, p.84) insisted that "teachers must always remember that parents are the child's first teachers and that a partnership between home and school benefits children, families, and teachers alike". Pesu et al. (2016, p.64) argued that parents could convey their principles to their children directly by urging them to trust their schools or by providing them with encouraging reactions when they do so. It has been observed that the more engaged families are with their children, the more effective students are in all academic areas (Young, 2015, p.8, Perriel, 2015, p.75, Kim et al., 2018, p.2).

In recognition of the importance of parents, UNESCO (2017, p.44) have endorsed the belief that parents are the most valuable means of socialisation for children. Al-Brikan (2017, p.10), argued that parents play roles in forming the desired behaviours as well as filling the children's psychological and social needs. Hence, it would seem beneficial if parents work with schools to prevent radicalisation amongst students (Ghosh et al., 2017, p.129). Parents can affect their children's performance by encouraging and inspiring them to do their best in school and/or by giving them positive feedback when they do well in school (Pesu et al., 2016, p.64). According to Sabatine et al. (2017, p.54), a strong parent/ school trust and relationship play a significant role in preventing students' misbehaviour.

Richards (2019, p.186) mentioned that an officer who worked with the Prevent Strategy affirmed that, once parents are on board, fifty per cent of the tough work is done. Breaking the barrier between parents and children can assist in discussing crucial subjects. When parents build trust with their children, parents can ask them openly about their daily lives, or expect them to behave in a certain way, to see if they are susceptible to extremism or not. In Luhmann's Theory of Social Systems, people (parents and teachers) may create an expectation that their children/students will respect their trust and act accordingly. Luhmann assumed that trust presumes an individual's freedom and controls it because this person is supposed to behave according to the expectations (Luhmann, 1979, p. 26). As online activities are the most crucial source of radical recruitment, discussing these activities with children and knowing what they do with their smart-phones and on social networks, will help parents teach their child the best practices when using these tools. Janssen et

al. (2012, p.386) confirmed that "when people trust each other, this trust will lead to sharing information." Thus, this openness can help parents educate their children on managing their choices, especially in a possibly unsafe arena (Demant and Ravn, 2013, p.342), such as social network media. One of these online practices is how to deal with people and how to make friends online. Knowing children's friends can serve as the first step to observing them and evaluating the influence of these friends. It is difficult for schools to perform such a duty, so the onus is better placed on parents to teach young people about these critical issues.

Teachers are also in a good position to combat extremism amongst their students and create a healthy educational environment (Gielen, 2015, p.26, Bryan, 2017, p.213). Finn et al. (2016, p.215) stated that: "many acknowledged the formative role that education plays in people's lives as being a place of morals". Fundamentally, teachers can enhance their students' resilience to radical thoughts by preparing them with the understanding and skills that will enable them to efficiently explore issues of concern (Bonnell et al., 2011, p.2). Peterson and Esbensen, 2004, p.221) confirmed that educators are essential for the achievement of school-based awareness programs since their contribution decides if plans proceed as a significant aspect of the curricula. Predominantly, teachers are often the first to become aware of changes that occur in student's mind set and behaviour. Hence, the atmosphere should be conducive to discussing critical matters (McCully, 2006, p.61).

However, the UK teachers' monitoring role appears to harm their relationship with their students and families, driving some Muslim children to distrust them

and become less willing to openly discuss critical issues for fear of being referred to the authorities (Novelli, 2017, p.847). The challenge is not only that students do not speak the fear, but as Novelli affirmed that, students may discuss all these concerning aspects underground, where there is no adviser to correct misleading thoughts and offer counter arguments. Broadhurst et al. (2008, p.103) emphasised that educators could act as the eyes and ears of the society and connect with partners who must deal with socially concerning problems. What is better than understanding this issue, is the ability to create a trustworthy environment in the classroom. Bovier and Boehnke (1999, p.819), have stressed that teachers who create a positive social atmosphere in a classroom with a dependence on non-tyrant encouraging styles of teaching and learning, are inclined to produce non-extremist students. This belief is supported by Bandura (1977, p.60), who affirmed that behaviour can be learned from the environment through the procedure of observational learning. Thus, creating a trustworthy educational class will encourage students to imitate it and behave peacefully.

What seems challenging is that a few teachers may be distrustful having sympathy for terrorist activities and may work as recruiters inside their schools. For instance, in 2014, the "Trojan Horse Plot" broke in Birmingham, when there were claims that certain teachers had embarked on methodically radicalising state schools (Felderhof, 2018, p.250, Faux, 2017, Arthur, 2015, p.311). According to Gilligan (2014), most of the key figures were members of a WhatsApp discussion group talking about radical ideas, such as anti-Semitism and Islamic supremacy. Following this event, the former British Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, warned that teachers who are proven to fail

to protect their students from radicalisation would be fired without appeal (Wintour, 2014). Evans (2018) reported that in March 2018 a teacher was accused of recruiting some of his students. The challenge that may face the British authorities is that this school, according to Evans, was investigated by the Ofsted inspectors and classed as outstanding. Such a case highlights how it is sometimes challenging to identify distrustful teachers espousing harmful narratives.

In Saudi Arabia, it has been proven that some mistrustful teachers exploited their involvement with students to recruit them. For instance, one of the Saudi investigation departments noted that multiple ISIL fighters had studied in the same school. Security investigation has shown that one teacher recruited all these students. In 2017, the Saudi Specialised Criminal Court accused this untrustworthy teacher of multiple charges; one of them was inciting his students to travel to Syria to fight with ISIL (al-Shihri, 2017). The teacher admitted that he committed almost all the twelve offences of which he was accused. Among these charges were propagating radical ideologies, calling for takfir against the state and those who work for the country, and exploiting the school to inspire his students to join terrorist groups.

According to an official statistic, the Saudi Ministry of Education has fired or transferred to administrative positions more than two thousand teachers accused of disseminating radical ideologies. Ansary (2008, p.126) explained how some radical teachers tried to bypass the curricula and suggest alternative books that might include fundamental ideologies. Hence, the Saudi Ministry of Education has conducted a review of curricula to certify that teachers do not

adopt radical thoughts (ibid). Similarly, Felderhof (2018, p.250) discussed an attempt by some British Muslim teachers to radicalise their schools' curricula. Subsequently, although teachers can play beneficial roles in counter-extremism, some of them are untrustworthy causing some challenges that need to be considered.

## Educators' Awareness and Willingness:

Building a positive image for counter-radicalisation campaigns and educating parents and teachers is significant measures for an effective educational institutions engagement. Also, enhancing educators' willingness to engage in counter-radicalisation can indicate the proficiency of national efforts in this field. Parents can play crucial roles in safeguarding pupils at risk if their understanding of radicalisation and how it can drive violent activities, improved (UNESCO, 2017, p.44). By improving parents' awareness about extremism, a family may be able to identify and respond to this challenge more effectively (Sikkensa et al., 2017, p.193). Richards (2019, p.171) pointed out that parents are generally intolerant of radicalisation and are willing to do anything to protect their children from harmful issues. Thus, utilising this significant issue will make a difference in a child's educational process. Parents' role in the schooling operation can be regarded as preparing children to engage productively in the educational environment (Pesu et al., 2016, p.64). The educational process, therefore, cannot run entirely without parental involvement. The role of parents in this issue starts with preparing their child to discuss issues related to radicalisation, healthily (Ansary, 2008, p.124, Lindekilde and Sedgwick, 2012, p.32, Weine et al., 2013, p.311). Thus, when a student discusses such a subject

in school, there will be no confusion or reluctance to do so. Subsequently, there are efforts to empower parents in identifying early symptoms of anger and behaviours that can drive children to extremism (Fink and Barakat, 2013, p.5).

interviewees suggested that schools may be disregarding radical indication in the schooling environment because they are wary of causing a backlash. Lebo and Cassino (2007, p.723), highlighted such fear and explained that it can occur when people receive negative information which they discover is in line with their own existing views. Lodge and Taber (2000, p.209) argued that such education might lead individuals to build more radical views than they had before. Weine et al. (2013, p.311) emphasised the significance of tailoring strategies developed by parents to be utilised when discussing the threat of extremism with their children. Safeguards can also be developed with the aid of parents. The same strategies can be utilised when dealing with similar sensitive subjects, such as how some individuals become extremists, examining susceptible students, and protecting young people from being recruited by online extremists. These issues can be considered as joint missions performed by parents and schools. One of these joint missions is discussing radical indicators. Addressing the signs of radicalisation with parents may lead to increased effectiveness as there is generally more time available at home to explain and discuss these signs with children. Also, parents are in a prime position to positively affect their children especially those with negative views. In contrast to parents, teachers may have many students in their classes, making it challenging to explain every critical issue.

According to Clinch (2011, p.34), one of the challenging issues that face counter-extremism projects is teachers' unawareness of their duty to protect students from radical ideologies. It has been proven that it is not easy to convince certain teachers to participate in combating radicalisation amongst students. For example, some teachers willingly engage in cautioning campaigns against all kinds of misbehaviours such as drug usage, sexual abuse, and bullying, but when it comes to fighting extremism, they become hesitant. As reported by Flannery and Torquati (1993, p.395), teachers who are not pleased with a program in their school will not use the program materials. There are various causes for this hesitation, one of which is the confusion that fighting extremism means fighting the religion. This logic is a fundamental misconception that needs to be taken into consideration as a part of the counter-extremism policy. Another challenge is that students seek to know about vital issues, such as their identity, religion, and belonging. Thus, the teacher who has insufficient knowledge about these issues cannot beat radical recruiters who may provide convincing answers. Besides, students need a comfortable atmosphere in which to discuss critical matters (McCully, 2006, p.61).

Teachers might have accurate knowledge about the indications of radicalism, but, according to Sheikh et al. (2010, p.38), students feel that it is essential for educators to be more mindful of their community matters and what it resembles for young people to be presented to these issues. They believe that educators could profit by preparing themselves to be more perceptive regarding the indications of young people' association with socially unacceptable behaviours and issues, as this would empower them to help better and redirect young

people away from danger. Having this broad information about the signs of extremism and other ideological indications, enables educators to involve effectively. Thus, students will feel that their teachers are incredibly dependable (ibid).

Studying the Saudi case demonstrated that stakeholders are unaware of the essentiality of this issue. For instance, Al-Rwais said that from his observation, he had not encountered any program for raising the awareness of teachers about the danger of extremism.[30] This comment confirms Davies' (2018, p.21) assertion that many people are against extremism, but they never participate in public cautioning projects owing to the lack of awareness. The Saudi Ministry of Education focuses on students' advisers to monitor schools and resolve problems or report them to the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education is not inclined to warn teachers about the danger of extremism. Al-Esa affirmed that there are no cautioning programs to enhance the awareness of teachers about the dangers of extremism.[31] She added that, she spent three months investigating this issue but found no efforts to educate teachers about the risk of extremism.

Likewise, Tahiri and Grossman (2013, p.97) affirmed this lack of cautioning projects, while the performance of the Saudi Ministry of Education was also criticised by al-Mutairi for its deficiency in providing cautioning programs for parents and teachers. The interviews demonstrated that very few warning activities were prepared for parents which weakens the effect of their

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[30] Marzooq al-Rwais is the Intellectual Awareness Centre director in the Saudi Ministry of Education. The interview with the author took place on 8 February 2019.
[31] Meshael al-Esa is a member of the Fatehn initiative in the Saudi Ministry of Education. The interview with the author took place on 7 February 2019.

participation in counter-radicalisation. In the UK, Hafeez said that he was disappointed when speaking about the level of awareness in the British Muslim community. He explained that parents are almost forgotten. Schools do not have a stable link with them, and mosques do not make any effort to educate them about the risk of extremism (Fink and Barakat, 2013, p.12).[32] Yousuf stated that he has been working in the British educational field for more than ten years and never had any awareness about the importance of counter-radicalisation. Hafeez blamed the British Department for Education who he felt should raise the awareness about various concerning subjects, such as radicalisation, gangsters, and bullying, before hiring staff to teach in a school.

Raising parents' awareness seems to be a neglected issue (Weine et al., 2013, p.329). According to Ambrozik (2019, p.1058), there is a need for educating parents on the dangers of extremism and the significance of participation in counter-radicalisation. Although the Saudi Ministry of Education has established parental councils in schools that may be held at least once every semester to discuss students' affairs and raise awareness about new challenges, these councils are not as effective as they are supposed to be. Al-Rwais admitted that he was dissatisfied with the role of these councils. He added that the idea is unique, but there is a weakness in the way that it has been run.

Some Saudi participants have indicated that many teachers assumed that those who work for the Hasanah plan are spying on them. Such suspicions

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[32] Asim Hafeez is the deputy director of Prevent, Office for Security and Counterterrorism at the Home Office. The interview with the author took place on 10 March 2019.

confirm what has been asserted by various academics, that counter-extremism policies maybe designed to spy on communities (Spalek et al., 2011, p.19, Romaniuk, 2015, p.18, Qurashi, 2018, p.4). Ibn al-Shaikh suggested that the burden might be placed on stakeholders who have neglected this critical issue for a long time while cautioning campaigns could resolve it. Al-Mutairi affirmed this suggestion saying that the Hasanah plan to fight ISIL propaganda provided a cautioning program for four hundred teachers to educate them about the threat of these radical groups and to correct any misunderstanding. At the end of the program, most teachers showed their eagerness to participate in any national efforts to counter-radicalisation. This example demonstrates the possibility to positively influence people's thoughts and gain their minds.

Also, it confirmed scholars' suggestions that emphasised the essentiality of raising awareness about counter-extremism (Naqshbandi, 2006, p.8, Gunaratna, 2011, p.70, Bhulai and Fink, 2016, p.10, Davies, 2018, p.35). Nevertheless, the challenge is that cautioning efforts are still deficient. For instance, one challenge that may weaken teachers' engagement in the national counter-radicalisation strategy is that some are themselves unaware of the dangers of extremism but are expected to engage in fighting radicalisation (Clinch, 2011, p.34). Thus, they need to be educated, cautioned, and empowered to provide counsel and support for their students (Nordbruch, 2016, p.2, Sheikh et al., 2010, p.38).

Lundie said that Britain is facing severe difficulties in this issue. He specified that the primary cause for these challenges is that parents seem to be harder to reach for evaluation of their level of awareness about the cruciality of

extremism.[33] Al-Mutairi suggested that parents can be reached through their workplaces whilst those who are retired or do not work can be reached through the neighbourhood, social organisations, and mosques. Yousuf suggested that this limitation could be addressed by adding information and lessons in curricula and encouraging parents to read them so as to become aware of challenges that face the whole community in order to counter deviant phenomena. However, it is critical to take Davies' (2009, p.185) warnings into account, when he stated that terrorism is rarely discussed in schools as some educators consider it not a part of curricula.

**Providing Training for Educators:**

Having broad information about the signs of extremism and other ideological indications enables educators to involve effectively, especially as they spend significant time with students affecting their ways of thinking and observing their social interactions and backgrounds. Besides, improving the critical thinking levels amongst Students can protect them from radical ideologies. Evaluating training for educators to participate in counter-radicalisation in Saudi Arabia and the UK has indicated that, there have been efforts made in this field (Saltman and Frenett, 2016, p.157, Butt and Tuck, 2014, p.17). Nonetheless, interviewees suspect that one critical challenge is that not all teachers seriously deal with these phenomena. In fact, Clinch (2011, p.34) believes that some teachers are unaware that they are required to protect their students from extremism. This unawareness may be associated with the way the Ministry of Education deals with this issue. Some Saudi interviewees agreed that the

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[33] David Lundie is a senior lecturer in Education Studies at Liverpool Hope University. The interview with the author took place on. 24 September 2018.

Ministry does not pay much attention to this aspect. In this regard, Ibn al-Shaikh warned that many teachers are unqualified to identify signs of radicalisation, as has been affirmed by de Silva (2017, p.17). Al-Esa highlighted the Ministry of Education's negligence, saying that she was among those who were chosen to train in order to gain the necessary counter-extremism skills, such as identifying radical signs, enhancing moderation, and countering radical ideologies. Unfortunately, in the same year as her training, the Ministry of Education withdrew this assignment from the Intellectual Awareness Committee and appointed the Islamic Awareness Department to manipulate it, whereby this department replaced the successful training programs with exhibitions and reports about the educational environment without any training.

Discussing and dealing with crucial issues, such as extremism and radical indications with children, tends to be a challenging issue. It has been observed that parents are often aware of the early signs of concern, but are unsure of how to react to them, or to whom to speak in such a case (Bhulai et al., 2014, p.8). Several interviewees reported that some teachers had claimed difficulty in discussing this subject with students. The challenge here is that this subject is controversial; thus, teachers find it problematic to convince all students that extremism and violence are unacceptable concepts. With limited time, large numbers of students, and a diversity of subjects, it would appear challenging to cover this issue adequately in classrooms.

Psychologically, discussing a critical issue with one or two people is more likely to achieve a positive outcome than talking about it with multiple students. With such a controversial issue, some people may challenge the educator to prove

to their classmates that they know the subject. Accordingly, parents and teachers need advanced training on how to face such situations. Daryabady (1991 p.477) stated that "in large gatherings passion and prejudice are more likely to prevail". This statement shows that discussing critical issues, such as extremism and terrorism, can be more efficient between a parent and their child than a teacher with many students. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003, p.21) argued that home discussion is a major influence on children's comprehension. According to Desforges and Abouchaar, "children with behavioural problems get less home discussion but significantly more school communication". Such a challenging debate may lead some students to become fanatic and reject any correcting attempt out of arrogance, as suggested by Daryabady (1991 p.477).

Parents can be trained on how to discuss critical issues, such as radicalisation and counter-radicalisation based on real-life stories, especially when family members sit together watching a TV program. Dorey et al. (2010, p.416) upheld the belief that "TV also provided a medium that provided opportunities for parents to connect and engage in discussions with their children". The discussion at home is contained as it occurs between a parent and child, whereby if it goes out of the parent's control, it will not affect other innocent children. Bean et al. (2006 p.1336) disclosed that several studies indicated the significant roles parental control play in children's lives. Also, parents might also learn how to share their best practices and learn from each other (Sheikh et al., 2010, p.29). Accordingly, parents are capable of playing a significant role in educating their children about extremism as they are in better positions as caregivers than teachers who are constrained by the educational setting and curriculum.

Consequently, parents should acquire some helpful techniques related to the digital world's parental control to protect their children. The academic literature has shown how parents' warmth, interaction and control can deliver the most positive child outcomes and help their moral growth (Sikkens et al., 2017, p.199). More importantly, parents may exchange this knowledge with other parents and teachers to protect the whole society (Pirchio et al., 2013, p.152, Thorslund, 2017, p.499, Kim et al., 2018, p.7). These activities can be seen as a part of their social role in educating people about the risk of extremism. Hence, it would seem beneficial for parents to educate their children about what to do when they face harmful people or online content that aims to promote radicalism. Parents might also educate young people on how to use tools which warn and inform them about any suspicious online activities.

The British Educational Suppliers' Association has stated that fifty-one per cent of teachers in primary schools, and forty-nine per cent in secondary schools have recognised the need for more in-depth training on how to challenge online extremism (IG, 2017). Bilazarian (2016, p.4) has pointed out that teachers and schools' staff are required, in the wake of the 2015 Counterterrorism and Security Act, to apply Channel, as part of Prevent, and find measures to deal with the risk of radicalisation. Teachers are trained on how to observe the signs of radicalisation, such as support for the Islamic political system, a focus on scripture as a reliable, independent source and a conspiratorial mindset (Coppock, 2014, p.120). Interviewees have confirmed that, in general, British teachers are able to recognise signs of radicalisation with Haroon referring teachers' ability to identify these indications to the Prevent policy, which provides training programs that cover a variety of skills. She confirmed that

although these training courses have not yet covered all educators, they are expected to cover them in the future. In this regard, Lundie said that Muslim educators are better at understanding signs of radicalisation in their students than the average British educators.

On the other hand, evaluating the ability of parents to deal with radical signs has shown that they, in general, are unqualified to identify such signs. Fink and Barakat (2013, p.11) claimed that mothers are not prepared for such a mission. participants linked this limitation to the lack of official efforts to educate parents who are mostly unaware of the risk attached to this problem. In Britain, some experts divided British Muslim parents into two types: those who are well educated and those who have limited education. The first category, which forms a tiny percentage of the community, find little difficulty in noticing radical indications in their children, owing to their qualified level of education. The second category have considerable difficulty recognising these signs (Ambrozik, 2019, p.1058), because they are mostly busy all day and unaware of these issues. Moreover, Yusuf asserted that the challenge that can face parents who do not speak English is that they find themselves unaware of issues and disconnected from their surroundings.[34] Al-Mutairi, however, argued that parents could not identify the radical signs in their children due to a lack of training and the gap between parents and their children. Ibn al-Shaikh believes that there is an ignorance amongst some parents that may lead them to affect their children negatively. For instance, a father used to criticise the Saudi government and oppose it in front of his teenage children which, subsequently,

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[34] Ali Yousuf is a al-Hamd House Islamic schoolteacher in Birmingham. The interview with the author took place on 9 October 2018.

caused one of them to foster a negative feeling toward the state. Eventually, he joined ISIL which had exploited this negative sense to recruit him.

However, parents cannot succeed in playing their part in combating extremism unless they are provided with sufficient training (Pels and de Ruyter, 2011, pp.321-322). It has been observed that children can be radicalised and behave in fundamental ways while their parents are unaware of the changes that occur in them. Chin et al. (2016, p.123) argued that family members, in general, lack understanding of the radicalisation process. Therefore, parents need to learn to recognise extremism signals in their children in order to help them identify any signs of radical behaviour. Fink and Barakat (2013, p.11) stated that "mothers are often in a unique position to identify early signs of violent behaviour and intervene but in many countries do not feel empowered to do so". The simplest sign of child extremism is their tendency to be argumentative and reject conventional ideas that he/she has never challenged before (Baker, 2009, p.189). In some cases, the new extremist refuses to hear other people's points of view, assuming that there is only one way of doing things, and whatever else is wrong. This radical way may lead them to abandon their old friends and build new friendships with radical people. Thus, changing friends can be seen as a possible indication of ideological changes. Moreover, starting to discuss or ask about crisis areas, such as Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan, may indicate that this person is embracing radical ideologies. Similarly, if the child praises the terrorist network, such as ISIL or al-Qaeda, this is surely a sign that they have been affected by some fundamental assumptions (Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010, p.20).

When parents notice that their child participates in more religious activities, or engages with new religious friends, they should seriously investigate these changes. Observations have demonstrated that radical groups look for those who become religious and try to exploit them in their terrorist activities (Huey and Witmer, 2016, p.4). Ranstorp and Herd (2007, p.8) explained that newly converted recruits affiliate with terrorist groups to atone for their past misdeeds. Parents may share with their child his interest and follow his online activities. When parents notice that their child spends much time browsing the internet, they might consider this a possible hint of radicalism (Apau, 2018, p.19). It may also be a sign of his involvement in fundamental issues when he changes his identity and takes on an anonymous name. This sign will be clearer if he chooses an anonymous name representing radical concepts, such as terrorist figures, or places favoured by extremists. Koehler (2015, p.127) emphasised that "the Internet allows for an anonymity which Internet can foster hidden extremist attitudes that can be acted out over a long time".

Despite the importance of curricula in the fight against extremism, there is observable poverty regards this topic in curricula (Abrahamian, 2003, pp.535-536). Educational institutions teach their students using stereotypical cautioning methods which entail showing what is right and what is wrong without discussion. This is in variance to the belief of scholars who have emphasised the importance of interaction in curricula, by involving educators and pupils and avoiding initiation (Peterson and Esbensen, 2004, p.220). Traditional curricula can be accepted in a society with no challenges. Bonnell et al. (2011, p.45) argued that lessons should be provided to students facilitated in developmental ways with meaning and critical thinking skills. Additionally, Fink et al. (2013,

p.4) suggested that CVE teaching be incorporated into current curricula in an intelligible and effortlessly digestible way where it may be tackled alongside other unsafe behaviours influencing students.

The proactive, modern way of teaching aims to train students to decide whether something is useful or harmful, instead of giving them the 'right' answer. In other words, such a method does not provide a fish for students every day; rather, it educates them how to fish. It can be said that this way of teaching does not evaluate ideas and dictate what is right and what is wrong. Instead, it teaches trainees how to assess an ideology and determine if it is suitable or not. Tahiri and Grossman (2013, p.14) are of the belief that education could help develop the degree of critical reasoning and analytical skills necessary to bolster resilience against radicalisation. Thus, Jerome and Elwick (2017, p.1) emphasised that curricula should consider building pupils' critical capacity. Critical thinking teaches students how to create an independent opinion by criticising students' information inside or outside schools. According to Sas et al. (2020, p.6) "in Rwanda, research has shown that the curricula and teaching methods smothered critical thinking, which impacted individuals' responses to the genocide".

Enhancing critical thinking amongst students will assist them in becoming more resilient against extremism as, according to Bonnell et al. (2011, p.3), critical thinking skills are substantial for examining and testing radical ideologies. Teaching critical thinking to students can enable them to search for probable resolutions. Also, it can increase their tolerance to others' opinions. Nevertheless, the educational environment's focus on teaching students to

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pass exams at the expense of enhancing students' critical thinking skills, harms students and their ability to deal with some controversial challenges. Schultz et al. (2016, p.352) stated that "curricula are heavily focused on academics, not leaving much time for targeting social skill development". A Cambridge Assessment Research Survey demonstrated that eighty-seven per cent of educators assumed that overly concentrating on teaching to the test is a key factor influencing undergraduate students' being underprepared (Suto, 2012, p.2).

Teaching can be more fruitful, and more pleasant if less time is spent on educating students on how to pass their examinations, and instead, educate them on how to have independent minds (Taylor, 2012). Davies (2009, p.200) suggested that to protect students from becoming violent extremists; teachers need to adopt five criticality types, one of which is building students' critical thinking skills. Taylor (ibid) prescribed a philosophical approach that implies that students should be critical and intelligent inquirers. In other words, critical thinking provides pupils with the instruments that enables them to find answers for themselves and empowers them to start thinking even more profoundly and fundamentally about ideas and contentious issues (Taylor, 2012). In this regard, it can be said that teachers may inspire their pupils to solve surrounding issues critically, using technical methods in thinking and research (Hammad, 2014, p.67).

A recent study demonstrated that critical thinking skills are insufficient among Saudi students. Al-Oraim and Omar (2017, p.13), conducted research in which four hundred and ninety-seven secondary schools participated. The study

showed that while the acceptable result of mastering critical thinking skills is eighty per cent, the participants achieved an average of sixty-two per cent (ibid, p.27). Furthermore, the study indicated that the students were scoring lower when they achieved higher schooling levels. While students of the first year of secondary schools were graded at sixty-three per cent, students of the second and third years scored sixty-one per cent and sixty per cent, respectively. This study displayed that secondary schools may not pay sufficient concern to critical thinking skills. These outcomes are disappointing for the Saudi Ministry of Education who has been working since 2010 to develop its schools' curricula, signing a contract with MacGrew-Hill Educational Company, University of Cambridge House Publishing, Bell Educational Foundation, and other companies (al-Zabin, 2015). As for the UK, Morse (2012), wrote that critical thinking is absent in British schools. He redressed this remark by saying that this statement does not mean that this term is unknown, somewhat rational thought, and the Socratic method have been introduced for years, but they are ignored. Higton et al. (2012, p.77), confirmed the weakness of critical thinking amongst "A Level" British students. Higton added that even though pupils comprehend the curriculum's content, they cannot apply their knowledge.

Arguably, some students may be misled by radical propagandas that call them to commit terrorist activities in their countries as a way for reform. Such actions may be marketed by recruiters to young people as a sample of love not a sign of hate for their countries. Due to a lack of critical thinking, young people may believe that they can attack their lands and murder their people out of love for their countries. Thus, focusing on the expansion of the desire to support the

country while at the same time working to counter negative messages, seems to be a positive move forward towards fighting terrorism.

Teaching critical thinking skills in curricula will assist in protecting students from believing the wrong ideas. The evaluation showed that Saudi curricula contain different lessons about critical thinking skills. These lessons will not be useful unless teachers learn and master how to teach these skills. Al-Esa confirmed that it is rare to find lessons that teach critical thinking skills. She explained that, imagining herself as a student, the curricula did not assist her intellectually. Al-Baker stated that, as a professor in the university, she assumed that even if the curriculum is prepared professionally, unless the Ministry of Education trains its teachers on how to enhance their critical thinking, students cannot benefit from the curriculum. In other words, teachers and curricula can be developed to achieve a healthy educational ecosystem.

Yousuf stated that curricula in British schools teach critical thinking and allow students to question everything, but it is not useful in counter-extremism. Instead, it encourages them to condemn religion and criticise society, which will affect their sense of national belonging. Some experts have confirmed that British curricula educate students freedom with no limit, which harms students and leads to adverse outcomes. Raja thought that a curriculum teaches students to criticise everything, but it does not protect them from gangsters and extremists. Haroon emphasised that the British educational system teaches students how to think for themselves and how to question everything.

**Conclusion:**

This chapter has shown that the academic literature signifies that the parent-teacher trust and relationship is vital to the school environment. This statement indicates that the continuing association between parents and teachers is the foundation of supporting young people. While teachers hold the responsibility of teaching, parents focus on child-rearing. However, distrust and negative relationships between parents and teachers can adversely influence students, causing an undesirable consequence, particularly regarding student behaviour. This research has noticed that a few distrustful teachers who had sympathy for terrorist activities worked as recruiters inside their schools. The "Trojan Horse Plot" in Britain, and the ISIL member Saudi teacher cases have proven that some mistrustful teachers exploited their involvement with students to recruit them.

On the other hand, the second section of this chapter has displayed that parents could play critical roles in counter-radicalisation if their understanding of this phenomenon improved. By enhancing parents' awareness about extremism, they may be able to identify and respond to this challenge more effectively. This chapter has demonstrated that one of the challenging issues that face counter-extremism projects is teachers' unawareness of their duty to protect students from radical ideologies due to the difficulty to persuade some of them to participate in combating radicalisation amongst students. This chapter has shown that stakeholders are unaware of the essentiality of cautioning issues, to a level that has driven some British and Saudi interviewees to testify that they had not encountered any program for raising awareness in the educational

environment. Such negligence has caused many moderate educators to reject the participation in counter-radicalisation.

The third section of this chapter has demonstrated that having sufficient training about radical signs could enable educators to involve effectively in counter-radicalisation. Besides, improving the critical thinking levels amongst students can protect them from radical ideologies. Evaluating the training provided for educators in Saudi Arabia and the UK has indicated that although some efforts have been made, many teachers are still lack of skills to identify radical signs. It has been detected that parents are often aware of the early signs of concern, but they are unsure of how to react to them, or to whom to speak in such a case. Several interviewees reported that some teachers had claimed difficulty in discussing this subject with students. In the UK, it has been stated that almost half of teachers in primary and secondary schools have declared their need for more in-depth training on how to deal with online extremism

Nevertheless, when it comes to students' training, the chapter has displayed that enhancing critical thinking amongst students could assist them in becoming more resilient against radicalism. Critical thinking skills are considerable for realising radical ideologies. Thus, teaching critical thinking to students can empower them to search for probable resolutions. Researching the Saudi experience proved that critical thinking skills were deficient among students. What more challenging was that Saudi pupils scored lower when they achieved higher schooling levels. The same can be seen in the UK, critical thinking is absent in British schools, even though the Socratic method has been introduced for years, but it has been ignored.

# Chapter 10

# Conclusion

The engagement of local communities can play a significant role in national approaches to counter-extremism around the globe. The academic literature has affirmed the engagement of youth, families, women, religious, cultural, and education leaders in combatting extremism. Thus, this research has concentrated on the subject of engaging local communities in order to better understand how this practice can enhance the effectiveness of counter-extremism programmes. For this purpose, an investigation of the community as one entity with four components has been conducted. At the same time, each element has been examined as a separate unit. This technique required that the Muslim community be seen as one entity formed of four pillars: religious figures, women, youth, and educational institutions. Each of these societal elements has been studied and presented separately in its own independent chapter. This method has led to drawing a comprehensive picture of each one of these components, identifying that each one has different characteristics that can affect its interaction with the surrounding community. Furthermore, the academic literature has shown that there is a combination of three essential concepts that should be considered when engaging communities in counter-extremism. These three linear aspects are trust-building, awareness enhancement, and training provision. Furthermore, these three requirements can be affected by multiple factors: local cultures, external factors, political regimes and foreign policy.

Accordingly, the original contribution to knowledge of this research is specifying and studying the most central social apparatuses and related concepts that may affect community involvement in counter-extremism projects. It is discernible that very few studies have attempted to answer such a research question through a multi-level comparative framework. This framework is formed of communities, concepts, and factors. Such a method is one in which an original and significant contribution to the academic literature on counter-extremism through community engagement is claimed. Studying the involvement of four critical elements of the community as one combination can assist in learning lessons which may increase the quality, participation, and success of counter-extremism initiatives. Moreover, taking the three required aspects into consideration can add to the value of this framework. In addition, realising the effect that local cultures, external factors, and political regimes have can assist in understanding what can be harmful and what can be beneficial for community engagement in counter-extremism.

Comprehending the relationships between these aspects can increase the efficacy of community engagement in counter-extremism. This research has shown, in chapter one, that studying the community engagement or the participation of one societal component in counter-extremism, provides general or exclusive lessons to follow. It is, therefore, possible that investigating counter-extremism requires a more significant focus on specific issues to deliver inclusive solutions. Partial absorption appears to be unsatisfactory for highly sensitive phenomena such as extremism and terrorism. Likewise, the academic literature has confirmed that general examination of the role of a community looks unlikely to offer a full understanding of a community's

participation in a given issue such as counterterrorism. This uncertainty occurs owing to the absenteeism of a complete picture that can recognise pivotal zones to determine any deficiency. As a consequence, combining a comprehensive and intensive evaluation requires joint research of general and exclusive analysis. Such analysis requires an identification of the primary components of the community, which can perform a significant role in counter-extremism.

The importance of the research arises from the shortage of scientific evaluating methods for counter-extremism projects. Research into this phenomenon has displayed that more academic studies are required to reach a deeper understanding of how to assess the success of counter-extremism. The shortage of criteria in the evaluation of counter-extremism allows this research to assume the possibility to consider the communities' participation efficacy as an indication of the general efficiency of counter-extremist initiatives. Besides, it is assumed that active community participation can build the required resilience. Thus, the effectiveness of societal participation can be used in some cases as an evaluating method for counter-extremism. From this angle, the benefit of studying the community's involvement in counter-extremism becomes apparent. Furthermore, the lessons drawn from this research can be developed to become suitable criteria to evaluate the success of counter-extremism approaches through the engagement of communities.

Hence, identifying these lessons was the main achievement of this research. This study aimed to find comparable lessons that could be drawn from the British and Saudi experience with fighting extremism through community engagement. It also sought to understand what lessons can be learnt through

the investigation into a community as one entity divided into four primary components. It has been observed that such complex aspects, like communities and their multiple components, need general requirements that suit them all as one combination. Significantly, each part has requirements that can improve the efficiency of its participation in counter-extremism, as discussed in chapters six, seven, eight, and nine Accordingly, to answer the question of this study, an examination of the community as one entity with four components has been conducted, while simultaneously looking at each element as a separate unit.

**Summary:**

Consequently, to answer the research question, this study has been divided into ten chapters. The first chapter has concentrated on the conceptual framework. The second chapter has concentrated on the academic literature review. The academic literature review has focused on the main concepts researched in this study, such as extremism, radicalisation, and counter-extremism, and community participation in counter-extremism. The academic literature has displayed that the assessment of counter-radicalism activities may require more consideration in two main areas. The first area concerns searching for the most appropriate definitions for radicalisation and counter-radicalisation. These definitions can help with forming a clear picture and explicit norms for the assessed subjects. Radicalisation can be seen as a process that can be acceptable in its early phases but can lead to criminalised actions, such as violent extremism and terrorism. Such a phenomenon is very complex and cannot be predicted in its early stage. However, it would seem

vital to monitor susceptible individuals to ensure that their early fanaticism is not connected to and cannot be exploited by any extremist. Such a mission appears exceptionally difficult for local authorities to accomplish without community assistance.

The previous assertion prompts an important area that can be explored to help with arriving at a practical counter-extremism evaluation. This statement is linked to the need for community engagement in counter-extremism. The academic literature has demonstrated that national projects to counter radicalisation necessitate community involvement. Examination of the academic literature has displayed how the participation of four elements of society: religious leaders, women, young individuals, and educational institutions can produce positive outcomes. Thus, this research has recommended that community participation in counter-extremism should be considered at the early stages, as discussed in chapter four. Simultaneously, the academic literature has demonstrated that productive collective engagement needs intensive work to prepare individuals to join in this mission voluntarily and effectively. This preparation takes the form of three chronological stages: building trust, enhancing awareness, and providing training to attain a probable efficient engagement.

The third chapter has underlined the methodology that has been used to conduct this thesis. The qualitative method has been utilised to examine various related documents that may relate to any given aspect of this present research. Examination of the societal participation in counter-extremism needed to analyse four sorts of materials. Also, the interview was chosen as the primary

data collection tool. For efficient outcomes, a significant number of experts in counter-extremism have been interviewed as they can enhance the understanding of this issue. It was a useful method for this study, whereby an identical set of questions were predesigned to cover the exact areas being studied. Thus, a reasonable amount of data has been collected through interaction between experts and the interviewer.

The Fourth chapter has discussed the comparison between the two countries, Saudi Arabia and the UK, to show its importance for academic research. This chapter has displayed that Muslim communities, around the globe, share an almost similar social environment. In addition, it has shown that this social environment could be influenced by three-factors; internal factors "local cultures", external factors "surrounding cultures" and political systems. Such effects can be discerned in individuals' willingness to engage in governmental activities and integrate into the surrounding cultures. This chapter has demonstrated that various aspects can confirm the usefulness of conducting a comparative study between two Muslim communities in different countries.

Thus, lessons drawn from such a comparative study can be derived and utilised in the enhancement of Muslim community engagement efficiency in counter-extremism. The probability of conducting comparative research is linked to several aspects, some of which are general issues suiting multiple communities, while other matters may serve only a few communities. One of these broad issues is the leading role of Islamic faith regards the personal and public life of a Muslim. This aspect motivates Muslims to reconcile their needs with the demands of their communities. In this regard, Muslim identity has an

apparent influence on individual values which inspires Muslims to either contribute to counter-extremism or participate in radical activities. This relationship has demonstrated that the sense of belonging to this Ummah becomes more evident during crises and the war against terrorism. Hence, it can be observed that the definite presence of religion, identity, and the concept of Ummah in Muslim communities globally can play key roles in counter-extremism, making this study academically valuable. As a result, comparative research could be conducted between any Muslim communities regardless of whether they are majorities or minorities.

The fifth chapter has shown the research findings and discussed them. It has analysed the complex relations between the three different combinations of conditions and has displayed how these three combinations have strong causal correlations. The six chapter highlighted the role of religious elites in combatting extremism. In this chapter, three critical issues have been discussed. The first crucial issue is the engagement of trustworthy religious scholars. Another essential aspect discussed in this chapter is enhancing the imams' awareness about their roles in counter-extremism. The third aspect of the engagement of religious elites in counter-extremism is related to the significance of providing training for religious leaders. The seventh chapter has explored the participation of British and Saudi Muslim women in counter-extremism. This chapter has focused on three vital issues that can affect women's participation. The first key issue is the marginalisation of women's roles in counter-extremism. The second issue that has been raised in this chapter is the negative role that can be played by women's radical relatives. The third section discussed the qualification of women in counter-radicalisation.

The eighth chapter has investigated the engagement of young people in fighting extremism. This chapter has demonstrated how three crucial issues might play substantial roles in convincing young people to participate in any activity. The first factor has focussed on the enhancement of the sense of national belonging amongst youth as a method to build trust between them and counter-radicalisation stakeholders. The second aspect has discussed the utilisation of advanced communication tools to reach young people. The third section evaluated the training level and the ability of young people to identify radical signs. The nineth chapter has concentrated on the role of educational institutions in counter-extremism. This chapter has shown that the educational operation may rely on three apparatuses: parents, teachers, and curricula. These elements jointly, can generate an educational environment that can produce the required resilience amongst students. It can be noticed that the purposes of these four chapters are to discuss what is needed to enhance the efficacy of these four social elements. Also, these four chapters have highlighted multiple factors which can nourish radicalisation.

Researching this phenomenon was a very challenging mission. Interviewing experts was one of the most challenging requirements of this research. The researcher needed to discuss the efforts of Saudi Arabia and the UK in counter-extremism with forty experts from these two countries. Numerous difficulties arose when the interview procedures started. Some of these experts were constantly busy and had no time for such discussions. Furthermore, collecting data from official documents was complicated work in some cases. Accordingly, one of the challenges, called the 'effectiveness element', illustrates the difficulties that may counter the researcher when trying to attain data. Even

though official documents used in this research were primarily taken from open sources, one of the essential documents was classified and difficult to be acquired. As a result, valuable time was lost before access to this document was finally allowed. Besides, utilising the QCA for analysing the collected data was time consuming given the complexity and connectivity of ideas. Manipulating data showed that multiple dimensions could assist in building a more in-depth understanding of the engagement of communities in counter-extremism. Having combinations of conditions that linked to each other in causal and linear correlations hardened the data analysis and caused it to take a longer time to complete.

**Recommendations:**

Accordingly, the research recommends that three crucial aspects should be reflected when engaging Muslim communities in counter-extremism. Firstly, the significance of engaging four main societal components. This research has shown that community engagement in counter-extremism efforts is crucial for success. Two aspects should be taken into account to achieve more effective participation. The first aspect is the importance of engaging four societal elements that can play significant roles in this fight. These social elements are religious figures, women, youth, and educational institutions. The second aspect is that each societal component of these four parts of a community has some critical areas that require more focus to enhance their efficiency when participating in counter-extremism initiatives.

Concerning religion, attention should be given to engaging trustworthy religious scholars, educating imams, and teaching them how to identify radical signs in their communities. For women, there is a need for greater awareness of the marginalisation of women's role in Muslim societies, the harmful effects of women's radical relatives, and the need for more women with relative skills. Similarly, there are areas of young individuals' lives which require a greater focus. Accordingly, for the more active involvement of adolescence, there is a need for greater concentration on enhancing the sense of national belonging amongst young people, working on their overwhelming desire, and their psychological status. Finally, investigating the role of educational institutions shows that two key areas form the focal points of this component: the influence of parents and teachers on their children and students, which needs more concern on trust building in this atmosphere, and the importance of critical thinking learning for counter-radicalisation.

Secondly, the research has demonstrated that three consequential requirements are needed to increase the quality and quantity of social engagement in counter-radicalisation. It is discernible that the academic literature focuses on different aspects when evaluating the community engagement in counter-extremism. As such, the research has identified three critical issues that can enhance this participation. These issues are trust-building, the importance of awareness, and providing training. Thirdly, the study recommends that three further factors should be considered owing to their crucial impact on community engagement as noted in this research. Hence, community participation in counter-extremism can be influenced by three factors: internal factors, external factors, and political systems and their foreign

policies. Such effects can be discerned in individuals' willingness to engage in governmental activities and to integrate into the surrounding cultures.

**The Research Significance for Policy Makers:**

These recommendations provide a framework that can be beneficial for policymakers and practitioners. Investigating the British and Saudi cases to counter-radicalisation, has demonstrated the tremendous efforts performed by stakeholders in these countries. As can be seen in chapter four, CONTEST (2011, pp.67-68), has emphasised the role of the British government to continue their support for religious leaders to stand up against radicalisation. Also, various activities are run by Muslim women who are trying to fight extremist propaganda. Moreover, the British government, in one of its policy initiatives to combat terrorism, is working to increase the participation of Muslim women in mosques. The Young Muslims' Advisory Group was formulated to prompt the government on their part in handling brutal extremism. The British CONTEST stated that youth could be employed in the national battle against violent extremism and be the most reliable voice and most stringent supporter (CONTEST, 2009, p.90). Besides, The UK Government Document "Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales" (HMG, 2015, p.10), has emphasised the duty of schools to protect its students from being drawn into violent extremism.

Likewise, it can be observed that the Saudi stakeholders attempted to engage individuals in counter-extremism. The emergency media plan to counter the propaganda directed at Saudi youth by ISIL and other extremist groups

(Hasanah, 2015, p.26), has emphasised the significance of choosing moderate imams and Friday sermon preachers and supporting them morally and financially. Besides, the Assakina campaign (Tranquillity) plays a significant role in counter-extremism in female communities, where tens of women participate in its cautionary projects. Moreover, Saudi women have been engaged in countering radicalism in the kingdom, through launching a multitude of activities and initiatives, such as lectures, expos, contests, and workshops (MOE, 2017). In addition, the Hasanah plan recognises young people as leading players who can play a significant part in this mission. Therefore, tens of initiatives have been offered or suggested by young Saudi individuals. The Ministry of Education has launched a number of initiatives, such as "My Mind is Immune", "The Unit of Intellectual Awareness in School", and "The Unity of the Country; Values and Principles".

These numerous projects appear to indicate that British and Saudi Arabian communities have reached a satisfying level of awareness. Yet, the numbers of British and Saudi individuals who are affiliated with ISIL reflect unsatisfactory results. The challenge that may face stakeholders is that it cannot be seen as sufficient to evaluate the success of such critical efforts by the numbers of affiliates with terrorist groups. What makes this matter more challenging is the lack of theoretical evaluating methods, as discussed in chapter one. This research has shown that a number of researchers have examined the scientific need for accurate ways to assess the proficiency of counter-radicalisation. According to Jessica Stern, there are more than a thousand programs around the world intended to combat extremism, none of which has shown any evidence of success. Also, examining the efficiency of British and Saudi efforts

to combat extremism shows that both share almost the same level of deficiency. The Saudi and the UK efforts to combat extremism were evaluated by Combes (2013), who noted that the Saudis have not indicated how they measure success. Likewise, Gregory (2009, p.5) pointed out that one of the limitations of the British CONTEST is the lack of an adequate assessment.

Nevertheless, evaluating the British and Saudi efforts to counter-extremism using a framework built out of multiple-levels has demonstrated and identified weaknesses in these efforts. Interviewing experts and discussing with them these efforts based on what has been found in the academic literature, has assisted in identifying those critical limitations that could harmfully affect the community engagement in counter-extremism. One significant factor which the academic literature has demonstrated as being crucial is trust-building. Interviewees confirmed that if people do not trust those who are running cautioning projects, they will not participate. Thus, when "Imams Online" created attractive materials that amazed audiences, it was condemned by people because of a rumour that an untrustworthy British organisation had funded it. Furthermore, the research has found weaknesses in the awareness and encouragement of people to engage in counter-extremism. The research investigations have shown that many people are against extremism, but they never participate in public cautioning projects owing to a lack of awareness. The same can be noticed when researchers emphasised the essentiality of providing training for the participants in counter-extremism. The study has highlighted how many participants in this field cannot provide sufficient influence owing to their lack of training. Worryingly, they may cause a more negative impact than a positive one. However, this research has utilised these

concepts as benchmark for evaluating the success of the community engagement in counter-radicalisation.

Taking these three aspects into consideration and monitoring how they can be affected by the three influential factors may provide a better understanding of the reluctance of some individuals to participate in counter-extremism. The academic literature has displayed that local cultures can affect social engagement in counter-extremism. Interviews have affirmed this assertion by indicating that local cultures played crucial roles in limiting Muslims' participation in counter-extremism. Besides, external factors can crucially impact an individual's activities. Examining this aspect has demonstrated that what happens in some parts of Muslim communities around the world can be exploited by radical networks to recruit more people. The same factors can create a feeling of grievance that may prevent them from involving in counter-extremism.

Furthermore, scholars have asserted the influences that can be caused by political systems. Studying this factor has exhibited that Muslim communities can be affected by their government's foreign policy to a level that it can determine their interaction with national activities. It can be observed that evaluating these efforts through this research framework, which considers the community engagement, three critical stages of aspects, and three factors that affect this process, may provide a better picture for stakeholders. However, this research has drawn multiple lessons from studying the British and Saudi experience in counter-extremism; all of which can enhance the understanding of this issue. Yet, how to reach people and convince them to participate in

counter-extremism based on this research framework, needs future academic studies.

In conclusion, this research has observed that the challenge that faces the evaluation of counter-extremism programs may relate to the ignorance of community engagement in counter-radicalisation. Besides, there is ambiguity regarding what can be done or what areas should be covered to succeed in counter-extremism. This research believes that defining these two critical issues can assist in the evaluation of counter-extremism projects. Thus, chapter two has suggested a definition that covers these two areas. This definition has assisted the research in examining the British and Saudi efforts to engage communities in counter-extremism. Thus, the above-mentioned recommendations can be beneficial with clear definitions of extremism and counter-extremism.

## Further Study:

Based on these conclusions, the research has noted that further studies are required to improve social participation in counter-extremism. The additional work can focus on a critical issue that can increase the community engagement, in quality and quantity, which then will professionalise counter-radicalisation. How audiences are approached plays a significant role in gaining their hearts. This mechanism can be a suitable tool to evaluate the success of propagandists in reaching their target audience. Investigating the community engagement in counter-extremism has shown a weakness in how to reach individuals and convince them to participate in these efforts. The research found that there is a

lack of awareness amongst people regarding the importance of combating radicalisation. Thus, how to reach them, how to increase their realisation, and how to persuade them to involve in this mission needs further study.

Significantly, disregarding youth may lead to feeble cautioning products and campaigns created by people who think in different ways from young people. Such weakness may prevent cautionary messages from reaching targeted audiences, and this paves the road for radical narratives, which may be produced and presented in professional ways, to attract young people and affect them. The variety of fundamental propaganda may explain why there are hundreds of teenagers who are affiliated with ISIL, substituting a comfortable life for a very miserable one. Additionally, the extremist propaganda reaches its targets with idealistic images that are capable of convincing innocent people to respond to the delusion. Researchers have explained why radical ideology is attractive, saying that it is because ISIL offers fast food that suits some spiritually hungry young Westerners. When young individuals ask reasonable questions, radical groups present themselves as having the most satisfying answers, providing an emotional narrative that placates their anxieties. Simultaneously, official messages produced boringly is causing young individuals to reject them. In a survey conducted by King Saudi University, 71% of three thousand Saudi participants stated that they are dissatisfied with the official cautionary messages due to their unattractive presentation.

Inspections show that terrorist groups, especially ISIL, are far better than governments in their utilisation of narratives and tools to recruit young people. While the Saudi and the UK governments are still using fundamental means to

speak to youth, ISIL is using very advanced methods. ISIL is exploiting a very new tool to affect its audiences. This research has found that ISIL's use of technology has reached a sophisticated level where it can mix brutality with technology to present an enriched content that is attractive to young people. Interviewees stated that comparing contents and tools used by al-Qaeda and ISIL with that utilised by British and Saudi governments, shows weakness in the official narratives.

Also, interviews have displayed that the British government has tried to enforce a counterterrorism paradigm, but it is not working as the Prevent strategy possesses many problems with its delivery. It has been affirmed that the British government has not done enough, and even when they do, they do it in an inappropriate way that causes harm to the community. A number of interviewees stated that the United Kingdom needs to build a program based on social, psychological, and ideological pillars to reach the hearts of its youth. It has been stated that when the British government used its plan as a safeguarding policy, it succeeded; this is what was happening from 2014 until the beginning of 2016. However, when it started to change its focus to stopping terrorism from focusing on policing issues, people's satisfaction and involvement decreased. The community sees the change as a move from helping vulnerable individuals to stopping terrorism at the expense of some people's privileges.

At the same time, Saudi's efforts have shown an absenteeism of scientific methods capable of educating the community about the cruciality of radical thoughts. Saudi interviewees are convinced that the Saudi authorities need to

work more on the leading cautioning platforms in various communities, such as mosques, media, and schools, which need to play a vital role in creating a moderate social model. Also, assessing the Saudi case indicated that there is a fragility in proficiency in the means that are used to speak to young people. The usage of social media networks seems to be the only promising sign, but it is insufficient, which leads to affirming that more advanced tools and methods are required.

## Conclusion:

To conclude, it can be said that the local communities' participation can play influential roles in counter-extremism efforts around the world. To increase the effectiveness of this engagement, this research has looked at the Muslim community as one-unit formed of four components: religious figures, women, youth, educational institutions. Exploring the academic literature has shown that three aspects should be considered as demands for social involvement. These three linear aspects are trust-building, awareness enhancement, and training provision. Besides, the study has displayed that the quality of community engagement can be influenced by local cultures, external factors, and political regimes and their foreign policy. Thus, this way of evaluating community engagement in counter-extremism is this research's original contribution to knowledge. These combinations can answer the research question, which is designed to find the comparable lessons that can be drawn from the British and Saudi experience with fighting extremism through community engagement. The significance of this method derives from the lack of academic evaluating means for counter-radicalisation projects. Although this study has utilised the three

concepts as a benchmark for evaluation, research into this phenomenon has shown that more academic works are essential to achieve a deeper understanding of how to evaluate the success of counter-radicalisation.

This comprehension can be seen in three crucial aspects which need to be reflected when engaging Muslim communities in counter-extremism. The first aspect is the significance of engaging four main societal components. The second aspect is that three consequential requirements are needed to increase the quality and quantity of social engagement in counter-extremism. The third issue is that three factors should be taken into account owing to their strong effect on community engagement. These three aspects form a framework that can be beneficial for stakeholders. Notably, officials put much effort into counter-extremism. Studying the British and Saudi cases to counter-extremism has confirmed the multiple actions performed by stakeholders in these countries. These activities may designate that the British and Saudi Arabian communities have reached a sufficient level of awareness. Yet, the numbers of British and Saudi individuals affiliated with ISIL reflects unsatisfactory results. Exploring the British and Saudi efforts to counter-radicalisation using this framework has verified weaknesses in these efforts. Therefore, the research assumes that considering the engagement of communities as an indication of efficacy and evaluating counter-extremism based on this assumption, can provide reliable outcomes.

# List of Interviewees

| interviewee's name | Position | country | Interviews Date & Place |
|---|---|---|---|
| Afzal, Samayya | The community engagement manager at the Muslim Council of Britain. | Britain | 7-2-2019 phone call |
| Al-Afnan, Ali | A psychiatric and member of Muhammed bin Naif Counselling and Care Centre. | Saudi Arabia | 2-1-2019 Phone call |
| Al-Baker, Fawziah | A professor of sociology of education at King Saud University. | Saudi Arabia | 29-12-2018 Phone call |
| Al-Brikan, Luluah | An assistant professor of sociology at Princess Nora bint Abdul Rahman University. | Saudi Arabia | 25-12-2018 Phone call |
| Al-Dossary, Fawziah | A professor of social studies at Princess Nora bint Abdul Rahman University. | Saudi Arabia | 21-12-2018 Phone call |
| Al-Esa, Meshael | A member of the Fatehn initiative in the Saudi Ministry of Education. | Saudi Arabia | 7-2-2019 Phone call |
| Al-Foaim, Fahd | A researcher in counter-extremism and ideological security. | Saudi Arabia | 1-10-2018 Phone call |
| Al-Hiliyl, Abdul-Aziz | A researcher in radicalisation signs who works for the Saudi General Department for Counter Extremism. | Saudi Arabia | 10-10-2018 Phone call |
| Al-Jadid, Abrar | A specialist in media and youth initiatives at King Saud University. | Saudi Arabia | 5-1-2019 Phone call |
| Al-Jasir, Abdullah | The Riyadh Youth Committee secretary and a former member of Muhammed bin Naif, Counselling and Care Centre. | Saudi Arabia | 3-1-2019 Phone call |
| Al-Moshawwah, Abdulmonaem | The founder and director of Assakina Campaign for Dialogue. | Saudi Arabia | 1-12-2018 Phone call |
| Al-Mutairi, Tariq | The Hasanah Plan coordinator at the Saudi Ministry of Education. | Saudi Arabia | 6-2-2019 Phone call |
| Al-Otaibi, Awatif | A member of the Intellectual Awareness Centre in the Saudi Ministry of Education. | Saudi Arabia | 16-3-2019 Phone call |
| Al-Rwais, Marzooq | The Intellectual Awareness Centre director in the Saudi Ministry of Education. | Saudi Arabia | 8-2-2019 Phone call |
| Al-shalhoob, Manal | An advisor at the Saudi Ministry of Education. | Saudi Arabia | 5-12-2018 Phone call |
| Al-Shihri, Ali | The director of the General Department for Intellectual Awareness at the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs. | Saudi Arabia | 11-11-2018 Phone call |
| Al-Yusuf, Faisal | An al-Hamd House Islamic School teacher in Birmingham. | Saudi Arabia | 10-11-2018 Phone call |
| Baker, Anthony | A former chairman of the Brixton Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre and co-founder of Strategy to Reach, Empower and Educate Teenagers Initiative (STREET). | Britain | 2-1-2019 Phone call |
| Bin Dabil, Abdullah | A sociology professor at King Fahd Security College and a former member of Muhammed bin Naif Counselling and Care Centre. | Saudi Arabia | 10-1-2019 Phone call |
| Cook, Joana | An assistant professor of terrorism and political violence, faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, Leiden University. | Britain | 2-10-2018 Phone call |

| Cornwall, Simon | A counterterrorism consultant and trainer who works within the British Criminal Justice System. | Britain | 4-1-2019 Phone call |
|---|---|---|---|
| Douglas, Raymond | A behaviour management specialist, youth offending worker and dynamic trainer, works within the British Criminal Justice System. | Britain | 14-1-2019 Phone call |
| Eggert, Jennifer | A researcher at the Department of Sociology at the University of Warwick, researcher and practitioner working on gender, political violence, preventing/countering violent extremism. | Britain | 10-10-2018 Coventry 28-10-2018 Phone call |
| Hadlaq, Abdulrahman | The former director of the Saudi General Department for Counter-Extremism. | Saudi Arabia | 4-1-2019 Phone call |
| Hafeez, Asim | The deputy director of Prevent, Office for Security and Counterterrorism at the Home Office. | Britain | 10-3-2019 Phone call |
| Hamid, Sadek | A senior researcher at Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies at Oxford University. | Britain | 30-9-2018 Email |
| Haroon, Hifsa | A Prevent strategy coordinator in Staffordshire, further and higher education. | Britain | 4-10-2018 Phone call |
| Ibn al-Shaikh, Mohammed | An Adviser in the Saudi General Department for Counter Extremism. A member of Muhammed bin Naif Counselling and Care Centre. | Saudi Arabia | 5-10-2018 Phone call |
| Imtiaz, Mohammed | The vice-chairman of Central Mosque in Birmingham. | Britain | 28-10-2018 Phone call |
| Ismail, Mohammed | The Muslim chaplain at The University of Sheffield. A member of Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies. | Britain | 28-10-2018 Phone call |
| Karmani, Aylas | A specialist in violence, prevention intervention, provider working with young people, and co-founder of Strategy to Reach, Empower and Educate Teenagers Initiative (STREET). | Britain | 1-1-2019 Phone call |
| Limbada, Zubeda | The founder and director of Connect Futures, a social enterprise that delivers training and research for the prevention of extremism and exploitation. | Britain | 28-11-2018 Phone call |
| Lundie, David | A senior lecturer in education studies at Liverpool Hope University. | Britain | 24-9-2018 Phone call |
| Mirsal, Majid | A specialist in counter-extremism and advisor at the Saudi General Department for Counter-Extremism. | Saudi Arabia | 30-9-2018 Phone call |
| Mulbocus, Yasmin | A mentor/interventionist who works with imams and community leaders in London's Hounslow area, reaching out to youth, young Muslim women, in particular. | Britain | 17-12-2018 Phone call |
| Najashi, Craig | An expert on criminology and counter-extremism. | Britain | 8-1-2019 Phone call |
| Rahman, Hafiz | The Imam of Jalal_Abad Mosque in Birmingham. | Britain | 9-10-2018 Birmingham |
| Raja, Abid | A Muslim Contact Unit member (a Metropolitan Police anti-terrorism unit) | Britain | 7-3-2019 Phone call |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | and former community officer in Notting Hill. | | |
| Saleem, Zakaullah | The imam of Greenlane Mosque in Birmingham. | Britain | 10-10-2018 Phone call |
| Yousuf, Ali | A Teacher in Hamd House Islamic School, Birmingham | Britain | 9-10-2018 Phone call |

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